

ASSOCIATIONS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AGREE ON ELECTION REFORM STATEMENT

Racine, Wisconsin, April 10-12: Representatives of eight election official organizations responsible for writing or administering election laws agreed on a ten-point statement of understanding.

The participants concluded the election system in America “works extremely well and election officials continue to be committed to maintaining and improving the process through state and local governments.” They plan to urge Congress not to adopt a national solution for what has been a state and local responsibility.

The association representatives agreed to the following statements:

1. The system must be fair to all voters. All jurisdictions should make every effort to ensure the equal treatment of all voters.
2. We are committed to making every reasonable accommodation in order to ensure the right to vote for elderly and disabled Americans.
3. States need to establish, either through legislation or administrative rules, with input from local election officials: coordinated state-wide databases of voter rolls; state-wide standards for what constitutes a vote by system; and state-wide standards for voting recounts.
4. State election officials should gather data on rates of over and under votes and other relevant information to provide base-line data and to identify potential problems in the system.
5. Well trained and committed Election Day workers are critical to the election system and voter confidence. Election officials should continue to develop creative and proactive methods for recruiting and training Election Day workers.
6. Election jurisdictions should make every effort to increase voter awareness regarding when, where, and how to register and vote.
7. Congress should provide sustained funding for the Office of Election Administration to update and maintain voting system standards (including both technical and operational standards) and to resume its data collection and research service.
8. States are in the best position to evaluate their own needs. Therefore, if federal funding to states is proposed, funds should be applicable to a variety of needs on a block grant basis.
9. Any federal funding provided for the purpose of voter education should be generic and universal; it should not be targeted for any specific group.
10. To fully implement congressional intent of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), Congress should fund a new discount rate for official election mail.



Conference representatives will now ask their respective organizations to take action to implement these statements in their respective areas of responsibility.

Update based on an article by Richard G. Smolka, Election Administration Reports, 4/16/01.