



# Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.

## California Secretary of State Elections Division

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### Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

Monday, March 2, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

### Meeting Minutes

1. **Welcome, Call to Order**
2. **New Committee Members Swearing-In**
3. **Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum**

LAAC members present:

- Anabel Alonzo
- Dean Logan
- Gloria Lizbeth Oviedo
- Rosie Rascon
- Melissa Sanchez
- Fangchun Tsai
- Rahmo Abdi
- Janet Bernabe
- Paul Burke
- Pedro Hernandez
- Deanna Kitamura
- Cindy Wu
- Armando Salud- Ambriz
- Clarissa Laguardia

Members of SOS:

- Justin Hirai – Election Security Unit Manager
- Kirsten Larsen – Election Administration Manager
- Joanna Southard- Election Staff Service Manager
- Rodney Rodregiz – Office of Voting Systems (OVSTA)
- Adam Quintana – Voter’s Choice Act (VCA)
- Lauro Feliciano– Legislation

Quorum was met.

#### **4. Public Comments**

During each committee meeting we will hold an agenda spot for public comment/presentation

- The public comment portion of the hearing is an opportunity for members of the public to make comments regarding today's agenda item(s). This is not a question-and-answer session, just an opportunity to provide comments. There are other members of the public here today to make comments. While their opinion may differ from yours, everyone is asked to provide all speakers with the courtesy and respect you would want if you were speaking. If you have a specific question regarding language accessibility please submit it to [laac@sos.ca.gov](mailto:laac@sos.ca.gov).

#### **5. Review of Bagley- Keene Act**

- The Act includes rules designed to ensure that state boards and commissions meet publicly at locations open to the public, post agendas that can't be deviated from without prior notice to the public, and refrain from contemplating items of interest outside of such public meetings and agenda requirements
- Outside of an open and public meeting, the Act expressly prohibits a majority of the members of a state body from communicating, in any manner, about a topic of interest to that state body. (Gov. Code, § 11122.5(b).)
- Members of the public are entitled to record and to broadcast the meetings (via audio and/or video), unless this constitutes a persistent disruption. (Gov. Code, § 11124.1.)
- All votes taken during a teleconferenced meeting shall be by roll call ("yeas" and "nays"), with a record of how each member votes. (Gov. Code, § 11123(b)(1)(D).)

#### **6. LAAC Policy and Procedures**

Like the previous item, you should have all received the Policy and Procedures guide. This is also posted on our website. Hopefully you have all reviewed the document, but we would like to bring attention to these specific items:

- You have all been appointed because you have demonstrated language accessibility experience, have knowledge of presenting

election materials to voters using plain language methods, or you are a county election official

- Being part of LAAC you are responsible for providing recommendations for improving language related access to voting and election materials.
- The committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall consult with and consider the recommendations of this committee.
- A quorum of a majority of the members must be present for any committee business.
- Agendas and meeting notices will be prepared, finalized, posted, and sent out at least 10 days before a scheduled meeting. All presentation materials will be posted and released at time of notice.
- We request all committee members who wish to share documents or presentation material during a meeting to submit their documents to the Secretary of State at least 12 calendar days prior to next meeting date.
- Documents should be submitted in a digital format, to ensure ease of distribution and accessible for all members. Late submissions will not be accepted, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and will not be included in the meeting agenda.
- If members are participating remotely, all members must remain visible on video unless technologically impractical.
- Members of the State LAAC must approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting before they are adopted.

## 7. Co- Chair Nomination

Each member of the committee introduces themselves and gives the committee a background of who they are and what they do.

- **Armando Salud-Ambriz:** is a dynamic and accomplished leader in election administration and civic engagement. As the Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters for Nevada County, he has a proven track record of successfully managing all aspects of election administration while advancing transparency, accessibility, and public trust in the democratic process.

Armando is a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator, a California Registered Election Official, and a Credentialed California County Senior Executive. His commitment to excellence extends beyond his work in Nevada County. He earned his Master of Public Administration from the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law and currently serves as the youngest County Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters in the State of California. He was also the youngest person ever elected to the Yolo County Board of Education.

Armando has been a member of the Election Center since 2018 and previously served on the steering committee for the National Voter Registration Day organization. He is also a founding board member of the Greater Sacramento Chapter of the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA). Since its inception, he has served on the State's Language Accessibility Advisory Committee and was most recently reappointed as Co-Chair. Armando will also serve his first term on the State's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee.

- **Pedro Hernandez:** is Legal and Policy Director for California Common Cause. Born and raised in Watsonville, California, he attended Cabrillo College, earned his bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in American Studies from the University of California, Davis, and his J.D. from UC College of the Law, San Francisco. At Common Cause, he leads efforts to protect and expand voting rights and strengthen election administration, with a focus on language access and ensuring every voter can participate. In 2025, he co-organized California's "Section 203 at 50: More Voices, Stronger Democracy" convening, bringing advocates from across the country together to advance multilingual voting access. He serves on the Board of Directors of Mission Action, a San Francisco-based nonprofit advancing housing stability, immigrant rights, and community power. He is based in Santa Cruz County.
- **Paul Burke:** chairs the Committee on Political Action for the NAACP of Ventura County. He has been a bilingual poll worker in Ventura County, a poll worker in West Virginia, and an election supervisor in Bosnia. He manages Lang1234.com which fosters free online language learning in California's many languages and hundreds more. He also manages VoteWell.net, which explains election procedures in plain language.
- **Clarissa Laguardia:** is a Salvadoran immigrant and former Limited English Proficient (LEP) individual whose personal journey fuels her professional dedication to language justice. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the [California Center for Civic Participation](#) (CalCenter), where she oversees initiatives that empower diverse youth to engage in the democratic process.

Clarissa's expertise in language access is rooted in high-level policy and grassroots advocacy. She was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown as the Language Access Manager for the 2020 Census, where she developed the foundational methodology to trigger language access services, disaggregate data to identify underserved communities, and establish statewide best practices and standards. Her work was instrumental in collaborating with the City of Sacramento to develop and pass a comprehensive Language Access Ordinance, ensuring municipal services are accessible to all residents regardless of the language they speak.

As the founder of Rethink Language Access, a grassroots initiative dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for systemic change, Clarissa continues to bridge the gap between policy and community needs. Her unique perspective as a former LEP individual and a seasoned policy expert ensures that language access is treated not just as a service, but as a fundamental civil right.

- **Anabel Alonzo:** is an election supervisor in San Joaquin County, has a background in traditional polling place operations and experience in vote by mail, voter registration, and voter outreach. She has a strong understanding of language access throughout the electoral process and has led outreach campaigns through various mediums. Annabelle's commitment to language access began at a young age, and she now focuses on ensuring accurate and clear Spanish translations for the county's voters. She is proud to support outreach efforts and is honored to serve on the voting accessibility advisory committee (VAAC)
- **Gloria Lizbeth Oviedo:** With 27 years of dedicated election experience in elections, Liz serves as the Election Division Coordinator for the Ballot Layout Division at the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters. In her current role, she oversees the production of official Santa Clara County ballots, County Voter Information Guides, and translated election materials in 17 languages. Her extensive career encompasses a wide range of election functions, including voter registration, Vote by Mail operations, election administration, outreach, media relations, and ballot creation.

In 2021, Liz was appointed as a member of the Secretary of State's Ballot Design Advisory Committee, where she has contributed expertise to help shape best practices and standards for ballot design and format.

- **Rosie Rascon:** is currently serving as the interim assistant registrar for San Diego County voters, with nine years of experience in elections. She spent six years in language services and outreach, overseeing various outreach programs, including reaching out to Native American communities and coordinating with the sheriff's department to engage eligible voters in county facilities. Rosie is responsible for providing language access outreach for

state and county languages, with San Diego County supporting federal languages, nine state languages, and two county languages. She is enthusiastic about contributing to the advisory committee and collaborating with fellow members.

- **Melissa Sanchez:** is the chief staff for Supervisor Leticia Gonzalez of District 4 in Madera County. With a background in behavioral health and public health, she has supported leadership and strengthened programs in the county, as well as contributed to community initiatives. Melissa has been involved in outreach events and work programs throughout the county, shaping her commitment to prevention and early support for families. She is passionate about building community partnerships and improving care delivery. Melissa also has experience as a translator and holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Fresno State University. In her free time, she enjoys antique shopping and spending time with her two cats and schnauzer in Fresno, where she resides.
- **Fangchun Tsai:** I am the election process supervisor at Country of Santa Carla Research Office. I work in the election field for over 10 years and I'm specialized in power creation management. My experience include the vote by mail process, also the voter outreach and my professional responsibilities. In addition to that, I am actively involved in the Chinese community for both promoting for the civic engagement and also providing the voter education to help strengthen the connection between the and the diverse community that are on the computer.
- **Rahmo Abdi:** the Director of Organizing Campaign with PANA of Americans, is grateful for being elected to serve on the committee. Language access is a significant aspect of their work, particularly in underserved communities where lack of access can hinder engagement in society. Rahma has advocated for language access for a long time, especially when assisting elders who are voting for the first time. They are eager to contribute to the advisory committee and continue their efforts in supporting language access.
- **Janet Bernabe:** a resident of Riverside County, has been selected to serve on the voting accessibility advisory committee at the state level for the third time and is also involved at the county level. With a background in nonprofit work for the past 10 years, she is dedicated to supporting language access initiatives. Janet has previous experience working for the Riverside County Registrar of Voters office and continues to serve as a poll worker due to her belief in the power of elections. As a proud daughter of immigrants, she values the privilege of being a US citizen and is actively involved in various community organizations, including the League of Women Voters and Lulac3190, where she serves as the foundation president. Janet is committed to promoting language access and outreach efforts in Riverside County and San Bernardino.

- **Cindy Wu:** a naturalized citizen who learned English after moving to Los Angeles, is a new member of the Secretary of State's Language Accessibility Advisory Committee. She has served as a trustee on the Mountain View School District Board of Education, focusing on student success, family engagement, and building partnerships with immigrant communities. Cindy is a community organizer, nonprofit founder, and charter president of the Rotary Club of El Monte. With over 20 years of experience in business, consulting, real estate, nonprofit, and education, she is dedicated to service above self and supporting overlooked communities, particularly non-native English speakers. Cindy believes that language access is essential for full participation in democracy and has provided translation support and assistance to immigrant Americans in completing voter registration forms. She is grateful for the opportunity to strengthen language access in elections to ensure that every voice is heard and every vote counts.
- Pedro Hernandez Nominated Armando Salud-Ambriz
- Anabel Alonzo seconds for Armando Salud-Ambriz
- Committee voted 12 yes for Armando Salud-Ambriz
- Cindy Wu Nominated Pedro Hernandez
- Rahmo seconds Pedro Hernandez
- Committee voted 12 yes for Pedro Hernandez

## 8. Committee Goals Discussion

- Previous Term working groups:
  - Poll Worker Research
  - Translation Timeline, Feedback, and Recommendations
  - Language Accessibility Best Practices
  - State and Federal Language Requirements
- Comparison of translations costs for election material
- Proofreading for other languages
- Translations cost, budget and streamline costs, rebuilding trust in elections
- Translation feedback on state material
- Learning and observing; Indigenous groups and language outreach. Ways to cover all demographic.
- Assisting in proofing process
- Best practices of foreign language message and outreach, getting translations out in the community. Reaching different populations.
- State and Federal language requirements. 14201 regulations and law. Revisiting the timeline
- Applications used for voter engagement apps, specifically for the Asian demographic. (LINE; "WeChat"?)

- Technology and automation for language services; 14201 and framework of the law – formula that determines those requirements; partnership with ethnic media – How to craft their outreach efforts and media to be cultural and language relevance.

#### 9. Future Agenda Items

- Next meeting is Monday April 13, 2026
- Establish working group for the new term
- Survey of LAAC members for preferred meeting dates
- Public facing meetings at a location or area of diversity so their voices can be heard.
- SOS response to the translations timeline the working group developed last time.

#### 10. Adjournment