



Introduction

Center for Election Confidence, Inc. (“CEC”) is a non-profit organization recognized as a key “civil society group”¹ that promotes ethics, integrity, and professionalism in the electoral process. CEC works to ensure that all citizens can vote freely within an election system of reasonable procedures that promote election integrity, prevent vote dilution and disenfranchisement, and instill public confidence in election systems and outcomes.

CEC submits these comments to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (“EAC”) in response to its May 12, 2026, Notice of Public Meeting, Dkt. no. EAC-2026-0199, 91 FR 25871, concerning “a virtual public meeting to obtain further information on election official training programs.”

CEC’s interest in training programs and professional development initiatives for election officials relates directly to the organization’s purpose of “advancing the role of ethics, integrity, and legal professionalism in the electoral process, including safeguarding the right of eligible voters to vote” by undertaking efforts that “increas[e] confidence in election results and election systems”.²

I. Training Programs and Professional Development for Election Officials Generally

The importance of well-constructed, topical, timely, and practical training programs and professional development initiatives for election officials nationwide is self-evident. In a given mid-term election year, more than 650,000 election officials, including poll workers, administer elections for hundreds of thousands of elected offices in thousands of jurisdictions.³

And each of those elections requires drafting innumerable ballot styles, preparation for a variety of modes of voting (including early in-person voting, mail voting, absentee voting, overseas voting, military voting, in-person voting on Election Day, and provisional balloting), testing, certification, programming, and public demonstration of large amounts of voting equipment, preparation and proofing of pollbook materials, coordination with a variety of vendors, and public-facing service to voters before, during, and after the conduct of the election.

¹ Elena Patel, Brookings Institute (Dec. 30, 2025), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/when-a-postmark-no-longer-tracks-mailing/>.

² *About CEC*, Center for Election Confidence, <https://electionconfidence.org/about/>.

³ Rebecca Leppert, *Key facts about U.S. poll workers*, Pew Research Center (Oct. 24, 2024), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/10/24/key-facts-about-us-poll-workers/> (citing *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report*, U.S. Election Assistance Comm’n (2022), https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/2022_EAVS_Report_508c.pdf). See also Paul Gronke, *The Elections Workforce: How Many Election Workers are there Nationwide?*, EVIC News, Reed College (Apr. 23, 2024), <https://evic.reed.edu/evic-news/the-elections-workforce-how-many-election-workers-are-there-nationwide/> (citing *Today’s Election Administration Landscape*, Elections & Voting Information Center at Reed College (Feb. 2025), <https://evic.reed.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024-EVIC-LEO-Survey-Result-Report-Final-Source-File-v13.pdf>). Leslie Graves, *The Pathfinder: Our American Elections Mosaic*, PBS (Oct. 25, 2024), <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/preserving-democracy/2024/10/25/the-pathfinder-our-american-elections-mosaic/> (citing *Election Administration at State and Local Levels*, Nat’l Conf. of State Legislatures (Jan. 13, 2026), <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/election-administration-at-state-and-local-levels>). See also Leslie Graves, *Bringing it all together: Why robust information matters, part 1*, Ballotpedia Daily Brew (Oct. 17, 2025), https://ballotpedia.org/Daily_Brew:_October_17,_2025.

Protecting the integrity of and voters' confidence in the voting process, as well as the right to vote of every eligible citizen, demands that each of those steps—and others not mentioned—must be executed perfectly and without delay on every occasion. Even the most astute, curious, and unflappable election official has a complicated job.

For all of those reasons, the Center for Election Confidence supports efforts to ensure each person involved in the administration of American elections has access to top-notch training programs and professional development opportunities. Indeed, CEC was encouraged to hear from EAC Chairman Thomas Hicks that approximately 7,000 such individuals have taken advantage of the Commission's Learning Lab.⁴ This recent venture by the EAC is a novel and needed approach to fulfilling the federal government's long-standing election administration "clearinghouse", which, after years of management by the U.S. Government Accountability Office and the Federal Election Commission, was transferred by Congress to the EAC with the passage of the Help America Vote Act.⁵

II. Importance of Commitment to Curricula Free from Ideological Bias

As the EAC convenes its May 21, 2026, "virtual public meeting to obtain further information on election official training programs", CEC urges the Commission to focus its inquiry not only on the *quantity* of training available to election officials, but also—and perhaps more importantly—on the *quality* of such training. Assuming *arguendo* that the basics of election administration theory, law, and key concepts would be included in any training offered by a given jurisdiction or agency to election officials, what becomes the foremost inquiry is whether the training curriculum was prepared by a group of experts whose body of work verifiably reflects the intellectual and ideological diversity not only of the profession, but also of the Union as a whole and/or was reviewed by such a separate group of experts who also meet those criteria.

With voters' confidence experiencing severe, frequent, and regular turbulence since at least the 2000 presidential election—with public polling now reflecting voters' questions of confidence in election officials⁶—it is vital that the training adopted, certified, and/or provided to such officials is, first, above ideological reproach and, second, responsive to constructive feedback to address noted deficiencies with meeting the first requirement. Otherwise, any training program or professional development initiative is not fit for purpose.

Conclusion

The Center for Election Confidence urges the EAC to consider these comments as it conducts its public meeting on May 21, 2026.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of May 2026,

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⁴ See, e.g., Tweet: Center for Election Confidence (@voterconfidence), Twitter (May 20, 2026, 2:34 p.m. EDT), <https://x.com/voterconfidence/status/2057168225423499391> ("@EACgov Chair Thomas Hicks notes that over 7,000 election officials across America have taken part in EAC-led professional development training courses.").

⁵ Karen L. Shanton, *The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC): Overview and Selected Issues for Congress* 11, no. R45770, Cong. Research Svc. (Feb. 23, 2023), https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R45770/R45770.8.pdf (citing provisions of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 codified at 51 U.S.C. § 21131-21133).

⁶ In 2024, a Pew survey showed that only 48% of registered voters were "very confident that each [poll worker] will do a good job during the elections this November." 49% of registered voters reported at least some doubt. See Leppert *supra* n. 3.