# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2004

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

We are writing to request that the General Accounting Office (GAO) complete a study of critical issues that concern the integrity of the voting process in the United States. The ability of Americans to register to vote, cast a ballot and have each vote counted in the upcoming Federal election are issues central to the health of our democracy. The importance of an immediate review by the respected professionals at GAO cannot be overstated.

We understand that you already have pending a request for an important study regarding state and local efforts to improve the security and reliability of electronic voting machines and the best practices that should be employed with respect to those machines. We also understand that the GAO will conduct a post-election survey of state and local election officials to determine the extent to which they followed such practices and state policy and procedures. We look forward to learning of your findings.

In addition to those issues, however, there are four pressing issues that need to be appropriately addressed and remedied by federal, state and local governments before this November's elections. It is critical that we take an academic and dispassionate look at these issues to assist state and local governments in eliminating avoidable election problems.

In order to facilitate the GAO's expeditious review of the issues, we believe there are four questions that should be posed to each of the fifty states. They are:

1. Provisional Voting: If a state resident is registered to vote under state law and casts a provisional ballot but in the wrong precinct within the state, will that provisional ballot be counted for purposes of presidential and congressional elections? What other state rules govern whether a provisional ballot will be counted?

2. Voter Registration: If a citizen registering to vote attests to his or her citizenship and age when signing the voter registration form, but does not additionally check a box indicating that he or she is of age and is a citizen, is the voter registration form accepted or rejected? What process is used to notify applicants that their form has been rejected?

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

3. Identification: Which voters must provide identification on Election Day, and, what if any identification is required?

4. Purging of Voters: Since 2002, has the State (or local jurisdiction) conducted, or will it conduct before November 2004, any felon or death purges? If such purges have been or will be conducted before November 2004, what methods have or will be used, including safeguards to protect against erroneous purges? How and when is the State notifying the persons who have been or will be purged?

* * *

Given the importance and urgency of these issues and the concise nature of these limited questions, we ask that the GAO provide us with the results of this survey no later than September 15, 2004. GAO staff should feel free to contact Leecia Eve, Counsel to Senator Clinton (224-2348), or Paul Braithwaite, Executive Director of the Congressional Black Caucus (226-8488), for any additional information.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these issues of vital importance to our nation.

Sincerely,

Tom Daschle

Nancy Pelosi

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Elijah E Cummings

Lucille Rodriguez

Michael Honda

John B. Larson

John Conyers Jr.

Patrick Leahy