

Election Officials Call on Congress to Secure Federal Elections

Dear Members of Congress,

We, U.S. election officials from across the country, are writing to request the appropriation of at least \$400 million in Election Security Grants in FY2024. We are Secretaries of State, poll workers, state, county, city, and township Supervisors, Commissioners, Recorders, and Clerks. All of us are united in a call for Congress to meet the moment and provide funding that will improve the security of our election system in the face of growing threats. This is a call that the American people strongly support on a bipartisan basis. A recent poll conducted by Citizen Data, in partnership with Issue One, revealed that 69% of Americans believe that the federal government should be just as, or more, responsible for election funding than local municipalities and states. The same poll found that 74% of Democrats and 66% of Republicans support federal funding of elections.

Running an election is not an every two or four year job. Nor is it a 9 to 5 job. As one County Clerk and Recorder from Colorado recently [stated](#), overseeing elections “is a seven-days-a-week kind of responsibility.” We are proud to shoulder that responsibility. But today that responsibility carries with it a set of tasks and threats that simply did not exist twenty years ago. Those threats require a concerted response from every level of our government.

Election officials now must counter mis- and disinformation about election processes on a bewildering array of news and social media platforms. We must adapt to changing state laws, implement federal mandates, and react to disruptive weather conditions. We must prepare for cyber attacks using outdated hardware and software, harden our buildings and sometimes personal homes against threats of violence, and respond to endless streams of information requests. We must also carry out our core responsibilities of registering voters, hiring poll workers, setting up and running polling places, processing and counting ballots, and certifying and auditing results.

State and local governments have long taken the lead in administering and paying for elections in the United States, but Congress has both a constitutional role and a responsibility to protect the security of federal elections. The American people, on a bipartisan basis, believe that the federal government should fund elections.

Federal election security grants, though only intermittently appropriated, have proven essential for state and local election officials to be able to respond to shifting threat environments during the last 20 years. Election officials across the country have [used these grants](#) to improve voter registration systems, replace paperless voting machines, purchase high-speed tabulators, implement post-election audits, install security and live-streaming cameras in ballot warehouses, and for many other essential improvements in election security.

This is money well spent. Alongside each of our signatures below, we have each included a brief description of how some of these grants have previously been spent in our states. As you can see, the programs funded by Congress' appropriations are critical to securing our election infrastructure.

We ask Congress to heed the call of U.S. election officials and responsibly invest in our critical election infrastructure. Appropriating \$400 million in Election Security Grants for FY2024 — with at least 50% going to local election offices — will help ensure our elections remain secure, free and fair.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

- **Bill Gates**, Supervisor, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (AZ)
 - Arizona has used previous federal funding to implement cybersecurity best practices, improving the physical security of election offices, and replacing voting equipment. The state has also used federal funding to begin implementation of a new statewide voter registration system, conduct statewide trainings, and place threat liaison officers in polling places on Election Day.
- **Cathy Darling Allen**, Clerk and Registrar of Voters, Shasta County (CA)
- **Neal Kelley**, Registrar of Voters (Ret.), Orange County (CA)
 - California has used previous federal funding to enhance election security safeguards and infrastructure, improve security of the statewide voter registration database and improve polling place accessibility. The state has also invested in recruitment for poll workers statewide in an effort to assist all county election offices conduct outreach efforts to voters.
- **Amber McReynolds**, Director of Elections (Ret.), City of Denver (CO)
- **George Stern**, County Clerk and Recorder (Ret.), Jefferson County (CO)
 - Colorado has used previous federal funding to develop and implement table top exercises on incident response, upgrade counties' voting equipment, and improve the state's risk-limiting audit system. The state also developed a user interface to allow voters to monitor the status of their ballot as a tool to counter foreign disinformation intended to decrease confidence in the American electoral process.
- **Denise Merrill**, Secretary of State (Ret.) (CT), former President of NASS & Chair of DHS Committee on Election Security
 - Connecticut has used previous federal funding to upgrade and replace the state's Centralized Voter Registration System, with a focus on increasing system cybersecurity and functionality and accessibility for local election officials. The state has also used federal funding for enhanced post-election audits, improved voter accessibility, and comprehensive cybersecurity training for all local election officials.

- **Barb Byrum**, County Clerk, Ingham County (MI)
- **Justin Roebuck**, County Clerk, Ottawa County (MI)
 - Michigan has used previous federal funding to enhance election security, improve the voting experience, and speed up ballot counting by equipping local election officials with electronic poll book laptops, encrypted drives, and software and hardware upgrades.
- **Steve Simon**, Secretary of State (MN)
 - Minnesota has used previous federal funding to provide local election officials with election security sub-grants, modernize the Statewide Voter Registration System, develop and administer election security training for election administrators, conduct cybersecurity trainings, and expand the state's Cyber Navigator Program.
- **Brianna Lennon**, County Clerk, Boone County (MO)
 - Missouri has used previous federal funding to modernize the state's Centralized Voter Registration System and to fund a multi-year contract that provides constant cyber defense monitoring of the voter registration system. The state has also sub-granted federal funds to local election officials to upgrade computer systems, perform security assessments of election equipment, enhance physical security of voting processes, and replace and maintain voting machines.
- **Ken Hamm**, Poll Worker, Clark County (NV)
- **Cisco Aguilar**, Secretary of State (NV)
 - Nevada has used previous federal funding to hire staff to lead the expansion of post-election audits and to improve security and standardize data transfer procedures for the statewide voter registration list. The state has also used federal funds to hire three contractors to implement new cybersecurity features for the statewide voter registration database, and to establish procedures for cybersecurity training for local election officials.
- **Dustin Czarny**, Elections Commissioner, Onondaga County (NY)
 - New York has used previous federal funding to conduct county-level risk assessments, install intrusion detection monitoring systems, conduct cybersecurity trainings, and improve cybersecurity preparedness at all levels of government. The state also used federal funds to create a Secure Elections Center to assist local election officials with developing and implementing security measures.
- **Tonya Wichman**, Director, Defiance County Board of Elections (OH)
 - Ohio has used previous federal funding to assist local election officials improve accessibility for disabled voters, install intrusion detection devices and monitoring services on election technology systems, and conduct proactive cybersecurity training for staff. The state has also used federal funds to acquire secure USB devices for election data and to support the implementation of risk limiting audits.

- **Al Schmidt**, Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth (PA)
 - Pennsylvania has used previous federal funding to modernize the state’s election infrastructure by purchasing new verifiable paper ballot systems and supporting local election officials in their efforts to provide voters with timely information about voting procedures, rights, and technology.
- **Gregg M. Amore**, Secretary of State (RI)
 - Rhode Island has used previous federal funding to upgrade and replace outdated voting equipment, create a post-election audit pilot program, and improve cybersecurity preparedness through sub-grants to local election officials. The state also used federal funds to hire an Elections Chief Information Security Officer to coordinate cybersecurity and election administration initiatives across all state and local election jurisdictions.
- **Jim Condos**, Secretary of State (Ret.) (VT)
 - Vermont has used previous federal funding to acquire new voting equipment, implement two-factor authentication for user access to the state’s election management system, perform post-election audits of federal elections, provide cybersecurity training to local election officials, and implement annual penetration testing of the election management system to respond to evolving cyber threats.
- **Dave Bjerke**, Director of Elections & General Registrar of Voters, City of Falls Church (VA)
 - Virginia has used previous federal funding to begin the modernization of the State Voter registration system, as well as to enhance election infrastructure and security systems, conduct cybersecurity training, and deploy a risk limiting audit tool kit for use by local election officials.
- **Julie Wise**, Director of Elections, King County (WA)
 - Washington State has used previous federal funding to increase both physical and cybersecurity across the state. From securing the statewide voter registration system to improving network capabilities to replacing dated equipment, these grants allowed both state and local officials to be ready to face new challenges and be prepared for whatever democracy throws their way.