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California Secretary of State

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August 1, 2025

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #25059

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Victoria Estrada
Language Access and Translations Coordinator

RE: Language Accessibility Advisory Committee: August 13, 2025, Meeting

Attached is the notice and agenda for the next Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) meeting to be held on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. via videoconference and in person at the locations listed on the agenda.

County elections officials and members of the public are welcome to attend in person or by calling in to the conference number listed on the agenda.

This notice and agenda will also be available on the LAAC website at:
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/laac>.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions at LAAC@sos.ca.gov.

Thank you.



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August 1, 2025

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

Language Accessibility Advisory Committee
(LAAC)

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/laac>

Date and time:	Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 1:30 p.m.
Conference call number:	+1 877-336-1831
Phone Conference ID:	9190294
Screenshare/webstream:	https://sos-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/88356822597?pwd=QtDH0v6BL08YUARVO1H48jNH6Tk6UI.1
Password:	9PmYB3Y+
Location:	Secretary of State 2 nd Floor Boardroom 1500 11 th Street Sacramento, CA 95814

Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum
2. LAAC Member Updates
3. Secretary of State Updates
 - Voting Systems (OVSTA)
 - Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
 - Legislation
4. Voting Rights Act Section 203 Commemoration Events
 - [Register for FREE Pre-Event Webinar – August 6, 2025, 10-11:30 AM](#)
 - [Register for In-Person Summit – August 26, 2025, 9-4:00 PM](#)
5. Working Groups
 - Poll Worker Research
 - Translation Timeline, Feedback, and Recommendations
 - Recommendations: Improving Translation Timelines for Ballot Materials
 - Language Accessibility Best Practices and Recommendations
 - State and Federal Requirements
6. *“From Paper to Practice: How California authorities can better enforce language access laws and give more eligible voters equal access to the ballot”* Presentation by Rosalind Gold representing the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
7. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items
8. Adjournment

IMPORTANT NOTICES TO THE PUBLIC:

- This meeting is open to the public and is accessible to the physically disabled.
- In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, reasonable accommodations are available. Providing accommodation requests at least five (5) business days before the meeting will help to ensure availability of the requested accommodation.
- Any person who needs a disability-related accommodation or modification in order to participate in the meeting, or any person wanting to subscribe to future meeting notices and agendas, may make a request by contacting Victoria Estrada at (916) 695-1444, by emailing LAAC@sos.ca.gov, or by sending a written request to Victoria Estrada, 1500 11th Street, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Discussion and action may be taken on any item on the agenda. The time and order of agenda items are subject to change at the discretion of the committee and may be taken out of order.
- Persons interested in addressing the committee on any agenda item will be given an opportunity to speak. The committee may limit the time for each individual speaker.
- The committee may not discuss or take action on any matter raised that is not included on this agenda, except to decide whether to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting. (Government Code sections 11125, 11125.7(a).)

Recommendations: Improving Translation Timelines for Ballot Materials

At the August 2024 LAAC meeting, concerns were raised about the compressed translation timeline currently in use. Accurate and accessible translations—especially in state-required languages—require sufficient lead time, thorough review, and community-informed input.

The Subcommittee proposes the following recommendations for the LAAC to consider for submission to the Secretary of State.

Key Timeline Constraint:

Day 123 before the election: SOS finalizes **English Version 1** (ballot titles, labels, and Voter Information Guide) and delivers to **state contracted translators**.

Day 105 before the election: English Version 1 (plus lists of supporters/opponents) delivered to counties, who then begin translations into **state-required languages (14201)**.

- [2024 Translation Timeline](#)

Possible Recommendations

1. Explore Feasibility of Delivering English Version 1 to Counties on Day 123 (not Day 105): Counties and local vendors could receive the finalized English text at the same time as state contracted translators. This would:

- Extend the translation and review window by 18 days for counties translating in 14201 languages

2. Standardize Glossary and Dialect Guidance Early in the Process:

Dialect and terminology disagreements remain a key challenge.

Recommendations:

- Support efforts to update and expand glossaries of terms that counties use for translations.
 - Consider partnerships between community groups and philanthropy to accomplish this.
- Create a public facing glossary, that is available online and provided to County LAACs, that civic orgs and voters could use to ensure terminology is understood.

3. Ensure Transparency and Usability of Review Tools:

During the BLTS process, participants noted the need for:

- A clearer explanation of BLTS process, recruitment, and review flow (ex. first draft → review → translator feedback → final) with the goal to improve recruitment.
- Explore efforts to make the BLTS process and commenting infrastructure more user-friendly and accessible because not everyone has experience with excel sheets and changing character formats within excel.
- More language reviewers (e.g., Thai had only 2–3)



Recommendations

From Paper to Practice:

How California authorities can better enforce language access laws and give more eligible voters equal access to the ballot

August 13, 2025

Recommendations Focus on Compliance and Enforcement

- Federal and California laws provide an opportunity for LEP citizens to have greater access to the electoral process.
- But poll monitoring, complaints, word of mouth, and litigation show that there is not consistent compliance with and enforcement of these laws.
- Recommendations are based in part on interviews with more than 25 voting rights advocates, community and policy leaders, litigators, former federal civil rights or voting rights attorneys, current (and former) county elections officials, and secretary of state elections staff.
- Recommendations do not directly address:
 - Best practices for providing language access
 - Proposed changes to federal or California law

Enhancing Compliance

- Most interviewees—from elections administrators to advocates to former federal voting rights attorneys—agreed that generally, county and state officials want to comply with language access requirements.
 - Challenges with compliance may involve resource constraints, administrative issues.
- Thus, before enforcement recommendations, we wanted to make suggestions which could ease compliance, including:
 - **Make translation resources more readily available**
 - **Better understand the eligible LEP voter pool**
 - **Sharpen and expand training resources**
 - **Promote inter-agency cooperation**
 - **Strategically use internal and informal communication**
 - **Foster more local language advisory committees**

Oversight and Enforcement Recommendations

Staffing

- **Put one person in charge of language access compliance in the California Secretary of State's (SOS) office**
- **Put one person in charge of language access compliance in each county, to oversee the implementation of requirements**
- **Add more county language access coordinators and outreach staff**

Oversight and Enforcement Recommendations

System Changes

- **Require counties to submit reports before and after elections (should not be duplicative of information already collected or required)**
- **Conduct more spot checks at precincts or vote centers**
- **Systematize the complaint process**

Oversight and Enforcement Recommendations

SOS LAAC

SOS should examine the feasibility of providing the SOS LAAC with greater oversight responsibilities.

Responsibilities could include:

- **Reviewing complaints received by SOS and county hotlines, and monitoring resolution**
- **Helping with design and review of pre- and post-election reports**
- **Reviewing process for obtaining data and public input on Section 14201 determinations**
- **Reviewing and providing recommendations on VCA county EAP election and outreach plans**
- **Making recommendations on administrative action, CCROVs, or regulations (see below)**
- **More consistently providing written recommendations, with SOS being required to provide written response**

Oversight and Enforcement Recommendations

Administrative Action, CCROVs, and Regulations

SOS should examine options for taking additional administrative actions, or issuing CCROV's or regulations, including:

- Translating the state's [online voter registration platform](#) into all of the Section 14201 required languages
- Require counties to hire or designate one person who will coordinate the development and implementation of the county's language access policies
- Provide guidance to counties on the content and translation of their election websites, including minimum standards covering the elements which must be included as well as translation practices
- Create mechanisms for proactive consultation with experts, community and civic leaders, election officials, and other stakeholders who can provide input into preparing the state and county for new Section 203 and 14201 determinations
 - As part of the foregoing, the SOS should develop a formal application process for a community to request coverage under Sections 14201 and 12303.
- Issue formal regulations for the implementation of Section 203 in California

Oversight and Enforcement Recommendations: Stronger Formal Legal Enforcement Mechanisms

- Interviewees agreed that formal legal action against election officials should be a last resort.
- For cases of very egregious violations that need swift resolution, there should be research into California statutes to understand whether we need to strengthen ability to bring temporary restraining orders or writs of mandamus.



Thank you.

Rosalind Gold
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