



February 7, 2017

Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the
Committee on House Administration:

On behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), I write in strong opposition to HR 634, the "Election Assistance Commission Termination Act." The bill could profoundly and negatively impact a commission that plays a vitally important role in standardizing and modernizing election administration. In the interest of ensuring a fair, ethical, and accessible system of elections, we urge the Committee to reject HR 634.

SEIU opposes HR 634 because it would eliminate a resource that is a critical part of the government's effort to ensure that our elections are fair, efficient, and accessible. The EAC serves every American voter by conducting research, collecting data, and sharing information among elected officials, the public, and interested organizations. The EAC also oversees the distribution of federal funds that assist states and municipalities with election administration.

In December 2014, after over three years without a single commissioner in place, the Senate unanimously confirmed three new commissioners - two Republicans and one Democrat. Although a single vacancy remains, the EAC now has the quorum it needs to address the backlog of business that built up over the years. In the two years since the EAC has had a quorum again, it has voted to accredit a new voting system test laboratory after a recommendation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The lab will test new voting equipment against the voluntary voting system guidelines, which are themselves in need of attention. The EAC has provided best practices on voting and election administration to countless jurisdictions around the country. It is an invaluable agency that serves a critical function to strengthen our democracy.

Now that it has a quorum, the Commission has gotten back to work evaluating and endorsing standards and guidelines that reflect the newest and best methods of election administration. In light of the many challenges faced by our state and local election administrators and the serious procedural problems that weaken voter access and participation, we believe that this is a time to reaffirm our commitment to voting rights and fair elections by strengthening

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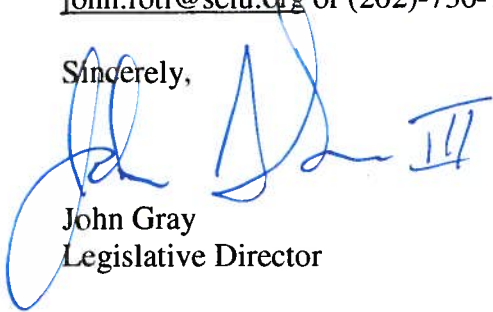
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the EAC and providing it with the staff it requires to function effectively. HR 634 would eliminate an important tool for improving a voting system fraught with problems and should be rejected.

The EAC is important component of an honest and fair election system that suffers from congressional neglect and gridlock, not from any inherent flaw. Instead of eliminating this important democracy reform tool, members of this Committee and both parties in Congress need to work together to strengthen and provide the Election Assistance Commission with the resources it needs to perform its duties. The problems facing our electoral system demand such an effort to improve the integrity and effectiveness of how we as a nation administer elections.

We therefore respectfully ask that the Committee on House Administration reject HR 634 on the grounds that it does nothing to protect the integrity of the electoral system and would in fact harm the overall system. We may be adding votes on this legislation to our legislative scorecard in the future. Should you need any additional information, please contact John Foti at john.foti@seiu.org or (202)-730-7157.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Gray", with a stylized flourish to the right that includes the number "14".

John Gray
Legislative Director