

Committee on Rules and Administration  
Statement by Mr. Thomas Hicks, Nominee for Commissioner  
Election Assistance Commission  
Wednesday December 11, 2013

Good Morning Chairman Schumer, Ranking Member Roberts and Members of the committee. Thank you for holding this hearing on my nomination to serve on the United States Election Assistance Commission. I am truly honored to be a nominee to serve on the commission.

I look forward to the opportunity to testify on my qualifications and interest in becoming an EAC Commissioner. I thank House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi for resubmitting my name to the President and for the President for submitting my nomination to the Senate. I thank members of the Committee on House Administration for supporting my nomination, including current ranking member Bob Brady and past ranking members Steny Hoyer and John Larson. I also thank other members from both sides of the aisle and both chambers, a list that is too long to enumerate, who have not only supported and encouraged my nomination, but helped me throughout my career in Washington.

My interest in elections started as a child when my mother brought my brother and me into the voting booth and pulled the lever. She gently reminded us that when she was growing up in southern Georgia, it was a lot harder for minorities to vote than on that day when she voted for President Jimmy Carter. I was able to share this story with President Carter a few years ago. The ability to help facilitate access to our voting system – the cornerstone of our participatory system of government – for all eligible Americans continues to be a strong motivating factor in my career.

Over the last 10 plus years, I have worked at the Committee on House Administration, the equivalent committee in the House to Senate Rules and Administration. I interviewed for the job the day after my oldest daughter was born. My primary responsibility is advising and providing guidance to the committee members and caucus, on elections issues. Prior to that, I worked at Common Cause, a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization that empowers citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest. I enjoyed working with state and local election officials, civil rights organizations and all other stakeholders to improve the voting process.

I believe in the Election Assistance Commission. I believe in the primary mission of the agency - ensuring all eligible Americans have the information needed to register to vote, cast a ballot and have that ballot counted. Whether those Americans are voting in New Hampshire, California, Georgia or Afghanistan, they should have the same confidence that their ballots are

being counted.

I believe our elections must be administered in a manner that ensures accuracy while allowing for openness and transparency. I also believe the process should ensure malicious actions are prevented from influencing the final outcome of our elections.

This is a challenge that must be accomplished with smaller budgets and without the option of failure. Elections don't allow for do overs. Above all else, we must always uphold the public's trust and ensure confidence in the process.

Through my present job as senior elections counsel, I have communicated with Americans in every state about their voting experiences. I have worked with state and local election officials across America to address critical election concerns, I have had unique opportunities to work and speak with Americans overseas concerning the obstacles they face in registering to vote and casting their ballots. Should I be confirmed, I will use this knowledge and experience in my role as an EAC Commissioner.

I believe that, regardless of partisan ideology or political affiliation, we all want the same thing—fair, accurate elections, where we are confident of the outcome and all eligible Americans (domestic and overseas) are able to participate in our process, the best in the world. Should I be confirmed, I hope to use the lessons learned in life and my experiences to continue working to achieve this goal.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother and father, both now retired and enjoying the love and admiration of their grandchildren. I would also like to acknowledge my three children, Elizabeth 10, Megan 7 and Edward 5. I am most gratified that their experiences with voting and participating in our election system will be far different from that of their grandmother.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS HICKS**

Thomas Hicks serves as the Democratic Senior Elections Counsel for the Committee on House Administration. In this role, he is responsible for issues relating to campaign finance, election reform, contested elections and oversight of both the Election Assistance Commission and Federal Election Commission. Mr. Hicks came to the committee from the government watchdog group Common Cause, where he served as a Senior Lobbyist and Policy Analyst.

Mr. Hicks currently is a nominee to the Election Assistance Commission. Prior to joining Common Cause, Mr. Hicks worked for nearly 8 years in the Clinton Administration as a Special Assistant and Legislative Assistant in the Office of Congressional Relations for the Office of Personnel Management.

Mr. Hicks, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, earned his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Clark University in Worcester, MA. He earned his law degree from the Catholic University of America - Columbus School of Law.