



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

October 1, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Ashcroft", is written over the name "THE ATTORNEY GENERAL".

SUBJECT: VOTING INTEGRITY INITIATIVES

The right of citizens to vote and to have their vote count is a cornerstone of our democracy. Democratic elections ensure that the people rule by selecting their own leaders and by holding those leaders accountable at the voting booth. Any activity that disrupts or undermines the electoral process attacks democracy at its roots. The Justice Department, therefore, must take steps to ensure the integrity of the vote in federal elections, including the upcoming general election on November 5, 2002.

To that end, I have ordered the creation of a Department-wide Voting Integrity Initiative to spearhead our efforts to combat election fraud and civil rights offenses involving voting. This Initiative will be under the supervision of the Assistant Attorneys General of the Civil Rights Division and the Criminal Division.

As a part of this effort, I have decided that the following steps should be taken before the upcoming November 2002 general election to enhance the Department's ability to deter and prosecute aggressively election voting rights and election fraud offenses:

- **Coordination with State Officials.** Each United States Attorney should meet, prior to the November 2002 elections, with the Secretary of State, State Attorney General, or other state official responsible for handling election violations in his or her District. The purpose of this meeting is two-fold: 1) to underscore the Department's commitment to investigate, and, where appropriate, prosecute election fraud and voting rights offenses; and 2) to explore ways in which the Department and state and local election and law enforcement authorities can work together to deter electoral corruption and bring violators to justice. I am holding similar meetings before the November elections with the leadership of several national organizations whose memberships are essential to the election administration process.
- **Training Symposium.** The Department will host a day-long symposium on election and voting rights offenses for all Assistant United States Attorneys who have been appointed to serve as District Election Officers for the 2002 election cycle. The symposium will take place in Washington, D.C., on October 8, 2002. It will consist of presentations from senior Department officials, the Civil Rights and Criminal Divisions,

- and Assistant United States Attorneys who have prosecuted cases involving civil rights violations and corruption. Please ensure that the District Election Officers in your District come to Washington to participate in this event. You are, of course, also invited to attend.

Finally, on election day in November, the Department will once again have its nationwide Election Day Program in place. This Program was established over 25 years ago to respond to public concerns about the integrity of the electoral process. The goal of the Program is to have federal prosecutors and investigators readily available to the public for the purpose of receiving complaints during the period when the polls are open. The Program also ensures that the federal response to election fraud and voting rights allegations is both warranted and consistent nationally. You will receive additional information about this year's program shortly.

I know that each of you shares my belief that election fraud and voting rights abuses should not go unnoticed, or unpunished. Election crimes and civil rights offenses involving voting, along with other forms of public corruption, should be among the Department's highest priorities. I ask for your assistance in the efforts that the Department is undertaking to enhance our ability to deter election fraud and voting rights offenses, and to prosecute these serious crimes vigorously and effectively when they occur.