U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
Hearing on Oversight of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Testimony: United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC)

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Chairwoman Klobuchar, Ranking Member Fischer, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the work of the bipartisan U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) as we prepare for the 2024 elections. We appreciate the Committee's crucial oversight efforts and your close attention to the EAC.

Our nation's elections have faced increased scrutiny in recent years, and the Committee has responded by demonstrating leadership in helping to support election administrators. Whether listening to the needs of election officials, furthering work under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), or providing grants for election security, Congress has worked closely with states to support our nation's elections. As an independent bipartisan agency, the EAC stands in a unique position to work with the Congress to further assist the states and localities in the efficient and accurate administration of elections.

Over the past decade, the field of election administration has faced ever-growing challenges and the need for increased technology improvements to our election systems. Many of these challenges, including questions about adequate funding and security for voting systems, are not new. Some date back to the passage of HAVA, if not earlier. Others, however, have increased suddenly in recent years.

During the 2016 election cycle, election officials saw a rise in cybersecurity threats and misinformation spread through social media. This has led to the recognition that election administration must be protected with the same diligence with which we protect other critical infrastructure.

In addition to these concerns, the 2020 election cycle was dramatically affected by the pandemic. Election officials were tasked with navigating considerable challenges, including unprecedented changes to election dates and voting methods – all while purchasing and deploying voting systems, verifying trusted sources of information, combating misinformation, and continually improving their cybersecurity posture.

Immediately following the 2020 election cycle, election officials faced yet another new hurdle - threats to their own personal safety, as well as to the safety of their staff and volunteers. Many administrators have recounted personal stories of intimidation. Not only have they received

personal threats to their lives for serving their community, but these threats have also extended to their spouses and children.

The ever-evolving election environment shows no signs of abating. Social media continues to evolve, with new platforms and generative AI tools making voter education more challenging. In addition to administering elections and voter education, officials must still prepare for all cyber, physical, and personal security threats to the election process.

Many election officials have left the field, citing this change of pace, increased requirements and expectations, and a lack of resources. Some local communities have seen their entire elections departments resign. Now more than ever, election officials need our support.

With the help of this Committee, the EAC is determined to do all we can to meet these challenges. Over the past year, Commissioners have redoubled outreach by resuming travel across the country for in-person meetings, conference presentations, and visits with state and local election officials. These discussions have underscored not only the outstanding work of election administrators in the 2022 midterms, but also the significant impact of efforts by the Federal government to provide guidance, monetary resources, and best practice materials.

Election officials have expressed sincere gratitude for this recent assistance, especially for resources dedicated to safety and security in election administration. This includes $955 million in HAVA security grants provided by Congress and administered by the EAC. The agency distributes guidance on how grants may be used and offers specific guidance for physical security and cybersecurity protections. With support from Congress in the form of an increased agency operating budget and consistent HAVA funding to the states, the Commission continues to fulfill the agency's mission to improve the administration of Federal elections and help America's voters.

As you are aware, the decentralized nature of U.S. elections results in a diversity of practices, laws, and regulations. Election officials, poll workers, and U.S. voters shepherd this complex process forward across 50 states, five territories, the District of Columbia, encompassing more than 3,000 counties, and thousands of localities. In 2020, the EAC's Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) found a total of 176,933 voting precincts, including 107,457 Election Day polling places and 25,099 early voting locations. Nearly one million poll workers operated these polling sites. This intricate process brings together thousands of election officials supporting more than 209 million registered voters on Election Day and during early and mail voting. The work of running elections is a year-round endeavor, and the EAC's mission is to support this critical work at every stage.

Since 2021, the agency's newly expanded Clearinghouse Division produced more than 60 products to assist election administrators across different jurisdictions. We will further detail these resources later in our testimony and have attached a listing of available material. Earlier this year, the agency hired an experienced government leader, Steven Frid, to serve as our new Executive Director and help fulfill the agency's mission. Additionally, the EAC marked the 20th anniversary of HAVA in 2022, commemorating the historic milestone with the launch of the Help America Vote Day and the celebration of the second National Poll Worker Recruitment Day.

HAVA established the EAC more than 20 years ago. Since that time, the agency has served both election officials and voters as we work to protect the national security of U.S. elections. In 2023, we are doing more. Looking forward to 2024, election officials and poll workers across the country continue to face the challenges we have noted. With ongoing support from Congress, the Commission can provide the necessary assistance to mitigate these challenges and protect the integrity of U.S. elections. We can and must continue to invest in our elections and in our nation's foundation of democracy.

EAC and Election Worker Programs

As previously mentioned, 2022 marked the 20th anniversary of the enactment of HAVA. This presented the agency with an opportune moment to review progress, respond to new developments, and address urgent needs in election administration. In marking this milestone, the EAC undertook new initiatives in 2022 to address ongoing poll worker shortages across the nation.

National Poll Worker Recruitment Day, initially launched by the EAC in September 2020, was the first nationally coordinated event designed to encourage Americans to serve as election workers. Following the success of this event, the EAC held a second National Poll Worker Recruitment Day in January 2022 to bring attention to recruitment needs for primary elections. The timing was intentionally selected to help election officials retain trained and experienced poll workers ahead of the November midterms.

In addition to these efforts, on August 16, 2022, we conducted Help America Vote Day, a second day of action based on feedback from election officials. This event allowed jurisdictions to bring attention once again to the need for volunteers ahead of their scheduled poll worker trainings, or, depending on the needs of the jurisdiction, use it for civic education.

The EAC continues to strategically promote election worker information on social media and our website. We created helpamericavote.gov, a permanent outreach platform in 2020, in service of the first National Poll Worker Recruitment Day. This site offers a custom look-up tool with jurisdiction-specific information sourced directly from election officials. The tool includes such details as official contacts, required training, and polling place hours. Over the course of 2022, the EAC's poll worker webpages had over 263,000 page views. We regularly receive modifications from election offices and, based on their responses, information has been updated for nearly 300 local jurisdictions. The EAC also works closely with the General Services Administration to seamlessly integrate voting-related information at vote.gov.

In 2022, Help America Vote Day and National Poll Worker Recruitment Day helped 41 states and numerous local jurisdictions promote election worker participation. Additionally, the EAC produced comprehensive toolkits to ensure election offices of all sizes could participate in both days regardless of their in-house communications capabilities. These resources remain available for election offices to customize for their ongoing needs.

Looking ahead, the EAC is in the process of selecting future dates in 2023 and 2024 for both National Poll Worker Recruitment Day and Help America Vote Day. Election officials have informed the EAC that these national days of action assist in the planning of recruitment efforts at

the local level. We will continue to offer resources relating to poll worker recruitment, retention, and training leading up to 2024. Given the interest that members of this Committee have shown in these efforts, we would welcome your input moving forward.

Election Security Grants, EAC Operations, and Oversight

A core component of the EAC's mission is distributing, monitoring, and auditing the use of [Federal grants](#) for the improvement of election administration and security. Federal HAVA funds, including the recent appropriations of $75 million in both FY 2022 and 2023, are a key resource for election administrators dealing with continuing demands of technology advancement. Grant funding in partnership with the states is crucial, and we value your efforts to address the needs of state and local governments through the congressional appropriations process.

The EAC works diligently to advise states on the availability of funds and has an extensive track record with successful and prompt grant administration. Since the agency was established, the EAC has distributed and supported the administration of more than $4 billion in appropriated HAVA funds. This includes HAVA Section 101 and 251 grants, $955 million in HAVA election security grants, and $400 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funds.

Training and technical assistance is a critical service provided by the EAC across all our grant programs to help recipients as they plan and appropriately allocate HAVA funding. In addition to regularly publishing guidance on our website in the form of [frequently asked questions](#), we provide remote technical assistance via email, conference calls, and webinars. We host multiple training sessions throughout the year to support reporting requirements and grants management activities at the recipient level. The EAC has also expanded capacity in the Grants Office by hiring additional staff and adopting a grant management system to enhance the overall grants administration process in support of states.

The agency issued [guidance](#) to the states in June of 2022 regarding the use of HAVA funds for physical security services and social media threat monitoring. This resource outlines how HAVA Section 101 funds can be used to address the current escalation of threats made against Federal, state, and local officials. We stand ready to help as the states endeavor to best apply these funds, but we must do more to protect election official security.

Through a recent congressional appropriation of $1 million, the EAC will renew a competitive grant program in the fall of 2023. Established under HAVA, this initiative will support the Help America Vote College Program (HAVCP). The proposed HAVCP grant competition includes funding for two grant initiatives: the HAVCP Poll Worker grant and the HAVCP Service Day mini-grant. The purpose of the HAVCP Poll Worker grant is to inspire college students to serve as nonpartisan poll workers or assistants, and to encourage election jurisdictions to take advantage of this pool of young, talented volunteers. The purpose of the proposed HAVCP Service Day mini-grant is to elevate civic participation on college campuses through a day of service and inspire college students to volunteer their time and talents in support of our democracy. Both the poll worker and mini-grant proposal are required to be reviewed and considered by the Office of Management and Budget.

As of March 31, 2023, states have spent a total of $529 million in Election Security funds appropriated since FY 2018. This represents approximately 56% of available grant funding. The spending rate depends on the state's planned use, with some states allocating the funds for long-term programs or resources. Some states provide these funds to local governments in the form of subgrants while others rely on these funds for staff and materials at the state level. States have also used this funding for materials (like PPE during the 2020 cycle) that were ordered by the states and shipped to local jurisdictions. The EAC remains focused on helping states utilize this vital resource effectively.

We recognize your attention to unspent HAVA Election Security grants and remain deeply committed to the process. With each state prioritizing their own security needs and differing timetables for significant purchases, such as voting system replacement or new statewide voter registration databases, usage rates have varied across the country. The next expenditure reports are due to the EAC on July 30, 2023, and we will update you on the results made possible by these much-appreciated funds.

Grants Oversight

Alongside distribution and administration efforts, the EAC's Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently added resources and staff to better monitor state spending of election security grants. As set forth under HAVA, audits of election security grants are conducted after a state begins to expend the provided funds. Moving forward, the OIG would like to utilize audits more frequently and implement additional oversight checks to increase confidence that grant funding is effective and used appropriately. Agency leadership understands the importance of prudent grants oversight and will continue to carefully implement OIG recommendations.

EAC Operations and Budget

The EAC is grateful for the increased resources provided by Congress in recent years. After facing over a decade of significant fiscal constraints, the EAC returned to pre-2010 budget levels for the first time in FY 2023. The agency has responded by addressing critical needs and providing requested assistance for the election community.

For FY 2020, 2021, and 2022, the EAC successfully adapted and executed the operating budget provided by Congress, ending each year with an obligation rate of over 99%. Congressional funding has been fully utilized and enabled the agency to maximize impact to both the election community and the public. The EAC is well underway in meeting these goals in FY 2023 as we work to meet the expanding needs of election administrators and voters.

With new staff leadership in place, the agency is set to not only continue responsible budget optimization but also continue recent growth. This has a direct impact on improving the security posture of America's elections. For example, the EAC Testing and Certification division is currently in the process of standing up a regional Field Services Program, which will, in consultation with states, bring staff on site to work directly with local election officials on their voting systems. Furthermore, the new director of the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation

Program (ESTEP) has made progress with onboarding technology specialists to further the agency's work on standardizing the security, accessibility, and usability of our nation's innovative election-supporting technologies. Additionally, the agency has facilitated extensive stakeholder engagement with our Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) boards through collaborative in-person annual meetings for the first time since the onset of the pandemic.

In April, the Standards Board convened in Phoenix, Arizona followed a week later by the Board of Advisors in Washington, DC. Both forums provided the agency with direct feedback from lawmakers, election officials, and other experts, offering actionable guidance for future actions. The EAC is also looking forward to a meeting of the Local Leadership Council (LLC) in July. As the newest FACA board, the LLC is comprised of county and local election administrators who serve in leadership roles within their state election official associations. We will further discuss the above-mentioned efforts later in our testimony but be assured the agency is carefully utilizing taxpayer dollars and closely adhering to principles of fiscal discipline.

To further enhance collaboration and efficiency, the EAC completed the relocation of our offices to Washington, DC's Judiciary Square. For the first time in almost 10 years, the EAC has been able to host public forums with the elections community in an accessible hearing facility. Our first such meeting occurred on November 15, 2022, where we accredited a Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL) and discussed lessons learned from the midterms. The offices are designed as an adaptable space that can be used for everything from formal public hearings to roundtable discussions. This facility would not have been created without your support, and we greatly appreciate the funds provided by Congress for moving our offices to a more serviceable location.

We would note that EAC still faces significant attrition challenges, with 20% of agency staff moving to new employment opportunities in FY 2022. It is essential that we regain and maintain adequate staffing levels in mission-critical functions to ensure statutorily mandated requirements are met. Despite these challenges, the agency continues to bolster our services to election officials through strategic growth in staffing across the Commission.

EAC Collaboration with Federal Partners

At the Federal level, we work diligently to improve the lines of communication between agencies, election jurisdictions, and ultimately the public. In 2017, the EAC and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) established the Election Infrastructure Subsector (EIS) [Government Coordinating Council](#) (GCC). Through this interagency organization, the EAC is able to coordinate our services and communications with both CISA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). We continue to work closely with CISA as they provide services and information that support the EAC's mission. The EAC has served as co-chair of the GCC Executive Board and, as such, participates in regular meetings with other Federal entities.

EAC Efforts to Address Office of Inspector General (OIG) Concerns

On June 1, 2023, the EAC OIG issued its semiannual report to Congress covering October 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. This recent report details OIG analysis of EAC programs and recommendations for improvement.

We are extremely appreciative of the OIG's vital oversight efforts and programmatic assistance. Therefore, as the Commission seeks to further modernize and stay competitive, we remain focused on improvements based on oversight recommendations. The EAC is committed to addressing the specific issues raised in the OIG's report and is currently working to resolve outstanding concerns.

In January of this year, the OIG also issued a report entitled, "Management Challenges for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission in 2023." The report cited areas to strengthen EAC operations, and the EAC is deeply committed to implementing the recommendations where possible. We appreciate these opportunities to improve overall agency processes in order to further assist election officials, congressional stakeholders, and voters.

EAC Legislative Recommendations

Reviewing the OIG's insight into agency operations has reinforced the agency's consideration of the need to update provisions of the EAC's statutory framework. The Commission recently circulated to our congressional stakeholders an outline of legislative recommendations to enhance agency efforts and improve assistance to state and local election officials. These reforms include suggestions such as the elimination of EAC's burdensome requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act and updates to HAVA that would codify the work of election-supporting technologies within the agency's mission. In response to feedback from election officials, the EAC also proposes extending the EAVS deadline to September 30th. This would allow election officials more time to prepare their responses and permit the agency to conduct a more thorough analysis of submitted data. We appreciate your consideration and have attached a copy of these recommendations for your convenience.

We recognize that the EAC has received funding increases in recent years to assist in meeting HAVA's promise to election administrators. This funding has been vital in getting the agency on track to appropriate funding and staffing levels to support the mission. The impact is already being felt on the ground. Election security and integrity are strengthened when state and local officials can access the much-needed programs and resources the EAC provides, whether these are modern standards for election technology or sharing best practices across jurisdictions. We would encourage you to continue investing in the agency to increase the security of our voting systems moving forward.

Testing and Certification Division

In 2023, the EAC is advancing our testing and certification efforts in several areas. The certification of a voting system does not simply end with a successful test of the system in an accredited laboratory. Rather, the review of these systems continues during the life span of the voting equipment. As a result, the agency is preparing to launch an innovative Field Services Program to help election officials strengthen their overall posture and preparedness with EAC certified or tested systems. This endeavor will bring EAC staff on site to work directly with local officials monitoring election systems and reviewing anomalies.

The new Field Services Program is important for several reasons. First, implementation of field system reviews will ensure that the equipment delivered to jurisdictions is equivalent to what was purchased. The effort will also analyze system hardware and software configurations to verify equivalency of the equipment to EAC certifications. In addition, our Field Services outreach work will include jurisdiction site surveys of voting systems, best practices assessments, collection of system census information, and analysis of anomaly reports. When fully staffed, the program will have six EAC program experts across the country. We recently onboarded the Field Services Program manager and look forward to building out this initiative.

Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP)

As a part of our election technology efforts, the agency launched the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) in FY 2022. This includes technology like electronic poll books, electronic ballot delivery systems, election night reporting databases, and voter registration portals. Electronic ballot-marking systems, in particular, are essential for assisting voters with disabilities as we strive to meet HAVA's promise of a private and independent vote. These election supporting technologies are crucial tools for both election officials and voters.

As more states and localities adopt these technologies, officials are looking to the Federal government for voluntary standards and guidance. Currently, election administrators must rely on a patchwork of state laws, regulations, and certification programs of varying degrees of applicability, scope, and completeness. Many states have no program of testing or evaluation and seek the support of the EAC. The EAC looks forward to working with Congress to continue to analyze the practicality of this program to offer potential solutions and efficiencies. An established EAC program will provide for the development of robust voluntary standards, testing, guidance, and training material covering election supporting technologies.

In FY 2023, the EAC is implementing electronic poll books (EPBs) as the first technology pilot for ESTEP. EPBs are central to the in-person voting experience in a growing number of jurisdictions. Election officials have leveraged EPBs to streamline the check-in process, automate ballot issuing, and collect and display critical data. We currently have five EPB manufacturers participating in the initiative. The state of North Carolina, which has an in-house EPB system, is also joining the pilot. The EAC expects a second EPB in-house system from a local jurisdiction to enlist in the pilot this month. The goal of the ESTEP program prior to the 2024 election is to put voluntary standards in place for states and jurisdictions to secure their election supporting technologies and increase voter confidence.

Statutory authorization for the EAC to develop standards for this type of election supporting technology would bolster the EAC's position in this area and be an additional benefit to the agency's ongoing election system cybersecurity work. The security of these systems has never been more important. Attacks from nation-state actors against our election infrastructure have specifically targeted election systems in the past, and these attacks are only going to escalate. The EAC's objective is to establish standards for these critical election supporting technologies like the VVSG, which would enhance the security and accessibility of these systems for all users.

Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG)

In 2022, the Commission made considerable progress by fully operationalizing version 2.0 of the VVSG. The new guidelines incorporate technological advancements in cybersecurity, accuracy, accessibility, usability, and auditability. Adoption of the EAC's new VVSG lifecycle policy, along with the accreditation of two VSTLs, are necessary steps toward the realization of voting systems that are VVSG 2.0 tested and certified. The EAC currently has one system that is being tested against VVSG 2.0. We are diligently working to ease the transition to this improved iteration of the guidelines.

The EAC's VVSG Lifecycle Policy details how the standards are updated. According to section three of the policy, 12 months after new major revisions of the standards are ready to use for testing, voting systems must be submitted for certification to that latest version. With the accreditation on November 15, 2022, of the first VSTL to test VVSG 2.0, all new or modified voting systems must be tested to VVSG 2.0, with certain exceptions to allow the maintenance of fielded systems, beginning November 16, 2023. The VVSG Lifecycle Policy also calls for an annual review of the requirements.

We would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that VVSG 1.0 and 1.1 certified voting systems will not be decertified by the EAC as the result of migration to the new guidelines. They will continue to be tested and updated with security patches. Much like fuel economy standards for motorized vehicles, the updated standards for voting systems will improve future generations of voting equipment. However, voting systems that are currently deployed are still accurate and reliable, may continue to be used, and do not need to be replaced or recertified to VVSG 2.0.

It is unlikely that systems certified to the VVSG 2.0 will be used in the 2024 elections. By necessity, it takes time for testing, procurement and deployment, and time is insufficient for systems to be put in place ahead of the primaries. However, the systems tested to previous iterations continue to be secure and accurate. Congress and the American people should have absolute confidence in this process. The EAC has amplified this message by recently publishing a communications toolkit to assist election officials in communicating about VVSG standards updates and election security. We will keep promoting this trusted source of information throughout 2023 and 2024.

Additionally, the EAC will continue to assist state and local election officials as they communicate with voters and stakeholders about what VVSG migration means in their jurisdictions. It will take time and significant monetary expenditure for jurisdictions to implement new systems certified under the rigorous VVSG 2.0 process. There is still much work to be done and the EAC is doing everything possible to assist states with this key tool for boosting confidence in the critical infrastructure of our election systems.

Other Testing and Certification Initiatives

As the cybersecurity threat landscape across the election community continues to evolve, the EAC is planning a voluntary Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure Program. The need to quickly identify and respond to vulnerabilities to our voting systems is critical. The EAC will lead the

program alongside our Federal partners at CISA and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Development of this program is in its infancy, and it will require staff and resources to fully realize. It is, however, a priority for the Commission.

NIST and the EAC are also developing a research study that will harness interviews with election administrators to better understand which technologies and supportive processes could increase voter trust and confidence in election outcomes. NIST will investigate whether end-to-end verifiable voting systems offer properties that address election officials' concerns. This research will use qualitative interview methodology to explore security, usability, and accessibility prerogatives, including those related to the various properties that end-to-end verifiable voting systems addresses.

Information Security

As the agency strives to bolster election security, we also remain keenly aware of the need to protect the EAC's information technology and security systems. In furtherance of this pursuit, the EAC is engaged in a digital transformation project with the goal of automating existing manual processes to improve operational efficiency, customer experience, and agency scalability.

As the tempo and scope of the EAC's mission continues to increase, leadership recognizes the importance of modernizing the agency's systems and processes. From a customer service perspective, the project will improve communication between our grants division and grantees and facilitate the award and administration of formula and competitive grant programs, such as HAVA Election Security Grants and the HAVA College Program funded by Congress in FY 2023. The project will also ease the burden on jurisdictions participating in the EAVS by streamlining data collection and automating data quality checks. Internally, the effort will improve project management, staff development, budget planning, and process instrumentation.

We also remain on track to meet the zero trust architecture requirements of Executive Order 14028, Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity. Over the past year, the EAC has decommissioned legacy infrastructure and become 100% cloud native. This includes moving to a modern identity management infrastructure providing phishing-resistant multifactor authentication, single sign-on, and conditional access as well as eliminating the agency's reliance on access technologies such as VPN. All EAC data storage is fully encrypted with remaining communications encryption planned for implementation in FY 2023. The EAC is enrolled in CISA's continuous diagnostics and mitigation (CDM) program with automated reporting to the Federal dashboard. In the coming months, the EAC will improve its logging, domain name service (DNS), and data classification capabilities to achieve a mature zero trust architecture.

New and Future Clearinghouse Services

The EAC's Clearinghouse Division, composed of former election officials and subject matter experts, helps the agency share tools for both the public and election administrators including best practices, information for voters, and other resources. In this role, the EAC serves as a trusted source of nonpartisan election information. The Clearinghouse Division also develops materials and meets with stakeholders and state and local officials.

In anticipation of the 2022 and 2024 elections, the Clearinghouse Division has released more than 60 products over the past two years to assist election administrators. These range from resources on physical security threats against election officials, to EAVS data collection and analysis. Furthermore, Clearinghouse products offer overall guidance to new election officials in conducting elections, such as improving chain of custody procedures, auditing, and better serving voters with disabilities. All of the products developed by the Clearinghouse Division are guided by the parameters set forth in HAVA.

2022 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS)

In the coming weeks, the EAC will publish the 2022 EAVS report. This biennial report is the agency's flagship research initiative, collecting nationwide data on election administration from nearly 6,500 local election jurisdictions across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The EAVS compiles state-by-state, jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction data on a wide variety of election administration topics, including voter registration, military and overseas voting, domestic by-mail voting, polling place operations, provisional ballots, voter participation, and election technology. EAVS data is utilized by countless stakeholders in the election community, including members of Congress, legislative staff, Federal officials, journalists, academics, advocates, and election officials.

This will be the 10th iteration of the survey since the first EAVS in 2004. The EAVS consists of two surveys: (1) the Policy Survey which collects qualitative information on state election laws, policies, and practices; and (2) the EAVS which collects mostly quantitative election administration data. The 2022 Policy Survey included new questions on issues such as drop box usage, mail ballot curing, UOCAVA ballot transmission and return methods, state auditing practices, and more. Questions were also added to the EAVS to request jurisdictions report numbers for: drop boxes used, mail ballots successfully cured, new poll workers recruited, and provisional ballots cast as based on justification.

After the 2022 EAVS report and data are released, the EAC will publish interactive data and one-page briefs for each state. The agency is also conducting an election data summit on July 19th in Washington DC to further discuss EAVS and other relevant elections research. Planning for the 2024 survey will begin in the fall of 2023 and will include revisions to Section A on voter registration and list maintenance data. The EAC released a report in July 2022 which discusses in further detail many of the anticipated changes.

Election Worker Security

The escalation of threats to election officials and poll workers is of great concern to the EAC. The agency has taken a proactive approach to distributing information on EAC clearinghouse resources and election security grants assistance.

In late 2021, the EAC launched a webpage for security-related concerns: Security Resources for Election Officials. This dedicated landing page serves as a resource for election workers who may face personal threats in the workplace. We regularly update this comprehensive guide to include

information from the FBI and Department of Justice. The site includes best practices specific to the physical security of poll workers, securing personal information online, practical training videos, information on submitting reports to law enforcement, helpful toolkits, and the most recent updates from our Federal partners. The EAC will provide additional clearinghouse products moving forward as the security environment continues to evolve.

Assisting Voters with Disabilities

The EAC is committed to continuing our support of election officials as they fulfill the requirements of both HAVA and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure elections are fully accessible. We have taken additional steps to serve voters with disabilities by hiring a full-time subject matter expert for accessibility, establishing an internal accessibility working group, continuing EAC research on disability-related voting issues, and expanding our accessibility resources and programs.

Currently, the EAC is working on a national study to document the experience of voters with disabilities in the 2022 midterms. The survey results, which will be finalized in summer 2023, will include key information on voter access. The agency commissioned the study with the assistance of veteran researchers at Rutgers University who have extensive experience conducting similar studies with the EAC. While initial study results indicate progress has been made, we anticipate that a closer analysis will reveal areas of persistent inadequacy. The Commission intends to use these results to produce actionable items that are necessary to meet HAVA's vision of fully accessible elections.

Additionally, the EAC will publish video training materials later this summer related to serving voters with disabilities. The series of brief videos on accessibility and disability awareness will be a valuable resource for election officials and others interested in voting accessibility. The EAC worked with the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) to produce these training modules.

Among numerous other resources on voting accessibility, EAC has released checklists for election officials on accessibility for In-Person Voting, Voter Registration, and Voting by Mail. The agency also publishes checklists and best practices pertaining to assisting voters with language access needs. These resources were updated following the most recent release of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act requirements, which require 330 jurisdictions to provide language accessibility resources for voters. Moving forward, we will continue to advance voting access across all EAC divisions and seek new opportunities to meet HAVA's promise of a private and independent vote for all Americans.

The EAC has also partnered with the University of Rhode Island to create a video series that allows election officials to learn from the results of thousands of computer simulations of the voting experience. These videos provide visual representations of voting locations, equipment, and the people involved, all with a goal of increasing efficiencies and minimizing wait times for voters. Information about the Processes Simulations series is available on the EAC's website. The videos address polling place consolidation, polling place line alleviation, and polling place line

interruptions simulations. More simulations will be added in FY 2023 with the goal of addressing other critically important topics, such as the placement of accessible voting technology at the polls.

<u>Additional Clearinghouse Products and Services</u>

To build on existing data and services, the Clearinghouse Division recently released an updated [Election Management Guidelines (EMG).](#) This comprehensive resource assists election officials. The updated version covers 19 chapters on topics such as voting system certification, system security, accessibility, ballot building, absentee voting, and recounts, with increased focus on relevant election technologies that have changed since the last EMG from 15 years ago. As the field of election administration continues to see high levels of turnover, the EMG represents an important addition to EAC's growing library of resources for future elections.

Other resources from the EAC include [list maintenance tools and resources](#), a comprehensive [guidebook on chain of custody](#), a detailed overview of [different types of audits](#), and information on the [proper disposal of unused election equipment](#). In addition, as election officials field increasing requests for public records, the EAC has developed a [guide and webpage](#) to highlight best practices in this area. This resource discusses innovative methods that election administrators can use to respond to public record requests efficiently and transparently. We also plan to release an updated Guidebook for Recruiting College Poll Workers to assist potential grantees with the College Poll Worker program in FY 2023.

Recognizing the need for improved list maintenance practices, the EAC is implementing a pilot project on new tools in this field. The agency plans to incorporate resources from a leading credit bureau along with selected state and local jurisdictions to enhance list maintenance practices. The pilot aims to determine "best addresses" for voters who have not responded to notifications or other attempted inquiries on their current registration status. The EAC expects to launch the initiative later this year. In addition to these efforts, the Clearinghouse Division also regularly solicits feedback from stakeholders and the EAC's advisory boards and develops services to meet election official needs.

<u>Online Clearinghouse Network for Election Officials</u>

In anticipation of the 2024 Election, the EAC is also continuing work on the EAC Clearinghouse Network – a collaborative peer-to-peer platform where election officials can find resources, connect with experts and colleagues in other jurisdictions, and discuss emerging issues. To fulfill the mission of the EAC's clearinghouse function, the agency recognizes that election officials must be able to easily communicate with each other on common issues and solutions. This resource offers a secure platform for that important collaboration.

The network is organized by community topics, and individual posts and resources can be tagged. Users can also list their skills and interests on their profiles, making it easy for community members to connect with experts on specific subjects. Election officials themselves are often an excellent source of hands-on experience and direct primary information, and the EAC applies their hands-on experience to facilitate discussions between states and localities on many election administration topics. The Clearinghouse Network will first be used to serve our FACA Board

members who directly advise the EAC. This initial stage of this project will commence over the next few weeks, with an expanded controlled launch of this system occurring throughout the summer and beyond.

EAC Public Forums

To engage the public at large, the agency hosts open meetings on various topics of interest to election administrators and voters. Early this year, we facilitated public forums on poll worker recruitment and list maintenance. Most recently, on April 26th, the EAC hosted an in-person discussion on serving military and overseas voters with election officials and subject-matter experts. This is the fourth public meeting the EAC has hosted since November 2022 when the agency's new hearing room opened in Washington, DC. Previous public meetings have focused on VVSG 2.0, poll worker recruitment, and list maintenance best practices.

As we continue to prepare for 2024, topics for future forums are likely to focus on voter education and civic engagement, accessibility for voters with disabilities, and continuity of emergency operations. The EAC takes a comprehensive approach under our agency's mission to assist state and local election officials and offer innovative tools for their success.

Clearinghouse Awards

In late May, the EAC announced the 24 winners of the 2022 Clearinghouse Awards recognizing best practices in election administration. Also known as the "Clearies," the awards program celebrates the hard work of election offices across the country by honoring programs implemented in the 2022 midterms. The seven Clearies award categories cover a variety of topics from poll worker training and recruitment to efforts to improve access for voters with disabilities.

The latest awardees include jurisdictions of varying sizes, from states with 6.5 million registered voters to counties with approximately 80,000 registered voters. Now in its seventh year, the Clearies play an essential role in fulfilling the EAC's mission to serve as a clearinghouse for election administration under HAVA.

New EAC Website

To share the EAC's resources more effectively for 2024, the agency is launching an updated version of EAC.gov that improves the website's usability, accessibility, and organization. The new design ensures a consistently high-quality experience for visitors across all web platforms. Interactive visualizations have been added to highlight key data related to the EAC's mission and resources. Back-end improvements will help staff deliver and maintain information critical to the nation's election administrators, voters, and other key stakeholders.

Conclusion

With the 2024 election cycle quickly approaching, election officials face an ever-growing list of responsibilities and challenges. The EAC is working diligently to help them prepare for the

expected and unexpected. We at the EAC work hand-in-hand with election officials to meet these challenges and help them provide the best voting experience possible to every voter.

More than 20 years ago, HAVA charged the EAC with providing comprehensive assistance to election administrators across the U.S. Since that time, the agency has worked closely to support our nation's elections by distributing grant funds, certifying voting systems, highlighting best practices, publishing clearinghouse resources, and offering additional support. The inclusive vision of HAVA calls on the EAC to assist election officials and voters, and we embrace this mission wholeheartedly. Similarly, the nonpartisan approach of election administrators has continued to promote confidence in voting, while advancing civility throughout America's electoral process.

Thank you for your continued support of the EAC and your commitment to election administrators, poll workers, and voters in localities across the nation. As mentioned previously, the leadership of the Committee has been instrumental to the agency's efforts. Truly, our work would not be possible without your support in investing in the elections process and the men and women who make up the election community. There is still work to be done and we look forward to working closely with you on these and other important matters. We welcome any questions or feedback you may have.