



**UNITED STATES ELECTION  
ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
HONORABLE ROSEMARY RODRIGUEZ, CHAIR,  
U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND  
ADMINISTRATION**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008**

*U.S. Election Assistance Commission  
1225 New York Ave., NW – Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005*

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Feinstein, Ranking Member Bennett, and Members of the Senate Rules Committee. I am deeply honored to be with you today to discuss my appointment to the United States Election Assistance Commission. This week is of critical importance to our Nation, as Congress determines the best course of action to address the economy. At the same time as the Congress copes with enormous economic issues, the Election Assistance Commission is helping Election administrators across the Country prepare for one of the most important elections in history.

The Help America Vote Act charges the Election Assistance Commission with improving the administration of federal elections through a number of objectives: We establish voluntary guidelines for voting equipment, accredit test laboratories and certify voting equipment, disburse and oversee Help America Vote Act funds, develop a uniform voter registration form for use across the United States, direct research on significant election issues, and create research-based guidelines and “best practices” for improving the administration of elections.

I am pleased to report that EAC has made significant strides in achieving many of these objectives. I believe that at least some of it can be tied to my service on the Commission. I have been involved with voting rights issues for more than 25 years, and my expertise with voting rights has been of enormous value to the Election Assistance Commission. In addition, because of my political background, I am able to approach issues from a perspective of cooperation rather than confrontation, and have attempted to find common ground among disparate perspectives.

As Chair of the Commission since January, I have encouraged Commissioners who disagree on an issue to be fully heard before a vote is taken. This approach may sometime seem protracted, but it is essential to our decision-making process that both sides are respectfully and completely heard. I encourage Commissioners and staff to recommend issues for the Agenda. I have attempted to participate in as many workshops, conference calls and roundtables as possible. I seek ideas for the statements I issue on election management issues from Commissioners, staff, election administrators and election advocates.

Although my style is conciliatory, this approach will not allow me to abandon my deeply held convictions. Simply put, I have a commitment—a passion—to ensure that all voters who are eligible to vote will have the opportunity to do so. I believe I am serving at the Election Assistance Commission for one reason only—to protect the rights of voters. These rights will always guide and inform my decisions. My preference for conciliation will always be secondary to—and will never outweigh or be at the expense of—the rights of voters.

The Election Assistance Commission has generally performed well in working to accomplish its statutory mandates. That is not to say, however, that its performance cannot be improved. It can. And if I am confirmed for reappointment, one of my goals will be to make sure that the EAC performs even better over the next four years than it has to date.

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One of the ways the Election Assistance Commission's performance can be improved is to develop procedures that allow the Commission to meet its objectives more efficiently. If confirmed, therefore, one of my principal goals will be to work with Commissioners and staff to implement a strategic plan for creating procedures by which you and the other members of Congress, and the public, are assured that the EAC operates efficiently, and that the actions of the Commission and its members are uniform, consistent and fair.

I request that you confirm my appointment to the EAC so that I may continue to protect the voting rights of citizens. I believe I will be able to assist the EAC in performing its statutory mandate of improving federal elections, by ensuring that they are accessible, fair, verifiable and transparent.

I thank you again for your time and am pleased to take questions.

**COMMISSIONERS****ROSEMARY RODRIGUEZ, CHAIR**

Rosemary Rodriguez was nominated to EAC by President Bush last year and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on February 15, 2007. Ms. Rodriguez was elected Chair of the EAC for 2008 after serving as Vice-Chair in 2007. Her term of service extends through December 12, 2007.



Ms. Rodriguez comes to EAC after three years on the Denver, Colorado City Council, where she served as its president from 2005 to 2006. She was director of Boards and Commissions for the mayor's office from 2002 to 2003 and a clerk and recorder for the City and County of Denver from 1997 to 2002. In 1997 she was acting director of the Denver Election Commission where she supervised city elections.

She has been active in numerous grass roots civic and voter advocacy organizations, including the Colorado Voter Initiative where she co-chaired a statewide initiative to allow Election Day voter registration. She was also a co-founder of the Latina Initiative, a voter registration project to register Latino voters and provide non-partisan election information to the Latino community.