



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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February 6, 2017

The Honorable Gregg Harper
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Brady
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: NAACP STAUNCH OPPOSITION TO H.R. 634, *THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION TERMINATION ACT*

Dear Congressman Harper and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of the NAACP, our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, I am writing to let you know of our strong opposition to the ill-conceived H.R. 634, the *Election Assistance Commission Termination Act* (EAC). This problematic legislation moves us backwards in our attempts to encourage and support eligible Americans in their pursuit of their Constitutional right to vote. The EAC currently helps voters and potential voters by providing vital information on registration and voting sites and procedures as well as local municipalities by providing a national clearinghouse of information on election administration, from voting system testing and certification to data on how Americans voted in recent federal elections.

The EAC is an independent agency created by the *Help America Vote Act of 2002* (HAVA). The *Help America Vote Act* was signed into law in October, 2002, by President George W. Bush and was a response to the myriad of problems that culminated with those issues that plagued the 2000 Presidential election. At the time, the NAACP strongly supported the tenets of this important legislation, including (but not limited to) the creation of the EAC. The *Help America Vote Act* addressed many of the disenfranchising problems which came to light in the 2000 election and moved our Nation closer to the democratic goal of allowing every eligible American to cast an unfettered vote and to be assured that their vote would be counted.

A crucial component of the *Help America Vote Act* was the creation of the EAC. This bipartisan commission was established to act as a clearinghouse of information and as a resource to state and local election officials who want to employ the most current technology and best practices when overseeing elections. The EAC also oversees voting-system testing and certification. Through research, grant-making and the development of voting guidelines, the EAC is helping many groups which had heretofore been disenfranchised gain their Constitutional right to vote,

including racial and ethnic minorities, members of the Armed Services (especially those serving overseas), disabled Americans and senior citizens.

Since its creation the EAC has done an admirable job, especially in light of the fact that it has never been adequately funded and that for more than six months, between May and December of 2014, it was without the leadership of even a single commissioner. With the confirmation by the U.S. Senate on December 16, 2014, of three Commissioners the EAC was again able to address many of the problems which plague our nation's electoral process.

Given the importance to our democracy to protect the rights of all eligible Americans to vote and to be assured that their vote counted, the termination of this crucial agency would be shortsighted, to say the least. Given the allegations of foreign attempts to influence our recent Presidential election, among other challenges with voter suppression and election systems, we need to assure Americans that their electoral process cannot and is not corruptible. We need the guidance, the expertise, the assistance and the assurance of a fully functioning EAC.

Thus, I again urge you to ultimately oppose H.R. 634, and to withdraw it from consideration during the mark-up on Tuesday, February 7, 2017. Thank you in advance for your attention to the position of the NAACP. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office at (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hilary O. Shelton', written in a cursive style.

Hilary O. Shelton
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau &
Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy

cc: Members,
House Administration Committee