



Secretary of State

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“Voting in America: Ensuring Free and Fair Access to the Ballot” Hearing

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Committee on House Administration

Room 1310 of the Longworth House Office Building via Cisco Webex Video Conferencing

Secretary of State Kim Wyman Testimony

Thank you Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the committee for inviting me to appear as a witness today. For the record, I am Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman, and I am proud to serve as the chief elections officer in a state that has already implemented nearly every election requirement proposed in H.R.1.

In the 2020 Presidential Election, 90% of Washington’s voting eligible population was registered to vote and we had the fifth highest voter turnout in the country. Washington’s accessible registration and voting system employs robust safeguards that ensure only one ballot can be counted for each eligible voter in an election.

Maintaining a balance between voter accessibility and election security is foundational to inspiring public confidence in election outcomes. Though Washington State serves as a model for successfully implementing same-day and automatic voter registrations, equitable voter registration list maintenance, expanded mail-in voting, and many other progressive policies — I can tell you, building an election system that balances access and security took time, bipartisan collaboration, and the active engagement of state and local election administrators working closely with legislators to constantly improve our processes. Innovation in election administration isn’t unique to Washington. It happens in states across the country every day and needs to happen with H.R.1.

The overly prescriptive and one-size-fits-all approach contained in the election sections of H.R.1 discount the voices of state and local election officials who share valid concerns about their ability to implement these sweeping changes within the defined timeframes, and leaves little margin for states’ innovation in elections administration.

In 2000, following the politically charged and razor-thin Presidential Election, Congress took on comprehensive, national election reform with passage of the Help America Vote Act in 2002. This process provides a reliable pathway for creating impactful election reform legislation today. Congressional members worked across the aisle to draft bipartisan policies, while actively seeking input from election administration experts and the public to perfect them.

The 2020 General Election was the most litigated Presidential Election in our history with hundreds of lawsuits filed before and after Election Day. Many states adopted policies and procedures to provide safe voting options in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Election officials conducted high-turnout elections through hurricanes, wildfires, social unrest, and active cybersecurity threats. Throughout these unprecedented circumstances, our country's election system remained resilient. One portion of the electorate is concerned that laws passed by state legislatures will disenfranchise voters who struggled to participate last year.

Rampant misinformation and disinformation in 2020 tore at the fabric of our democracy and shattered confidence in our elections with another portion of the electorate. Despite numerous audits and recounts demonstrating the accuracy of election results and multiple federal agencies proclaiming unequivocally this was the most secure election in our nation's history, some voters still lack confidence in the integrity of mail-in balloting. We must move forward, and begin rebuilding the confidence lost in both election security and voting accessibility.

Fast-tracking an 800-page bill written without meaningful input from state and local election experts is not the answer.

If the goal is to provide national consistency in registration and voting for U.S. citizens, I recommend establishing baseline expectations for states to meet. This is preferable to implementing highly rigid and prescriptive policies that may be unworkable or non-administrable within the timelines specified. This level of prescription will stifle innovation in states, now and for decades to come.

Our Constitution gives states the important role of administering our country's elections. Election officials in every state work to inspire the public's confidence in election returns and provide members of Congress the same confidence in the certified results of federal elections. Examples would be setting timelines for registration and residency, Maximum precinct size for both geography and the number of voter served. Standards for the minimum number of voting machines for voters and availability of ballots and voting opportunities.

As you move forward, I encourage you not to limit states' authority to conduct elections in a narrow, limiting manner, rather empower them to improve election administration.

My colleagues and I, in state and local election offices across the country, stand ready to work with you and ask you to include us in your work to create a bipartisan solution that improves elections for all Americans.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kim Wyman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Washington Secretary of State