



*Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515*

*Anna G. Eshoo
Fourteenth District
California*

January 19, 2005

Mr. Peter Erben, Director
Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program
Amman, Jordan

Dear Mr. Erben,

Thank you for your reply to my letter regarding the Iraq Out-of-Country Voting (OCV) Program, and the lack of polling facilities in California.

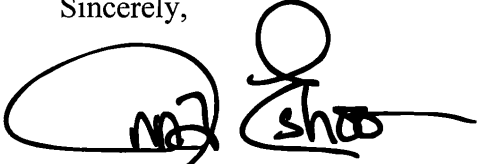
I appreciate the hard work you and your staff have put toward making the upcoming Iraqi elections an international success and I share your hope for high participation by the Iraqi expatriate community in the United States, however, my concern continues to be for the thousands of eligible Iraqi voters in California who are facing a huge challenge in taking part. That's why I continue to urge in the strongest terms possible that your organization take steps to accommodate this significant population.

I understand that your organization faces many challenges in accommodating all eligible voters in the United States and abroad. What remains unclear are the specific reasons that make additional polling stations in California impossible. Considering that your organization will have several polling stations at your Los Angeles voting facility, it seems reasonable that two of these stations could be moved to facilities in other cities, especially given that several leading members of the ChaldoAssyrian community and others across California have volunteered facilities, buildings, and manpower to host voting sites. Some voters will only have to drive across town to vote, when other eligible voters will be required to travel several hours to participate.

Additionally, because your organization has extended operations to a few additional cities in the United States to accommodate a larger number of eligible voters, this indicates to me there is a precedent for your organization to accommodate Iraqi expatriate populations that have been initially overlooked in this process. Far from opening your organization to charges of inconsistency, as you state in your reply, I believe this additional effort will show an unparalleled determination by your organization to accommodate huge communities who wish to take part in these historic and important elections. Such efforts need not detract from the broader effort to ensure fair elections inside of Iraq.

I urge you, please, to reconsider your position and move forward quickly to expand voting opportunities for eligible Iraqi voters residing in California. Thank you again for your prompt attention to this matter and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna G. Eshoo'. The signature is stylized, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress