



**Statement from the  
Honorable Connie Lawson**

**Indiana Secretary of State**

**President, National Association of Secretaries of State  
Executive Committee Member, Election Infrastructure  
Subsector Government Coordinating Council (EIS-GCC)**

**Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules & Administration**

**Open Hearing on Election Security Preparations:  
A State and Local Perspective**

**June 20, 2018  
Washington, D.C.**

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Good morning, Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Klobuchar and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the chance to appear before you today my name is Connie Lawson, and I am the Indiana Secretary of State. I am also president of the bipartisan National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). In addition, I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Election Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council (EIS-GCC).

I was invited here today to testify as NASS President. I am honored to represent our nation's Secretaries of State, forty of whom are their state's chief election official. NASS is an organization made up of bipartisan officials, but when we speak as an organization, we speak with one voice.

I am delighted to join my colleagues to showcase what we are doing to prepare for the 2018 election cycle and beyond. As you know, we are in the midst of primary season, with state and local election officials administering successful and secure elections. I would like to take this opportunity to reassure this committee and voters alike that we have worked tirelessly to further safeguard the elections process by working with our local election officials, our IT teams, private sector security companies, the federal government and various stakeholders.

## **I. ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE SUBSECTOR GOVERNMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL (EIS-GCC) EFFORTS**

The 2016 election cycle highlighted challenges in communication and the sharing of information between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the states. We learned in 2017 that a number of state systems were scanned and probed leading up to November 2016 by bad actors trying to access our voter registration systems and websites. However, it is important to note that **no votes were changed** in 2016 and federal, state and local officials have tackled the communications challenges head on. We are taking the lessons learned from 2016 and Secretaries of State are focused on moving forward. We have done so by working together and with our federal partners like DHS, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and through the Election Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council (EIS-GCC). The EIS-GCC was established in October 2017 to enable improved communications between state and local officials and the federal government and to share resources. The EIS-GCC is comprised 29 members, of which 24 are state and local election officials. This is the first group of its kind and helps us stay on the same page and share vital information.

Since the EIS-GCC was established there have been two in-person meetings, October 2017 and February 2018, with another in-person meeting happening July 13, immediately before our NASS Summer Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The EIS-GCC currently has nine working groups that address the goals and the mission of the GCC and an Executive Committee made up of 5 members (President of NASS, President of NASED, DHS rep, EAC rep and local official rep.) The Executive Committee meets every two weeks via conference to review working group progress and materials, discuss communications strategy, track sector progress and plan for future work products. For example, we are in the final stages of approving the Communications Protocol Framework, which outlines how state and local election officials share information with DHS, FBI and ODNI, and vice-versa.



The EIS-GCC has also been developing our Sector Specific Plan. This document will undergo a final review at our July 2018 meeting and if approved, it will be included in the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP).

Additionally, through the work of the EIS-GCC a number of states participated in a pilot program to share election-specific threat indicators. From that pilot, a full Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) has become operational. States will have the option to put monitors on their election-networks to track traffic, detect anomalies and share with other states.

This work has created a solid foundation for the EIS-GCC to have frank and productive conversations as we all work to ensure the security of the nation's elections.

## **II. FEDERAL FUNDS FOR ELECTION SECURITY**

The members of NASS are extremely pleased that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 included \$380 million of Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds. This funding will help states further prepare for elections by increasing cybersecurity, replacing aging voting equipment, educating voters and much more.

When it passed in 2002 HAVA was the first piece of federal legislation to provide funding for election administration improvements, and states used the opportunity to enhance the security, accessibility, accuracy and reliability of election systems. Implementation of HAVA was a success, and it helped improve the voting experience for all Americans over the last 15 years.

While it may seem like this funding was delivered in time to see physical changes for November 2018, that will often not be the case. Most states will have implemented security and data protection improvements and policy behind the scenes including vulnerability testing, IT staff recruitment, risk mitigation solutions and training. However, states that are utilizing these federal funds to purchase new voting systems and equipment upgrades will likely not have much in place for this election. The HAVA funding appropriated will make a difference in the upcoming 2018 elections but will be much more visible by 2020.

There are several things that states want or need to do before spending this money. Many need sign-off from their legislatures that already have or soon will be adjourning. Others are convening stakeholders to get input on priorities, and more are meeting with local officials to understand their most pressing needs. Federal funds are rare and it is imperative that these new funds are used judiciously.

It is important to remember that certain enhancements can be done quickly, but others require careful planning, requiring gathering of information and slow implementation. According to the EAC, as of June 8, 2018 59% of HAVA funds have been requested by 29 States. States will submit plans and budgets to the EAC outlining the intended use of their new federal funds. Each state's plan will look different. My colleagues testifying before you today can speak about their priorities for their HAVA dollars.



In Indiana, we are meeting with local election officials and stakeholders to determine the best use of the funds. We understand this is a one-time limited infusion so we are doing our due diligence to ensure the funds are utilized in the most effective manner. Indiana appreciates the need for network security around all election equipment. In doing so we are considering virtual private networks for our ePollBook connections and county based Albert sensors. As emphasized by the FBI in 2016, multi-factor authentication is one of the most critical tools of cyber defense. As a result, this spring, we conducted a two-factor authentication pilot with 10 of Indiana’s 92 counties. The pilot introduced a physical USB tokens and a unique identifier to access the Statewide Voter Registration System. Additionally the pilot restricted access to working hours for each employee, which could be adjusted by county administrators. We learned a lot from this program and hope to expand it statewide.

Even though this journey will take time, please understand that election officials work to ensure that elections are administered in a secure manner, whether it’s protecting voter registration data from cybersecurity threats or ensuring that the votes cast are protected from tampering or manipulation. As election officials work to fulfill this commitment to improve voter confidence, we are glad that Congress fulfilled its commitment to states and fully funded HAVA. Please know that states look forward to using this money judiciously in the coming months and years to help protect the nation’s election infrastructure.

### **III. THE 2018 ELECTION CYCLE AND BEYOND—SECURING ELECTIONS AND RESTORING VOTER CONFIDENCE**

Secretaries of State and their staffs are also working with their state legislatures to secure additional funding for improved cybersecurity, new voting machines, additional IT staff and to strengthen existing election systems.

In Indiana, we have migrated data, which has created more tailored services as a result of our unique election needs. Our outward facing websites and electronic poll books work on a mirror of the actual database, thereby mitigating and limiting potential for damage as a result of unauthorized access. We have also taken advantage of free services offered by DHS including cyber hygiene, risk and vulnerability testing and penetration testing. We have also done internal phishing campaigns to educate staff and counties. Earlier this month, we did our first risk-limiting audit in Marion County, which includes Indianapolis. The pilot went well and we are working to develop audits in each county. On Primary Election Day, we had cyber teams in place monitoring activity. I am pleased to report we did not see anything suspicious.

This will be an ongoing commitment by state and local election officials and our federal partners. It is my hope my testimony has provided you with many concrete examples of how we have taken positive steps to move forward from 2016. I look forward to continuing this journey with my colleagues and having a successful mid-term election.

In conclusion, NASS and its Members ask that Congress, DHS and others such as the EAC, help us in

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this process and work with us to further restore the nation's confidence in our elections.

I want to again thank the Members of this Committee for holding this hearing and giving me the opportunity to speak about this important matter on behalf of NASS.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have for me.