



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
1335 EAST-WEST HIGHWAY, SUITE 4300
SILVER SPRING, MD 20910

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary
“Securing America’s Elections Part II: Oversight of Government Agencies”
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Ben Hovland, Vice Chair
United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC)

Good morning Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning to detail the work of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, better known as the EAC, to fulfill its mission under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). I also appreciate this opportunity to highlight the great work of state and local election officials around the country.

As you know, our nation’s elections are run at the state and local levels, with each of the 50 states and the U.S. territories running elections in different ways. Election officials in over 8,000 local jurisdictions are ultimately responsible for conducting our elections, and their work truly protects and ensures the most fundamental pillar of our democracy – the vote.

Since 2016, there has been an enormous increase in focus on the security of our elections, which is just one of the many responsibilities election officials must address. I am pleased to report that, from my vantage point, the elections community has responded in an impressive fashion considering the challenges we face. Nearly every conference I attend while travelling around the country has a substantial focus on security, and protecting the integrity of elections is a constant topic in meetings with election administrators, our federal partners, and external stakeholders. The consideration, time and treasure devoted to this serious issue is as persistent and relentless as the threats we face. Even so, we need to ask ourselves a key question: Will that be enough if election officials do not have the sustained resources they need to defend our democracy against potential threats?

The good news is that following the Department of Homeland Security’s designation of election infrastructure as critical infrastructure, there has been a sea change in information sharing between the federal government and state and local officials. This includes the creation of a Government Coordinating Council, which brings together state and local officials with federal partners, as well as a Sector Coordinating Council, which has helped organized private-sector vendors and non-profit entities that support local election officials. We have also seen the creation of the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (or EI-ISAC), which now has nearly 2000 members, including every state chief election official’s office.

The deployment of Albert monitors, hardening of systems, increased trainings and promotion of table-top exercises around cyber events have all exponentially increased since 2016. The FY 2018 appropriation of \$380 Million HAVA funding, which the EAC distributed within months of its allocation, has largely contributed to these improvements. It doesn’t cover everything election

officials need, but states have had the ability to essentially choose from a menu of reforms, improvements, and priorities that could address their most pressing needs and vulnerabilities.

As Chairwoman McCormick testified earlier this year, the EAC projects that 85% of the FY 2018 money will be spent in advance of 2020. We have seen some states use the funding to replace aging or paperless equipment. Other states have replaced their statewide voter registration database or added additional security measures like multi-factor authentication. Some have hosted essential training and tabletop exercises ahead of 2020 to give election officials “hands on” experience that can help them prepare for various threats.

One of my personal favorite uses of the FY2018 funding is the implementation of “cyber navigator” programs. Essentially, the state recognizes that many local jurisdictions do not have the capacity or need for a full-time election cybersecurity expert, so the state employs individuals with regional responsibilities and they provide technical assistance to several counties or municipalities. This is the kind of innovative program that will help bolster our cybersecurity defenses and improve how states conduct elections. It’s also a model that the EAC would like to help amplify nationwide should our own funding support such an effort.

Unfortunately, not all of the news is good. As you all know, the threat of foreign adversaries remains real and, ultimately, our state and local election officials do not have the resources to thwart a truly determined and sophisticated nation-state actor. That is why we must take action to build resilience here at home and implement policies that deter adversaries abroad, such as a real sanctions regime.

Additional funding is crucial to allow states to continue to make necessary improvements that increase the strength and resiliency of our election systems. When we talk about election administration, we are talking about the infrastructure of our democracy. To make meaningful and lasting change requires a consistent investment over time. It cannot just be about 2020 or any one election, but about all of our elections going forward.

During a Senate Rules Committee hearing in May, I shared a recent discovery that the EAC’s operating budget of \$7.95 million dollars is less than the amount Kansas City spends on potholes. It is startling to think that one city with a population of around 500,000 people invests more to protect its residents’ car tires and alignment than our country invests in the only federal agency dedicated completely to improving election administration and helping more than 200 million registered voters cast their ballot.

I thank you for your time and am happy to answer any questions you may have.