

# STATE OF ALASKA

OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR

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## **NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Headline: HAVA State Plan Committee Discusses Election Reform**

*Subhead: First meeting demonstrates interest in voter accessibility, improved election official training, concern for voters in rural communities*

At its first meeting this week to review a draft plan proposed by the Division of Elections to meet federal requirements under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed by Congress last year, a State committee appointed by Lt. Governor Loren Lemman discussed issues of concern to Alaska's diverse voting population.

Alaska could receive up to \$15 million in federal funds through the plan. The first \$5 million could be received as early as late spring of this year. The remainder will require a 5 percent match from the State and would be received in Fiscal Years '05 and '06.

Lt. Governor Lemman opened the Wednesday teleconference by outlining HAVA goals and expressing appreciation both to the committee for serving and to the division, which prepared the preliminary plan.

"When it comes to election reform and advanced election technology, Alaska is one of the forerunners in the country. We have a few changes to make to our election laws, our voter registration and database, election equipment and accessibility, but I expect that Alaska will be able to make a clean transition into compliance with the federal act," he said.

HAVA committee members include:

- Senate President Gene Therriault
- House Majority Leader John B. Coghill
- Senator Donny Olson
- Representative Mary Kapsner
- Rural Affairs Assistant to the Governor Tara Sweeney
- Access Alaska Executive Director Jim Beck
- Alaska Independent Blind President Lynne Koral

(more)

## HAVA Committee Meeting

March 27, 2003

Add 1

- Anchorage League of Women Voters Member JoAnne Baker
- Elmendorf Installation Voting Officer Major Tim Nelson
- Alternative Language Community Member Mario Lim
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Municipal Clerk Mona Lisa Drexler
- City of Ketchikan Municipal Clerk Katy Suiter
- Region I Election Supervisor Pam Crowe
- Region II Acting Election Supervisor Doug Pryor
- Assistant Attorney General Sarah Felix
- Division of Elections Director Laura Glaiser, who chairs the committee and is responsible for the development and implementation of the plan

"I particularly appreciate seeing in the plan good ideas for handicapped accessibility at the polls and video presentations for election officials, many of whom live in remote areas of the State," said Drexler, the FNSB clerk.

Kapsner, a Representative from Bethel, said she appreciated the plan's consideration of "some of the smallest communities in the State" in its outline for improving training methods and producing voter-assistance information.

In this year's capital budget the division has requested the purchase of 10 direct recording electronic (DRE) voting units for voters with disabilities. HAVA requires that by FY'06 DREs be installed in every polling place in the State.

Alaska's HAVA committee will meet again on April 10. After that the plan goes out for public comment. It will then be forwarded to the Department of Justice for review and ultimately to the Federal Election Commission's Election Assistance Commission.

During the public comment period the Division of Elections will make the plan available online, at regional elections offices, through public notice and announcements, and through Legislative Information Offices and the Alaska Municipal League.

Further information about HAVA is available at the Division of Elections Director's Office: (907) 465-4611.