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CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

October 18th, 2022

Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

October 5, 2022, Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Roll was called. The following participants were marked as present:

Committee Members

- Deanna Kitamura
- Jacqueline Coto
- Pedro Hernandez
- Karen Diaz
- Nanindeep Singh
- Armando Salud

Secretary of State Staff

- Jana Lean
Chief of Elections
- Katreena Alder
VCA Analyst
- Daneka Huynh
Language Access Coordinator
- Ted Muhlhauser
Staff Services Manager I
- Rodney Rodriguez
IT Specialist - OVSTA
- Mike Somers
Election Security Manager
- Ruben Vasquez
Voter Accessibility Coordinator
- Ryan Reece
VBM/Ballot Tracking Analyst



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Members of the Public and County Elections Office Staff

- Nevada County
- San Joaquin County
- San Mateo
- Julia Marks (Advancing Justice – ALC)

2. LAAC Members Election Updates

Armando Salud

- County is partnering with a local organization called Power the Polls to recruit bilingual poll workers to help provide language assistance to voters. The organization provided names for over 1000 volunteers. The highest support language being Spanish.

Deanna Kitamura

- Reported on the character-based names/transliterations agenda item from the last meeting. Deanna contacted multiple advocacy groups to understand if there should be transliterations in Khmer, Hindi, and Thai.
- Khmer and Hindi groups said it would be beneficial to transliterate in those languages.
- Group representing Thai language responded to not transliterate names in Thai since the language is very complicated and the margin for error is large.
- Overall, Bengali, Urdu, Farsi, Khmer, and Hindi groups are interested in translations.

Jacqueline Coto

- No updates.

Naindeep Singh

- No updates.

Pedro Hernandez

- California Common Cause is getting ready to observe vote centers in the Central Valley for the upcoming elections.

Karen Diaz

- Released a new study on new Americans becoming naturalized citizens and will share publication with LAAC members.
- Passing out fliers and information for this upcoming election and partnering with the LA County Elections.

3. SOS Updates

Voter's Choice Act (VCA)

- Katreena Alder provided an update on the Ambassador program for VCA. The program has over 20 ambassadors and that number is increasing each week. The long-term goal of the program is to reach over 1,000 ambassadors.

OVSTA

- Rodney Rodriguez communicated the OVSTA is in the middle of testing ES&S election systems and software. Accessibility and usability testing will be conducted from November 2 and November 3. The accessibility testing will also include language accessibility testing.
 - If any members are interested in participating in accessibility and usability testing, contact VotingSystems@sos.ca.gov.

Legislative

- Ted Muhlhauser communicated that all of bills on the governor's desk were acted on as of September 30.
- One bill in particular, AB 1631, requires county election officials to post on their website the public list of all polling locations where multilingual poll workers will be present and which languages will be supported.
 - Another effect of the bill is requiring election officials to proactively recruit multilingual poll workers.

4. Bilingual Poll Workers

- Ruben Vasquez presented the Best Practices for Language Access document to the committee. The best practices were provided to the SOS from the California Language Access Work Group and this document was collaboratively created.
- Julia Marks (Advancing Justice – ALC) added that the documents main goal was to share information that election officials can look at and identify items they can improve upon.
- Deanna Kitamura communicated to Armando Salud if they can share this document with the CACEO president. Armando approved to share the document and will want to provide feedback after the election is over.
- Pedro Hernandez asked Julia Marks if there are any items on the document that should be prioritized? Julia Marks communicated to spend more time on the language access training.

5. Committee Goals

- Deanna Kitamura requested a process for community groups to petition to add supported languages under 14201. Armando Salud asked to hear from the community directly to see if there is a need for additional languages. Naindeep Singh stated its important for the committee to know which local languages groups to reach out to concerning this topic.
 - Deanna Kitamura, Armando Salud, Pedro Hernandez, Naindeep Singh, and Daneka Huynh will further discuss this topic after the 2022 General Election.

6. Partnering with local language accessibility organizations

- The committee discussed reaching out to Power the Polls to see if the organization will include an option for people to select if they speak another language besides English when they are signing up to become a poll worker.
- Naindeep Singh asked to ensure the organization is non-partisan.
 - Armando confirmed the organization, Power the Polls, is non-partisan.

7. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- Public Comments:
 - No public comments were made.
- Future Agenda Items:
 - Character-Base Names/Transliterations
 - 1. Transliteration regarding Hindi and Punjabi.

8. Adjournment at 1:53pm.

- Next meeting is scheduled on December 7th at 1:00pm.