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United States Senate

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COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6325

June 18, 2025

Dear Lieutenant Governors, Secretaries and Chief Election Officials:

I am writing to bring to your attention the significant election security cuts in the President’s proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget, which includes no funding for Election Security Grants.¹ The Trump Administration has also taken steps to slash the Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency (CISA) with a drastic cut of \$424 million and the elimination of over 1,000 positions, including the complete elimination of CISA’s \$40 million Election Security Program. The Administration also undercuts the work of election administration assistance, proposing a budget of \$17 million for the Election Assistance Commission (a cut of \$11 million, or 40%, from FY25 enacted levels).

As a former Secretary of State, I know the role that states primarily have in administering our elections and the importance of consistent federal funding assistance for the continuation of secure and safe American elections. As a result, I am very concerned that the President’s budget request leaves states to fend for themselves at a time when election administration costs are rising and there continue to be cybersecurity threats and emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence. In recent months, I have heard from election officials about how the lack of consistent funding impacts the budgeting for future investments made in election infrastructure. Without the ability to plan and align their needs with election equipment procurement cycles, states and localities are left under-utilizing federal funding, counter to the goals of the appropriated funds.

The budget also continues the concerning trend of a reduction in funding made available in each fiscal year since 2020. As you are all aware, the FY25 Continuing Resolution provided just \$15 million for Election Security Grants, which did not even allow the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to meet its non-discretionary minimum payment required in the previous FY24 appropriations law. It is imperative that Congress appropriate funding that allows states to address severe election administration needs, especially with some statewide elections in 2025 and midterm elections upcoming in 2026.

At a time of ongoing threats towards election officials, a reduction of election security funds would also impact the ability of officials to invest in their security. Following EAC guidance in June 2022, states have had the ability to use funds for “physical security services and social

¹The White House, *Technical Supplemental to the 2026 Budget, Appendix* (May 30, 2025) https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

media threat monitoring.”² Depriving states of these funds has many impacts on election administration, including the safety of those conducting the elections.

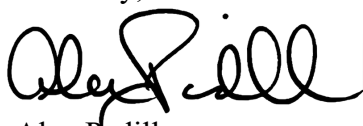
In addition to the alarming elimination of Election Security Grant funding, I am concerned that states will also be facing increasing risks and costs from severe personnel reductions and restrictions at CISA implemented by DOGE and the Department of Homeland Security. As you all know, CISA plays an instrumental role in the cybersecurity of our elections and countering dis- and misinformation. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration has frozen CISA’s election security work, eliminated funding for the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) and Multi-State ISAC, and it is reported that CISA has lost nearly a third of its workforce with election security personnel particularly targeted for termination.³

Given the impacts we are already seeing, if taken without changes, the proposed budget would have devastating impacts for election administration. However, this budget is just a proposal and as always Congress has the opportunity to exercise its power and determine final funding decisions and there is still time to communicate priorities to Members of Congress. The House Appropriations Committee’s DHS Appropriations bill, for example, includes a 5% reduction for CISA, instead of 18%. The relevant House subcommittee will meet to consider the bill containing the EAC and election security grant funding decisions on June 23. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet announced its schedule but will produce its own versions of the legislation.

As the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, I am committed to working with election administrators across the country to address your needs and protect our secure elections. As Congress debates the FY26 appropriations package, I encourage state election officials to share your election security priorities with your Congressional representatives, the impacts the President’s budget would have on your jurisdictions, and the value of Election Security Grant funding and protections for CISA in the final bill.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to my staff or I with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla

U.S. Senator

Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration

² U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Allowable Use of Funds: Physical Security Services and Social Media Threat Monitoring*. (June 2, 2022)

[https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/paymentgrants/Allowable Use of Funds Physical Security Services and Social Media Threat Monitoring EAC.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/paymentgrants/Allowable%20Use%20of%20Funds%20Physical%20Security%20Services%20and%20Social%20Media%20Threat%20Monitoring%20EAC.pdf).

³ Eric Geller, *CISA workforce cut by nearly one-third so far*, Cybersecurity Dive (June 4, 2025) <https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/cisa-departures-trump-workforce-purge/749796/>.