



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
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July 28, 2015

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The EAC Commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the ADA by Hearing How to Make Voting More Accessible for Individuals with Disabilities

WASHINGTON, DC – Members of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) met today to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and explore ways to make voting more accessible for individuals with disabilities.

“While great progress has been made there is much more that can be done. The EAC remains focused on fulfilling the full potential of the promise in HAVA for voters with disabilities,” said EAC Chair Christy McCormick.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 mandated that individuals with disabilities be given the same opportunity to vote freely and independently as other voters. The Commissioners heard testimony from accessibility advocates, experts, and individuals with disabilities regarding the progress made since the passage of HAVA and the work still to be done.

“As technology has improved so have services for people with disabilities. The EAC is working with election officials and other stakeholders to bring those technologies and services into the voting process,” said EAC Vice-Chair Thomas Hicks.

The EAC’s Accessible Voting Technology Initiative (AVTI) supports accessibility research and development on transformative technologies and approaches. Through the AVTI, the EAC and its grantees have produced over 45 technological and administrative solutions for assisting voters with disabilities. The initiatives include the EAC’s Military Heroes grant to provide assistance needed for recently injured military personnel to participate in elections.

“Serving those who have served us is our greatest responsibility. The Military Heroes initiative is critical to ensuring our wounded warriors are able to fully participate in our democracy”, said EAC Commissioner Matthew Masterson.

Commissioners were presented testimony that accessibility issues for voters remain. Witnesses highlighted several facts regarding individuals with disabilities. These included:

- There is likely to be an increase in the number of individuals with disabilities within the next few years, as the “baby boomers” grow older and live longer. This will require substantially more emphasis on serving voters with accessible voting needs.

- The number of those reaching retirement age swelled more than 50 percent within the last 12 years according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- The category of voters most likely to participate in elections is the 60 and older segment of the population.
- Current estimates are that 30 to 35 percent of all voters during the next 25 years will need some form of assistance at the polling place whether that is seating, wheelchair accommodations, visual needs, or clear and easy-to-understand instructions.

For more information and to access the meeting agenda documents and webcast, visit EAC.gov.

The EAC is an independent bipartisan commission created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. HAVA was passed by the U.S. Congress to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process, address improvements to voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 election, and to provide federal funding to states for new voting equipment. HAVA mandates that the EAC test and certify voting equipment, maintain the National Voter Registration form, conduct research, and administer a national clearinghouse on elections that includes shared practices, information for voters and other resources to improve elections. More information is available at EAC.gov.

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