



The United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Louisiana

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**STATEMENT BY UNITED STATES ATTORNEY STEPHANIE A. FINLEY
RELATING TO NOVEMBER 2012 ELECTIONS**

United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today the details of her office's efforts in connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day Program for the upcoming November 6, 2012 general elections.

"Every citizen must be able to vote without interference or discrimination and to have that vote counted without it being stolen because of fraud. The Department of Justice will act promptly and aggressively to protect the integrity of the election process," United States Attorney Finley said.

The Department of Justice has an important role in deterring election fraud and discrimination at the polls and combating these violations whenever and wherever they occur. The Department's longstanding Election Day Program furthers these goals and also seeks to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by providing local points of contact within the Department for the public to report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day.

Federal law protects against such crimes 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.

The franchise is the cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to the franchise exercise it if they choose, and that 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 6, 2012, and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, United States Attorney Finley stated that Assistant United States Attorneys will be on duty in this District while the polls are open. **They can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: Shreveport (318-676-3600) or Lafayette (337-262-6618).** The Western District of Louisiana covers 42 parishes and includes the major cities of Shreveport and Lafayette, as well as Monroe, Alexandria and Lake Charles.

In addition, the FBI will have special agents available in each field office and resident agency throughout the country to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses on election day. **The local FBI field office can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: Shreveport (318-864-2609) or Lafayette (337-233-2164).**

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

United States Attorney Finley said, "Ensuring free and fair elections depends in large part on the cooperation of the American electorate. It is imperative that those who have specific information about discrimination or election fraud make that information available immediately to my Office, the FBI, or the Civil Rights Division."

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