



COMMISSIONER ELLEN L. WEINTRAUB
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

March 6, 2017

The Hon. J. Michael Mulvaney
Director, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Director Mulvaney,

The Federal Election Commission was asked by the Office of Management and Budget to provide its views regarding HR 634, which would terminate the Election Assistance Commission and transfer a small part of its jurisdiction to the FEC.

I of course endorse the Commission's consensus position that the FEC would carefully administer any new responsibilities assigned to it by this bill should it be enacted. But I am also compelled to provide my view on this bill in my individual capacity as a Federal Election Commissioner. What I find most striking is that this bill would not merely shuffle functions from one agency to another. Certain functions key to our democracy would be abandoned altogether.

The EAC was created as part of the Help America Vote Act, reflecting an overwhelming bipartisan consensus in Congress that the states needed greater assistance on a national level to ensure fair, accurate, and trustworthy elections. To say the least, that need has not diminished.

Killing the EAC now would be like shutting down the Red Cross the day after an earthquake.

This nation is at a moment of great uncertainty regarding the integrity of our elections. One of this country's chief geopolitical rivals engaged in a concerted effort to disrupt this past election. Foreign actors have hacked state voter-registration data. And allegations of voter fraud – without, as of yet, any evidence to support them – are being cast from the highest levels of our government.

It is difficult to imagine a *less* opportune time to terminate the Election Assistance Commission and abandon important parts of its mission. The EAC's duties may appear to some as prosaic, but they play a vital role in our ability to secure our elections.

The security and reliability of America's voting equipment has come under close scrutiny as concerns emerge over attempts to disrupt our elections by foreign powers. The EAC examines, tests, and certifies voting equipment to make sure it is safe, secure, and reliable, and then tells the states what it finds. This coordinated effort saves the states significant time, effort, and resources; provides uniform information to every state; and allows state officials to concentrate on everything else our elections need to be fairly and safely administered.

Perhaps even more significantly, the EAC serves as a nerve center for the best elections practices of the states. Its deep survey of state elections officials unearths the information needed to help military and overseas voters cast their ballots. It brings to light the best ways states help those with disabilities vote. It serves as a primary source for those studying our elections to identify problems and solutions.

HR 634 would not transfer these duties to the FEC; it would eliminate them altogether. I cannot fathom why anyone would want to make it harder for Americans with disabilities or our military personnel to cast their ballots.

This bill would make our elections less safe, less secure, and less fair, and could reduce the faith of the American people in their elections' results. In these unsettling times, surely public officials in all branches and at all levels should be pulling together to increase – not diminish – civic engagement and faith in government.

Sincerely,



Ellen L. Weintraub
Commissioner
Federal Election Commission