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August 6, 2019

Hon. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader

Hon. Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader

United States Senate

The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your continued leadership in the U.S. Senate and for your willingness to work with Secretaries of State, election directors and local election officials as Congress discusses possible future federal funding to support our nation's elections—a state and local responsibility.

Due to the ongoing funding discussions, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) has passed a [resolution](#) in support of federal funding and resources to supplement state-funded and state-led election cybersecurity efforts. Forty members of NASS serve as their state's designated chief election official, overseeing the conduct of elections according to law.

Importantly, the resolution says if new federal funding is allocated, federal law must make it clear that Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Section 209 applies to all aspects of such appropriations and cannot be circumvented with the imposition of rules, regulations, or requirements by federal agencies.

The purpose is to ensure states have the flexibility essential to making effective use of these funds. The states' diverse election systems require diverse cybersecurity strategies. NASS and its members call on Congress to apply these principles as it considers stable federal funding that allows states to plan and implement election security enhancements to counter emerging cybersecurity threats.

Each state has submitted a plan to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) on how they will or are spending the \$380 million in HAVA funds appropriated in late-March 2018.

For example, states are using these funds to implement cybersecurity best practices, provide training to local election officials, enhance post-election audits, and increase cybersecurity and information technology staff.



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The state processes to spend federal funds does take time. Many must consult their state legislatures, abide by procurement rules and procedures, while gathering input from cybersecurity experts and community advocates.

States understand the importance of spending federal dollars wisely and will continue to take steps to ensure the utmost security of election systems as we approach the 2020 election.

In order to continue our critical work ensuring the cybersecurity of state election systems, NASS urges Congress to provide the adequate funds needed to sustainably address the ongoing threat of foreign interference in elections.

There is no indication the cyber threat to our democracy is going away. As stated in the resolution, election security is equated with national security.

Nationwide threats justify federal assistance in funding individual state efforts to prevent and defend against cyber threats. Even with the recent \$380 HAVA funds appropriated, there will be ongoing needs in states to do the necessary work to effectively address this threat sustainably into the future, and we ask Congress to plan for that need.

Again, NASS and its members appreciate our continued positive working relationship with the Senate and its committees of jurisdiction. In the interim, if you or your staff have any questions please feel free to contact Leslie Reynolds, NASS Executive Director at 202-624-3525, or reynolds@sso.org.

Sincerely,

Hon. Paul Pate, CERA
NASS President and Iowa Secretary of State

Attachment: NASS Resolution on Principles for Federal Assistance in Funding of Elections