

CONCLUSION

A vibrant democracy demands the equal participation of all its citizens in the electoral process. As this report sets forth, many state and local officials, in spite of no new federal funding, are developing ways to make elections run more smoothly and efficiently and make the process accessible and available to as many voters as possible. Examples include modernizing voter registration systems, introducing innovative technology like iPads and electronic poll books at the polls to increase efficiency on Election Day; ensuring fully accessible polling locations; and developing programs to encourage the recruitment and development of the next generation of poll workers.

Yet, as the over 400 witnesses before the National Commission on Voting Rights testified, the election process in the United States continues to be overly complex and often challenging. Many voters still experience the sting of being turned away from the polls due to administrative errors, overly restrictive identification requirements, or poll workers ill-equipped to handle voter needs. Voters with disabilities often arrive at polling locations to find that accessible voting equipment is not functioning properly or that poll workers do not know how to operate the machines. Out-of-state college students have been denied regular ballots because their college addresses do not match their driver's licenses. Individuals convicted of a felony continue to face a maze of confusing rules and regulations around the restoration of their voting rights. And some states have reduced or cut completely early voting days and same day registration which encourage voters to turnout.

Only by instituting election laws and practices that remove barriers to civic participation will the nation meet its obligation to allow each citizen to exercise fully the right to vote.