



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organizacion Internacional para las Migraciones
Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

22 January 2005

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo

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

Regrettably, the Iraq OCV Program is unable at this stage to extend facilities to any other locations within the US or worldwide.

As was stated in my last letter it is simply impossible to provide any further registration/polling facilities. While this is very much regretted it is hoped that the Iraqi communities will be able to understand the complexities of this request and nevertheless offer their unconditional support for the Program and register to vote despite of the distance.

Setting up a registration/polling facility takes a considerable amount of time and effort. It is not simply a matter of accepting an offer from a particular community group, however generous. Amongst the many issues considered security is of paramount importance and full security assessments must be undertaken in collaboration with the local security and/or governmental forces. Policing must be arranged and schedules adapted. As has occurred elsewhere there are often objections to the citing of a facility by local community groups or town administrations. These must be engaged and negotiated. In addition comprehensive voter education and media campaigns are developed and accompany the citing of any facilities.

In any event, and as stated previously, in order not to appear to discriminate against particular Iraq communities the Program would strongly resist any attempt to extend facilities in one country or region without being able to offer such extensions in all. There must be a fair and uniform approach taken at all times. The OCV Program has come under pressure from many hundreds of groups representing many thousands of individuals to extend facilities in countries across the globe. I am sure you can appreciate our position if we were seen to do this in California and no where else.

Many Iraqis face great challenges and obstacles to participation, no more so than in Iraq itself. The program has attempted to provide facilities in the most equitable manner possible and hopes this will be appreciated by all stakeholders, and especially the Iraqi people themselves.

If you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Erben". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a horizontal line.

Peter Erben, Director
Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program