

Assistant U.S. attorney leads Election Day efforts involving voting rights and fraud

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WASHINGTON – On Oct. 24, United States Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced that Assistant United States Attorney Kelly Cavanaugh 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 Nov. 8 general elections.

AUSA Cavanaugh has been appointed to serve as the district election officer for the District of Alaska, and in that capacity 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.

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

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 long-standing 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, impersonating voters, 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.

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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 Nov. 8 and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, United States Attorney Loeffler stated that Cavanaugh will be on duty in this District while the polls are open.

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.

Complaints about possible violations of the federal voting rights laws can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington, D.C., by phone at 1 (800) 253-3931, by email to voting.section@usdoj.gov, or by complaint form at justice.gov/crt/complaint/votintake/index.php.

"Ensuring free and fair elections depends in large part on the cooperation of the American electorate," Loeffler said. "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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