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Ranking Member Terri Sewell (AL-07)
Subcommittee on Elections
Committee on House Administration
“Examining Best Practices for Strengthening Election Security”
May 20, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. ET
Opening Statement, as prepared for delivery

“Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us.

“As Ranking Member of the Elections Subcommittee, I take very seriously the responsibility that Congress holds to our constituents and to the Constitution—to ensure our elections are fair and secure.

“Our elections are the foundation of public trust in self-government. Every American, regardless of race, religion, party, or ideology, deserves confidence that their vote will be counted accurately and that their election will be administered fairly.

“Yet the threats facing our elections are growing at an alarming pace. Voters at home see their right to vote targeted—whether by hostile state legislatures or regressive courts—all while election officials face targeted threats from radical groups at home and abroad. Moreover, Donald Trump and his allies have spread widely debunked conspiracy theories and false claims that are designed to undermine our collective belief in democracy.

“And now, the right-wing Supreme Court’s recent *Louisiana v. Callais* decision has ignited a five-alarm fire to the rights of voters in this country. As this hearing occurs, Republican state legislatures across the South are frantically redrawing Jim Crow era maps that could erase Black political representation at all levels of government in Republican controlled states. And as this administration continues to perpetuate the lie that the 2020 presidential election was stolen voter, suppression and discrimination is at a fever pitch.

“Just this week, President Trump created a taxpayer financed slush fund for January 6th insurrectionists, who violently tried to overthrow the results of the 2020 election. I think this is hypocrisy to its highest degree. We are here today doing important work to guarantee that election workers have the financial resources they need to do their jobs effectively, all awhile the President just greenlit payouts to people who committed heinous crimes aimed at undermining an election.

“During a moment of incredible political turmoil, election officials across the country are being asked to administer elections while Republican state legislatures change the rules of the game in their desperate scramble to consolidate power and suppress the voices of the people. Our election officials must navigate these changes while also suffering from inconsistent, and often inadequate, funding streams. This inconsistency in funding, in electoral districts, and in election schedules harms our poll workers and our election process.

“In my home state of Alabama, local election administrators and county officials are responsible for running elections across 67 counties, often with constrained budgets and outdated equipment that must still meet modern security standards.

“Federal support through the Help America Vote Act has helped Alabama and other states improve voting systems, strengthen cybersecurity, and modernize election administration. Since Congress passed HAVA, billions of dollars have been distributed nationwide to support election administration improvements, including election security grants specifically intended to modernize voting infrastructure and protect election systems from emerging threats.

“But even that funding has not been enough. Additional sustained federal funding would provide Alabama with much-needed assistance to better support county election officials who are often operating with limited staff and resources. Federal grants have already demonstrated measurable benefits nationwide in improving physical security, cybersecurity, accessibility, and election administration planning.

“Congress has a responsibility to act before vulnerabilities become crises. The cost of prevention is far lower than the cost of repairing public trust after a successful attack or major systems failure.

“Our democracy is one of the most important institutions we will ever steward. Not just as Members of Congress—as American citizens. Future generations will judge whether we met this moment in American history with resolve. As primary elections are currently underway and we get closer to the midterm elections, Americans must know that our elections will continue without fail. The votes of every citizen matter. Our elections are safe, secure, efficient—and every vote will count. Let us stand up for democracy. Let us stand up for the truth—for voters, for the power of the ballot box.

“Let us provide every state with the tools, resources, and sustained federal support necessary to protect the sacred right to vote and preserve confidence in American democracy for generations to come.

“I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about the ways that Congress can better support the EAC—can better support state and local election administrators.

“Thank you, Chairwoman Lee, and I yield back.”

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