

WASHINGTON – Today, the Committee on House Administration, led by Chairman Robert Brady, D-Pa., and Ranking Republican Vernon Ehlers, R-Mich., heard from election officials and experts expressing concern over the dire need for increased voter education and adequate training for poll workers.

Testimony provided by witnesses, including state election officials and various nonprofit organizations associated with the MyVote1 national voter hotline, expressed the need for greater voter education through private and government initiatives. According to the Executive Director of the Reform Institute, Cecilia Martinez, callers inquiring about poll locations accounted for 78% of all calls received for the 2008 Presidential Primaries by the MyVote1 hotline. “Improving voter access to basic information must be a cornerstone of efforts to improve election administration,” Martinez noted in her testimony. “Citizen education and empowerment are one of the major pillars to building a resilient society.”

In addition to voter education, witnesses expressed concerns over the adequacy of poll worker training. In his testimony before the Committee, Radio Host Tom Joyner described callers’ frustration over uninformed poll workers and recommended that officials, “do a better job to train poll workers so they know how these machines work and how to fix problems.”

However, according to the Prince George’s County, MD Election Administrator, Alisha Alexander, ever-changing state and federal requirements make it difficult for the “underfunded and understaffed” election administrators to improve recruitment processes and training. In her testimony, Alexander cautioned, “legislators cannot continue to add layers of paperwork and technology and expect the volunteers who work at the polling places who receive four hours of training to understand it all.”

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.