



The Protection & Advocacy System for South Carolina

June 24, 2013

Mark Nejbauer, Designated Federal Officer
Presidential Commission on Election Administration
General Services Administration
One Constitution Square
1275 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20417

Dear Mr. Nejbauer:

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (P&A) is the federally-designated organization implementing Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access in South Carolina. In response to your request for public comments on how to improve election administration, I have enclosed P&A's report, Polling Place Accessibility: Ensuring Access for Voters with Disabilities – Election Day Survey, completed after the November 2012 elections. It reports the results of P&A's survey of whether polling places have basic accessible features needed by voters with disabilities. The survey focused on areas of a polling place that are important to all voters, especially voters with disabilities, including access to parking, the entrance to the polling place, the voting area, availability of assistance, and accessible ballots.

The enclosed report summarizes the nearly 300 accessibility surveys completed on Election Day in 23 of the 46 counties in South Carolina. Many of the problems encountered by voters with disabilities in South Carolina are the same as in other states across our nation. We all need to work together to ensure that all voters, including people with disabilities, have an equal right to vote. Voting isn't a right. It's the right – the one that all our others depend upon. Many of the barriers encountered by people with disabilities and others completing the Polling Place Accessibility Survey can be easily corrected.

P&A recommends that:

- Poll workers have the training needed to work effectively with all voters, especially people with disabilities.
• Polling places are accessible to all voters, especially people with disabilities – from the parking lot to the voting machines.
• Curbside voting is implemented consistently at all precincts and poll workers are provided needed training on the implementation.
• Every precinct has the required number of poll workers to assist all voters, especially people with disabilities.

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Only then can all people with disabilities exercise the right to vote privately and independently.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on how to improve election administration. We look forward to following the work of the President's Commission on Election Administration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 803-217-6713 or prevost@pandasc.org or contact Vicki McGahee at 803-217-6702 or mcpahee@pandasc.org.

Sincerely,


Gloria M. Prevost
Executive Director

Enc.

cc: Vicki McGahee