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Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Wednesday, April 16, 2024, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum

VAAC members present:

- Fred Nisen
- Veronica Elsea
- Mathew Ptacek
- Aaron Nevarez
- Mike Nguyen
- Rebecca Donabed
- Mary Helen Gallagos
- Roxana Castro

Members of SOS:

- Jana Lean – Chief of Elections
- Justin Hirai – Election Security Unit Manager
- Kirsten Larsen – Election Administration Manager
- Adam Quintana – Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
- Lauro Feliciano – Legislation

Quorum was met.

2. VAAC Member Updates

Veronica Elsea:

- Assisting Santa Cruz County with their social media messaging to promote fair, safe, and accessible elections for everyone.

Fred Nisen:

- Groups monitored a couple of voting centers during the special election in Oakland.
- Advocates are working with LA, Orange, and other counties to help voters with disabilities that are incarcerated.

Rebecca Donabed:

- Provided statistics from the 2024 General Election:
 - King County had 64% voter participation
 - 35,000 ballots mailed in or through drop box
 - 500,034 voted in-person on election day
 - 100,623 voted during early voting
 - 1084 were provisional
 - 31 requested RAVBM and use of sign language services

Aaron Nevarez:

- Los Angeles County local VAAC is on April 26.
- Outreach team has participated in 60 events so far, and plan to attend 15 to 20 more events this month.

Mike Nyugen:

- High school voter education week 14th to 25th.
- Santa Clara County LAAC meeting 22nd and VAAC 24th.

Mary Helen Gallegos:

- N/A

Roxana Castro:

- Visioning preplanning meeting with VAAC and LAAC
 - EAP outreach strategy
 - Public workshops for EAP take place between May through July
 - Increase membership for LAAC and VAAC
 - Next VAAC meeting May 9th and trying to recruit new members

Mathew Ptacek:

- San Luis Obispo County is working on increasing their local VAAC membership.
- Gained three members.
- Teamed up with Disability Rights California

3. Secretary of State Updates

Voter's Choice Act:

- Implementation of SB bill 1450: became law 2024 and took affect January 1, 2025
- Met with VCA counties to get feedback about SB 1450
- Held meeting with advocacy groups
- Released CCROV in February to invite people to join voter choice task force
- Reinstating task force
 - Releasing CCROV
 - Requesting applications

- Received applications
- Created a work group that shows consistent fairness in reviewing applications
- Submitted recommendation to the SOS for review, update coming soon regarding membership for task force
- Election Administration Plans (EAP):
 - VCA counties are required to notice and revise EAPs first 2 years after becoming a VCA and then every 4 years after
 - 12 VCA counties will notice and revise their EAP (orange county being one of them)
 - 2025-2026 EAP renewal calendar: to identify key requirements (optional for counties to use)
 - In process of scheduling monthly meetings with all 12 VCA counties (already met with 2 counties)
 - Purpose of meeting: make sure that the office is available to answer any questions/concerns that the counties may have about their EAP renewals
- VCA counties request about making available counted label data that could give more detail on vote center usage leading to election day like:
 - Who is voting on which days
 - Traffic we see on weekend vs weekdays
 - Voting activity by age group
 - Currently being shared to the VCA counties
 - Planning on making that information available to the public soon
- Imperial County reached out about planning to be a VCA

Legislation:

- Legislation is not touching any pending legislation in terms of our legislator – regarding Trump decertify voting equipment

4. Working Group Updates

Petitions/Signature Verification:

- Questions were created to submit to SOS to receive a follow-up
- Voting results: 8 members voted in the affirmative to move questions forward to SOS.

Curbside Voting:

- Voters with specific needs created their own curbside working group to review the document and are awaiting approval.

Outreach to Voters with Disabilities:

- Outreach to voters who don't identify with a disability:
 - Offering suggested language that counties can use in their general outreach campaign.

- Get attention from all voters to inform them about unknown services (using suggestive language).
- The working group recommends SOS send these suggestions to the counties for potential implementation.
- Changing the language to make it more understanding with the voter so voters can know about other services.
- The committee requested the SOS to work with the working group to create a package and send it to the counties. Bring a recommendation back to the VAAC.
- Voting results: 8 members voted in the affirmative to move document forward to SOS.

Increasing Accessibility for Voters who use ASL:

- Fred sent an email to Rebecca and Mary Helen about the best practices that DRC developed for people who use ASL.
- Taking time between now and next VAAC meeting to review and bring finalized draft.

5. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- VAAC meeting June 18th
- Veronica requested update from OVSTA regarding equipment
- Action items:
 - Questions to SOS
 - Recommendations to SOS from outreach to voter with disability

6. **Adjournment**