



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR ELECTIONS IN TEXAS

(Beaumont, Texas) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced today that three Assistant United States Attorneys in the Eastern District of Texas, will lead the efforts of his Office in connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day Program for the upcoming November 2, 2004 general elections. AUSAs Michelle Englade in Beaumont, Andrew Stover in Plano and Tom Gibson in Tyler have been appointed to serve as District Election Officers for the Eastern District of Texas, and in that capacity are responsible for overseeing the District's handling of complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses in consultation with Justice Department Headquarters.

Two years ago, in October of 2002, Attorney General Ashcroft established a Department-wide Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative. The goals of this Initiative are to increase the Department's ability to deter election fraud and discrimination at the polls and to prosecute these offenses whenever and wherever they occur - to make voting easier and cheating harder. Both goals are equally important. It is imperative that in pursuing voter integrity, ballot access is not in any way diminished or harmed. The Department's long-standing Election Day Program furthers the goals of the Initiative. The Program also is intended to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by providing local points of contact within the

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Department where the public can report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day. The franchise is the cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to the franchise exercise it, while those who seek to corrupt it are brought to justice.

In order to respond to complaints of election fraud or voting rights abuses on November 2, 2004, and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, U.S. Attorney Orwig stated that Assistant United States Attorneys Englade, Stover and Gibson will be on duty in this District while the polls are open. They can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: **409-839-2538 in the Beaumont area, 972-509-1201 in the Plano area and 903-590-1400 in the Tyler area.**

The FBI will also have Special Agents available in each field office and resident agency in this District to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses. The FBI can be reached by the public at 409-832-8571 in Beaumont or 903-592-4301 in Tyler.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767.

United States Attorney Orwig said, "Just as it is our duty to vote, it is our duty to ensure that all votes are cast in a fair election, free of corruption and discrimination." Orwig encourages citizens to be vigilant at the polls and report suspected abuse immediately.

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