



United States Government Accountability Office
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Comptroller General
of the United States

Statement of the Comptroller General on Election-Related Matters
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GAO has received a number of comments pertaining to the recent national election processes. In the past, GAO has conducted a range of federal elections-related work, including broad-based systemic reviews primarily focusing on issues relating to federal election requirements and technologies. We also have ongoing and planned work relating to systemic election issues, involving reviews of voter registration processes, provisional voting, and voting technologies. In addition, GAO has reviewed federal entities charged with overseeing various aspects of election-related activities. For example, we recently issued a report on actions taken by the Department of Justice to investigate and pursue violations of federal laws related to voting irregularities emanating from prior national elections.¹ You may obtain copies of our published election-related reports on this web site.

While GAO has and will continue to do certain elections-related work, we are not authorized to engage in enforcement efforts relating to specific allegations of voting irregularities. Under the nation's legal framework, elections are a matter largely reserved to, and regulated by, the states.² Thus, many of the issues relating to the recent election are primarily the responsibility of state and local jurisdictions, since they involve the implementation of state law and regulation. As a result, general questions concerning these issues, as well as specific allegations of voting irregularities, should be addressed to state and local officials, such as the Secretary of State or the State Attorney General.

Congress has, however, asserted its prerogatives under the Elections Clause of the Constitution (Article I, Section 4, Clause 1) to impose certain procedural requirements on federal elections through such federal statutes as the Help America Vote Act and the National Voter Registration Act, both of which are enforced by the Department of Justice. In this regard, questions or allegations regarding federal voting irregularities generally are addressed by one of three federal entities. The name, areas of responsibility, and contact point for these entities are:

- The Civil Rights Division, Voting Section, at the Department of Justice: responsible for enforcing federal voting rights statutes. Information about how to

¹ GAO, *Department of Justice's Activities to Address Past Election-Related Voting Irregularities*, GAO-04-1041R (Washington D.C.: September 14, 2004).

² For example, as outlined in Article I, Section 4, Clause 1 of the Constitution (known as the Elections Clause), the legislature in each state is required to prescribe the "Times, Places and Manner" of holding elections for United States Senators and Representatives. The clause goes on to state that "...Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulation..."

file a complaint through the mail or by telephone can be found at www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/misc/contact.htm.

- The Criminal Division, Public Integrity Section, at the Department of Justice: responsible for enforcing federal criminal laws applicable to federal election fraud offenses, among other things, in conjunction with the 93 U.S. Attorneys. Information about how to contact the Criminal Division can be found at www.usdoj.gov/criminal.
- The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC): serves as a national clearinghouse and resource for information on the administration of federal elections. Information about the EAC can be found at www.eac.gov.

Specific allegations of voting irregularities should be addressed to the appropriate authority as described in the above framework. I assure you that GAO will continue to do its part in connection with important elections issues consistent with our scope of responsibility and authority.