

“Priorities, Policy and Strategy: Next Steps for the EAC”
EAC Roundtable Discussion

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Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this EAC Roundtable Discussion. First let me express my sincere congratulations and best wishes to each of the newly appointed commissioners. Like the others gathered here today, I am committed to supporting the efforts and work of the EAC.

Allow me to speak very briefly on four topics that I know are of concern to the Supervisors of Elections in Florida and to the EAC. Those topics being: Voting Systems; Voter Registration; Education and Research.

Voting Systems:

Florida, too, is concerned about aging voting equipment, the lack of replacement items for existing systems (memory cards for the Accuvote OS) and the lack of new systems development.

Florida is a paper based voting system state (lever, to punch, to touch, and back to paper in 2008). Systems require state certification using the VVSG standards (with sand testing per Brian Hancock), and currently Florida has only two voting systems vendors doing business in our state—ES&S and Dominion. Two of our counties are still on an old Sequoia System inherited by Dominion (Optech Insight Plus). The Florida Division of Elections

needs to re-evaluate whether it should continue requiring state certification or begin accepting the EAC Certification.

At the Election Center Workshop, in Tampa, Supervisor of Elections, Lori Scott, from Brevard County (Florida's Space Coast), suggested to the EAC Commissioners that one way the EAC could help local elections officials is to develop a training program to educate funding sources on the election process.

I would add to that suggestion that the EAC help voting equipment vendors understand the timeline that state and local government officials need to select, secure funding, complete the purchasing process, and conduct acceptance testing before implementing a new voting system to the voters. It amazes me how vendors will introduce new equipment/software in election years and not understand why we can't complete the process in time for that election.

Voter Registration:

The Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections is actively supporting legislation, in the current Legislative session, for On Line Voter Registration. We want to join the other 20 states currently offering this method. The EAC can assist state leaders by sharing best practices from those states that have implemented OVR and the timeline for doing so. The current legislation would not have Florida starting until October 1, 2017.

HAVA required that each state have a statewide registration database in place by 2006. Is it not time to amend HAVA to have these database interconnected? Florida's Secretary of State and Division of Elections have been reluctant to join the ERIC Project. Our association actively supports having our state be a part of this database review process and I know other states want us to join.

Education:

If at all possible, the role of the state appointees to the Standards Board and the role of the appointees to the Board of Advisors need to be expanded to assist the EAC in the area of education and research.

I have had the pleasure to serve on both of these boards in the past. I found that the majority of our time was spent on reviewing the VVSG standards. I understood why and its importance. But at the same time I felt the need for a closer connection between the EAC and my fellow local election administrators and the members of the Election Division within IACREOT.

The local election appointees on the Standards board should be challenged to conduct presentations within their state association on the various resources available through the EAC (the Quick Start Guides, webinars, clearinghouse materials, etc.). Another possibility is for them to conduct focus groups on research topics for the commission and staff. The EAC staff can provide the training outline and materials for such activities. This would expand the reach of the Commission's work across the country. The same would apply to member of the Board of Advisors. As a past President of IACREOT and with the current IACREOT President (Michael Winn) here today we could see this working at the annual conference of IACREOT. The EAC has been an active participant in the Election Center since the formation of the commission-with participating in their workshops, annual conference and CERA courses. The same process could be incorporated into other election administration professional programs. Including Florida's own Florida Certified Election Program (FCEP) which would benefit from this type of support from the EAC.

More effort is needed in helping to educate the national media about the conducting of elections. As the speed of information increases, so does the amount of mis-information about the election process. You can't play a sound bit about voter id requirements from one state on another state's airwaves without fact checking the laws of that state. A true story! Too much of my time on an election day is spent correcting the mis-information with media, candidates, political parties, etc.

Research:

As our population continues to shift to larger urban areas our method of voting continues with the same elements as it did when we were mostly rural. Today, many parts of the country have begun to move away from the traditional polling place on Election Day. Some have moved to Vote Centers, other to all Mail Ballots, and at least one to a hybrid system (Colorado) but which method has had the most impact? Are these the model for voting in the future? What are the pros and cons of each? What works best in what environment?

Finally, are we to the point that we must stop saying we can't vote electronically (over the internet) and start talking about how we are going to make it a reality. Future generation of voters will be demanding it!

Thanks you for the opportunity to share these brief remarks and I look forward to participating in the panel discuss to come.