



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 23, 2012

Ambassador Daan Everts
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Ul. Miodowa 10
00-251
Warsaw, Poland

Dear Ambassador Everts:

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) will reportedly dispatch election observers to the State of Texas to monitor the November 2012 general election. While it remains unclear exactly what your monitoring is intended to achieve, or precisely what tactics you will use to achieve the proposed monitoring, OSCE has stated publicly that it will visit polling stations on Election Day as part of its monitoring plan.

In April, you reportedly met with a group of organizations that have filed lawsuits challenging election integrity laws enacted by the Texas Legislature. One of those organizations, Project Vote, is closely affiliated with ACORN, which collapsed in disgrace after its role in a widespread voter-registration fraud scheme was uncovered. In September, a federal appeals court rejected Project Vote's challenge to the State's voter-registration regulations and allowed Texas to continue enforcing laws that were enacted to protect the integrity of the voter-registration process.

According to a letter that Project Vote and other organizations sent to you, OSCE has identified Voter ID laws as a barrier to the right to vote. That letter urged OSCE to monitor states that have taken steps to protect ballot integrity by enacting Voter ID laws. The OSCE may be entitled to its opinions about Voter ID laws, but your opinion is legally irrelevant in the United States, where the Supreme Court has already determined that Voter ID laws are constitutional.

If OSCE members want to learn more about our election processes so they can improve their own democratic systems, we welcome the opportunity to discuss the measures Texas has implemented to protect the integrity of elections. However, groups and individuals from outside the United States are not allowed to influence or interfere with the election process in Texas. This State has robust election laws that were carefully crafted to protect the integrity of our election system. All persons—including persons connected with OSCE—are required to comply with these laws.

Elections and election observation are regulated by state law. The Texas Election Code governs anyone who participates in Texas elections—including representatives of the OSCE. The OSCE's representatives are not authorized by Texas law to enter a polling place. It may be a criminal offense for OSCE's representatives to maintain a presence within 100 feet of a polling place's entrance. Failure to comply with these requirements could subject the OSCE's representatives to criminal prosecution for violating state law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas