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November 5, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ander Crenshaw
Chair
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ensure Adequate Funding for the Election Assistance Commission

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Representative Crenshaw, and
Representative Serrano:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to fully fund the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) at the currently proposed Senate level of \$9.6 million. The Leadership Conference and our member organizations are committed to supporting and expanding the civil and voting rights of all Americans, and have devoted substantial resources to the passage of both the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). Underfunding the EAC risks reducing the voting and civil rights of our citizens—rights for which many have given their lives.

After years without the ability to take action, we are thrilled that the EAC now has a quorum. The Commissioners have set a significant agenda and have been hard at work holding listening sessions, meeting with state election officials, and working to strengthen our elections.

The Leadership Conference believes that the EAC is instrumental to protecting the rights of those who are most frequently disenfranchised and least able to advocate for their right to vote. The EAC, an independent, bipartisan commission has, as its primary purpose, furthering the goals of HAVA, one of our nation's major federal voting laws. The EAC does valuable work to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of our nation's election systems and plays a major role in collecting accurate and comprehensive election data. With our nation's complex and diversified election administration systems, central data collection is critical if we are going to improve our citizens' trust and confidence in election results. The EAC develops and fosters the training and organization of the nation's more than 8,000 election administrators. Through its many working committees and the work it does to foster



robust dialogue among advocates, manufacturers, and administrators, the EAC is improving the administration of elections.

In addition, the EAC is charged with developing standards for voting systems, and this precedent setting work has been recognized by nations around the world. Several countries are so impressed with our system that they have signed agreements with the EAC for technical assistance as they develop their own voting system standards and certification procedures. The EAC's certification program uses its oversight role to coordinate with manufacturers and local election officials to ensure that existing voting equipment meets durability and longevity standards. This saves state and local governments from the unnecessary expense of new voting equipment.


At a time when voters in many jurisdictions must spend hours in line waiting to vote due to broken machines and undertrained workers, we need a fully funded EAC that will ensure that elections are run as effectively as possible, in keeping with HAVA standards. With the 2016 presidential elections approaching, the work of the EAC is more critical than ever. It is for these reasons that we ask that you ensure adequate funding for the EAC for Fiscal Year 2016.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Legal Director and Senior Legal Advisor Lisa Bornstein at (202) 263-2856 or Bornstein@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President