



**ALEX PADILLA** | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
ELECTIONS DIVISION

1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 | Tel 916.657.2166 | Fax 916.653.3214 | www.sos.ca.gov

August 28, 2019

**Language Accessibility Advisory Committee  
(LAAC)**

August 15, 2019, Meeting Minutes

**1. The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.**

Roll was called, a quorum was declared, and the following participants were marked as present:

Committee Members

- Dean Logan/ Tim McNamara
- Greta Arevalo
- Astrid Garcia Ochoa
- Deanna Kitamura
- Maria de la Luz Garcia
- Ky-Nam Miller
- Christina Fletes-Romo
- Clarissa Laguardia
- Sunghee Richard Park
- Gurjatinder Randhawa
- Ana Paula Noguez Mercado
- Eren Mendez
- Primo J. Castro

Secretary of State Staff

- Tiffany Mok,  
Chief of Legislative Affairs
- Robert Abelon,  
Deputy Secretary of State, Policy &  
Planning
- Jana Lean,  
Chief of Elections
- Adam Quintana,  
Election Services Manager
- Reina Miller,  
Voter Accessibility Coordinator

Members of the Public and County Elections Office Staff

- Glenn County

**2. VAAC Members Community Outreach Updates**

- Ana Paula shared she was in Hawaii last week for a language justice training where the need to address the needs of immigrant communities was brought up. She wants

the LAAC to think about what access is being provided to families who are prevalent in the community but without much access.

- Astrid shared about the work she and her team are doing for Voter's Choice. On September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, Los Angeles County is hosting a mock election and her group organized a coalition. They will be hosting a webinar on Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> and a in person meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> in Los Angeles. It's a three part series that will coordinate and connect organizations so that they can put the word out on this mock election. Los Angeles will be having a new voting experience in 2020 and the county is doing this mock election so that voters get to experience these vote centers. Although the county has an extensive outreach plan, because it is a mock election it is hard to get people to show up. She's hoping that people with contacts in Los Angeles connect them to her or the county. Visit the website [www.voterschoice.org](http://www.voterschoice.org) for more information and to share this outreach opportunity to help low English proficiency (LEP) voters test these voting systems.
  - Deanna asked if there is a flyer that can be shared so we can send out to folks?
    - Astrid responded that she will have a flyer that will be sent to Reina to send to the group.
- Christina shared that for their Voter's Choice Act (VCA) in Fresno County, they had a panel late July to talk to the committee about VCA. This panel was done in Hmong, Spanish, and English. They had a large coalition in Fresno County that submitted a plan with a lot of focus on language accessibility.
- Eren shared that she was at a community event and one thing that was brought up was what the Spanish speaking community can do to prepare for next year. Other talking points were how to encourage more people to participate and an idea by the United Latino Voter was to create a promoter program to educate community leaders who are already doing similar work to focus on a uniformed message for party preference for those voters who don't have much voting experience and who also have limited language experience. She mentioned how the group (LAAC) and Contra Costa County would be happy to help. If it does get developed it could help counties recruit bilingual poll workers as well as explaining the party preference information on what it means when you're nonpartisan or when you unknowingly select American Independent believing it means no party preference. Once she gets more information she will share with the group.
- Gurjatinder shared that there are almost 1 million of people living in California, who speak Punjabi. He is an expert in Punjabi and Hindi and knows that only Hindi is available as one of the SOS's languages and not Punjabi. His community has asked him to bring this up to see of the possibility of adding Punjabi as a language.
  - Jana commented that SOS is looking into having Punjabi as one of the languages. She may have an update during the next meeting.

### 3. Secretary of State Updates

#### Legislative Update

Tiffany:

- AB 57 by Evan Low. SOS supported it and was passed into law. If you have a character based name that is translated into a ballot, you can use that name and not the direct print literation of your English name if there is evidence that you have previously established that name either through usage in the past two years or by a birth certificate or any other proof. SOS is happy to provide support and hopes that this will encourage people from diverse background to run for office during an election.
- There are 3 Legislative Bills that are moving through the cycle that involve language access issues:
  - SB 523 was just amended and deals with notices sent to voters who have forgotten or have a mismatched signature on their vote-by-mail ballot. The notice explains to folks their options after they have turned in an incomplete vote-by-mail ballot and would be provided in all languages that are subject to section 203.
  - AB 1391 which will provide voter notification cards to individuals who have registered, reregistered, or in some cases, have updated their information, to provide the option for those individuals to receive the notification in their preferred language.
  - AB 849 is a redistricting bill that would require SOS to provide a translation that would be posted on the website of what redistricting is and basic FAQs that counties can utilize if they have local redistricting or initiatives.

#### Voter's Choice Act (VCA)

Robert:

- There are 15 counties right now that joined VCA which makes it above the majority of registered voters in the State of California. Calaveras being the most recent, joining a few weeks ago. A couple of other counties are doing vote centers only.
- SOS is putting together consultations with counties as they put together Election Administration Plan (EAP.)
- Higher Education Level – there are 12 universities, 10 CSU's, and 2 UC's (Los Angeles and Irvine) that will be implementing vote centers on their campuses. The 10 CSU's together represent roughly 350,000 students and about 50,000 faculty and staff. The UC's are about 35,000-45,000. They did a presentation to the CSU presidents, in which they answered questions about vote centers on campuses, ensuring they are still accessible to the public and find a balance between the student population and the population at large. They have also had stakeholder meetings with those involved with VCA around the state and getting their impute.
  - Astrid commented that during their last cycle, the SOS came up with a valuable resource, a translated VCA glossary, and she was hoping that those could come

back and shared with counties that are implementing VCA because the VCA introduces some terms that are not always common in the Spanish language and so they actually can be translated a couple of different ways. The Glossary is available on the website but SOS should consider sharing it with counties who are implementing VCA.

- Robert's responded that he will be sending out a checklist with a timeline for the EAP that includes the glossary which will be sent to counties very soon. Timeline includes consultation meetings, how long they should publically notice their meetings, and what needs to be done before submitting their draft to SOS.
- Astrid commented that she can share the checklist that she has that counties have been using. They have county specific ones but also a general one that isn't finalized and therefore not available on the website. VCA is new with many requirements and she wants to know whether a document can be created that describes the language requirement. One of the recommendations should be translating the draft EAP in different languages for the 14-day public display period.
- Clarissa asked what the timeline will be for university vote centers?
  - Robert responded that about 2-3 universities will have 11-day vote centers, while the rest will have 4-day vote centers. Many are still trying to figure out which building they will be using as vote centers.
- A member asked whether they are going to have parking?
  - Robert responded that they will. That is one of the criteria's. There were some lessons learned in 2018 and so we will be sharing those tips for best practices with universities moving forward and parking will be one of them.
- A member asked whether the universities looking to be vote centers are only in counties that are VCA?
  - Robert responded that vote centers that have been approached by counties are all counties that have implemented VCA but there may be some that are not. San Diego is currently doing a study to see whether they'll be having 10 vote centers.
- Christina asked whether there is someone monitoring the VCA counties and making sure they are posting in the languages they are supposed to?
  - Robert responded that SOS is in good communications with all counties. They have been in contact with most counties every 2-3 weeks. With counties who have been VCA since 2018, they check in with them monthly.
- Astrid asked whether SOS is keeping notes on how to improve in 2020? There seems to be confusion of the timing in the public consultation period and the draft of the EAP.
  - Robert responded that there has been confusion with counties believing their LAAC/VAAC meetings can count as both of their required public

consultation meetings. They plan on emailing not just a checklist but best practices so there's more clarity on the requirements.

- Christina asked whether the voting systems have the ability to print out voter ballots?
  - Jana responded that they do. It is one of the requirements. Systems are currently going through certification and they will have the vote-by-mail and the paper ballot function.
- Tim commented that AB 681 will require language advocacy soon. Does SOS have a position right now?
  - Jana responded that SOS does but she doesn't know the most current position. Jana encouraged Tim to contact Tiffany directly and request SOS's position on this bill.

### **Appointment Letters**

Reina:

- SOS is preparing letter's of appointments that will be mailed to all members. Confirmation of mailing address will be emailed to all members by Reina.

### **ASL Video**

Adam:

- This video will explain how to fill out a Voter Registration Card.
- Estimated completion date is first week of October.
- SOS has filming scheduled for September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Translation of Ballots, Labels, Titles, and Summaries (BLTS) Handout

- SOS has created a timeline of approximate dates assistance will be needed.
  - [2020 Primary Election BLTS Translations Timeline](#)
  - Tim asked whether November 7<sup>th</sup> be for all three categories?
    - Adam responded that it will.

Voter Bill of Rights

- SOS is looking into having Voter Bill of Rights available in braille. SOS to provide periodic updates on this project.
  - Eren commented that this is something that should be discussed with the VAAC, maybe they would like audio instead.
    - Adam responded that this will definitely be discussed with the VAAC members.

Poll Workers (Eren):

- Armando who couldn't attend the meeting, but wanted to share that during the CACEO conference the item of poll workers being proficient to translate was discussed. They asked counties to share samples of proficiency tests they are currently using. More to come on this item.

#### 4. Electing New Co- Chairs

Reina:

- 2019-2021 is a new term and new co-chairs need to be elected.
- Members nominated: Astrid Garcia Ochoa, Christina Fletes-Romo, and Clarissa Laguardia.
- Members will email their vote to Reina.
- Members nominated discussed their backgrounds.
  - Clarissa shared that she has been in the language industry juggling translation and interpreting for 15 years. She is a US State Department Certified Translator and National Board Certified as a medical interpreter. She owns a company that does translation interpreting equipment rental and cultural consulting. Has served as the Language Access Manager for the California Complete Count. She serves in the Sacramento County LAAC and is affiliated with United Latinos. She is also a graduate student in Public Policy and Administration at Sac State.
  - Christina shared that she is currently a ACLU Voting Rights Attorney working with voting issues across the state. One issue area is language accessibility for voters and another issue area is the Voter's Choice Act. She also works in redistricting as well as campaign finance. Prior to her current position she worked with domestic workers such as nannies and housecleaners across the United States and she ran the first ever research project in this industry and with this she put together trainings in English and Spanish. The training was done in all 9 different languages and she did a lot of the Spanish training. She also served as an interpreter and translator for this project. At one point she was able to translate from Tagalog to English although she has now lost that skill.
  - Astrid shared that she is the Executive Director of Future of California Election, which is a statewide network and work on strengthening California's democracy through building cross sector collaboration with election officials and advocates. This has been her roll for the past six years. Prior to this she worked with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), an educational fund leading their state advocacy around election issues and also managed their national redistricting strategy. She has always focused on civic engagement, public participation of latino and low income voters. Her background has mainly been in policy around language access. She is bilingual and feels that she does the work to serve her family, especially her grandmother.

#### 5. Future Meeting Dates

Reina:

- Set day will be Wednesday,
- First week of the month,
- From 1-2:30 p.m.
- Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 2, 2019, at 1:00 p.m.

No members opposed.

## **6. List of LAAC's Goals for this year**

Reina:

- Members will email Reina their list of goals.
- Goals will be discussed during the next meeting.

## **7. Member Profiles**

Reina:

- SOS would like to move forward with having member profiles on the SOS website.
- Requesting that members submit a short bio of about 100 words.
  - Eren commented that it should include what languages they speak.

No members opposed.

## **8. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items**

Public Comments

- None.

Future Agenda Items

- Goals for the year.

## **9. The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.**