

July 16, 2009

Nothing is more important in a democracy than the integrity of the democratic process. Everything we do in this body is based on the assumption that the voters put us here as the result of a fair, accessible, and accurate process. If there is anything we should not shortchange, it is our ability to conduct the most exemplary elections in the world. And we have not reached that standard yet.

In fact, the major national election official organizations and more than 25 civil rights, disability rights and other public interest groups have asserted that local jurisdictions still need all the funding originally authorized by HAVA simply to carry out HAVA's original requirements.

I have heard the gentle lady speak. But this letter addressed to every Member of Congress from such organizations as the National Association of Counties, the National Association of Secretaries of State, the American Association of People with Disabilities, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and others says that it is "imperative," in their words, that State and local governments receive all the funding that is coming to them, that should be coming to them from HAVA. It should not be cut.

They need this funding for poll-worker training, for voter education and for putting in place voter systems that are accessible and reliable, and as we discussed earlier, auditable.

They say in this letter that full funding is necessary to fulfill the promise of HAVA, and I include this letter for the *Record*.

I urge my colleagues to support the modest HAVA funding in this bill and to defeat this amendment.