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VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

National Institute of Standards and Technology 100 Bureau Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

**Public Comments on Draft of Promoting Access to Voting:
Recommendations for Addressing Barriers to Private and
Independent Voting**

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement appreciates the opportunity to comment on the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)'s Draft Report on *Promoting Access to Voting: Recommendations for Addressing Barriers to Private and Independent Voting*, as set forth by Executive Order 14019, Promoting Access to Voting.

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement's mission is to inform citizens, inspire creative cooperation, and catalyze change on issues of social justice, fairness, and opportunity. The Harkin Institute offers programming, research, and education in policy focus areas that defined Senator Tom Harkin's career: people with disabilities, labor and employment, retirement security, and wellness and nutrition.

As stated in Executive Order 14019, the right to vote is the foundation of American democracy. However, people with disabilities continue to face barriers to private and independent voting. These barriers are violations of the federal laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities. Overall, The Harkin Institute believes this draft report is a good start in addressing access to vote for people with disabilities. In the interest of not duplicating comments, The Harkin Institute strongly supports the public comment submitted by the National Disability Rights Network which provides a line-by-line analysis with recommended edits.



We take this opportunity to further emphasize the importance of involving and engaging the disability community in this process. The NIST specifically asked for feedback on the systemic barriers and systemic recommendations outlined in this draft. Our current system of voting was not designed for people with disabilities and continues to illegally place barriers on the right to vote. The only way to ensure people with disabilities can vote the way they want to, is to have the disability community at the table. The disability community is the primary stakeholder that will directly gain or lose access because of this report's recommendations. NIST must commit to collaborating with disability organizations and accessibility experts in crafting the final report. People with disabilities are the experts in determining accessibility needs for their community.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on this important draft report. The Harkin Institute applauds this step toward making voting accessible for voters with disabilities and looks forward to future developments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Van Sant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "V".

Daniel Van Sant
Director of Disability Policy