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Media Advisory

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Interviews with experts/ students and photo/video opportunities available

Cleveland State leads first national study to address election pollworker shortage by recruiting college students

What: In response to the shrinking pool of Election Day pollworkers, the Center for Election Integrity at Cleveland State University **is conducting the first national study to determine the best ways to recruit, retain and train college students as pollworkers, and is developing a how-to manual for colleges nationwide.**

The study is funded by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and will be completed in December 2006. **Once approved by the EAC, the guidebook will be the first of its kind to be distributed nationally.**

As part of the project, three higher education institutions – a public university, a private college and a community college – have begun field testing the guidebook. Cleveland State University, Suffolk College in Boston and Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan began recruiting college students as pollworkers this fall. To date, more than 280 Cleveland State students have been recruited and are being trained. Cleveland State also passed a new policy allowing student pollworkers to miss class on Election Day (and earn up to \$172) and not be penalized, as long as they make up assignments.

Why: The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) brought to the forefront a major issue plaguing many election jurisdictions across the U.S.: **a shrinking pool of qualified pollworkers in an increasingly technology-driven Election Day system.** Recruiting college students to serve as pollworkers helps address the problem because:

- College students are well educated and oriented toward learning.
- They tend to be comfortable with computers and other new technologies, and may bring skills to help solve technology-related problems.
- They generally have the energy and enthusiasm to make it through a long day at the polls.
- They often have flexible schedules to accommodate pollworker training and election day work.
- They are more likely to vote and adopt a lifelong commitment to civic involvement if they are encouraged and integrated into the democratic system at an early age.

College students are not, however, the only solution to the pollworker shortage problem. They may not be registered to vote in the same state or county where they study; they may work for only one or two elections; and classes and assignments can conflict with working a full Election Day. Given those issues, however, they are an excellent resource.

Who: Abigail Horn of Cleveland State is leading the national study. She is the College Pollworker National Study Director for the Center for Election Integrity, and a Program Manager at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs.

(More)

Anita Ruf-Young and Kathi Howard-Primes from Cleveland State's Career Services Center are leading the Cleveland State student pollworker recruitment effort.

For more information: please visit <http://urban.csuohio.edu/cei/pollworkers> or call Cleveland State's Department of Marketing and Public Affairs at (216) 687-2290.

About the Center for Election Integrity

The Center for Election Integrity (CEI) is a partnership of Cleveland State's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs. It draws upon the long-standing expertise from both colleges in electoral and regulatory law, public administration and civic education. CEI provides research, training, consultation and public education to assist Ohio in becoming the leader in transparent, legal, efficient and accurate elections.

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and the County Commissioners have jointly appointed the CEI to serve as the Public Monitor for the County Board of Election's conduct of elections with the goal of ensuring a lawful, equitable, and secure electoral system that produces accurate and verifiable election results. As Public Monitor, the Center will provide frequent public reports on Cuyahoga County's progress toward election administrative excellence, and on any risks that develop in preparation for its conduct of an election.

The Election Review Panel's report can be found at <http://www.cuyahogavoting.org>

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