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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6325

October 6, 2022

U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Chair Thomas Hicks
Vice-Chair Christy McCormick
Commissioner Benjamin W. Hovland
Commissioner Donald L. Palmer
633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Commissioners:

We write to express concerns about the ongoing challenges presented by the shortage of election workers that states across the country experienced during this year's primary elections as we approach the general election in November. We appreciate the Commission's efforts to assist local election administrators in recruiting poll workers, and we urge you to take additional actions to address this critical issue in advance of Election Day.

Throughout the 2022 primary season election officials have struggled to recruit enough poll workers to meet their needs, impacting communities in both urban and rural areas. Recent reports have highlighted the serious effect that these shortfalls are having, including leaving some counties hundreds of election workers short and others unable to open some voting locations.¹ These latest accounts follow the challenges that election officials confronted in retaining longtime election workers during the coronavirus pandemic in the previous election cycle, when - as the Commission found in its 2020 Election Administration and Voting Survey - "election officials were able to recruit the necessary workers...only as a result of significant public efforts by the EAC, state election offices, and nonprofit organizations."

Recruitment efforts have been further hampered by the increase in threats and harassment targeting election workers. According to a March 2022 survey, more than half of local election officials are concerned about the safety of their colleagues in future elections, and one in six have experienced threats of violence.² At a Senate Rules Committee hearing on this issue, we heard directly from election officials who are facing issues recruiting and retaining election workers as a result of these threats. Kim Wyman - the former Republican Secretary of State in Washington and current Election Security Lead at the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency - has also warned of looming shortages of election workers in states nationwide due to the rise in these threats.³

¹ See, e.g., <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/03/01/texas-primary-election-voting-location-closures/>; <https://www.politifact.com/article/2022/jul/06/poll-workers-are-short-staffed-under-attack-and-qu/>.

² <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022>.

³ <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/cisa-election-chief-warns-of-workforce-problem-due-to-threats-to-poll-workers/#x>

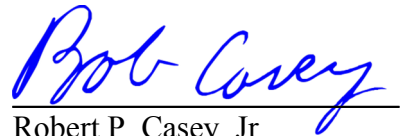
While the Commission has taken steps to support the recruitment of election workers including making resources available to the public, we urge you to take additional actions to ensure election officials have the information and resources necessary to address these ongoing shortages. We also respectfully request an update on the Commission's efforts to address this issue in advance of the general election.

Election workers are on the frontlines of our democracy, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that they are able to recruit the poll workers they need to administer the November election successfully.

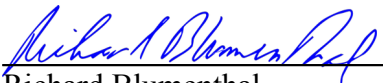
Sincerely,



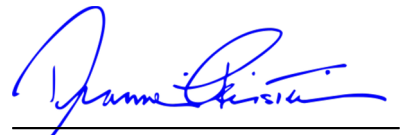
Amy Klobuchar
Chairwoman, Committee on
Rules and Administration



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



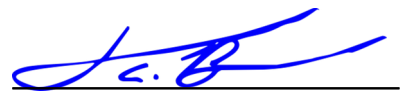
Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



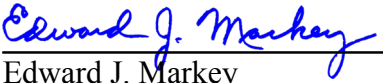
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



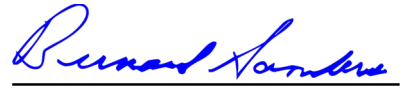
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



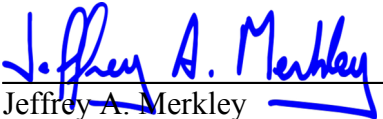
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator