

Federal and State Officials Promote Telephone Hotline for Reporting Election Fraud and Voting Rights Abuses

In an effort to ensure that the November 8, 2016 elections are administered fairly in every city and town in Connecticut, **Deirdre M. Daly**, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, **Patricia M. Ferrick**, Special Agent in Charge of the New Haven Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, **Michael J. Brandi**, Executive Director of the Connecticut State Elections Enforcement Commission, **Denise Merrill**, Connecticut Secretary of the State, and **Kevin T. Kane**, Connecticut Chief State's Attorney, today announced that a telephone hotline will be available for use by anyone who witnesses or experiences voting irregularities on Election Day.

The hotline will be staffed by the Connecticut State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) during polling hours on Election Day. Anyone with knowledge of election fraud or voting rights abuses is encouraged to call **1-866-733-2463 (1-866-SEEC-INFO)** to report suspected violations. The number is toll-free statewide. Individuals also can call the SEEC at **860-256-2940**. The SEEC staff will answer questions, advise on complaint procedures and, if appropriate, request the assistance of state criminal or federal law enforcement authorities in the investigation and possible prosecution of the matter.

Citizens can also send an email to elections@ct.gov to communicate with the SEEC and the Secretary of the State's office on Election Day. The SEEC is the primary elections investigative and civil enforcement authority in Connecticut. The Secretary of the State's office is charged with overseeing all elections in Connecticut, which includes advising and assisting local Registrars of Voters and Town Clerks on their statutory responsibilities regarding administration of elections.

Federal law protects against crimes such as intimidating or bribing voters, buying and selling votes, altering vote tallies, stuffing ballot boxes, and marking ballots for voters against their wishes or without their input. It also contains special protections for the rights of voters and provides that they can vote free from acts that intimidate or harass them. For example, actions of persons designed to interrupt or intimidate voters at polling places by questioning or challenging them, or by photographing or videotaping them, under the pretext that these are actions to uncover illegal voting may violate federal voting rights law. Further, federal law protects the right of voters to mark their own ballot or to be assisted by a person of their choice.

On Election Day, representatives of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI will be in direct contact with the SEEC, the Secretary of the State's office and the office of the Chief State's Attorney in order to receive any complaints of electoral corruption or civil rights violations. **Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Wines** has been appointed to serve as the District Election Officer for the District of Connecticut. In that capacity, she is responsible for overseeing the District's handling of complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses in consultation with Justice Department Headquarters in Washington.

The FBI in Connecticut and across the country will have special agents available to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses on Election Day. The local FBI field office in New Haven can be reached directly at 203-777-6311, and the U.S. Attorney's Office can be reached at 203-821-3700. In addition, complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington by calling 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767, or by emailing voting.section@usdoj.gov.