

Ensuring Enfranchisement

Historically, the right to vote has not been applied equally across communities, counties, or states nationwide. Our nation's history is blemished by incidents of systematic voter disenfranchisement. As we engage in our efforts to protect the vote by safeguarding our communities against the practice of exclusion, please be aware of these specific rights provided for in HAVA, designed to help protect all-too-frequently disenfranchised communities.

Voters with Disabilities

- ▶ Under HAVA, every voting system must be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including, but not limited to, non-visual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters.
- ▶ According to HAVA, every polling place must use at least one direct recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities.

Language Minority Voters

Under HAVA, a voting system must provide alternative language accessibility as specified in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which covers jurisdictions meeting certain criteria regarding non-English speaking voters. The Voting Rights Act states that:

- ▶ Whenever any state or political subdivision covered by the Voting Rights Act provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language.
- ▶ If the predominant language is historically unwritten, the State or political subdivision may instead furnish oral instructions, assistance, or other information relating to registration and voting. Contact your local board of elections to determine regulations associated with voter assistance.