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Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC)

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

2. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Roll was called and quorum was established.

The following participants were marked as present:

Committee Members

- Deam Logan
- Deanna Kitamura
- Jacqueline Coto
- Janet Bernabe
- Jeffrey Reeder
- Juan Pablo Cervantes
- Karduz Nguyen
- Paul Burke
- Pedro Hernandez
- Val Jacobo

Secretary of State Staff

- NaKeshia Robinson
Information Technology
Supervisor II
- Adam Quintana
Policy & Planning Manager,
Voter's Choice Act
- LaKenya Jordan
Deputy Secretary of State
- Ted Muhlhauser
Legislative Liaison
- Anakaren Monroy
Associate Governmental Program
Analyst
- Kirsten Larsen
Election Services Manager
- Daneka Huynh
Language Access Coordinator
- Ryan Reece
VBM/Ballot Tracking Analyst

3. LAAC Members' Updates

Dean Logan

- A motion was brought forward by LA County supervisors to call for additional support for non-English speaking voters and communities. This motion has led to discussions concerning state and federal language requirements based on the number of language speakers in a particular precinct and but under the VCA model, there is very little that is precinct based. He mentioned how thresholds may not be met at a precinct level but could be met county wide, and questioned how we might interpret that to VCA.

Deanna Kitamura

- Just released a report called the California Language Access Roadmap, which provides lessons learned on future pathways towards expanding language access for California voters. They have begun presenting their findings to different groups. LaKenya Jordan, the Deputy Secretary of State, asked for a copy of the report and Daneka agreed to send that over.

Jacqueline Coto

- NALEO is preparing for the upcoming Future of California Elections Conference. A link was placed in the chat to view the agenda for the event.

Janet Bernabe

- The League of Women Voters in Riverside are working on registering high schoolers.
- The Riverside ROV recently had a meeting to overview the VCA efforts which Janet attended.

Jeffrey Reeder

- No updates.

Juan Pablo Cervantes

- No updates.

Kardez Nguyen

- His organization attended the Orange County High School Voter Education Week. The event went well and provided an opportunity to coordinate with other government and advocacy groups.

Paul Burke

- No updates.

Pedro Hernandez

- The California Language Access Workgroup's report, California Language Access Roadmap, has been completed and he is hopeful that the LAAC can review the document during the next meeting.

Val Jacobo

- Val updated the LAAC on the grassroots outreach efforts of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community groups working on the upcoming election cycle. These organizations are in need of funding opportunities, and Val asked if anyone on the LAAC knows of any community resources that may be available.

4. SOS Updates

Office of Voting System Technology and Assessment (OVSTA)

- NaKeshia Robinson updated the LAAC on the voting systems that are currently being reviewed by OVSTA. These are the systems that are going through the process right now:
 - Hart Verity Voting System, Version 3.2 was certified on September 26.
 - KnowINK Pollpad, Version 3.4 (EPollbook) will begin the testing phase this month.
 - KnowINK PollPrint, Version 3.4 (Ballot on Demand) will begin the testing phase this month.
 - Tenex Precinct Central Touchpad, Version 6 (EPollbook) will begin the testing phase soon.
 - Runbeck Sentio Lite EVS and SPS version 9.3 (Ballot on Demand) have finished testing and a decision on certification is pending.
 - Runbeck Novus, Version 6.3 (Ballot Duplication System) has finished testing and a decision on certification is pending.
 - Dominion Democracy Suite 5.19 Voting System 5.19 will begin testing on October 16.
 - Dominion Democracy Suite Mobile Ballot Printing Solution (Ballot on Demand) has finished testing and a decision on certification is pending.
 - Dominion Democracy Suite RAVBM Solution has an application that is under reviewed.
 - ES&S Ballot on Demand Solution 3.0.5.1 has an application that is under review.

- NaKesha also announced that the accessibility and privacy testing of the Dominion voting systems that are currently being tested will be open to members of the committee. NaKesha will reach out to the LAAC to inform them when this testing will be conducted.
- Pedro asked if any of these systems will be including any additional languages beyond the languages that are required under federal and state law. NaKesha said she will get back to the LAAC on the various languages that are supported by the voting systems.

Voter's Choice Act (VCA)

- Adam Quintana updated the LAAC on the VCA counties that are working on their Election Action Plans (EAPs). Most of the counties have submitted their EAPs to the SOS for review and those that are still outstanding should be submitted by the next week.
- The VCA team continues to hold monthly calls with VCA counties to inform them about best practices, relevant legislation, and concerns raised by advocates and community groups.
- The VCA team has also begun sharing 2022 election data and VoteCal data with all VCA counties to assist them in preparing for the next election cycle. This has been prepared in collaboration with UCLA.
- Deanna brought up a concern she has about the counties' responsibility to provide facsimile ballots to those voters who request them. Deanna had sent an email to LaKenya and she acknowledged that she received it and has already contacted the appropriate counties.
- Val asked how many counties are currently in the VCA and was wondering when the 2022 report on the VCA will be released. Adam said that we are anticipating that twenty-nine counties will be on the VCA model for the 2024 cycle, including Humboldt and Placer, the two newest members to transition to the VCA. The 2022 VCA report from UCLA will be released soon.
- LaKenya also had an update on SOS efforts to create a new strategic plan, which includes strengthening California's voting environment.
<https://admin.cdn.sos.ca.gov/strategic-plan/2022-Strategic-Plan-721.pdf>

Legislative Affairs

- Anakaren Monroy updated the LAAC on the status of several bills that SOS is tracking.
 - AB 545 would allow voter with a disability to vote by regular ballot outside of a polling place and to eliminate any provisions mandating a voter to

declare under oath that they were unable to mark their ballot or that they required assistance.

- AB 626 would allow voters to return a vote-by-mail ballot to any in-person voting location without placing the ballot in a ballot identification envelope.
- AB 1762 would streamline the guidelines for hyphenated words and would allow for the use of online standard reference dictionaries to determine word counting procedures.
- AB 34 is a redistricting bill that would adjust Orange County's Board of Supervisors boundary lines.
- SB 314 will establish a redistricting committee for Sacramento County districts.
- AB 764 will require various types of districts to comply with uniform requirements for redistricting. It will also require SOS to create templates to assist in these redistricting efforts.
- Pedro asked about when the LAAC can expect to start receiving updates about legislation that will be presented in the next session beginning in January. Ted Muhlhauser from SOS said that their office will be updating the LAAC when they have information to share.
- Ted also provided an update on a question that Paul had during the last LAAC meeting regarding AB 1219 and the requirement of font sizes for the ballot and for ballot translation.

The departures of Jeffrey, Dean, and Juan Pablo at this point resulted in a loss of a quorum.

5. County LAAC Toolkit Subcommittee Update

- Pedro presented the toolkit and explained the process which the subcommittee took to create the document, including conducting surveys with VCA ROVs as well as with non-VCA counties that still operate LAACs.
- Recent changes to the toolkit were reviewed in the meeting and feedback was offered for sections that the subcommittee is still revising.
- Paul encouraged the subcommittee to add content that shows the effectiveness of current LAACs in advising on best practices and actions for county ROVs to implement. Paul believes this would encourage LAAC participation. Paul also recommended adding more information in the "Election Basics" section about translation timelines to help with scheduling.
- Deanna provided some feedback on ensuring consistency of formatting and grammar, particularly among the items that are set with bullet points.

- The subcommittee would like the toolkit to be approved by the LAAC soon so that they can get the toolkit to the counties in time for the upcoming election cycle. An official motion could not be made due to a loss of quorum, but, since the SOS tasked the LAAC to update the toolkit, Daneka said the committee would incorporate the changes and send it to SOS for review.

6. No Party Preference (NPP) Outreach Subcommittee – Continued Discussion on NPP Outreach Documents

- The subcommittee presented their revised and Paul requested that the card be translated into all languages that are recognized by California counties as well as by state law.
- Deanna mentioned she had spoken with Dean, and they agreed that all of the Section 14201 languages, not just the Section 203 languages, should be included in the translations provided.
- There was feedback provided by the LAAC, including a discussion about whether the language on the front of the card is too passive in attempting to get the voter to read the card and return it. Changes could not be approved due to a lack of quorum, but Daneka said she will bring these concerns to SOS staff.

7. LAAC Member Recruitment for 2024-2025 Term

- SOS will be releasing a CCROV within a week to encourage member recruitment for the next term. Daneka asked the LAAC members to reach out to potential board members.
- Current members will need to reapply for the next term and applications will be sent to those members soon.
- The application period will close in mid-November and members will be selected in December.
- LAAC Member Application:
<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/2023/october/23100dh.pdf>

8. Ballot Labels and Titles and Summaries (BLTS) Advisory Body Recruitment Reminder

- Daneka reminded the LAAC of upcoming timelines for the review of the translations of the ballot labels and titles and summaries. She also explained the timeline and what LAAC members should be prepared for.
<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/laac/blts-timeline-11-09-23.pdf>

- The official translator recruitment emails will be sent out soon and Daneka hopes that LAAC members will be able to assist in recruiting translators for the project.
- There was concern about the tight turn-around periods in November for the translation reviews, especially the second round of review which will be close to Thanksgiving. Daneka responded that this schedule has been determined by statutory requirements that SOS will have to abide by in order to meet the guidelines for the public display period.
- Val brought up a strong concern she has about how these translator reviewers are to be volunteers rather than paid contractors. She expressed that all translators who work on the VIG should be compensated for the sake of equity and fairness. It was mentioned that a motion could be created to make a recommendation to SOS, but without a quorum this issue may have to be revisited in the future.

9. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- There were no comments from the public.
- Future agenda items include:
 - The language access reports.
 - The discrepancy in language determinations between precincts and county-wide counts.
 - A possible vote on which languages the NPP postcard should be translated into.
 - Possible compensation for translator reviewers.
 - Paul asked again for the member and SOS updates to be placed at the end of the meetings so the LAAC can handle main business in the first hour when the LAAC is more likely to have a quorum.

10. Adjournment at 12:02 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.