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Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

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

VAAC members present:

- Fred Nisen
- 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
- Debra Ledsinger – Office of Voting Systems (OVSTA)
- Adam Quintana – Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
- Lauro Feliciano – Legislation

Quorum was met.

2. VAAC Member Updates

Fred Nisen:

- DRC was approved to give a presentation for the Ventura County disability summit, regarding accessible transportation providers
- Orange county will participate as well

Rebecca Donabed:

- Fresno county is redoing their website and add voting videos in English, Spanish, and ASL.
- Merced county had an election early march
 - City of Dos Palos
 - <2600 voters

- Tried mobile service trailer and had voter equipment on the outside for curbside voting (liked by the voters)
- Everyone used the mobile service trailer and the drop off box
- Dos palos only has English and Spanish as a required language

Aaron Nevarez:

- Outreach at the LA county fair.
- County LAAC and VAAC met and are striving to increase attendance
- Community voter outreach committee made new changes to VCA
- Working on a plan with SOS for revision to their EAP

Mike Nyugen:

- Santa Clara has meetings for the VAAC and teleconference

Mary Helen Gallegos:

- Preparing for their LAAC and VAAC meeting for July
 - In-person (1.5 hrs.)
- Increased outreach for students and participated in youth summit presentations
- Doing inventory for all accessibility tools

Roxana Castro:

- Looking forward to the panel in Richard? county shared with DRC.
- Looking forward to EAP updates and completed over 20 targeted small group meetings
- About to launch their 15-community workshop and 2 meetings with VAAC/LAAC leading to public hearing
- October: publishing amended EAP

Mathew Ptacek:

- New members at the VAAC meeting
 - Went over mitigation package

3. Secretary of State Updates

OVSTA

- LA county VSAP 4.0 has submitted an application and is in pretesting
- Reviewing application heart severity 3.2.2 & ES&S EVS 6.5.2.0
- 10x has an application for admin. approval that is currently in testing
- Pretesting the no ink polypad 3.9
- RAVBM system: LA county has the ISB 4.0 that is in pretesting

Voter's Choice Act:

- Voter choice task force
 - First meeting (100 participants)
 - 16 members & two advisors from the legislator
 - Will review elections conducted under the VCA model and provide comments & recommendations to SOS and Legislator within 6 months after each election
 - Meet again in September
- 12 counties are renewing their election administration plans in 2025

- All 12 counties should submit their outreach and education plans to the SOS for approval
- Meeting with advocate groups
 - Shared data files that show vote center usage
 - Shows low vote center usage from E-10 to E-7. Starts to pick up E-4 to E-3. Most usage before election day and election day.
 - voterchoice@sos.ca.gov to submit request to join meeting
- Imperial County:
 - County has not gone publish with the VCA
 - They published a draft EAP
 - ROV got approval –June 10th
 - She got approval to transition the county to the VCA

Legislation:

- Deadline:
 - June 6: House to pass bill
- SB 91:
 - Senate bill and is now in assembly election (current)
 - Amended on June 10th and is in assembly
 - 2-year bill

4. Working Group Updates

Petitions/Signature Verification:

- Working group questions related to address and signature requirements on petitions
- Question 1:
 - The committee is aware of the provision election code section 100.5.
 - Not aware of the provision of the election code that requires 1. explanation of election code section 100.5 or 2. Space for witness signature specified in section 100.5
 - SOS has no authority to modify petition requirements
 - Petition requirements are specified by law, legislator provides manner in which a petition should be circulated, presented and certified (California Constitution article 2 section 10e)
 - Proponent of the measure responsibility to prepare petition
 - Election official's responsibility is to receive those petitions, not to accept or file a petition that doesn't apply to election code requirements (election code 9015)
 - Change existing law related to petitions: voter must contact their representative and legislator. A voter can also propose an initiative measure.
 - Proponents can seek assistance from their own private council to help draft the text of a measure or write the text themselves.
 - Proponent can also obtain assistance from the office of legislative council in drafting the language
 - Advocate is free to request a proponent include additional

information on a petition

- Question 2:
 - Election code section 100b: petition signer must personally affix on the petition his or her signature. Name and place of residence.
 - Election code section 100.5: a petition signer that is unable to affix the information needed, they can have the information entered for them
- Question 3:
 - Election code 100.5: Not aware of a provision in election code that prohibits a petition circulator from acting as a witness
- Question 4:
 - Review general provisions regarding voter registration by affidavit (election code section 2100 – 2198)
 - Requirements related to online voter registration are included in section 2196 - 2198
 - Signers of a petition can request assistance if needed. The assistance must be witnessed by one person who must subscribe to their signature for it to be valid (election code section 100.5)
 - Complete regulations on signature verification and signature verification training can be found California code of regulations title 2 section 20910 – 20993
 - When petition is submitted to an election official, each petition must include a declaration signed by petition circulator- circulator must witness the signature and make sure it is genuine (election code section 104 & 9022)
- Question 5:
 - No provision in the elections code that requires a person to be notified of signature rejection
 - Note: The proponent of a proposed initiative measure is required that any person, company, or organization whose signature to qualify the initiative measure (paid or volunteered) receive instruction on requirements imposed by state law. (election code 9607)
- Copy will be provided to the committee

Curbside Voting:

- Recommendations on county best practices
 - The recommendations were drafted by Curbside Voting working group and approved by the voters with specific needs committee
 - Request: these recommendations be sent to counties prior to June 2026 primary election.
 - Request SOS to post on webpage and send an advance so counties can have a discussion with their county VAACs.
 - 7/7 voted yes

Outreach to Voters with Disabilities:

- Members of SOS teams presented the document at recent CACO voter

with specific needs committee

- There was a recommendation for counties to route the document to their VAACs
- The working good is awaiting feedback

Increasing Accessibility for Voters who use ASL:

- Getting input from other members of working groups and members of the deaf community on a draft that DRC circulated
- Waiting to hear back in order to continue

5. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- Next meeting – August 20, 2025

6. Adjournment