



ROY BLUNT *of* MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN

Chairman Blunt's Opening Statement Nomination Hearing for Donald L. Palmer & Benjamin W. Hovland

Shortly, we will hear from Donald Palmer and Benjamin Hovland, the President's nominees to serve as members of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). I congratulate you both on your nominations.

Authorized by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002, the EAC acts as a clearinghouse for election administration information, provides for the testing and certification of voting systems, studies election issues, and issues voluntary guidelines for voting systems. With the exception of the national mail voter registration form, the EAC has no rule-making authority and does not enforce HAVA requirements. Currently, the EAC does not have a quorum, which limits its ability to conduct regular business. The nominees, if approved by this Committee and the Senate, would fill the two vacancies on the four-member commission, thereby establishing the necessary quorum.

For many years, I questioned the need for the EAC. As a former Secretary of State and County Clerk, I felt then and now, that our state and local officials are, for the most part, very capable and a prominent federal role in elections is unnecessary. However, the threats posed by bad actors and their exploitation of cyber vulnerabilities have highlighted the need for election administrators to have access to real time security information, technical assistance, and best practices. The EAC plays an important role in supporting state and local election officials in their efforts to run efficient, secure elections. I look forward to hearing more from the nominees about how they would strengthen that partnership, so the American people can be assured that election outcomes accurately reflect what happened on Election Day.

###