



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

*United States Attorney Donald W. Washington
Western District of Louisiana*

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STATEMENT BY UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DONALD W. WASHINGTON RELATING TO NOVEMBER 2008 ELECTIONS

United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today the details of his office's efforts in connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day Program for the upcoming November 4, 2008 general elections.

In 2002, the Department of Justice established a nationwide Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative. The goals of this Initiative are to increase the Department's ability to deter voter intimidation, suppression, discrimination and election fraud and to prosecute these offenses whenever and wherever they occur – to make voting easier and cheating harder. Both goals are equally important. It is imperative that in pursuing voter integrity, ballot access is not in any way diminished or harmed. The Department's longstanding Election Day Program furthers the goals of the Initiative. The Program also is intended to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by providing local points of contact within the Department where the public can report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day. The franchise is the cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to the franchise exercise it, while those who seek to corrupt it are brought to justice.

In order to respond to complaints of election fraud or voting rights abuses on November 4, 2008, and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, USA Donald Washington stated that Assistant United States Attorneys will be on duty in this District while the polls are open. This federal district covers 42 parishes and includes the major cities of Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Lakes Charles and Lafayette, La. They can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: Shreveport: (318) 676-3600, and Lafayette: (337) 262-6618.

The FBI will also have Special Agents available in each field office and resident agency in this District to receive allegations of election fraud, intimidation, suppression and other election abuses. The FBI can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: Shreveport: (318) 864-2609, and Lafayette: (337) 233-2164.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767. Where voter intimidation or suppression tactics target voters on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin, please contact the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section at (202) 514-3204.

United States Attorney Donald Washington said, "Election fraud and voting rights abuses dilute the worth of votes honestly cast. They also corrupt the essence of our representative form of government. As crimes against both the individual and the government, they will be dealt with promptly and aggressively. Anyone who has information suggesting electoral corruption or voting rights abuses should make that information available immediately to my office, the FBI, or the Civil Rights Division."

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