



U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) | #HAVA20

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 29, 2002 and addressed a variety of improvements to voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 election.

“

*The 2000 election was a clear inflection point for our electoral system – not only revealing the challenges of our election infrastructure at the time, but also setting the stage for a continuous stream of improvements that have led to expanded voting access and technology nationwide. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), we acknowledge the immense advancements made at the local, state, and federal levels since the passage of this landmark legislation.”*

Joint statement from EAC Commissioners Thomas Hicks (Chairman), Christy McCormick (Vice Chair), Ben Hovland, and Donald Palmer

## HAVA at a Glance



Created new mandatory minimum standards for states to follow in several key areas of election administration



Provided funding to help states meet these new standards and continue to evolve by replacing voting systems, improving voter education and poll worker training, expanding provisional voting, and expanding accessibility offerings at polling places



Streamlined American elections and safeguarded our most vulnerable populations from accessibility restraints when voting including ensuring all voters can vote privately and independently



Established the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) as an independent, bipartisan federal agency charged with developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, serving as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration, accrediting testing laboratories, certifying voting systems, and auditing the use of HAVA funds

## HAVA has helped to facilitate numerous programs to assist voters on a state and national level, including:



**Testing and Certification Program:** HAVA mandated the EAC to provide certification, decertification, and recertification of voting systems, as well as the accreditation of voting system testing laboratories.

The Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) are a set of specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if the systems meet required standards. Some factors examined under these tests include basic functionality, accessibility, and security capabilities. These national level voting standards were designed to meet the challenges ahead, to replace decade's old voting machines, to improve the voter experience, and provide necessary safeguards to protect the integrity of the voting process.

In 2021, the EAC approved the VVSG 2.0, paving the way for the next generation of voting systems across the country. The national security importance in the testing and protection of our voting systems has never been more elevated.



HAVA states that the Commission shall serve as a **national clearinghouse** and resource for the compilation of information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of federal elections. The EAC's Clearinghouse Division is made up of former election officials and subject matter experts who work with EAC staff to provide materials that address the needs of election officials.



There are three **HAVA-mandated federal advisory boards** that help the EAC fulfil its mission: the Standards Board, the Board of Advisors, and the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC). The boards are composed of election officials, experts from the field, and representatives of the government. In 2021, the EAC also established the Local Leadership Council composed of two local election official leaders from each state in order to gain feedback and perspectives from these key stakeholders.



**The Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Comprehensive Report** is an analysis of survey data from all 50 states, the five territories and the District of Columbia on the ways Americans vote and how elections are administered.



**The Help America Vote College Program** grants are authorized under HAVA to encourage student participation as poll workers, to foster student interest in the elections process, and to prompt state and local governments to use students as poll workers.

## Since the passage of HAVA, the EAC has developed and expanded its scope to create various initiatives around important electoral issues, such as:



**Cybersecurity:** The EAC continues to work collaboratively with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and other federal partners to manage risks to the nation's election infrastructure, including voting technology and preemptive risk assessment tools.



**Election Official Security:** The EAC continues to publish resources and discussions around election officials' safety and security.



**Poll Worker Recruitment:** In addition to a variety of resources to inspire more Americans to sign up to become poll workers, the EAC created National Poll Worker Recruitment Day in 2020 to encourage people to help America vote by signing up to be a poll worker.



**Funding:** The EAC has distributed, monitored and provided technical assistance for \$880 million in HAVA election security grants since 2018. During the 2020 federal elections, the EAC also distributed \$400 million in grant funds provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help states prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of HAVA, the EAC launched Help America Vote Day in 2022 as a second day of action to encourage Americans to sign up as poll workers and distribute resources to assist voters. State and local election offices and other stakeholder groups from 41 states have participated in these efforts.

Since 2003, over \$4.2 billion in HAVA funds has been awarded to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands).