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EAC Prepares for Voting System Testing & Certification Program
(http://www.eac.gov/news_102606.asp)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) held a public meeting today to hear testimony and receive comments on EAC's proposed voting system testing and certification program. The commission heard from representatives of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), representatives of testing laboratories, equipment manufacturers, election officials, certification specialists, community interest groups and the public. The new program will apply to future federal elections that follow the November 2006 elections.

"This will be the first time in history that the federal government will hold this responsibility" said EAC Chairman Paul DeGregorio. "Today's panelists have provided valuable information to consider as we prepare to undertake this enormous challenge. Once EAC assumes responsibility for voting system testing and certification, manufacturers who participate in the program will undergo a rigorous process that will instill a new level of accountability to the process."

A webcast of today's meeting can be accessed next week at www.eac.gov
(http://www.eac.gov/Public_Meeting_102606.asp).

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) mandates that the U.S. Election Assistance Commission assume responsibility for the accreditation of testing laboratories and the certification of voting systems. All voting systems in use that are nationally certified have been certified by the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED). Once the new program is adopted and in place, EAC will be responsible for all future national certification. Under HAVA, participation in the program is voluntary. However, at least 39 states currently require voting systems to be certified at the national level.

The public comment period for the DRAFT Procedural Manual for Voting System Testing and Certification Program (http://www.eac.gov/eac_vstcp_manual.htm) began on October 2 and will close at 5:00 p.m. on October 31, 2006. After the 30-day comment period closes, EAC will review and consider all public comments. The final document will be considered for approval at EAC's next public meeting on December 7, 2006. Once the manual has been approved by the commission, the program will be implemented in January 2007.

EAC is an independent bipartisan commission created by HAVA. It is charged with administering payments to states and developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, implementing election administration improvements, adopting voluntary voting system

guidelines, accrediting voting system test laboratories and certifying voting equipment and serving as a national clearinghouse and resource of information regarding election administration. The three EAC commissioners are Paul DeGregorio, chairman; Donetta Davidson and Gracia Hillman. One vacancy currently exists.

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