



State of Vermont

Office of the Secretary of State

128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-1101

[phone] 802-828-2363

[fax] 802-828-2496

www.sec.state.vt.us

James C. Condos, Secretary of State

Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary

December 21, 2017

For immediate release

Contact: Eric Covey, 802-828-2148

**Congress Must Step Up to Help States Protect the Integrity of Our Elections
By Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos**

As Vermont’s chief election official, ensuring the accuracy and integrity of our elections is one of my highest priorities. In a world of constantly changing technology we must stay ahead of those who seek to undermine the integrity of our elections. We must ensure that our elections are secure and free from interference, especially cyber-attacks from foreign entities like Russia.

Alongside election officials from around the country, I work hard daily to do just that, and to stay ahead of rapidly developing technology and those who would use it to harm our democratic process. As Congress approves the largest tax cut in history, I can’t envision an investment more important to our democracy than an infrastructure that ensures our elections remain tethered to the important principle of ‘one person, one vote.’

Today I’m calling upon Congress to fulfill their commitment to this value.

In 2002, Congress passed the “Help America Vote Act” (HAVA) to help states improve election systems and practices. Under the Act Congress committed \$3.9 billion to states for these efforts. However, today, fifteen years later, Congress still has yet to provide \$396 million of that funding. If members of Congress are serious about ensuring that our elections, the bedrock of this country’s democracy, remain protected from the electronic interference of those who would wish to do harm, it is imperative that they provide states with the remaining 396 million dollars due under the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

As existing election infrastructure ages, election officials are under increasing pressure to modernize and innovate in order to ensure that elections continue to be administered in a secure and efficient manner. These efforts have become even more important as election officials work to counter a new generation of cyber security threats to election systems. As I, and my colleagues around the country, work to update and maintain aging election systems, we’re calling upon Congress to assist us in this critical effort by providing states with the remaining funding under HAVA.

This investment will not solve all of the challenges we election officials face, but it will help states, including Vermont, enhance the efficiency and security of elections through the purchase of new voting systems, the implementation of additional cybersecurity tools, and the hiring of IT professionals.

My call to action for Congress doesn't stop with the release of remaining HAVA money. In addition, Congress should also be actively considering a "HAVA II" to support the work my colleagues and I are doing to protect our elections from interference by bad actors.

While the remaining \$396 million dollars under HAVA will help in assisting states in overcoming this new generation of threats to our elections systems, more funding beyond that amount will be required to meaningfully bring our country's elections systems up-to-date.

I would invite any member of Congress who does not believe that prioritizing the integrity and security of our elections is worthwhile to have an honest conversation with me and with the bi-partisan group of election officials from around the country who are calling for this much-needed investment. This is about the very core of our democracy, and how their actions strengthen or weaken our ability to carry out those fundamental democratic principles.

Every day I strive to ensure that elections are administered in a secure manner, whether it's protecting voter registration data from cybersecurity threats, or ensuring that votes cast are protected from tampering or manipulation. As election officials work to fulfill this commitment to improve voter confidence, Congress must fulfill its commitment to states by fully funding HAVA now, and by ensuring that there will be further investment in the security of our elections in the future to keep us ahead of the evolving threats in the digital age.

Only by doing so can we maintain the public's confidence in our elections, and in democracy itself. The stakes could not be higher, and Congress must step up.

###

www.sec.state.vt.us | www.facebook.com/SecretaryOfStateJimCondos | www.twitter.com/VermontSOS

