



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

**Contact: Kay Stimson**

Director of Communications for NASS

202.624.3528 office

703.869.5868 cell

nass@sso.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2008

### **New Report Shows State Preparations for the 2008 Presidential Election Being Driven by Predictions of High Voter Turnout, Dramatic Increases in Voter Registration Numbers**

*National Association of Secretaries of State President Pedro A. Cortés Presents State Election Readiness Survey Results to Members of Congress*

**Washington, DC**—NASS President and Pennsylvania Secretary of State Pedro A. Cortés will deliver the results of a new survey on state preparations for the 2008 presidential election as part of his testimony today before a joint congressional committee hearing on Capitol Hill.

The report, entitled, “Engaging the Energized Electorate: NASS Survey on State Preparations for the 2008 Presidential Election,” focuses on state outreach efforts to inform and prepare voters, increase and facilitate voter participation, ensure that polling places run smoothly on Election Day and communicate election results to the public. It includes state-by-state profiles that highlight initiatives on voter participation, polling place operations and election results reporting and verification, among others.

“This survey shows how hard state election officials have been working to ensure that eligible voters will have a positive voting experience and a successful election that is fair, accurate, accessible and secure,” said Cortés, who authored the report’s introduction. “To achieve this in a presidential election year is a challenge given our decentralized electoral system that includes an estimated 7,800 local election jurisdictions, 200,000 polling sites, two million poll workers and, for this year, somewhere between 125 and 200 million voters—possibly the biggest turnout in recent history. Some secretaries of state say turnout could reach as high as eighty percent.”

Highlights of the NASS report include:

**State Voter Hotlines:** Thirty-six states provide toll-free hotlines to collect and respond to voter feedback, questions or complaints.

**Equipment Demonstrations:** Twenty-five states conduct voting equipment demonstrations to help familiarize voters with the equipment they will encounter at their polling place.

**Online Voter Tools:** A variety of resources are available on state election office websites to assist voters with their voting preparations, including polling place locators (42 states), voter registration lookups (31 states, plus DC), online sample ballots (22 states) and equipment demonstration videos (18 states). Sixteen states also have online provisional ballot tracking tools this year.

**Targeted Outreach:** In addition to general education campaigns aimed at assisting first-time voters, many states are also conducting targeted outreach for young voters, elderly and disabled voters, military and overseas voters and alternative language voters.

*Founded in 1904, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) is the oldest professional, non-partisan organization of public officials in the United States. Members include the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For more information, visit [www.nass.org](http://www.nass.org).*

**(NASS NEWS RELEASE CONTINUED – PAGE 2)**

**Convenience Voting:** Thirty-one states allow some form of early or advance voting, including vote-by-mail, early/in-person absentee voting or permanent absentee voting.

**Poll Worker Recruitment & Training:** States are looking to assist localities with poll worker recruitment by signing up students, bilingual volunteers, private sector employees and state employees. Thirty-two states provide educational assistance in training poll workers in order to provide more consistency in these efforts.

**Polling Place Efficiency:** Polling place locators, electronic poll books and vote centers are among the options that are helping election officials ensure a smooth process at the local level.

**Contingency Planning:** More than half of all states are assisting localities with contingency planning, which for this year, goes beyond natural disaster and security issues to include assistance with Election Day issues, such as ballot shortages, equipment problems and long lines.

**Post-Election Audits:** Twenty-three states currently have laws in place for post-election audits, while at least three states (Indiana, Missouri and Ohio) plan to issue post-election assessment reports.

To help states with their outreach efforts, NASS created the nonpartisan website [www.canivote.org](http://www.canivote.org), which can assist eligible voters with voter registration, identification requirements, local election office contacts and other useful information.

Download the full results of the NASS Survey on State Election Preparations for the 2008 Presidential Election at [www.nass.org](http://www.nass.org).

###