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ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA, MLA
INCHARGE, COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

24, Akbar Road,
New Delhi-110 011

May 26, 2017.

Attn.: **The Chief Election Commissioner**
&
His Companion Members of the Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan,
New Delhi.-110001.

Re: **The EVM Challenge announced by the Election Commission of India.**

Sir,

Transparency, accountability and fairness of the election process are intrinsic to our democracy. A free, fair and transparent election is the first fundamental of our polity. In this context, we welcome this initiative to remove every iota of doubt raised by certain sections of the polity with regard to tampering of EVM machines. We are of the opinion that this challenge must be fair, transparent and unambiguous in terms of scope, scale and rules.

Unfortunately, the extensive terms and conditions that this challenge imposes prevent challengers to conduct a thorough test of the EVMs. We urge you to reconsider relaxing the three rules of this challenge, as their inclusion undermines the very credibility of this initiative.

First, the challengers will be only given access to the Control Units and Ballot Units. Second, the terms of access allows them to only press buttons. And third, the challenge is based on the premise that tampering should be demonstrated only when the EVMs are in the strong rooms or at the counting booths.

The EVM machine is composed of more components apart from the Control Unit and Ballot Unit. If challengers don't have access to all the components – such as the motherboard - that constitute an EVM, how will they demonstrate their concerns? The EC must factor the possibility that those who would try and tamper with EVMs in real life scenario can do so without pressing buttons on the CU or BU or do it before/after the EVMs are in the control room.



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It is imperative that any challenge of this magnitude simulates real life conditions as much as possible, more so in view of doubts raised recently in Ater, Madhya Pradesh; Dholpur, Rajasthan and certain assemblies of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The design of this challenge must not be to prevent those who can demonstrate hacking from participating in the process.

A fair challenge would send a strong signal to the people of India that this vital component of the democratic process is tamper proof. Hence, we urge upon you to revise the rules and conditions of this challenge and ensure that the spirit behind it is not defeated in the guise of rules, which hinder it. Onus and duty to uphold the letter and spirit of the Constitution lies upon the shoulder of each one of us. Therefore, each one of us, including the Election Commission, must do everything within our power to strengthen the fundamentals of our democracy. We are certain that the Election Commission will examine the issues brought out above.

Yours Sincerely


(Randeep Singh Sujewala)