Statement of
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RTI International
Regarding the 2008 Election Administration & Voting Survey
Before the
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Washington, DC

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Madame Chair, Commissioners, and Executive Director Wilkey, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I am here on behalf of RTI International and I am summarizing our progress on the *2008 Election Administration & Voting Survey*. I am Sean Hogan, the deputy project director for the Election Survey. Our project director, Toby Moore, asked me to express his regrets that he is unable to be here today.

We are delighted to bring the resources of a large research institute to bear on the Election Day Survey, and RTI is proud to support the important work of the EAC. RTI is one of the country's largest non-profit research institutes, with more than 2,500 employees in offices around the country and overseas.

RTI began work on the Election Survey in July. Our first task was to organize our team of researchers, programmers and sub contractors and consultants to help administer the Election Survey.

Please allow me to describe briefly how we have organized our staff on this project. Dr. Moore has overall responsibility for our project. Before joining RTI, Dr. Moore was a redistricting expert for the Department of Justice and served as project manager for the Center for Democracy and Election Management at American University. He is involved in each step of our outreach to individual states and coordinating work with our research partners. Dr. Moore is responsible for making sure we adhere to our deadlines and budget.

I came on board in October and my job is to oversee data collection activities, work with our programmers and subcontractors to facilitate communication of data. My Ph.D. is in public policy analysis and I have spent my career in the field of data collection. I have been with RTI for five years. Our colleague Ryan Gordon, a survey specialist, is also heavily involved with all phases of the project, and Nathan Sikes in our Research Computing Division is overseeing development of the Election Survey webpage and our programmed instruments.

We are working with colleagues at three universities and two consulting firms in the execution of the Election Survey. The experience of our consultants on past Election Day Surveys has helped us anticipate and address potential problems in gaining state cooperation. We have also enjoyed working with Karen Lynn Dyson and Shelly Anderson, who have been directing our efforts.

Since beginning work, we have worked with EAC staff to prepare the proposed surveys for review at OMB and publish announcements in the Federal Register. We received and acted on public comments. This feedback led to led us to make minor revisions that lent greater clarity to the questions. This feedback helped us to ensure that appropriate response options would be available to meet the needs of each jurisdiction. Our next step was to format and administer the two components of the Election Survey. The first component is the quantitative portion, and the second part is the Statutory Overview. We are currently beginning to collect the quantitative information while we are preparing an analysis on the Statutory Overview.

Statutory Overview
The Statutory Overview is a new feature of the Election Survey. It will serve two purposes. First, it will allow the EAC, researchers, legislators and others to compare state laws and regulations governing elections in the States and Territories. Second, it will provide a richer context for understanding the quantitative data that states will submit next year.

This Statutory Overview is organized into three sections and covers 30 questions. It addresses laws and regulations related to the conduct of elections. It asks states to describe how they verify eligibility for voters and how they remove names from voter rolls. It collects information about how states use terms such as "spoiled ballot," and "defective ballot," "absentee voting," "active voter" and "inactive voter."

We transmitted the Statutory Overview to the states and territories in September. We assigned three members of our research staff –including Dr. Moore and myself-- to provide technical assistance and encouragement to the 55 states and territories. We each made periodic telephone and email contact. So far, we have received 48 completed surveys from the 55 jurisdictions.

On November 18 we sent the responses to the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Professor Dan Tokaji and his staff are performing the analysis and preparing a report for the EAC. The draft of this report and the Statutory Overview dataset will be delivered at the end of this month. Karen Lynn Dyson and her team will review and comment on the draft before we submit the final report in February. We will provide EAC with full text responses to each of the questions and in an electronic format

The Quantitative Portion of the Election Day Survey
The quantitative portion of the Election Day Survey focuses on collecting total numbers of voters, such as the numbers of UOCAVA voters, numbers of absentee voters and so on. It is organized into six separate sections and covers 835 data points. This is a large and complex data collection activity and we recognize that it is no small task for the states to collect and report these data to us.

Due to the complexity, RTI has implemented several steps to facilitate cooperation. First, we organized the states and territories so that three primary RTI staffers. As I mentioned earlier, the each of us is responsible to provide support to our own subset of jurisdictions. This fosters familiarity between the states and the RTI team member assigned to support that jurisdiction.

Second we distributed the final version of the questionnaire in September. By sending it prior to the election, states were able to anticipate the types of information we would be collecting. Third, we distributed a pre-formatted template for data entry. Fourth, we developed a website that states can log into and post data and receive updates from us. Fifth, we continue to adapt our data collection instruments to minimize burdens on states, maintain scientific rigor, and maximize the return of reliable data.

The backbone of our data collection is a customized, electronic data entry template. We sent these by email to each of the states and territories. Each state has its own template, which lists its local jurisdictions by name and FIPS code. The template is programmed to minimize data entry error by summing selected responses, or blocking out-of-range entries.

We also programmed a project website. The website describes the purpose of the data collection and provides additional copies of the forms. It has a link to the EAC's website. We also have a web-log in which we address common questions and concerns regarding the Election Day Survey and the Template. This website will allow states to upload completed forms to us.

We anticipate that states will vary significantly in how they collect the data. So RTI is working with them individually to provide them with the customized tools that will help them perform this task. For example we recently produced a customized data collection instrument to accommodate a request from California.

Finally, once we have received all of this data, each of our data collection staff will review results. We will ask states to verify responses before assembling our final database in March. At that point, we will work with our consultants to begin our analysis and the drafting of the various reports required by the EAC.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer your questions.

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