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Address to NACRC and NACO  
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Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important meeting. It is an honor to be in your presence. You are the people who keep the American democratic model in tact. This country was founded upon a basic premise that those who are governed have the right to offer their consent. And that consent is granted through the exercise of casting our votes on Election Day.

America would not be America without free and fair elections. I was in South Africa when Nelson Mandela was released from jail. And when South Africa was attempting to rise above and go beyond its legacy of apartheid, American democracy was the model. Whether it's Poland or Nigeria or any part of the world, there is no society that has demonstrated an interest in democracy that has not factored in the American precedent, and the foundation of our democracy is managed by what you do. We certainly take pride in public education. We take pride in the free enterprise system. We take pride in scientific endeavor. We take pride in being the healthcare capital of the world. We take pride in all of what makes America America. But, without elections, we would not be the self-correcting society that we are.

We are the nation that has grown beyond the limitations of our founding. We are the nation that has been able to self-correct and eliminate legal slavery and the subjugation of women. We liberated children from exposure to sweatshops. We've conquered space. We've scoured the depths of the ocean. And we do so because we have a governance model that allows itself to correct and expand itself. We've not been invaded by a foreign country for regime change. We've not had sanctions imposed on us by the world community. We looked at ourselves - we've corrected ourselves and thus we are still, with all of our flaws, the best demonstration of civil society in the history of humanity. That's what America is.

And the foundation of that report is that men and women who are eligible to do so have the right to cast their ballots to choose people for positions and to weigh in on public questions. And for many Americans that is an *event*. For most people the greatest challenge on Election Day is to get to the polls before they close. But, for you, Election Day is a *process* and the challenge that you face in doing what you do is truly the untold story of America. If that story ever gets told, we will have to thank God for the men and women who work all year long to make sure people have access for the exercise of that franchise. And so it is an honor to be here because you are the ones who know that you have to recruit five poll workers in order to get three to show up. You are the ones who have to make sure there is enough pizza on election night so that you can hold on to your people long enough to count the votes. You are the ones who work in offices that are under funded, understaffed and underappreciated. You are the ones who know that if you do everything right all year long nobody will say a word -- nobody! But you can make

one mistake, one time, and you will be the focus of media attention, public scrutiny and it can ruin your career. Yet, notwithstanding all of that pressure, day in and day out you, and people like yourselves all across this country, get up in the morning and go to bed at night committed to the proposition that you will use all of your talents, all of your resources, to ensure that Americans have the right to vote.

I came from Washington today, on behalf of the new U.S. Election Assistance Commission, to thank you. Thank you for your labor. Thank you for your willingness to give of yourselves. Many of you have dragged your families into this elections business. Some of your children grew up in a polling place. And now here you are today attending this meeting, because you know that in November there will be two elections. One election will be reported upon and we will know who holds what positions. But the second election will be that which determines whether or not the voting process in this country has the integrity that democracy demands. And you know full well that there were “Floridas” long before Florida 2000. And so my job and the job of our Commission is to behave and conduct ourselves in such a manner that we in Washington do work that makes your jobs easier.

I’d like to describe how we perceive our tasks today.

I moved into a house about seven years ago. Everybody on the street had beautiful grass. My front yard looked like a dessert...without cactus. I decided that the best way to fix my problem was to get the same people who had helped my neighbors with their grass to help me with my front yard. So I called the fellow over and I said, “Can you help me with my yard?” He said, “What do you have in mind?” I said, “I want it to look like that person’s over there.” And he said something I’ll never forget. He said, “It’s going to take time and it’s going to take money.” And so when the White House called and said that President Bush wanted me to help address voting situation and serve on this election commission, it was clear to me that they needed to know the same thing about this mission that I had to know about my grass: It’s going to take time and it’s going to take money.

And I’m sure all of you are familiar by now with the Help America Vote Act, which is affectionately known as HAVA. And HAVA has a wonderful vision as it relates to elections in this country. The key component of that vision has to do with standards. And those standards require research and that research will take time and will cost money. It’s going to take time to expand and upgrade voting system standards against which voting systems technologies can be certified. It’s going to take time to do research that informs us about usability and what is the preferred construct for various types of devices to make it easier for people to vote. It’s going to take time for us to look into some of the security questions and their corresponding solutions as it relates to electronic voting. It’s going to take time to make sure we are as accessible as we would like to be to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the privacy of the voting booth. It’s going to take time to implement our statewide, computerized, voter-registration database lists. It’s going to take time to educate the population about some of the HAVA mandates that started January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. I was in New York with some of your

counterparts three weeks ago and found out that in New York City 62,000 mail-in voter registration forms arrived in January without the proper voter ID. It's going to take time for New York to teach the citizens of New York the new voter ID requirements and they'll have to work hard. And we hope to help them with this to ensure that those people are not turned away from voting, thus inciting suspicion that there is a move of disenfranchisement afoot. It's going to take time.

It's going to take time to identify additional independent testing authorities, because, in a country this size, with a system this complex we think that having one independent testing authority to certify voting systems hardware and two to certify software is inadequate for this country. It's going to take time to reconcile many of the issues we have with vendors and types of uses that we employ from different types of technologies. It's going to take time.

And the tension for us, in Washington today, is that the mandate of the Help America Vote Act is to do work that takes time. But the Commission that I chair is being called upon to have some value and some benefit and some impact this November. Quite frankly, the media and elected officials with whom I speak don't want to hear my lament about the fact that we, the EAC, just got started. They don't want to hear that our operating budget, \$1.2 million dollars, which is smaller than my church's budget and is inadequate for a federal commission with a national mission. They don't want to hear the fact that we need millions of dollars for research that are in no one's budget. They don't want to hear that. What they want to know is the answer to this question: "What have you done? What are you doing? And what will you do to make certain that in November 2004 we will not have the fiasco we had in 2000?" That's all they want to know. And, when I get them in private, I tell them stories about a fellow that walked on water and three fellows that made it out of a fiery furnace.

I told them when I first arrived in Washington that I felt like I was chairing a commission that has been asked to make brick without straw. And the last crowd that was asked to do that left town. And I had to think seriously about whether or not I, on a very personal level, would even continue in this mission. November 2 is critical to the future of this country. Not so much because of the fact that we are at war and people have intense interest in who leads us. That's important. Not so much because of the closeness of the last election and the polls predict that this will be close. That's important. But it's also important because America is going to observe what happens in the voting process and determine if what they see squares with our opinion of who we want to be.

I was Secretary of State of New Jersey on September 11, 2001. I went into New York in a small boat when you could still see the fire melting the steel at the World Trade Center like it was butter in a microwave oven. And it became clear to all of us that America was attacked because of who we are and what we stand for. And what happens in November in election number two will be an indication for many of what we stand for. Will we stand by and watch people be turned away from the polls because somebody died with their name and there was no way to tell that their name was purged from the voter list and now they can't vote? Will we stand by and watch people manipulate a system that is so

open that fraud can be perpetrated with impunity? Will we stand by and watch our young people die on foreign soil to bring about a more democratic State across the water while our people suspect that democracy is at risk right here at home? These are the types of questions people are asking and we will be assessed not only by ourselves but by the entire world.

In contemplating those things that will take time and cost money, we've had to come to some conclusions about those things we can do right now with the little time and little money that we have. And there are a few things I want to tell you as the EAC prepares to help you and help America prepare for November.

The first commitment we are making is to develop a HAVA toolkit that offers guidance to election officials concerning the new mandates created by HAVA. We are rapidly working on this resource and expect to send it to you in early July. (By the way if we get some more money we'll turn it into a HAVA tool box. And if we get even more money we'll call it a HAVA tool rack. But right now it's just a kit.) And that HAVA tool kit is going to offer guidance using responses that we've gotten from the field, using answers we've given to the States about certain national mandates created by HAVA that will be different in 2004 than it was in 2000. People frequently ask the question, "What's going to be different in 2004?" If you only read the newspapers, you could assume that the only real story is the voting machines. But in 2004 we will all have to manage something new called the provisional ballot. We are assembling information now that can help us teach the country about using provisional ballots in every polling place. This is a brand new challenge for most States. We call this the "No-voter-turned-away" provision of HAVA. And we want our tool kit to inform the country about how to get it right so that problems and violations related to provisional ballots will be minimized.

Certain voter registration ID requirements are also brand new nationally. Accessibility is a growing commitment that many jurisdictions have placed on the fast track to implement this year rather than to wait until 2006. The point is that we don't want to wait until November 3<sup>rd</sup> to talk about what went wrong yesterday. We want to start on July 1<sup>st</sup> helping people who want the help to know what the "do's and don'ts" are so they can prepare for November properly. And we're going to invite the States to help the States. There are many places that just get certain things right. And some of you have so much experience and so much passion and have used so much creativity that we want to capture what the industry might call "best practices" and put that in the HAVA tool kit so that no one feels overly burdened by the HAVA mandates that are national and new in 2004. Rather, along with those mandates, jurisdictions will get information that as the EAC begins to assume the role of clearinghouse for election administration information that HAVA intended. We will then become a conduit for information for that the election official that we visited just a few days ago that has 2,000 people in her district and where every call is a long distance call. We believe that there is some experience in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Oregon or other States that can help that local election official get it right. So the HAVA tool kit -- hopefully it will become the HAVA tool box -- is a product we are creating right now, that we will spend four months distributing to not only local election officials but also to advocacy groups such as the League of Women Voters, the

NAACP, church groups, and People for the American Way, and Republican activists, and Democratic activists, so that we can all have the same information about the requirements of HAVA.

The second objective that we're going to accomplish is development of best practices for the various types of voting devices. This is a direct outgrowth of our public hearing that the EAC held on May 5<sup>th</sup> on the use, security and reliability of electronic voting machines. As you are aware, seventy four percent of the people in this country will vote on the exact same machine in 2004 as they did in 2000. The use of DRE's has doubled; the use of punch cards has been cut almost in half; the use of optical scan is up about 3 percent, but the majority of the country will vote on the exact same machine this time that they did last time. And what we must accomplish is better use in '04 than we had in 2000. The EAC desires to help local jurisdictions, again, know the "do's and don'ts," the best practices, so that where, for instance, lever machines are being used, we can help assure the people that using a lever machine can be done with integrity.

There are so many things that are just good elections systems practices that have nothing to do with the machines: how machines are moved, where they are stored, adequate training of the people who manage those devices. And you'd be surprised to know how many districts will have people who are brand new on the job, no training on the job, appointed by an elected official who gave them no handbook, no precedent and they're out there feeling virtually alone. They have no budget; they have no staff; they have no guidelines. All they have is newspaper reporters breathing down their necks waiting for them to make a mistake. We've got to help them now. The production of our best practices resources will be a part of what we offer so that people will not be able to say they just didn't know. We don't want people to say "We didn't know that when you use a punch-card voting device that you really have to sharpen the stylus and you have to remove the chads periodically." There are some things you have to do to stop a chad from hanging. Chads don't hang because they're bored. They hang because something is wrong. We had a county in Florida that used the optical scan machine and the whole county was in disarray because there was an alignment problem between the printing and the scanning.

Our reality is so generally different than the theories of major conspiracy that create the impression that voting in America is in technological free fall and that we just don't know what to do. There are some things we can do to increase the likelihood of reliability; decrease the likelihood of irregularity. That work is in your hands and we feel that it's our responsibility to serve you well by sharing with you the best information that America has to offer.

But at the end of the day I don't think anyone will disagree that the greatest threat to voting in this country has less to do with source code and more to do with finding people who don't mind getting up at four o'clock in the morning and getting to the firehouse on time. Months before Election Day morning you need trained people in reserve who are willing to be deployed to polling places, And now that the technology is more prevalent and the rules have changed, you need people who have attended more training to insure

that they are helping in a way that is really help. Reports from around the country suggest that it is not easy to recruit these workers everywhere. We have a few problems when it comes to poll workers and I am not talking about IQ. What I'm saying is this: after World War II there was a spirit of patriotism in this country and housewives felt that it was their duty to work the polls. Their generation now is getting up in age. The average poll worker or election judge in America can't be younger than 65. We don't have a pool of young people in the bullpen warming up to take their places. It is becoming less and less popular for people to take time to be trained and work the polls. It's hard work. You know it. You do it. And then in other parts of the country we find, particularly in urban areas, that some poll workers are showing up because they need the money. And when you find someone who is so desperate that they need to work from six in the morning until midnight for fifty dollars, then we are really in big trouble. Those two realities are causing us to have an emerging crisis. If everybody in America were to register to vote and then show up to vote, it would break the system because we don't have enough folks to handle that level of voter response. There are 200,000 polling places in America. If the average polling place requires five to seven people, then we need an army of a million to a million and a half people in November. That means we have train about two million people to get our number. And that's not all election officials and administrators have to do. If you had a recruitment and training department in your town that just worked on the recruitment, training and deployment of poll workers, you might be able do it. But most of you are your own recruiters and trainers. You've got other things to do. And so here's what the EAC will offer.

We have begun meeting with executives of national companies to discuss a National Poll Worker Recruitment Initiative. I believe that corporate America has got to support letting people off from their jobs, without having to take a sick day or vacation day, to help you on Election Day. It's time for corporate America to support people working on polls in the exact same way that corporate America supports people serving on juries without jeopardizing their jobs. Therefore, in a few days the EAC will launch a national poll worker initiative. We're going to invite corporate America to promote this throughout the ranks of their employees the same way they promote donating to charities like the United Way or volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. I want corporate America and national organizations to recruit people that you can train and use at the polls this November. We want to help you fill this gap.

Finally, on Election Day we want to do some research. We'd like to know, for the first time in history, how many people voted on Election Day in 2004. We already know how to determine how many votes a particular candidate received. However, there is no national repository that collects the data about how many people voted. And the reason that's important is because if candidate "A" got 50 million votes and candidate "B" got 49 million votes, that's 99 million votes. But if 125 million people actually vote, then we have a different kind of issue that we can measure and then research to find out why we have such a significant national drop off. We don't know today. We don't know the national failure rate of any particular voting technology. And so if you decide to buy a particular type of machine in one State, we can't tell you how that machine has performed all across the country. There's something wrong with that. There is

something wrong with us giving States \$3 billion dollars in federal money – much of it to be used for new equipment - and no one can tell you the performance record of any particular piece of voting equipment. We are launching by faith. And I'm a man of faith. But I also like some facts that are based on hard data. We want to collect that data on Election Day.

And so we want to create a tool kit that will help you. We want to provide best practices that will inform you. And we plan to recruit poll workers that can serve you well. And we're doing this because we believe that true and fair elections are fundamental to the demonstration of a free society. We took our young sons to Florida for a family vacation while I was New Jersey Secretary of State. When we got to Florida, one of my sons asked me this question: "Dad do you still have your power?" He was a fourth grader at the time and I said, "What do you mean by power?" He said, "Well, you're the Secretary of State of New Jersey but we're in Florida now. So do you have your power?" Of course, a year later, I thanked God I was not the Secretary of State of Florida. I said, "Son, let me give you two answers. One, we're in Florida and here we're just normal citizens. We have no statutory responsibilities. I have no constitutional office. The State police won't pick us up and drive us around, I hope. But the second answer is this: Yes, I still have my power. I have the power to respect everybody irrespective of their background. I still have the power to love your mother and stay faithful to her until we die. I have the power to be a good father to you and take time to raise you myself. I still have the power to help somebody whose car is stuck on the side of the road. I still have my power. Power has nothing to do with your title. Power is derived from your values and what you stand for."

And I believe the values of this country stand for freedom, freedom as practiced through democratic principles. And you are the managers, therefore of that power. And I know that you sometimes feel powerless and abandoned and overworked and underpaid. I understand the profundity of the fact that you work just as hard as people in the private sector. Yet, you get no stock options, you probably don't make overtime your benefits aren't tremendous. I know that you are not getting rich doing this. I realize, in many ways, you're swimming up stream. And just like those of us on this federal commission, you've been asked to make bricks without straw. But I also understand that this country is a great country because people, nameless faceless people who didn't make a lot of money, give their time and dedicate their talent to make this the beacon of light and hope for the world. For, in spite of our flaws and inadequacies, there are still people who risk their lives on small boats to get here. In spite of all the criticism, the loudest voices of criticism I've heard still want to stay right here. They're not going anywhere. And, in large measure, they do it because of the work that you do.

So let me thank you on behalf of the federal government. Let me thank you, on behalf of democracy and freedom, for doing what you do and being who you are. And tell you if you hang in there, it's going to take some time and it's going to cost some money. But we will protect the legacy of freedom that has made our country the envy of the democratic world.

Thank you.

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