

**Statement by Paul DeGregorio, Presidential nominee to the
Election Assistance Commission,
to the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.
October 28, 2003**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you some of my background and interest in the newly-created US Election Assistance Commission. It is an honor for me to share the dais with three distinguished Americans: Gracia Hillman, Rev. Buster Soaries, and Ray Martinez.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of my wife, Kerry, my sister Fran and brothers Roland and John, who are here today representing my four daughters and many family members, colleagues and friends who made me what I am today.

I am deeply honored to have been asked to serve on this important Commission. The Help America Vote Act, which was enacted one year ago tomorrow, is an historic law for all Americans and will make our democracy stronger. If confirmed as a member of the Commission, I will work hard to implement this Act with the highest integrity and will utilize all of my God-given skills in doing so.

For the past twenty years, I have been immersed in the administration of elections, both here in the United States and abroad. From 1985-1993, I served as the Director of Elections for St. Louis County, Missouri, one of the most complex counties to administer elections in the United States. St. Louis County has one million people living in 92 municipalities, 26 school districts, 26 fire districts, 32 state representative districts and 3 congressional districts—and my office was responsible for conducting elections in all of those jurisdictions. During my 8 years as Director of Elections, I sought to be the best administrator in the nation. We modernized our systems, made it easier to register and received great recognition for our achievements. With small wards in our 92 municipalities, every year we had 5 or more races where 10 votes or less made the difference in the election. So I am very familiar with recounts, hanging chad and knowing that every vote is important.

During the past 10 years, I have had the distinct honor of sharing my election expertise in over 20 countries as an expert for the International Foundation for Election Systems. IFES, as it is known, is a non-profit non-partisan organization based in Washington DC that promotes democracy throughout the world by providing expertise in elections to governments and election bodies. Earlier this month I had the honor to represent IFES and the United States in Moscow at the 10th anniversary of the founding of Russian Central Election Commission. I was present in 1993 for the birth of the Russian Election Commission and have provided technical support and advice to the Commission over the past 10 years.

I have also been involved in helping to improve the election process in the United States and served as the Education and Training Chairman for the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers. As Director of Outreach for the University of Missouri-St. Louis, I helped to establish a Chancellor's Certificate in Public Administration program for election officials. Working for IFES, I led a team of US experts that conducted an important assessment of the problems in Florida's Miami-Dade County for the November 2002 election.

The Election Assistance Commission, to which I have been nominated by President Bush, will be an important body that will provide technical support to the nearly 5000 state and local officials who conduct elections in the United States, DC, and our territories. If confirmed to this position by the United States Senate, I will work to implement the Help America Vote Act to help insure that every citizen has the opportunity to register and vote in an accessible, free and fair manner, and that all Americans have confidence that the elections conducted in this nation are administered properly and without fraud, and that their votes really do matter.

During my considerable work overseas over the past 10 years I was often questioned by foreign officials on why the federal government of the United States had not provided assistance or funding in election administration to state and local officials. With the enactment of the Help America Vote Act I, along with all Americans, can now answer that the United States has taken a bold and important step to insure that our system of democracy and elections remains the best in the world.

I would be honored to have your support of my nomination to the Election Assistance Commission and would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.