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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6325

November 22, 2021

U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Chair Donald L. Palmer
Vice-Chair Thomas Hicks
Commissioner Christy McCormick
Commissioner Benjamin W. Hovland
633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Commissioners:

We write to express our concerns regarding the unprecedented rise in threats against election officials and election workers. As a result of these threats, state and local election officials have expressed to us a need to better understand the resources available to them. In order to ensure election officials have the resources to carry out their duties safely, we request that the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) actively provide state and local election officials and administrators with information detailing how federal election funds received through the *Help America Vote Act* (HAVA) can be used to improve safety for election officials, administrators, workers, and facilities. We also request that you provide guidance to election officials on other resources available to them for identifying and responding to potential threats.

In the past several years we have seen election officials and election workers face a barrage of threats and abusive conduct. This problem is widespread, as was evident in the recent hearing we held in the Rules Committee on emerging threats to elections during which election officials from both parties and from states across the country testified to the harassment and threats, including death threats, they have been subjected to in recent years. According to a survey of election workers earlier this year, nearly one in three felt unsafe because of their job, nearly one in six received threats of violence, and more than one in six were concerned about their lives being threatened.¹ Media reports have also shown the scale and severity of the issue with officials from both parties in states including Nevada, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Colorado reporting that they have received violent threats.

This onslaught of threats against election workers is unacceptable and raises serious concerns about the ability to recruit and retain election workers needed to administer future elections.

¹ Benenson Strategy Group, *The Brennan Center for Justice: Local Elections Official Survey*, April 7, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey>.

We must ensure that election workers are able to do their jobs free from threats, intimidation, or other improper influence. In recent months, we have heard from state and local election officials looking for EAC guidance on using HAVA funds to help with security costs—such as whether they may use funds to hire security after being the direct target of threats or whether they may use funds to hire firms to investigate threats on social media and share that information with law enforcement. For these reasons, we request that the EAC communicate information to state and local election officials detailing the authorized uses of HAVA funding for improving and protecting the safety of election workers as well as the security of facilities used to administer elections, and regularly update this information as needed.

Additionally, we request that you provide guidance informing election officials and workers of resources available to assist in identifying and responding to potential threats. In doing so, we encourage you to collaborate with the Department of Justice’s recently established Election Threats Task Force and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your efforts to ensure the safe and effective administration of our elections.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
Chairwoman

Senate Committee on Rules & Administration



Roy Blunt
Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Rules & Administration