



# NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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## **Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Welcomes Federal Review of Shelley HAVA Spending**

*Auditors Begin Work Ordered by EAC in January*

Sacramento -- Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today welcomed auditors from the Department of Interior, Office of the Inspector General to his office as they commenced their Election Assistance Commission-ordered audit of California's expenditure of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) discretionary funds under the administration of former Secretary of State Kevin Shelley.

"The books are open," Secretary McPherson said. "I have directed my staff to be completely candid and cooperative with the auditors. I welcome the federal auditors' review of how the HAVA money was spent during the 2003-2004 fiscal years."

It is anticipated that the federal audit will take up to 90 days to complete, after which a formal report will be submitted to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to determine if any of the funds were improperly spent. Under HAVA, the EAC could request repayment from California of the funds if the auditors determine improper payments were made with this federal money. The EAC voted in January to conduct the California audit.

"It is critical that we restore trust and confidence in California's proper oversight of the HAVA funds and quickly move forward with the implementation of the critical components of this federal law," the Secretary of State McPherson noted. "I recently met with the chair and vice chair of the EAC in Washington and reassured them that controls are in place to ensure that HAVA money will only be spent on HAVA-consistent programs and in a nonpartisan manner."

HAVA was enacted in 2002 following concerns that surfaced in the 2000 presidential elections. The law provides for improved voting systems and voter education in the nation, including accessibility provisions for voters with disabilities, among its many directives.

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