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October 30, 2008

Mr. Phil Griffin
President
MSNBC
One MSNBC Plaza
Secaucus, NJ 07094-2419

Dear Mr. Griffin:

We are less than a week away from a historic Presidential election. It has been reported that more Americans have registered to vote for the first time in this election than at any other time in recent history, with an expectation that voter turnout could reach an all-time high on November 4.

Most Americans will turn to television newscasts for the most up-to-date information regarding the election and results. Because polls in some parts of the country will close as early as 7 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, while others will not close until as late as 11 p.m., it is vital that news organizations exercise caution when projecting the potential outcome of the election. Specifically, it is critical that television coverage of the election results does not serve to depress voter turnout by calling the election for a particular Presidential candidate before all polls have closed nationwide.

We are all too familiar with the voter confusion caused by the erroneous early calls by various cable and television networks in the 2000 Presidential election. And many, myself included, believe that when television stations call elections based on the results in a few Eastern States, voter turnout elsewhere in the Nation could potentially be lower than it would otherwise have been. This can affect the results of the Presidential election, but and have a dramatic impact on other contests for elected office as well.

Mr. Phil Griffin
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I therefore respectfully urge you to refrain from calling the 2008 Presidential election until all polls across the country are closed. Such a fair and judicious approach will allow the elections to play out as they may, without any unintended influence by the media, and is in the best interests of the country.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
CHAIRMAN

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce