

**Secretary of State's Task Force
on Uniform Poll Worker Training Standards
Wednesday August 25, 2004 Meeting Minutes**

1:45 p.m.: The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Freddie Oakley with the following members present:

Freddie Oakley, Kathay Feng, Bonnie Hamlin, Barbara Jones, Dr. Geraldine Washington, Ernest "Chuck" Alaya, Maria de la Luz Garcia, Luana Horstkotte, Mary Jungi, Elliott Petty, Phil Ting, Stephen Weir

Task Force Member Connie McCormack was represented by Debbie Martin of the Los Angeles County Clerk's Office. Task Force Member Rodermund attended via teleconference.

The following Secretary of State staff members were present: Marc Carrel, John Mott-Smith and Rachel Zenner.

Item I: Mr. Carrel, representing Secretary of State Kevin Shelley, welcomed the Task Force Members and thanked them for their service. He then administered the Oath of Office to all members, with the exception of Members McCormack, Rodermund and Ting.

Item II: Chairwoman Oakley welcomed the Task Force Members and thanked them for their service. The Task Force Members then introduced themselves.

Item III: Chairwoman invited Secretary of State staff to deliver the staff presentation.

- Mr. Carrel reviewed Senate Bill 610, which established the Task Force and provided new criteria for uniform standards of poll worker training. The bill mandates that the Task Force is mandated with providing recommendations to the Secretary of State for Uniform Poll Worker Training Standards by January 1, 2005.
- Ms. Zenner reviewed current poll worker training standards, citing a survey conducted by the Office of the Secretary of State of the counties. The survey found that counties anticipate using 60,000 poll workers for the November 2, 2004 Presidential Election. Of this amount, counties anticipate 73% of poll workers to have volunteered in previous elections. The survey also found that current training varies a great deal among the counties, with some counties offering as little as 90 minutes of training and some offering as much as six hours, with the average length of training at two hours.

- Mr. Carrel discussed an article from the *Detroit News* discussing potential problems associated with an aging population of poll workers. He also discussed a document from the Election Assistance Commission Best Practices Toolkit entitled *Pollworkers and Polling Places*.

Item IV:

Chairwoman Oakley announced that, as a starting point from which to frame discussion, she and staff had met earlier to generate points to consider when approaching uniform training standards. These points were taken from the criteria provided by S.B. 610 explicitly, as well as other ideas generated by staff. She then invited Task Force Members to identify other discussion topics. The Task Force members recommended adding the following items to the list of discussion topics:

- Selection criteria for precinct locations, including considerations of the “environment” of the polling place.
- New Help America Vote Act (HAVA) identification requirements.
- Setup of the polling place and assigned roles of poll workers.
- Increasing the stipend of poll workers.
- Recruitment of poll workers.
- Ability of voters to have questions answered.
- Training differences between clerks and inspectors, and between new and returning poll workers.
- Standardizing number of training hours received by each poll worker.
- Phone access/communication issues of poll workers on Election Day, including a suggestion by Task Force Member Rodermund of using the emergency radio networks used by first responders.
- Procedures for dealing with polling places that do not open.
- Poll worker recognition.
- Electioneering issues best practices.
- Dual polling sites.
- Printed resources for poll workers/poll worker training methods and materials.

Having identified additional issues to consider, the Task Force proceeded to identify specific issues within each point to consider. Under Point Number One (Rights of Voters), the following issues were identified for discussion:

- Poll worker sensitivity to linguistic minorities.
- Customer service standards/respect for the voter.
- Presumption that all voters are valid voters.
- Identifying bilingual poll workers.

- Provisional ballots as a means to ensure that only valid votes are counted.
- Unacceptable conduct by poll workers.
- Ability of poll workers to work together in harmony.
- Layout of polling place.
- Size/readability of materials.
- Training standards/materials from the Secretary of State regarding general poll worker issues statewide (i.e. provisional voting).

In addition, the Task Force requested that the Secretary of State's staff arrange presentations on cultural competence, handicapped accessibility issues and customer service so that the Task Force may have a better understanding of these issues when discussing uniform standards of training.

Several Task Force Members also expressed a desire to discuss how detailed training standards should be, specifically within regards to the ability of the average poll worker to be able to fully understand the training, as well as a discussion of whether or not new standards should be developed within the context of the November 2, 2004 Presidential Election or the 2006 Gubernatorial Primary.

In the interest of discussing as many points as possible at the next meeting, several Task Force Members and staff agreed to develop specific issues for consideration for the following points to consider:

- Election challenge procedures (*Chairwoman Oakley*)
- Operation of a jurisdiction's voting system (*Chairwoman Oakley*)
- Poll hours (*Mr. Carrel*)
- Relevant election laws (*Task Force Member Rodermund*)
- Cultural competency (*Task Force Member Ting*)
- Issues confronting voters with disabilities (*Task Force Member Horstkotte*)

3:35 p.m.:

Chairwoman Oakley adjourned the meeting, whereupon Mr. Carrel administered the Oath of Office to Task Force Member Ting.