

June 11, 2007

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
The Honorable Bob Bennett
Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
SR-305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairperson Feinstein and Ranking Member Bennett:

As former career professionals in the Voting Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, we urge you to reject the nomination of Hans A. von Spakovsky to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Prior to his current role as a recess appointee to the FEC, Mr. von Spakovsky oversaw the Voting Section as Voting Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division from early in 2003 until December, 2005. While he was at the Civil Rights Division, Mr. von Spakovsky played a major role in the implementation of practices which injected partisan political factors into decision-making on enforcement matters and into the hiring process, and included repeated efforts to intimidate career staff. Moreover, he was the point person for undermining the Civil Rights Division's mandate to protect voting rights. Foremost amongst his actions was his central decision-making role on a matter where he clearly should have recused himself. We urge you to use this confirmation process as an opportunity to thoroughly examine Mr. von Spakovsky's tenure at the Department of Justice and how his commitment to party over country will affect his decision making at the FEC.

Each of us came to the Voting Section to participate in the crucial role the Department of Justice plays in protecting all Americans without fear or favor. We saw this as an honor. Our commitment to public service was grounded in the belief that every American should have an equal opportunity to participate in our political process. We sought to work for the Civil Rights Division because of our patriotism, because of the honor of service and because of our commitment to the historic and heroic work of our predecessors in the Division. We are deeply disturbed that the tradition of fair and vigorous enforcement of this nation's civil rights laws and the reputation for expertise and professionalism at the Division and the Department has been tarnished by partisanship. Over the past five years, the priorities of the Voting Section have shifted from its historic mission to enforce the nation's civil rights laws without regard to politics, to pursuing an agenda which placed the highest priority on the partisan political goals of the political appointees who supervised the Section. We write to urge you not to reward one of the architects of that unprecedented and destructive change with another critical position enforcing our country's election laws.

