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December 16, 2022

Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

December 7, 2022, Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Roll was called and no quorum was established.

The following participants were marked as present:

Committee Members

- Armando Salud
- Deanna Kitamura
- Jacqueline Coto
- Juan Pablo Cervantes
- Karen Diaz
- Pedro Hernandez

Secretary of State Staff

- Jana Lean
Chief of Elections
- NaKasha Robinson
Information Technology
Supervisor II
- Erric Garris
Deputy Secretary of State,
Legislative Affairs
- Ted Muhlhauser
Legislative Liaison
- Mike Somers
Election Security Manager
- Daneka Huynh
Language Access Coordinator
- Ruben Vasquez
Election Security Analyst
- Ryan Reece
VBM/Ballot Tracking Analyst
- Justin Hirai
Election Security Analyst

2. LAAC Members' Updates

Armando Salud

- Yolo County certified their election results on December 1st.
- Yolo County had 207 poll workers for the November General Election, and they offered diverse language assistance across the county's vote centers that included Spanish, Punjabi, Mandarin, Japanese, Russian, Hindi, Urdu, Turkish, French, German, Greek, and American Sign Language.
- They are continuing their outreach efforts with their community partners to help spread awareness and information about elections.

Deanna Kitamura

- Their organization did poll monitoring in 16 counties that spanned over 400 polling locations during the November General Election. They are currently working on an analysis of that information and will make it available once complete.

Jacqueline Coto

- Their organization's national voter hotline had a high number of callers during the November General Election, and they helped answer any questions related to elections to English and Spanish speakers.
- Conducted a series of four-forums in English and Spanish for the elections happening in Los Angeles.

Juan Pablo Cervantes

- No updates.

Karen Diaz

- This year through their organization's general education work, they contacted 169,000 voters statewide through phone calls, canvassing, and using social media to provide information to voters.

Pedro Hernandez

- Their organization engaged in a poll monitoring effort during the November General Election that spanned 8 counties and at least 500 voting locations. They are working on assembling and analyzing their observations to create a report.
- Attended one of the certifications for the ES&S system.

3. SOS Updates

Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA)

- NaKesha Robinson communicated that OVSTA is wrapping up testing efforts with the Election Systems & Software's (ES&S) voting system. They completed accessibility and volume testing last week.
- Hart and Dominion testing will begin shortly after the new year.

Legislative Affairs

- Erric Garris communicated that the Legislature convened on Monday, and they swore in the new Legislature members; approximately 25 new Assembly members and 5 new members of the Senate. Assembly is still awaiting results for the 47th district.
- Key dates:
 - January 10th is when the Governor will be announcing his budget plan for the 2023-2024 fiscal cycle.
 - January 20th will be the last day to submit bill requests to the office of legislative council.
 - February 17th is the last day to introduce bills.
- AB 1631 was passed this year and will go into effect on January 1st. It amends Elections Code section 12303 and requires counties to provide a list on their website of polling places and the languages that multilingual poll workers will assist voters in at each location.
- Jacqueline, Deanna, and Pedro asked questions about the process for submitting legislative proposals. They suggested the LAAC meet in January to discuss this before the January 20th deadline. Daneka confirmed she would reach out to each LAAC member and schedule a January meeting if a majority of members wished to hold one.

4. Character Based Names/Transliterations

- Daneka stated that the Elections Division is researching and looking at the next steps that the SOS would need to consider before providing Hindi and Khmer transliterations for future elections.
 - There was a discussion about the requirement of quorum before the LAAC can provide a formal recommendation to the SOS.
- One idea is to provide a sample of a transliterated document in Hindi and Khmer to these community language groups and volunteers from counties who provide these languages, so that it can be reviewed to see if it would make sense and be helpful for voters. Daneka asked Deanna about the contact information for the

Hindi and Khmer community groups she had reached out to, which Deanna agreed to send.

- Jacqueline asked if the person reviewing the document would need to be a formal translator and if there would be any stipend for this. Daneka responded that this is a volunteer role; the person does not need to be a translator, but they do need to speak and read the language fluently.
- Daneka noted the differences on character-based and script-based languages per Elections Code section 13211.7. Currently SOS is mandated to provide transliterations in character-based languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Daneka noted that Hindi and Khmer are script-based languages. If the SOS moved forward with providing transliterations for these languages outside of the requirements of Section 13211.7, it would be at the discretion of the counties to use them as they would not be required by law.

5. Feedback on Best Practices for Language Access Document

- CACEO will be reviewing this document at the Voters with Specific Needs Subcommittee Meeting, and this will be moved to the next meeting's agenda.

6. Committee Goals for 2023

- Pedro suggested the LAAC consider making recommendations to voting systems vendors on how to better improve language accessibility features in their technology. NaKisha responded that local VAACs already have some of these conversations with vendors and provide such feedback, and it may be beneficial to check with any local LAACs.
- Jacqueline suggested the LAAC review the Bilingual Poll Workers Survey to provide feedback and recommendations on how to improve it for future reports. Pedro also stated that he would like to see improvements and additional questions added to the survey.
- Deanna suggested looking at various election-related bills to determine if there are any recommendations that the LAAC would like to make throughout the year.
- Jana suggested having a conversation about appointing a committee chair or co-chairs.
- Deanna suggested creating a process for the LAAC to provide the SOS with information for finding language access needs for specific languages. She is also interested in understanding the criteria the SOS would be looking at to find need.

7. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- Public Comments:
 - No public comments were made

- Future Agenda Items:
 - Bilingual Poll Workers Survey Review
 - Character Based Names/Transliterations
 - Feedback on Best Practices for Language Access Document
 - Appointment of Committee Chair/Co-Chairs
 - Voting Systems Certification Process
 - Other States' Language Access Programs
 - LAAC Meeting Schedule

8. Adjournment at 2:10 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.