



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

**Statement of Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub Regarding the Establishment of  
'The Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity'  
May 11, 2017**

The President this afternoon signed an executive order establishing “The Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity.”<sup>1</sup> While the integrity of this nation’s elections is vital to the health of our democracy, this particular commission gives me great cause for concern.

The President has made several very serious claims regarding voter fraud in the last Presidential election, but has so far failed to substantiate any of his firmly stated conclusions. Over the past three months, I have called upon the President to provide evidence for his claims,<sup>2</sup> and he has so far provided none. When I wrote to the President in March, I advised that a commission was not the answer:

*Your allegations are not properly a matter for a future investigation to take up, as you cannot have responsibly alleged this scheme without already having sufficient facts in hand to do so.*<sup>3</sup>

Without providing any evidence, the President has instead chosen to create this commission. Previous Presidents who convened similar commissions addressing issues at the heart of our democratic process (Carter-Ford, Carter-Baker, Bauer-Ginsberg) provided upfront commitments to bipartisanship and fairness. Here, by contrast, the top two members of this commission are from the same party; the vice-chair, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, is perhaps the single most controversial figure in the nation on the issue of voter suppression.

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<sup>1</sup> “Presidential Executive Order on the Establishment of Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity,” May 11, 2017, *found at* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/05/11/presidential-executive-order-establishment-presidential-advisory>.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub Regarding Allegations by the President of the United States of Widespread Voter Fraud in New Hampshire, Feb. 10, 2017, *found at* <http://www.fec.gov/members/weintraub/statements/ELW-POTUS-voter-fraud-statement.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub to the President of the United States Regarding Allegations of Widespread Voter Fraud in New Hampshire, March 22, 2017, *found at* <http://www.fec.gov/members/weintraub/statements/2017-03-22-ELW-Letter-to-POTUS-re-Voter-Fraud-Allegations.pdf>

Numerous nonpartisan studies of the 2016 election found vanishingly little voter fraud.<sup>4</sup> What could be the purpose of ignoring the ample already-existing research on the election? The President's choices raise serious concerns that the conclusions of this commission are preordained and will be used to undermine the right of legitimate U.S. citizens to cast their votes. Now, that would be *real* fraud.

When it comes to the integrity of our elections, facts matter. Words matter.

Mr. President, take responsibility for your words. Document them if you can. Apologize for them if you have to. But don't ship them off to a commission. You'd be asking them to build you a bridge you've already crossed.

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., "Pew study author: 'Zero evidence of fraud' in 2016 election," Jennifer Calfas, THE HILL, Jan. 24, 2017, found at <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/315914-author-of-study-spicer-cited-we-found-no-evidence-of-voter>; "Republicans and Democrats Agree There is No Widespread Voter Fraud," Jan. 25, 2017, found at <http://www.campaignlegalcenter.org/news/blog/republicans-and-democrats-agree-there-no-widespread-voter-fraud>; "There have been just four documented cases of voter fraud in the 2016 election," Philip Bump, THE WASHINGTON POST, Dec. 1, 2016, found at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/01/0-000002-percent-of-all-the-ballots-cast-in-the-2016-election-were-fraudulent/>; and, generally, "Debunking the Voter Fraud Myth," THE BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE, Jan. 31, 2017, found at <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/debunking-voter-fraud-myth>.