



# Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D. California Secretary of State Elections Division

1500 11th Street, 5th Floor | Sacramento, CA 95814 | 916.657.2166 | elections@sos.ca.gov

## Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

### Meeting Minutes

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

VAAC members present:

- Fred Nisen
- Veronica Elsea
- Mike Nguyen
- Rebecca Donabed
- Roxana Castro
- Aarron Navarez

Members of SOS:

- Justin Hirai – Election Security Unit Manager
- Kirsten Larsen – Election Administration Manager
- Jana Lean – Chief of Elections
- NaKeshia Robinson – Office of Voting Systems (OVSTA)
- Robert Ullrey – Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
- Lauro Feliciano – Legislation

Quorum was met.

#### 2. VAAC Member Updates

Aarron Navarez:

- Has been focusing on the upcoming election; we have reached a million votes by mail ballots so far.
- Los Angeles County is continuing to do some outreach events during this time as we gear up for March to Election Day.
- Wanted to highlight a particular bill, AB 287 was a bill that was sponsored by Los Angeles County that was recently signed by Governor Newsom. This is an important bill that will help election offices secure accessible parking and curbside voting for our voters with disabilities. I think this is a perfect place to talk about this and thank DRC and others who supported

and advocated for this bill. It will be a great opportunity and provide a lot of additional flexibility for our voters and disabilities.

Mike Nguyen:

- For Santa Clara County, we are postponing our recent VAAC meeting for October 23<sup>rd</sup> to early next year.

Rebecca Donabed:

- Tulare county we are busy with getting polling sites for the Special Election.
- On October 15<sup>th</sup>, I helped train the Tulare County poll workers on etiquette toward voters with disabilities.
- Fresno County and Tulare County are busy with the Special Elections.
- On October 9th and 10th, teamed up with Fresno County Registrar of Voters had a voter's workshop, ASL interpretation would be provided at the office. They have a staff member that is certified in ASL and frequently uses it.

Fred Nisen:

- We have our voting hotline open for the Special Election. The number is 888-569-7955.
- We have received more the 50 callers and are expecting more in the upcoming days.
- We are surprised by the amount of Spanish speaking callers we have gotten.
- We had a town hall webinar with one of our voting rights advocates, League for Women for California, and disability community advocates.
- The league spoke about Proposition 50 in a nonpartisan way, and other speakers spoke about the importance of accessibility voting options.
- The webinar will be posted on our website under events and past webinars.

Roxana Castro:

- We partnered with DRC to attend the government Disability Summit in Ventura County. They presented collaboration between government agencies and community partners.
- We learned a lot and it was nice to meet other government agencies across the state that are looking to increase partnership with advocacy groups.

Veronica Elsea:

- No Updates

### **3. Secretary of State Updates**

OVSTA

- Electronic Poll Book was approved on October 13th that is the Knowing Poll Pad 4.0.2 was approved on October 13. We also have a RAVBM that is in application review Democracy Live Secure system 1.2.6.

- We currently have two voting systems in pretesting.
- We are planning accessibility testing sometime in December or January, that will be a week long. We are looking for volunteers who would like to participate in that. If you're please send an e-mail to us. [votingsystems@sos.ca.gov](mailto:votingsystems@sos.ca.gov).

#### Voter's Choice Act

- Robert: Voters Choice Group has been working hard with the Special Election.
- We have been working directly with our ambassadors who are out in the field working with constituents on helping them vote and remove any obstacles.
- We have released a subcontract grants through our agencies SAX for giving money out to 501C3's that do outreach to specific groups, and one of the groups, is California Foundation for Independent Living Centers. They receive money to help disabled community members also vote or register to vote or find voting locations or find resources to help them vote.
- Voters Choice Taskforce had their first real working meeting two weeks ago. Next meeting is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup> and again in December. They are tasked with doing a report after the Special Election and giving the legislature about anything that they saw that worked and things that needed improvement. The meeting is open to the public and we will be sending out an announcement around the 10th or the 9th with the agenda.

#### Legislation

- Lauro: Some updates to some chapter bill that we're sponsored by the SOS related to elections.
- AB 808 by assembly member Addis. The name is Campaign Statements and Registrations, Filing online or Electronically. A Cal access cleanup bill. That bill eliminates the option for certain campaign disclosure reports to followed by facts. It also updates terms used in state law to reflect the electronic filing required campaign related reports and that one was chapter on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- AB 1249 Assembly member Wilson. It's regarding Early voting satellite locations for non VCA counties. This bill mandates one day of early voting on Saturday before the day of the election in non VCA counties. That was chaptered on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- AB 1392 by assembly member Sharp-Collins and Flora, the Elections: voter registration information: elected officials and candidates. This was a bipartisan bill that makes voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elected official elective office confidential. It will affect federal and state and local elected offices and candidates for those offices throughout California, access to personal information will be

granted for requests for journalistic or governmental purposes only. Requests for election scholar or political purpose will no longer be recognized, but the bill includes an opt out provision and that was chapter also on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- AB 1411 by assembly member Sharp-Collins, titled Voter Education Outreach Plans. This bill requires non VCA counties to submit voter education outreach plans to the SOS, requiring the SOS to provide a template for guidance on those contents.  
All those plans must include information about online voter registration, preregistration opportunities, vote by mail procedures, ballot tracking services, options for military and overseas voters, options for voters with disabilities, options for in person voting opportunities, language accessibility and key election dates and deadlines. That was chapter October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- SB 621 by Senator Grove, titled Voter Registration: Military and Overseas Voters. That bill just removed some obsolete and burned some requirements for military and overseas voters who are registering to vote. That was chapter on August 28th.
- SB 482 by Pierson, titled Roster of Public Officials, it's a Cal roster mandate. This bill directs local governments to provide the SOS with updates to the makeup of their governing bodies and other key offices within 120 days of a General Election. That was chapter on October 13th.

#### 4. Working Group Updates

##### Petitions/Signature Verification:

- We have been discussing and sending questions back and forth to the Secretary of State to clarify what's required, what isn't required, and what happens when someone signs a petition or referendum but cannot physically write their address.
- During our last VAAC meeting, we had a little discussion with Joanna from the Secretary of State's office and we came up with the following. The committee is asking the Secretary of State's office to consider encouraging the legislature to add clarifying language to election code Section 100.5 and a couple others in order to address the following outstanding questions. As an advisory committee we don't have the authority to propose legislation or send recommendations directly to legislature.
- We want clarification on; what the requirement is for a voter who cannot physically write their address on the petition form due to the physical disability is requiring an additional signature from a witness.
- The petitions also need to provide adequate space to put in the witness' information if this is truly required.
- The second item is the methods of fixing the physical address to the document. Clarifications that we would like, can the signer use an

address stamp? Would that be considered a fix the address to the document. If that is in fact allowed when the person did their initial voter registration?

- We are asking for a motion to send this request to the Secretary of State to see if they can help the legislature come up with some better guidelines.
- Fred: I'll make a motion to adopt the petitions working group recommendations.
- Rebecca Second the motion
- Vote Passed

#### Curbside Voting:

- This working group has achieved what they set out to do.

#### Outreach to Voters with Disabilities:

- Veronica: We are hoping to advance these issues in the next term. What we'd like to do is do more surveying of the counties come up with some graphics or little things that would help counties use some of these suggestions in PSA's and just really bring all voters into the general population of advertising.

#### Increasing Accessibility for Voters who use ASL:

- Fred: We decided to use the document DRC prepared about a year ago with best practice recommendations for voters who use ASL. We are asking the Secretary of State to provide these recommendations to the counties before the 2026 Primary.
- Aaron: We recently started offering ASL all our vote centers via videoconferencing and have heard amazing things from our deaf and hard of hearing community regarding that.
- Roxana seconds the motion
- Vote Passed

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

## **6. Adjournment**