

Committee on House Administration
Subcommittee on Elections

Oversight Hearing on the Election Assistance Commission
March 12, 2008

Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren
Opening Statement

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee on Elections oversight hearing on the Election Assistance Commission. The purpose of the hearing will be on what the EAC has done to improve its policies and procedures since our first hearing last August and what the EAC has planned leading up to the 2008 general elections.

The EAC has been operational for five years; however, it still is having difficulties becoming a fully functioning agency. Although the EAC has made changes since our last oversight hearing, recent reports by the agency's inspector general are cause for concern. As we will learn today, the IG found that the EAC lacks policies and procedures in all program areas, from document governance and accountability, short and long-term strategic plans and performance goals to a clearly defined organizational structure. Additional reports also cite to improvements need in the management of travel expenses.

Today we will also have the opportunity to discuss the just released IG investigative report on the Preparation of the Voter Fraud and Intimidation Report. This report has been the subject of much interest, both by the public and this committee. I appreciate the time and effort that went into this report and that the initial request for investigation came from the EAC Commissioners. While the investigation does not reveal that the political motivation was behind the changes and delayed release of the report, it does disclose a poorly conceived and managed project. The investigation coupled with the inspector general's testimony provides clear evidence of the Commission's lack of an effective organization and management structure.

However, we are not here to simply discuss what is wrong with the EAC. We are here to also learn what corrective action the EAC has taken since our last hearing and the agency's plans for the future. The EAC has received recommendations for change from the IG and has taken some steps towards developing sound goals, objectives, plans, policies and procedures and that should be acknowledged. Unfortunately we must now discuss if those changes are enough and what role the EAC is capable of playing, particularly in light of a highly charged 2008 presidential election.