

Supporting Statement A

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Alternative Voting Methods Study

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The proposed information collection is necessary to meet requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15301). HAVA §241(a) requires the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to conduct and make available to the public studies regarding the election administration issues described in subsection (b). The goal of these studies is to promote methods of voting and administering elections which:

- (1) will be the most convenient, accessible, and easy to use for voters, including members of the uniformed services and overseas voters, individuals with disabilities, including the blind and visually impaired, and voters with limited proficiency in the English language;
- (2) will yield the most accurate, secure, and expeditious system for voting and tabulating election results;
- (3) will be nondiscriminatory and afford each registered and eligible voter an equal opportunity to vote and to have that vote counted; and
- (4) will be efficient and cost effective for use.

HAVA §241(b)(10) instructs the EAC to study the feasibility and advisability of conducting elections for Federal office on different days, at different places, and during different hours. The study should include a discussion of the advisability of establishing a uniform poll closing time and establishing:

- A legal public holiday under section 6103 of title 5 United States Code, as the date on which general elections for Federal office are held;
- The Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November, in every even numbered year, as a legal public holiday under such section;
- A date other than the Tuesday next after the 1st Monday in November, in every even numbered year as the date on which general elections for Federal office are held; and

HAVA §241(c) requires the EAC to submit to the President, to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on each study conducted under subsection (a) together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative actions as the EAC determines are appropriate.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The proposed information collection is a one-time activity designed to meet the requirements of HAVA §241(b)(10). The information will be collected through a statistically valid survey of 3,000 U.S. citizens to determine how they respond to alternative voting methods (if in a state that offers them) or would respond to alternative voting methods (if in a state that does not allow them). This survey will be representative of all fifty U.S. States and Puerto Rico. The topics that will be explored include, but are not limited to: voting by mail, voting at a consolidated polling center, voting online, voting earlier/later on Election Day, voting on a weekend day, voting on a day other than the first Tuesday in November, and making the day on which Federal elections are held a Federal holiday. In addition, standard background information will be gathered for each respondent, which includes but is not limited to: (1) voter registration history, (2) voting history, and (3) standard demographic questions covering: age, ethnicity, education, employment status, and income bracket.

The information will be assessed and evaluated to determine the feasibility and advisability of establishing a legal public holiday on election-day by making the first Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November a legal public holiday, or making another date on which elections will fall a legal public holiday. At the conclusion of the information collection, in accordance with HAVA §241(c), the EAC will submit to the President, to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on the findings of the proposed information collection together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative actions as the EAC determines are appropriate. The report will also be made available to the public on the EAC website at www.eac.gov.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The collection of information will utilize Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology. CATI will be used to conduct the public opinion survey. CATI is a telephone surveying technique in which the interviewer follows a script by a software application. The software is able to customize the flow of the questionnaire based on the answers provided, as well as information already known about the participant.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

This information collection is required by HAVA §241(b)(10). Previous and contemporaneous public opinion surveys on this subject have been reviewed to eliminate duplication.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

This collection of information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The proposed information collection is a one-time activity designed to meet the requirements of HAVA §241(b)(10). Failure to conduct the collection of this information may result in the EAC being unable to meet its statutory requirements under HAVA (42 U.S.C. 15301). The information collected will be assessed and evaluated to determine the feasibility and advisability of establishing a legal public holiday on election-day by making the first Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November a legal public holiday, or making another date on which elections will fall a legal public holiday. At the conclusion of the information collection, in accordance with HAVA §241(c), the EAC will submit to the President, to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on the findings of the proposed information collection together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative actions as the EAC determines are appropriate. The report will also be made available to the public on the EAC website at www.eac.gov.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Not applicable.

8. Provide a copy of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The EAC published a notice in the Federal Register on January 9, 2007, at 72 FR 962 soliciting comments for a period of sixty (60) days. A second notice was published on May 18, 2007, at 72 FR 28037 soliciting comments for a period of thirty (30) days. This information collection request received one comment. Overall, the comment demonstrated a support for the objectives of this study. Specifically, the comment indicated support for a key issue that will be examined in this study, namely, making the day on which Federal elections are held a Federal holiday. Providing several justifications for making Election Day a Federal holiday, the comment

concluded that the benefits outweigh any drawbacks. There were no suggestions for changes to the study and subsequently no action was taken. During the design of the information collection instrument, public opinion research and polls conducted by The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, CBS News, and NBC news. Input was also gathered from the U.S. Postal Service. A copy of the Federal Register notices, a summary of the comments received, and an explanation of the revisions made have been submitted with this ICR.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

We will not provide any payment or gift to respondents in this collection.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Prior to volunteering to participate, respondents will be assured that responses will not be associated with a particular respondent.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The study will gather information from 3,000 respondents. The estimated reporting burden is 750 hours (3,000 respondents X 15 minutes for the interview).

- a. Number of respondents = 3,000
- b. Number of responses per each respondent = 1
- c. Total annual responses = 1
- d. Hours per response = .25 hours (15 minutes)
- e. Total annual reporting burden = 750 hours (*# of respondents x frequency of response x hours of response*)

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).

We have identified no reporting and recordkeeping “non-hour cost” burdens associated with this proposed collection of information.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The estimated cost to the Federal Government is \$113,241. This estimate includes: \$82,044 for the public opinion research firm; \$27,915 for personnel; \$3,064 office expenses; and \$219 for transportation.

- We estimate \$82,044 for the public opinion research firm. This will include services for programming the survey instrument into a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system so that survey questions, instruction and response categories are displayed in the computer, conduct of 3,000 completed interviews, quality control, data entry, coding of data, and delivery of final data.
- We estimate \$27,915 for personnel to design the study, oversee its implementation, translate the questionnaire into Spanish, analyze data, and draft a report.
- We estimate \$3,064 for office expenses.
- We estimate \$219 for any transportation related to this project.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-I.

This is the first time this information collection has been performed by the Federal government.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

At the conclusion of the information collection, in accordance with HAVA §241(c), the EAC will submit to the President, to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on the findings of the proposed information collection together with such recommendations for administrative and legislative actions as the EAC determines are appropriate. The report will also be made available to the public on the EAC website at www.eac.gov.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not applicable to this collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

To the extent that the topics apply to this collection of information, the EAC is not making any exceptions to the “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”