



July 27, 2020

Representative Marcia L. Fudge  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rodney Davis  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration  
Hearing: “Voting Rights and Election Administration in the US Virgin Islands and Other Territories”**

Dear Chairwoman Fudge and Ranking Member Davis:

On behalf of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) and the nationwide network of Protection & Advocacy (P&A) agencies, we commend the Subcommittee for examining voting rights and election administration in the US territories: US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands. We wish to submit this letter for the Subcommittee hearing record.

NDRN is the non-profit membership organization for the federally mandated P&As and Client Assistance Programs (CAPs) for individuals with disabilities. The P&As and CAPs were established by the United States Congress to protect the rights of people with disabilities and their families through legal support, advocacy, referral, and education. P&As and CAPs are in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US territories, and there is a P&A and CAP affiliated with the American Indian Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region of the Southwest. Collectively, the P&A and CAP Network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the US.

Through the Protection and Advocacy for Voter Access (PAVA) program, created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the P&As have a federal mandate to ensure the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote and accessing polling places and are the leading experts on access to the vote for people with disabilities in the US. The PAVA program allows P&As to advocate on behalf of voters with disabilities to ensure that they have access to all aspects of the American voting process. PAVA program funds allow P&As to conduct disability training to poll workers, distribute resources on how to conduct an accessible campaign, maintain voting hotlines, examine polling places for accessibility, and much more throughout the year.

PAVA program funding is currently awarded to all “eligible” P&As across the US. Unfortunately, because HAVA includes specific language about “states” only 55 out of the 57 P&As are currently eligible for PAVA program funding. The Northern Mariana Islands and the American Indian Consortium P&As do not receive PAVA funding since

they are not considered states and therefore have been ineligible for PAVA funding since HAVA passed in 2002.

It was always the intent for all P&As to participate in the PAVA program. We urge Congress to swiftly pass [H.R. 5510](#), the PAVA Program Inclusion Act, authorizing the distribution of grant funds to the Northern Mariana Islands and American Indian Consortium P&As to ensure that every P&A across the US can advocate on behalf of voters with disabilities.

Thank you for your work on this important topic and consideration of a technical fix to PAVA. If you have any questions please contact Erika Hudson, Public Policy Analyst, at [Erika.hudson@ndrn.org](mailto:Erika.hudson@ndrn.org) or (202) 408-9514 x134.

Sincerely,



Curtis L. Decker  
Executive Director