Testimony of John Lindback
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Good morning Chair Davidson and members of the commission. Thank you for inviting me to testify on this important study related to effective ballot design and polling place signage. I'm very pleased that this study is now done and that voters across the nation can begin to benefit from the outstanding work of Design for Democracy. I want to applaud the EAC for funding this work and showing leadership on how design can make a difference for the American voter. You are to be commended.

I'd like to begin my testimony by telling you a story – how I first became interested in Design for Democracy and how it could benefit voters. Not too long after the controversial 2000 election I quite innocently wandered into a presentation by Design for Democracy at a NASS conference. The presenter, a designer named Sylvia Harris from New York City, convinced me in just one short hour to expand my horizons on how we could better serve voters in America.

At the time of Sylvia's presentation, memories were fresh of the controversy caused by punch cards. The butterfly ballot became a prominent symbol of what was wrong with elections in America. Here are the images Sylvia showed that day (show on screen):

> Image 1: New York Times op ed page of Florida butterfly ballot.
> Image 2: Image of Chicago butterfly ballot.
> Image 3: Chicago butterfly ballot with Design for Democracy comments.
> Image 4: Design for Democracy's proposal for a butterfly ballot.

When I walked in the room I was convinced that getting rid of punch cards and purchasing new voting machines was the answer to improving the voting experience. When Sylvia's talk was done I walked out of the room thinking that maybe we were going too far. Could it be that all we needed to do was design better ballots?

A short time later HAVA started its journey through Congress and picked up the requirement related to voters with disabilities. That clinched it. We had no choice then but to go forward with new technology. But the questions of how we could use design to make paper ballots, DRE screens and the polling place itself easier to navigate for the voter continued. In my state, which votes entirely by mail, I questioned how we could design our ballots and voter information better so that voters would make fewer errors when they vote at home.

I turned to Design for Democracy. A designer at the University of Illinois at Chicago named Marcia Lausen came to my rescue. Marcia and her students had completed a project where they redesigned pollworker kits, manuals and signs for the City of Chicago. I asked her if her next class would like to tackle Oregon's vote by mail system and she and her students took it on. They researched our system and gave me proposed redesigns for the ballot packets that are sent to voters, for the ballots themselves, our voter registration card, our "Voting in Oregon" guide, our manuals and our state voter's

pamphlet. As the result of their work, we used HAVA funds to hire a designer to build on the work of the students and bring it to fruition. We now have a voter registration card that advocacy groups point to as one to emulate. Our designer worked with a key printer (32 of our 36 counties use the same printer) to make design improvements to our ballots. Our manuals have all gone through complete redesigns. I could go on and on and list more work that has been done. But, we don't consider it all "done" by any means. Our designer left us to go to graduate school. But we have agreed with AIGA, which stands for the American Institute of Graphic Arts and is the parent organization of Design for Demcracy, that they, under a contract with Oregon, will send us a design "fellow" every year so that we will continue to benefit from the talents and energy of a designer. The fellowship is advertised at designs schools across the nation in order to attract applicants from the young and the energetic. I'm hopeful that if this fellowship idea works out, AIGA could do the same thing in other states that are interested in doing this kind of work.

In the study you're considering today you get to benefit from that same talent and energy of Design for Democracy. I was part of a group that reviewed a draft of the study and was impressed with the depth of the research and the sensibility of the recommendations. My counterparts across the county will be especially appreciative of the templates in the study that can be easily obtained, and modified if necessary, for local and immediate use.

I noted with interest when I reviewed it that each section of the study has special relevance to different audiences. Clearly….the signage section has tools in it that are the most easily accessible and ready to use for elections officials. Local elections officials could work with their printers to effectuate many of the proposed design changes to paper ballots. But some counties may need their tally system vendors, who print their ballots and the ballots of other counties in other states, to make changes to their optical scan ballots. The recommendations related to DRE screens are in a class by themselves. Only the vendors could make most of those changes.

The question is raised then of what's the next step? How will the EAC implement the results of this study so that it doesn't just end up on the shelf? I believe part of the answer lies in the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines. The design principles recommended in this study for optical scan ballots and DREs should be forwarded to NIST and the TGDC as soon as possible so they can be incorporated into tally system standards. I believe that will be the most efficient route to change. I hope it's not too late for these recommendations to be considered for the newest version of the VVSG that is due to you this summer. I think it would be beneficial if they could be included sooner rather than later.

Other recommendations that fall outside of VVSG matters, such as the signage recommendations, should be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the EAC's recommended management guidelines.

I would like to close my testimony by offering a thank you to Design for Democracy for their work. This is not a large organization. This was a big task for them to take on. One

of the reasons why I appreciate them so much is that they've never taken their concerns and criticisms of elections public in a way that they've created an adversarial relationship with elections officials. They always in a quiet way and dignified way offered to help us make elections better. What a breath of fresh air in today's environment. I hope they can do much more work for us in the future.