

MAKE ELECTION REFORM A REALITY
SUPPORT GULF COAST STATES IN THEIR EXTRAORDINARY
EFFORTS TO ADMINISTER ELECTIONS AFTER KATRINA

April 24, 2006

Dear Senators:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you assist Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in their efforts to hold meaningful elections in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We are asking for \$50 million in the upcoming Emergency Supplemental Appropriations legislation for those states in their efforts to administer transparent and accountable elections.

It is imperative that the citizens of the Gulf Coast region are provided with the opportunity to participate in the critical and difficult decision making that each of these states face in the foreseeable future. Every election presents states with challenges, but never before has there been such great potential for disenfranchisement than in the elections the Gulf Coast states are facing this year.

Voters have been displaced, voting equipment has been destroyed or severely damaged and polling places have been leveled. The outcome of the devastation is that county budgets which were strained before the hurricane have now been depleted dealing with issues like debris removal and infrastructure rebuilding. Many of the businesses have shut down, thereby reducing or eliminating a tax base for those counties. The funding is just not available at the state and local level to rebuild the elections infrastructure.

Time is of the essence. Starting this month and running through the summer, all of these states have primary elections for local and federal offices.

The officials and residents of the Gulf Coast states are extremely grateful for the support from all levels of government and from the many Americans who have been devoted to helping them rebuild and move forward. We look forward to working with you on this critical issue. Should you have any questions, please contact Leslie Reynolds of the National Association of Secretaries of State at (202)624-3525 or Val Frias of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights at (202) 263-2852, or any of the individual organizations listed below.

Sincerely,

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
National Association of Counties
National Association of Election Officials
National Association of Secretaries of State
National Association of State Election Directors
National Conference of State Legislatures