UNITED STATES
PROGRAM SUMMARY

Election Day: 11/08/16

The OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General Elections in the United States of America was led by former Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla. It was the first time that the OAS deployed an EOM in the United States, making it the twenty-seventh Member State that has received an Electoral Observation Mission from the OAS.

On Election Day, the Mission deployed 41 observers in 12 states and the District of Columbia: California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nueva York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Wisconsin. On a preliminary visit, the EOM/OAS also visited Georgia and Pennsylvania. The OAS/EOM observed specific areas of the electoral process in a systematic way, including electoral organization, use of technology in elections, political participation, districts, gender, funding, and media coverage.

Donald Trump, from the Republican Party, was elected as the 45th President of the United States, who ran against Hillary Clinton from the Democratic Party.

OBJECTIVES

An international election observation can be defined as a process whereby an organized group of individuals from outside the host country systematically carries out a series of complex actions and activities to observe an electoral process in a direct, complete, and precise manner. The subject of the observation is the process.

The specific objectives of OAS/EOMs are as follows: 1. To observe the performance of the principal actors in the electoral process in order to verify compliance with election laws and regulations in place in the host country; to analyze the development of the electoral process in the context of standards adopted by the OAS Member States; and to take note of what is observed and inform the Secretary General and the Permanent Council. 2. To work with governmental and electoral authorities, and with citizens in general, to ensure the impartiality, transparency, and reliability of the electoral process. 3. To help create an atmosphere of public trust and encourage citizen participation. 4. To serve as a channel to seek and build consensus in situations of conflict among the different participants in the electoral process, as requested. 5. To make recommendations in order to help improve the electoral system. 6. To demonstrate international support and Inter American solidarity for the development of an electoral process that is impartial, transparent, and reliable.

RESULTS

The OAS/EOM recommended the possibility of assigning the drawing of electoral districts to independent commissions in those states that have not done it before, in a way to guarantee clearer standards in the demarcation of districts and to avoid the partisan configuration of the same ones. Also, to adopt new rules on private donations from Political Action Committees (PACs and super PACs) in order to increase transparency in the financing system and minimize the power of influence and conflicts of interest. With regards to political participation, these elections were the first since 1965 that were made without full protection of the Voting Rights Act. The Mission recommended that the effects of this decision should be analyzed with hard data. Among other recommendations, the OAS/EOM also referred to the adoption of proactive strategies within political parties to increase the number of women candidates for political office.