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SOS Toulouse Oliver Provides Election Security Testimony to U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver provided testimony on election cybersecurity to the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform today at a hearing entitled, “Cyber-Securing the Vote: Ensuring the Integrity of the U.S. Election System.” Secretary Toulouse Oliver provided her testimony in her capacity as New Mexico Secretary of State and as the Treasurer of the nonpartisan National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS).

“Election security is not a one-time issue. 2016 really brought a level of awareness to all of us about how serious election security truly is,” said Secretary Toulouse Oliver. “I personally believe that elections are severely underfunded particularly with regard to their significance.”

During her testimony at today’s hearing, Secretary Toulouse Oliver highlighted some of the election security best practices used in New Mexico, including the use of paper ballots and its robust post-election audit process. New Mexico is a national leader in its use of these practices, which are now being adopted by states throughout the country. Secretary Toulouse Oliver also discussed the work of the Election Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council (EIS-GCC), of which she is a founding member and one of only eight secretaries of state to serve. The EIS-GCC is made up of state and local election officials as well as representatives of federal agencies like the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and the Department of Homeland Security. EIS-GCC members are developing communication protocols and procedures to ensure that local, state and federal governments can collaboratively respond to any attempts to infiltrate U.S. election systems.

Secretary Toulouse Oliver shared how she plans to use the approximately \$3.6 million in Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funding that the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) will provide to New Mexico as a result of federal legislation that passed earlier in 2018 to help states secure their elections. Secretary Toulouse Oliver is using a portion of those funds to launch a new Election Security Program within her office’s Bureau of Elections. The program is creating and implementing security best practices to safeguard New Mexico’s sensitive election data and systems at the state and county level. It will also feature trainings and support to county clerks and their staff on cybersecurity issues.

Given that New Mexico already utilizes many election security best practices like paper ballots and post-election audits, Secretary Toulouse Oliver is helping county clerks modernize and improve their voting systems. She will allocate some of the HAVA funds to

counties so they can make various system upgrades that they cannot afford on their own, including the purchase of more robust vote tabulation systems. Some HAVA funds will also be used to hire a Native American Election Liaison to assist with voter education and outreach in tribal communities which exist in one third of New Mexico's counties.

Below is a list of panelists who participated in today's hearing:

- New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver
- U.S. Election Assistance Commissioner Thomas Hicks
- Christopher Krebs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Weber County (Utah) Clerk Auditor Ricky Hatch

You can watch a recording of today's hearing by clicking [here](#).

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