Deaf & Hard of Hearing Proposal
California Secretary of State
Voter Accessibility Advisory Council

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Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community
Initial Voter Accessibility Recommendations

1. Secretary of State (SOS) to add ASL (American Sign Language) to California Voter Registration card – it is a language, not just a version of English

2. SOS to promote the use of ASL video clips (Picture in a Picture) signed by CDI or DI trained experts (Certified Deaf Interpreters or Deaf Interpreters with a strong knowledge of Legal Terminology):
   - How to Register to Vote (SOS project in progress)
   - Text of Proposed California Propositions (In SOS plan)
   - Candidate Statements (National, State and Local) – SOS to encourage candidates to do these videos

3. Deaf Community Organizations & SOS – create links to these video clips on their websites to inform Deaf & Hard of Hearing voters
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community Proposed Pilot studies

- Test recommendations in pilot studies where large Deaf & Hard of Hearing Communities aggregate.

- Proposed Teams:
  - Sacramento area – Pilot in 2020
    - Courtney Bailey, Sacramento County, with Rachel Porter, NorCal Center on Deafness
  - Los Angeles area – Pilot in 2021 after computer system roll-out
    - Julia Keh, LA County, with Christopher Myers, Greater LA County on Deafness
NorCal’s Initial feedback:

- NorCal has a 99% declination rate when offering to register citizens to vote
- NorCal provides services to approximately 5,000 people
- If this is indicative of other Deaf & Hard of Hearing communities, these communities are not involved in the democratic process or exercising their right to vote
- Community needs assistance filling out voter registration form – it is overwhelming
- NorCal staff is not trained to assist in the voting process
- Questions about political parties, vote by mail, importance of residential address often go unanswered.
Sacramento County/NorCal
Initial meeting/plans

- Voter Registration
  - Sacramento County’s Initial Plan:
    - Conduct voter registration training for NorCal staff so they can answer questions
    - Provide materials in 4th grade literacy level (per NorCal’s suggestion) on how to register and political party information – will need more terse political party descriptions
    - Create posters with NorCal to attract people to the idea of voting, using graphics and icons to appeal to the community.
Sacramento County/NorCal Initial meeting/plans

- Election Information:
  - Sacramento County’s Initial Plan:
    - Partner with Sacramento Public Library who already hosts voter and election forums
      - Advertise to the deaf community, invite to these events
      - Provide an ASL translator for these events
      - Invite mayor/elected officials to bring out more interest in event
    - Consider Easy Voter Guide from the League of Women Voters as a tool
Sacramento County/NorCal Initial meeting/plans

- Voting Options:
  - Sacramento County’s Initial Plan:
    - Not clear yet which way Deaf & Hard of Hearing prefer to vote – in person or vote by mail
    - Use icons/graphics when discussing voting options or how to return a ballot
    - Create a video of what to expect at a Vote Center, the process of voting and what it looks like to vote by mail (in ASL) to post on website and share on social media, including NorCal website.