

MAKE ELECTION REFORM A REALITY

SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION AND FULL FUNDING FOR HAVA

April 20, 2006

Dear Senators:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support full funding for the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and include the remaining \$798 million of authorized funding in the upcoming Emergency Supplemental legislation. Of that amount, \$724 million is for the federally-mandated processes and equipment that state and local governments must have in place for federal elections in 2006 and \$74 million is for assisting state and local governments in making all polling places accessible. It is imperative that the states and localities receive all of the funding they were promised so they can fully implement these important requirements of HAVA.

State and local governments have worked hard on these reforms such as improving disability access to polling places, updating voting equipment, implementing new provisional balloting procedures, developing and implementing a new statewide voter registration database, training poll workers and educating voters on new procedures and new equipment. State and local election officials have always had a difficult struggle when competing for the funding necessary to effectively administer elections and they were counting on the funding promised by Congress to ensure that all the new federal mandates were implemented effectively.

To help state and local governments pay for these reforms, HAVA authorized \$3.9 billion over three fiscal years. Between FY03 and FY04, it was clear that Congress saw the importance of fully funding HAVA and provided \$3 billion of the \$3.9 billion for HAVA implementation. Unfortunately, in FY 05 and FY 06 no federal funds were appropriated for states to implement the HAVA requirements.

State officials incorporated the federal amounts Congress promised when developing their required HAVA budgets and plans. Without the full federal funding, state and local governments will encounter serious fiscal shortfalls and will not be able to afford complete implementation of important HAVA mandates. According to a state survey, lack of federal funding for HAVA implementation will result in many states scaling back their voter and poll worker education initiatives and on voting equipment purchase plans, all of which are vital components to making every vote count in America.

We are thankful that you have seen the importance of funding the work of the Election Assistance Commission. States, localities and civic organizations can utilize the work products of the EAC to effectively implement the requirements of HAVA i.e., the voting system standards, the statewide database guidance, and the studies on provisional voting, voter education, poll worker training, and voter fraud and voter intimidation.

We thank you for your support of funding for the Help America Vote Act, and 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 Rob Randhava of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights at (202) 466-6058, or any of the individual organizations listed below.

Sincerely,

Organizations Representing State and Local Election Officials

International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers
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

Civil and Disability Rights Organizations

Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association of People with Disabilities
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Brennan Center for Justice
Common Cause
Dēmos: A Network for Ideas & Action
FairVote
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Disability Rights Network
Paralyzed Veterans of America
People For the America Way
The Arc of the United States
United Auto Workers
United Cerebral Palsy
U.S. PIRG