

PRESS RELEASE

Erik C. Peterson
United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin
(608) 264-5158
TTY (608) 264-5006
www.usdoj.gov/usao/wiw

For Immediate Release

October 20, 2008

Contact Person

Stephen Ehlke
Assistant U.S. Attorney

DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER APPOINTED FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Stephen Ehlke, an Assistant United States Attorney in the Western District of Wisconsin, will lead the efforts of the United States Attorney's Office in connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day Program for the upcoming November 4, 2008 general elections. AUSA Ehlke has been appointed to serve as the District Election Officer for the Western District of Wisconsin and is responsible for overseeing the District's handling of complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses in consultation with the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

On October 8, 2002, then-Attorney General John 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 voter intimidation, suppression, discrimination and election fraud and to prosecute these offenses whenever and wherever they occur - to make voting easier and cheating harder. 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 Department where the public can report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day.

In order to respond to complaints of election fraud or voting rights abuses on November 4, 2008, and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, U.S. Attorney Peterson stated that Assistant United States Attorneys Stephen Ehlke and Peter Jarosz will be on duty in this District while the polls are open. They can be reached by the public at the following telephone number: (608) 264-5158.

The FBI will also have Special Agents available in each field office and resident agency in this District to receive allegations of election fraud, intimidation, suppression and other election abuses. The FBI can be reached by the public at (608) 833-4600.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767. Where voter intimidation or suppression tactics target voters on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin, please contact the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section at 202-514-3204.

United States Attorney Erik Peterson said, "The objective of the Department's Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative is to make voting easier and cheating harder. Both goals are equally important. It is imperative that in pursuing ballot integrity, ballot access is not in any way diminished or harmed. The franchise is the

cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to vote do so if they choose, and that those who seek to corrupt the vote are brought to justice."

#