Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) Public Meeting – June 22, 2016

Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum.

   Margaret Johnson, Committee Chair, opened the meeting and took roll. For the meeting, the following people were present:

   Committee Members

   - Jacob Lesner-Buxton
   - Margaret Johnson
   - Ted Jackson
   - Tim McNamara
   - Gail Pellerin
   - Larry D. Smith

   Secretary of State Staff

   - Susan Lapsley
   - Jon Ivy

   Members of the Public

   - Ruthee Goldkorn

2. Election Day Review: Discussion on June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary Election in review.

   Secretary of State staff gave a brief introduction to the topic, committee members were called one at a time to give their thoughts and ask any questions, and then members of the public were allowed to speak, ask questions, and give opinions about how the recent Election Day went throughout the state.

   Highlights:

   - Tim McNamara spoke of the issues Los Angeles County faced on Election Day, specifically explaining the setup problem with their ballot verification machines. He relayed that the county was still compiling data and reports from calls and issues on election day, that he'd be happy to answer any questions, and that they'd have more information after canvassing was wrapped up.

   - Gail Pellerin spoke of issues related to last-minute cancellation of pollworkers, general voter confusion over primary process, and party registration problems. There were some issues with how long the Postal

Service took delivering ballots. The "American Independent Party" (AIP was still an issue of confusion for voters.

- o Gail relayed a story of one voter who was an AIP registered voter, who voted provisionally a Democratic ballot. The voter was able to successfully go to court and the court ordered the vote counted and the voter re-registered as No Party Preference.

- Larry Smith spoke of issues with party preference confusion. Riverside County had issues with their vendors and issues with delayed mailing of their sample ballots.

- Margaret Johnson spoke about the voter hotline at Disability Rights California. There were about 18 calls – half from people in hospitals. About three were related to accessible voting systems, a couple were related to access issues, and one was a transportation issue. If they received the calls in real-time, they were able to work with officials to resolve issues.

3. Voter Registration Cards: Discussion on possible redesign ideas for voter registration cards.

Secretary of State staff gave a brief introduction to the topic, committee members were called one at a time to give their thoughts and ask any questions, and then members of the public were allowed to speak, ask questions, and give opinions about possible considerations for future redesigns of the voter registration application.

Highlights:

- Tim McNamara thanked the Secretary of State for the efforts already taken for improving the voter registration card (VRC). He also commented that there seemed to be a lot of collective desire to improve the VRC even further.

- Margaret Johnson suggested that a way to indicate a need for accommodation directly on the VRC would be a good idea.

- Ruthee Goldkorn, member of the public, suggested a simple box for the VRC, "Do you need an accommodation to vote or participate in the election process?" She put forth that self-identification should not be seen as an intrusion or an insult, and that it's important for those with disabilities to be counted in registration statistics. Her emphasis was on just creating a system of learning which voters need or request

accommodation and then working toward providing those accommodation.

- Jacob Lesner-Buxton brought up the issue of American Sign Language (ASL) and the need for registration information to be provided in ASL.

- Jacob also commented, "Our office would also appreciate that accommodation be added to the elections code. We have been struggling with getting more counties to provide accommodations, and this would give them more emphasis to work on these issues if it was a part of the voter code."

- Ted Jackson reiterated that he has supported this kind of change to the VRC to include accommodation. "Request in voter education materials in alternate formats" was the line item he suggested for the VRC. He feels that civic engagement is very important. Ted wanted to express that he'd been told directly by pollsters and researchers, and to his understanding, that because disability community demographics can't be derived from current election registration data, that they don't research the communities or voting trends and habits for the disability community.

- Ted also expressed that voter data is not just used for voting. There is a wide-spread need for this kind of data. For example, Covered California used voter data for their market research base. And this might have led to the problems with accessibility and accommodations for the Covered California program when it launched.

- Tim McNamara asked the question of if legislation would be required to make the proposed and discussed additions to the VRC.

    o Jon Ivy responded that it would likely take legislative action, but that at this stage in the discussion, everything is very preliminary.

4. Future Agenda Items and Public Comments

- Gail: Online accessible voter information guides.

- Larry: Further election day review.

- Ted: Future, SB 450 & AB 2552, Accessible voting over vote-by-mail

- To request or offer items for future meeting agendas, send an e-mail to vaac@sos.ca.gov or jivy@sos.ca.gov.