

To the Editor:

In just one month, in the midst of preparing for the 2018 midterm elections, 22 percent of all U.S. states and territories have begun to draw down nearly \$90 million in election security funds made available through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. Contrary to the misleading tone struck by a recent POLITICO article [“So far, few states have sought federal money to secure elections,” May 17, 2018], that is a remarkable rate of distributing federal funds that is both efficient and responsible.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has done much to ensure states receive federal funds in time for this appropriation to have a tangible impact on the 2018 midterm elections. However, characterizing these funds as the only way states can improve the security and resiliency of their election systems is misleading. States are and have for many years been working day and night to secure election systems and harden their defenses – cyber and otherwise. Simultaneously, election administrators are focused on recruiting poll workers, running primary elections, ensuring our military service members and other Americans overseas have the opportunity to vote, registering voters, and countless other responsibilities.

Equating the total funds actually transferred to states to insinuate that states are not eager to take advantage of new federal funds is not accurate. As we told POLITICO, the EAC has been in contact with almost all of the states and territories that are working to request new HAVA funds. Many are awaiting approval from their legislatures or working through state law or required administrative steps prior to submitting their requests. Based on our conversations with state election leaders, we anticipate distributing nearly all of the funds by July 2018.

Voters deserve the full picture when it comes to election security. States had already done a great deal of work to improve and shore up their systems by the time this appropriation, the first of its kind since FY2010, was enacted. Judging a state’s preparedness and dedication to securing the vote based on this measure alone is a careless oversimplification.

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