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## Staff Secretary, White House Office of the Miers, Harriet E. - Presidential Remarks

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Folder Title:

Remarks on Election Reform Principles - 07/31/2001; 755662

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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Speech	Remarks on Election Reform Principles Draft #7	16	07/31/2001	Transferred
002	Draft	Remarks on Election Reform Principles Draft #7 [page 3]	1	07/31/2001	P6/b6;
003	Draft	Remarks on Election Reform Principles Draft #7 [page 3]	1	07/31/2001	P6/b6;
004	Draft	Remarks on Election Reform Principles Draft #7 with footnotes [page 4]	1	07/31/2001	P6/b6;

**COLLECTION TITLE:**

Staff Secretary, White House Office of the

**SERIES:**

Miers, Harriet E. - Presidential Remarks

**FOLDER TITLE:**

Remarks on Election Reform Principles - 07/31/2001; 755662

**FRC ID:**

6024

### RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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Collection Code: **CTRACK**

Staff Name: **PRESIDENT**

Document Date: **07/31/2001**

Correspondent:

Subject/Description: **PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: REMARKS ON ELECTION  
REFORM PRINCIPLES - JUL 31 01**

SCANNED  
BY  
ORM

Remarks on Election Reform Principles  
July 31, 2001  
Draft #7

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

7/31/01

After the last election, two former Presidents and a panel of distinguished Americans from both political parties gathered to consider ways to improve America's election system. They have produced an impressive report.

Today, I accept their report – and I  
recommend some key principles drawn  
from the report as guidelines for reform.

## Acknowledgments

- President Jimmy Carter
- President Gerald Ford, who cannot be present today, but who is represented by former House Minority Leader and Co-chairman of this Commission, Bob Michel [MIKE-uhl] *Phil Zelico*
- Members of the Commission
- Attorney General John Ashcroft
-

Our American democracy is an  
inspiration to the world. Yet the work of  
improving it is never finished. President  
Jimmy Carter and President Gerald  
Ford – two men who took part in another  
close election a quarter century ago and  
went on to forge a close friendship –  
have together produced  
recommendations for modernizing our  
electoral system.

*Frank*

~~With the aid~~ of the University of  
Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs  
and the Century Foundation. *As well* Mr. Carter  
and Mr. Ford recruited a commission of  
20 distinguished Americans from both  
parties and every region of the country. I  
respect the members so much that I  
appointed one of them Ambassador to  
Japan: Senator Howard Baker.

The others continued to take testimony. They held hearings in four states, listened to dozens of witnesses, and consulted widely with state and local officials. And they identified some important concerns. The overeagerness of the media to report the outcome of elections can distort elections. Some voting methods have much higher error rates than others.

And citizens with disabilities or with  
limited proficiency in English can  
encounter obstacles to the exercise of  
their democratic rights.

The commissioners brought a broad  
diversity of personal experience to bear.  
Seven commissioners, in addition to  
President Ford and President Carter,  
have been elected to office themselves,  
and have seen America's voting  
procedures up close and personal. //  
Other members have had experience  
enforcing our Nation's civil rights and  
voting rights laws.

Others are experts in constitutional law  
and the mechanics of our government.  
This commission's idealism is reinforced  
by deep practical expertise.

The commissioners offer many recommendations to strengthen our electoral system. Those recommendations are grounded in four fundamental principles, which I endorse and recommend to the Congress.

First, our Nation must continue to respect the primary role of state, county, and local governments in elections. In 2000, more than 100 million Americans cast votes in more than 190,000 polling places under the supervision of 1.4 million pollworkers. Our Nation is vast and vastly diverse – our elections cannot and should not be run out of Washington, D.C.

Second, the federal government can have a limited but responsible role in assisting states and localities to solve their problems with election administration, so that our voting technology and practices respect the value of every eligible vote.

Third, we must actively and vigorously enforce the laws that protect the voting rights of ethnic and racial minorities – of citizens who do not speak English fluently – and of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Let me say, by the way, how pleased I am that the commission cites the state of Texas as a model of voting accessibility.

Fourth and finally, we must act to uphold the voting rights of members of the armed services and of Americans living abroad. We must safeguard absentee ballots against abuse; and we must ensure that those Americans who risk their lives to defend American democracy are never prevented from participating in American democracy.

These are some of the core principles underlying the Commission's report. They are principles that should guide us all.

I commend the commissioners for their statesmanlike work. They have risen above partisan emotions to offer practical suggestions for improving our democracy. And Congress should rise to the occasion and follow their example.

7/31/01

Remarks on Election Reform Principles  
July 31, 2001  
Draft #7

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With the aid of the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs and the Century Foundation, Mr. Carter and Mr. Ford recruited a commission of 20 distinguished Americans from both parties and every region of the country. I respect the members so much that I appointed one of them Ambassador to Japan: Senator Howard Baker.

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*Drafted by: David Frum, Office of Speechwriting  
Office: 202/456-5640*

(b)(6)

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<sup>1</sup> Confirmed by John Bridgeland (X62895) and Brian Bescanceney (X62948) of OPD.

<sup>2</sup> In 1976, President Ford lost to President Carter 48% of the vote to 50.06% of the vote.

<sup>3</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Ambassador Baker was replaced by Robert Michel, still leaving a total of 20 members. "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> Public Hearing #1 — March 26, "Citizen Participation" — Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia; Public Hearing #2 — April 12, "Election Administration" — Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley,

and local officials.<sup>6</sup> And they identified some important concerns. The overeagerness of the media to report the outcome of elections can distort elections.<sup>7</sup> Some voting methods have much higher error rates than others.<sup>8</sup> And citizens with disabilities<sup>9</sup> or with limited proficiency in English<sup>10</sup> can encounter obstacles to the exercise of their democratic rights.

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First, our Nation must continue to respect the primary role of State, county, and local governments in elections. In 2000, more than 100 million<sup>12</sup> Americans cast votes in more than 190,000<sup>13</sup> polling places under

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California; Public Hearing #3 — May 24, "What the Law Requires" — Lyndon B. Johnson Library & Museum, Austin, Texas; Public Hearing #4 — June 5, "The American and International Experience" — Gerald R. Ford Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

<sup>6</sup> Witness lists can be found on the University of Virginia's The National Commission on Federal Election Reform website (<http://millercenter.virginia.edu/webcast.htm>).

<sup>7</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, Policy Recommendation #8, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, pp. 18, 69.

<sup>9</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, p. 39. Does not address as a problem of language. Addresses as an income group.

<sup>11</sup> Eleven numbered principal recommendations are in the report. Each recommendation has subsections. The four mentioned are what John Bridgeland of OPD (X62895) felt the President should stress out of those 11.

<sup>12</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, p. 29. Confirmed by additional sources, 105,586,274 according to the FEC Office of Election Administration. Used numbers from the Carter/Ford report to be consistent.

<sup>13</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft — Report to be released August 2001, p. 29. Confirmed by additional sources, 192,419 as of 1998 from Election Data Services.

the supervision of 1.4 million pollworkers.<sup>14</sup> Our Nation is vast and vastly diverse – our elections cannot and should not be run out of Washington, D.C.

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<sup>14</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, p. 29. Confirmed by additional sources, "Report and Recommendations to Improve America's Election System," National Commission on Election Standards and Reform, May 2001, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> This is an idea of the President's, not necessarily addressed as strongly in the report.

<sup>17</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, pp. 18, 69.

<sup>18</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> "To Restore Pride and Confidence in the Process of Democracy," Report of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, Draft – Report to be released August 2001, p.8.

<sup>20</sup> We say underlying here because some are not spelled out in the report, but are the principles OPD wants to put forward.

*Drafted by: David Frum, Office of Speechwriting  
Office: 202/456-5640*

(b)(6)