

Agenda Item 3. The Role of the LAAC

I. Purpose and Responsibilities of the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) was established to advise the Secretary of State (SOS) on issues related to language accessibility of elections and election materials. The mission of the LAAC is to advise and assist the SOS with implementation of federal and state laws relating to access to the electoral process by voters with limited-English proficiency, so that all persons who vote can understand the voting process. The LAAC also provides recommendations identifying and prioritizing activities, programs, and policies to ensure every voter has equal access to the ballot.

The responsibilities of the committee include:

1. Providing expertise on language accessibility issues.
2. Promoting language accessibility initiatives.
3. Answering Secretary of State questions regarding language accessibility issues.

II. Organization

- A. The committee consists of twenty (20) members appointed by the Secretary of State, to include five (5) county elections officials and fifteen (15) elections and language accessibility experts. A quorum, needed to hold any meeting, shall consist of at least ten (10) members.
- B. Two members of the committee will act as co-chairs, and will run the meetings of the committee. They will be responsible for ensuring the agenda for each meeting is developed with the coordination of SOS staff, and that the agenda is followed at each meeting.
 1. The two co-chairs will be elected at-large from among the members.
- C. The Secretary of State shall provide resources and administrative services to the committee in accordance with the following:
 1. The SOS shall provide at least one staff member to act as liaison to the committee.
 2. The SOS shall provide for production and distribution of meeting notices and agendas.

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3. The SOS shall design and host an Internet website that will include postings of notices, agendas, and minutes, as well as general information about the LAAC.
4. The SOS shall provide coordination of meetings, to include location and conference call setup, as well as distribution of meeting materials.
5. When required, the SOS shall provide technical assistance, and record keeping.

III. Meetings

- A. The LAAC shall meet no more than monthly, according to a prepared calendar. A quorum of a majority of the members must be present for any committee business.
- B. Agendas and meeting notices will be prepared, finalized, posted, and sent-out at least 14 days before a scheduled meeting.
- C. Members shall only attend meetings in-person at either the SOS office in Sacramento or at a teleconference location listed in the meeting agenda.

IV. Committee Member Information

Committee members and meetings are subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. LAAC members will be expected to attend monthly meetings at a publicly accessible teleconference site in one of the following regions: Bay Area, Sacramento, or Southern California (sites in other regions may be available if needed). This is a volunteer committee. There is no stipend or reimbursement for participation in the LAAC.

Oath of Office

The Secretary of State, or his designee, for each committee member at the beginning of their first meeting, will administer the oath of office.

Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

A summary of the open meeting law shall be attached.

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Assembly Bill No. 1443

CHAPTER 347

An act to add Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 2600) to Division 2 of the Elections Code, relating to voters.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1443, Chau. Voters: language accessibility.

Existing law establishes the Secretary of State as the chief elections officer of the state and requires that he or she ensure that elections are efficiently conducted and that state election laws are enforced. Existing law declares the intent of the Legislature that non-English-speaking citizens, like all other citizens, should be encouraged to vote and that appropriate efforts should be made to minimize obstacles to voting by citizens who lack sufficient skill in English to vote without assistance.

This bill would require the Secretary of State to establish a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee. The committee would consist of at least 15 members and would include the Secretary of State, his or her designees, and additional members appointed by the Secretary of State who have demonstrated language accessibility experience, have knowledge of methods for presenting election materials, or are county elections officials or their designee. The bill would require the Secretary of State to consult with and consider the recommendations of the committee.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 2600) is added to Division 2 of the Elections Code, to read:

CHAPTER 8. Language Accessibility 2600.

The Secretary of State shall establish a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee which shall meet no less than four times each calendar year. The committee shall consist of no less than fifteen members and be comprised of the Secretary of State and his or her designee or designees and additional members appointed by the Secretary of State. The appointees shall have demonstrated language accessibility experience, have knowledge of presenting election materials to voters using plain language methods or another method that is easy for voters to access and understand, or be a county elections official or his or her designee. At least three county elections officials shall be appointed to the committee. The Secretary of State shall consult with and consider the recommendations of the committee. The committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of State.