

January 28, 2020

Representative Zoe Lofgren
Chairwoman
House Administration Committee
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
House Administration Committee
1740 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis:

The undersigned 57 Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems write today to express our support to amend the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to explicitly authorize the distribution of Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA) program funds to the Northern Mariana Islands and the American Indian Consortium P&As.

P&A systems are federally mandated, and pursue legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies under all applicable federal and state laws to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. There are a total of 57 P&As operating in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). There is also a P&A affiliated with the American Indian Consortium serving Native Americans with disabilities in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

In 2002, Congress passed HAVA acknowledging the unique obstacles people with disabilities face at the polls, and authorized funding for the PAVA program. 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 “eligible” P&As across the country. 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.

It was always the intent for all 57 P&As to participate in the PAVA program. Thus, we support Congress passing legislation that would provide a long overdue technical fix

explicitly authorizing the distribution of grant funds to the Northern Mariana Islands and American Indian Consortium P&As.

Thank you for your work on this important topic and consideration of a technical fix. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Eric Buehlmann, Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy at Eric.Buehlmann@ndrn.org or Erika Hudson, Public Policy Analyst at Erika.hudson@ndrn.org.

Sincerely,

AK Disability Law Center of Alaska
AL Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP)
AR Disability Rights Arkansas, Inc.
AS Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
AZ Arizona Center for Disability Law
CA Disability Rights California
CO Center for Legal Advocacy d/b/a Disability Law Colorado
CT Disability Rights Connecticut
DC University Legal Services/Disability Rights D.C.
DE Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.
FL Disability Rights Florida
GA Georgia Advocacy Office
GU Guam Legal Services Corporation-Disability Law Center
HI Hawaii Disability Rights Center
IA Disability Rights Iowa
ID Disability Rights Idaho
IL Equip for Equality
IN Indiana Disability Rights / Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services
KS Disability Rights Center of Kansas
KY Kentucky Protection & Advocacy
LA Advocacy Center
MA Disability Law Center
MD Disability Rights Maryland
ME Disability Rights Maine
MI Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc.
MN Minnesota Disability Law Center
MO Missouri Protection & Advocacy Services
MP Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy System
MS Disability Rights Mississippi
MT Disability Rights Montana
NA Native American Disability Law Center
NC Disability Rights North Carolina
ND North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project
NE Disability Rights Nebraska (formerly Nebraska Advocacy Services)
NH Disability Rights Center - NH
NJ Disability Rights New Jersey

NM Disability Rights New Mexico
NV Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center
NY Disability Rights New York
OH Disability Rights Ohio
OK Oklahoma Disability Law Center, Inc.
OR Disability Rights Oregon
PA Disability Rights Pennsylvania
PR Executive Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
RI Disability Rights Rhode Island
SC Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc.
SD Disability Rights South Dakota d/b/a South Dakota Advocacy Services
TN Disability Rights Tennessee
TX Disability Rights Texas
UT Disability Law Center
VA disAbility Law Center of Virginia
VI Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands
VT Disability Rights Vermont
WA Disability Rights Washington
WI Disability Rights Wisconsin
WV Disability Rights of WV
WY Wyoming Protection & Advocacy System, Inc.