



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

April 30, 2007

The Honorable Donetta Davidson
Chair
Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 150
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Commissioner Davidson:

I write to support, in the strongest possible terms, the State of Florida's request to apply funds the state already has received pursuant to Section 251 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) towards the replacement of the voting machines throughout the state so that 100% of the machines produce a verifiable paper record.

As the senior Senator from Florida, who won election to the U.S. Senate in the 2000 election, I am committed to doing all that I can to ensure that voting systems in my state – and throughout the nation – uphold the integrity of elections. Florida led the nation in election reform in 2001 with the passage of the Florida Election Reform Act, and I strongly supported HAVA's passage in Congress. My understanding of HAVA is that it affords states broad discretion to determine how to spend payments made to them under the statute to improve the administration of elections for federal office.

Florida has worked hard to meet HAVA's many federally-legislated requirements, and remains one of the few states to have met them. Now, under Governor Crist's strong leadership, Florida proposes, consistent with the state's HAVA plan, to eliminate any remaining uncertainty around ballot integrity by requiring a verifiable paper record of every vote that is cast in the state. It is my hope that the EAC will respond to Florida's initiative and commitment to reforming voting systems in a way that facilitates the efforts Governor and the Secretary of State to replace voting systems in the state using the funds that Florida received for this very purpose under HAVA.

Finally, I want to emphasize that my commitment to election integrity is so strong that I introduced S. 559, the Voter Integrity and Verification Act (VIVA), early in the 110th Congress, to require the use, throughout the nation, of voting systems that result in the creation of a paper record. I recognize the important role of the EAC in promoting fair

The Honorable Donetta Davidson

April 30, 2007

Page 2

and accurate elections, which is why my bill includes a provision that ensures that the Commission's authorization extends beyond the 3-year period specified in HAVA.

I appreciate the opportunity to be heard in connection with the EAC's review of Florida's request to use HAVA funds to improve significantly the state's voting systems and improve the overall conduct of elections in the state. I ask that this statement be shared with the other EAC Commissioners and made an official part of the record of the Tuesday, May 1 hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "N".