December 2, 2011

Re: Bilingual Proposition Questions

Dear Local Election Official:

As you may be aware, the recent Decennial Census revealed that DuPage County, for the first time, now has a single language group of Spanish speaking citizens which constitutes more than 5% of voting age citizens. Accordingly, the Director of Census has determined that DuPage County falls under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, requiring a bilingual ballot for the March 20, 2012, General Primary Election and all elections thereafter. (See the attached Notice).

In order to insure compliance with the law and an accurate translation of your ballot questions, all proposition questions submitted by you must be submitted in both English and Spanish, with a Certification from you that the bilingual ballot question is identical to the English version of any such question. The translation of the ballot question is your responsibility as the Local Election Official. The DuPage County Election Commission is only responsible for printing the Official Ballot and not the contents of proposition questions.

To the extent your unit of government has already passed or adopted a resolution placing a proposition question on the upcoming March Primary Ballot, it will be necessary for the ballot question to be translated to Spanish. This will not require any additional action on behalf of your governing body. Rather, the existing ballot question simply needs to be translated to Spanish and certified to the Election Commission that the Spanish translation is identical to the English version of the question. Both the English and Spanish versions of the question should be submitted at the same time to the Election Commission.

For those units of government who have not yet acted, I suggest the Spanish translated version of the question be included in your resolution, along with a Certification that the Spanish translation is identical to the English version of the question. Obviously, you should consult your own legal advisor on these matters.

The Commission simply wants to ensure that the question presented to the voters on the Official Ballot conforms to the question on which the unit of government seeks voter input.

Thank you for your attention to this election development.

Robert T. Saar
Executive Director

RTS/PKB:dn