

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (CSA)

In the Matter of:

2020 CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION (CRC)
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

621 Capitol Mall, 10th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020

9:00 A.M.

Reported by:

Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Ryan Coe, Chair

Angela Dickison, Vice Chair

Ben Belnap, Panel Member

Staff Present

Christopher Dawson, Panel Counsel

Lisa Molino, Office Technologist

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II

Applicants

Jeffrey Gee

Herman DeBose

David Coher

James Mendelson

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 8:58 a.m.

3 CHAIR COE: Okay. Once again, good
 4 morning. Thank you for being here. We'd like to
 5 reconvene the meeting. All panelists are accounted
 6 for and present.

7 Couple of quick reminders, please silence
 8 cells phones and other devices while the meeting is
 9 in session. If you need to take a phone call,
 10 please take it outside in the hallway.

11 Restrooms, out the door to the left. And
 12 in the event of an emergency, please follow the
 13 instructions of the State Auditor's Office staff.

14 At this time, I'd like to welcome
 15 applicant Jeffrey Gee.

16 MR. GEE: Morning.

17 CHAIR COE: Good morning. Thank you for
 18 being here.

19 And turn it over to Mr. Dawson to ask the
 20 standard questions please.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22 Mr. Gee, I'm going to ask you a series of
 23 five standard questions that each applicant has
 24 been asked to respond to.

25 Are you ready sir?

1 MR. GEE: Yes, sir.

2 MR. DAWSON: Question 1. What skills and
3 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

4 What skills or competencies should the
5 Commission possess collectively?

6 Of the skills, attributes, and
7 competencies that each Commissioner should possess,
8 which do you possess?

9 In summary, how will you contribute to the
10 success of the Commission?

11 MR. GEE: Just a clarifying point before I
12 respond. Do I need to segment my responses or can
13 I just blend them all together?

14 MR. DAWSON: Of the five questions?

15 MR. GEE: No, of the three parts that you
16 asked.

17 MR. DAWSON: Oh, yes. No, please, however
18 you see fit.

19 MR. GEE: All right. Thank you very much.

20 Well, good morning. It's an honor to be
21 here and thank you for the opportunity to speak
22 with the review panel personally. I appreciate it.

23 With regard to Question Number 1 about the
24 skills and attributes the commissioners should
25 possess. There's a series of qualifications and

1 attributes that I strongly believe that the
2 Commission and the commissioners together should
3 hold true and dear.

4 First is a belief in a common purpose and
5 goal. The second is a belief in a common
6 definition of success. For me, those are really
7 critical foundation elements for a group of people
8 that are coming together from different places,
9 with different backgrounds, and different cultures.
10 We need to be respectful. We need to be thoughtful
11 and analytical. We need to be articulate as well
12 as active listeners.

13 We also need to be able to do hard work
14 because the work that is before the Commission and
15 the commissioners is not going to be an easy task
16 next year. We have to stay in school and be
17 present.

18 Mr. Coe, you made comments earlier about
19 making sure our cell phones were off, you know,
20 things like that. When I say stay in school, that
21 does not mean that we're here at the dais or at the
22 podium texting and reading messages and things like
23 that. We have to be present to deal with the hard
24 work at hand.

25 We need to also be curious and inquisitive

1 and be able to ask questions. Not just to accept
2 information and to accept data and to accept
3 speakers as true, but to ask clarifying questions
4 to make sure that we are based in knowledge and
5 fact. We also have to be strategic and to be able
6 to look two or three steps ahead.

7 As to those skills and attributes that I
8 possess, I am very, very fortunate in my career,
9 both professionally and otherwise to have had a
10 number of experiences that have developed these
11 skills and to have refined them to be able to be
12 successful. Both professionally as an architect,
13 as a construction manager, as well as a former
14 elected official and someone who serves on a number
15 of boards and commissions, both for profit,
16 nonprofit, and community engagement.

17 It's through these experiences that have
18 brought me to those conclusions that to be
19 successful together, that we have to be able to be
20 purposeful, but we have to work together. And I'll
21 give you an example, several examples later as we
22 get to other questions. But how that -- how some
23 of those experiences help me refine my comments
24 that I just presented to you.

25 In conclusion, I think my analytical

1 skills as an architect, as a construction manager,
2 as a business leader, my skills as a observer.
3 There's always the challenge about the words we say
4 and how we say them. They don't always align. And
5 so my role sometimes is just to listen and watch
6 how people say words and how they physically say
7 words. And sometimes those things send different
8 messages and conflicting messages. And so that's
9 where inquiry comes into play.

10 My ability to work with diverse
11 communities. I'm Asian-American, I work very hard
12 in the API community, but I work across cultures
13 with different communities. And everyone comes to
14 the table with different backgrounds, different
15 experiences that we have to dive into and respect.

16 Looking at the new district boundaries and
17 the potential that California may lose some
18 congressional seats due to changing demographics,
19 this a very serious task at hand, and it's going to
20 be very demanding. We all need to be ready to roll
21 up our sleeves and work hard. And if I am selected
22 to serve, I'm ready to work, and I'm ready to jump
23 in.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. DAWSON: Question 2. Work on the

1 Commission requires members of different political
2 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010
3 Commission was selected and formed, the American
4 political conversation has become increasingly
5 polarized, whether in the press, on social media,
6 and even in our own families.

7 What characteristics do you possess and
8 what characteristics should your fellow
9 Commissioners possess that will protect against
10 hyper-partisanship?

11 What will you do to ensure that the work
12 of the Commission is not seen as polarized or
13 hyper-partisan, and avoid perceptions of political
14 bias and conflict?

15 MR. GEE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

16 As I mentioned in my response to the first
17 question, my belief about the foundation elements
18 of the Commission, our common purpose, and a common
19 definition of success is really key to moving
20 forward and to avoid hyper partisanship.

21 All of us that have applied to be a
22 commissioner come from different places. We have
23 different political experiences, political
24 backgrounds, different cultures, different life
25 experiences. And we need to be respectful of that.

1 But to be successful, we need to respect where we
2 come from, then work really hard to
3 be -- to achieve that goal that we have agreed on.

4 As I mentioned, I work in construction a
5 lot, and I was commenting as I was waiting
6 upstairs, there's quite a bit of construction going
7 on around here in Sacramento. Bringing people from
8 different parties together, the owner, the
9 architect, the engineers, the contractor, the
10 subconsultants, or subcontractors, they all come
11 from different places. And it's more than about
12 building a building.

13 One of the things I teach when I teach
14 across the country about construction management is
15 challenging people in a meeting with a simple
16 question. How do we know when we have been
17 successful? And the key word in that sentence is a
18 little two letter word called we. The architect
19 knows when he or she is successful when they may
20 win a design award. Maybe the contractor knows
21 when they're successful when they make money. But
22 how does the collective whole be successful? And
23 it's when we have been successful together that
24 we've achieved something.

25 So with regard to hyper partisanship, we

1 have to be cognizant and thoughtful about the words
2 we use and where we come from. It's going to be
3 difficult. As I mentioned earlier, one of my
4 skills I think I bring to the Commission is my
5 observation skills. Actions speak louder than
6 words. Words, as we are taught many times, may be
7 only 10 percent of communication. The other 90
8 percent are our actions, our body language, how we
9 present ourselves, how we show up in the room.

10 So we need to be cognizant of those
11 influences. And when someone's speaking, a
12 colleague is talking or presenting a point, look
13 for those disconnects and then ask questions. Not
14 in a blaming or accusational way, but for
15 clarifying. What is the basis? Where are you
16 coming from? How do we achieve this? And ask
17 clarifying questions.

18 Then analyze and do your homework. The
19 act of clarifying questions, again, it's got to be
20 very thoughtful and careful so that we're not
21 accusing one another, or a speaker, or a consultant
22 that they're presenting information falsely or
23 inappropriately.

24 And then if there is suspicions of hyper
25 partisanship, we have to be together as a

1 Commission, confident in each other to be able to
2 surface those concerns and to talk through them.
3 We cannot be passively quiet and watch it happen or
4 suspect it's happened -- happening. We need to be
5 able to talk with each other as a commissioner to
6 say, are there issues? Are there things going on
7 that we all should be aware of? Because if we're
8 passively sitting back and letting it happen, in
9 some ways we're saying that's okay.

10 And again, with the hard work in front of
11 us and the potential of losing some congressional
12 seats, this is very serious what we have to do next
13 year because of those changing demographics.

14 MR. DAWSON: Question 3. What is the
15 greatest problem the Commission could encounter,
16 and what actions would you take to avoid or respond
17 to this problem?

18 MR. GEE: Oh, wow that's -- I don't think
19 there's one. There's probably several different
20 things that can happen to the Commission.

21 Number one, there's going to be a lot of
22 data to review. I was -- I was in Redwood City, we
23 had to go to district elections. It's a city of
24 about 85,000. There was a lot of demographic data
25 to review. And even in that small community,

1 compared to the state of California, there was a
2 lot of demographic data. Different maps. A lot of
3 data. And so we will have to decide on how to
4 receive that data in consumable chunks so that it's
5 not overwhelming.

6 One of the challenges that I suspect will
7 be happening, or could happen, is also delays.
8 Census day is April 1st. The data -- census data
9 is supposed to be available later this year. There
10 are quite a bit of mixed messages out there in the
11 communities right now about the census. What
12 questions will be asked? Who has access to that
13 data? You know, and I'm involved in some efforts
14 to make sure people are confident to fill out that
15 census data.

16 If there are delays to that data or
17 challenges to the accuracy of the data, that could
18 impact the Commission. When we signed up for this
19 journey, it is a long journey, it is not an
20 overnight apply, sign up, you're selected, get
21 going. Just the selection process is a time
22 consuming, step by step, thoughtful, strategic
23 process. And the Commission's task is supposed to
24 be about a year after the census data is released.

25 But what happens if there are challenges

1 to that census data? And that data is not
2 available and is held up for a month, three months,
3 six months in the courts, or whatever. What does
4 that do to the Commission, our commitment to the
5 state, as well as the consequences to delays to
6 that? That could be a big challenge.

7 Commissioner absenteeism. We've made a
8 commitment to be here when we signed up and of
9 course I was selected. We cannot not not be in
10 attendance. Absenteeism could delay a significant
11 impact into the work of the Commission.

12 And lastly, as it was alluded to in one of
13 the questions, the presence of social media. Ten
14 years ago, social media didn't play as big a role
15 as it does in the world today. It plays an
16 important role of what the public sees and knows.
17 This will be the first redistricting effort in the
18 day of Facebook, and Twitter, and Instagram, and
19 all the different platforms that are out there.

20 Commissioners will need to be ready to
21 ignore potential social media posts about their
22 work, their recommendations, and their efforts. As
23 an elected official, I've had the fortunate, or
24 unfortunate, experience of having to deal with
25 media posts when people don't like decisions I've

1 made. And they can be pretty harmful in attempt to
2 influence you, and to sway a position, or a policy
3 direction. We have to be ready to deal with that
4 and ignore it and do the work in front of us, and
5 stay focused on doing what's right and not be
6 affected by those that believe differently.

7 MR. DAWSON: Question 4. If you were
8 selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
9 Commission, which is charged with working together
10 to create maps of the new districts. Please
11 describe a situation where you had to work
12 collaboratively with others on a project to achieve
13 a common goal. Tell us the goal of the project,
14 what your role in the group was, and how the group
15 worked through any conflicts that arose.

16 What lessons would you take from this
17 group experience to the Commission, if selected?

18 MR. GEE: All right, thank you.

19 Time permitting, may I do two examples?

20 MR. DAWSON: Oh sure. Sure.

21 MR. GEE: One of the most comparable
22 examples I'd like to share with the panel was what
23 I would call the water wars in Redwood City in the
24 early 2000s.

25 In the early 2000s, the Redwood City

1 Council was looking at investing in creating, in
2 their water treatment plant, to create recycled
3 water. This was a very divisive issue for the
4 Redwood City community. There were those that were
5 supportive of it, and there were those that were
6 fearful of it.

7 Council meetings would go to 2 or 3
8 o'clock in the morning. Experts would be called in
9 by all sides. Experts would say, you know, my
10 expert is better than yours and it would just go on
11 into the night at all hours.

12 What the Redwood City Council decided to
13 do was to form a citizen task force, Recycled Water
14 Task Force. It was a panel, or a commission of 20
15 individuals. Nine that were opposed to the use of
16 recycled water, nine that were supportive of
17 recycled water, and two were neutral.

18 I was one of the nine that was supportive
19 of creating the recycled water. So there was a
20 commission or panel of 20 of us. Our charge was to
21 recommend to the City Council not only yes or no,
22 but if yes, how and where would recycled water be
23 used, or no it shouldn't. We spent 12 months
24 together, a meeting a month. They were in the
25 evenings. And we had to find a way to work

1 together to reach conclusions and to bring
2 recommendations to the City Council.

3 The short answer at the very end was the
4 commission, or our citizen panel, were unanimous in
5 making a recommendation to the City Council to use
6 recycled water, to create recycled water first, and
7 to use it in certain instances. Like irrigation of
8 lawns and things like that.

9 But that's not where we started. We
10 started with nine opposed, nine for it, and two
11 that were neutral. And the saying that -- that
12 people, you know, facilitators, you know, and it
13 was a facilitated panel, that you have to learn to
14 crawl before you walk, before you run, was very
15 true.

16 So out of those 12 meetings, we spent the
17 first two or three learning about each other,
18 learning about our advocacies, learning about where
19 we came from as individuals. And then we started
20 to speed into the technical analysis. We had
21 experts come and talk to us. And then we started
22 to generate ideas and conclusions, or
23 recommendations. And then finally we started to
24 vote on certain elements.

25 And as I said, toward the very end, this

1 commission was unanimous in its recommendations to
2 the city of Redwood City, and we were the first
3 city on the peninsula that created recycled water
4 and started using it before the last series of
5 droughts. That was pretty amazing.

6 Excuse me for a second here.

7 The second example I'd like to share with
8 the group is I've been very honored to be an
9 elected official in the city of Redwood City. And
10 through that election, had the opportunity to serve
11 on a number of regional boards. San Mateo County
12 Transportation District, the Joint Powers
13 Authority, which oversees the operation of the
14 Caltrain, as well as the Trans Bay Joint Powers
15 Authority.

16 On the Caltrain Joint Powers Board there
17 are, it's a three-county agency, San Francisco, San
18 Mateo, Santa Clara. There are 20 different cities
19 on the Caltrain line. It is a tough balancing act
20 to try to meet everyone's demands. From the
21 commuter ridership, to the bicyclists, to
22 environmental needs and concerns, to the different
23 needs of every single city. Some cities want the
24 train to be in a tunnel underground. But the next
25 city right immediately adjacent wants it up in the

1 air.

2 Unfortunately, the train isn't quite a
3 roller coaster, it doesn't quite work that way.
4 And so serving on the JPB both as a director, as
5 well as a former chairman of the board, my role was
6 to try to balance all the needs of everyone so the
7 we have consensus on the outcomes and a direction
8 for the train moving forward.

9 Again, these influences, these experiences
10 helped shape my answer to the first question about
11 how we work together and how do we be successful.
12 We have to be respectful of the different cities.
13 We have to be respectful of the different
14 constituencies. We have to be able to work
15 together in a respectful and collaborative manner.
16 But at the end of the day, we have to be able to
17 make decisions and produce outcomes so that we can
18 move forward.

19 The worst decision we can do is just keep
20 talking and keep talking, and not make any
21 decisions. And so that's where my thoughts are and
22 hopefully those two examples are illustrative of my
23 experiences in my careers.

24 MR. DAWSON: We have roughly about 10
25 minutes left on this portion.

1 But your fifth question. A considerable
2 amount of the Commission's work will involve
3 meeting with people from all over California who
4 come from a -- who come from very different
5 backgrounds and a wide variety of perspectives.

6 If you are selected as a commissioner,
7 what skills and attributes will make you effective
8 at interacting with people from different
9 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

10 What experiences have you had that will
11 help you be effective at understanding and
12 appreciating people in communities of different
13 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

14 MR. GEE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

15 I think in my application I commented that
16 I believe one of California's greatest strengths is
17 our diversity, and I cherish that.

18 My grandfather brought my father to this
19 country from China to give us all a better chance
20 and a chance for better opportunities. My
21 experiences and my service has included continuing
22 to work on the OCA, Organization of Chinese
23 Americans, San Mateo Chapter; the League of
24 California City's API Caucus, The San Mateo County
25 API Caucus.

1 But I also work with other cultural
2 communities. I have the Latino community, I
3 support one of our local nonprofits, Casa Circulo
4 Cultural. The executive director often kids
5 everyone about me that my name's not Jeff Gee, but
6 Jeff Gimenez because of my commitment to support
7 the families and children of that organization.

8 And my role as a city council member. I
9 championed our sister cities. Our first sister
10 city for Redwood City was Zhuhai, China. I've gone
11 to Zhuhai on official delegation visits as well as
12 during my time as mayor. We adopted Qingyuan as a
13 friendship city. And one of my last actions on my
14 city council was we approved the city of Aguililla,
15 Mexico as a sister city. After eight years of
16 inaction, we finally moved the ball forward because
17 a number of our families in Redwood City come from
18 Aguililla.

19 And so while we've already had two other
20 sister cities from Mexico, this was excruciatingly
21 important to those families that came from
22 Aguililla and that still go back and forth, and
23 that was a respectful move to honor their
24 commitment to our city.

25 In addition, to work with a number of

1 other communities throughout California. And one
2 of the nice attributes of where I do my work, I
3 have six offices in California, and that diversity
4 I see everywhere I go. After this interview, I
5 will be meeting my staff here in Sacramento. I was
6 in San Diego a week ago. There are differences
7 throughout California, and we need to respect that.
8 I see that. I understand it. I live it. And we
9 need to be thoughtful as commissioners because we
10 are all one together. We are not little pockets
11 and we have to work together and acknowledge those
12 differences to be able to move forward.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. We will now move
14 into the portion where each panel member will have
15 20 minutes each to ask his or her questions.

16 And we'll begin with the chair today, Mr.
17 Coe.

18 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

19 Good morning, Mr. Gee. Thank you for
20 being here.

21 In your application, you discussed some of
22 your time on the -- on the Redwood City city
23 council and the effort you undertook to increase
24 the diversity of the council's appointments.

25 Can you tell us more about -- about that

1 experience?

2 MR. GEE: Sure. Redwood City is a city, as
3 I mentioned early, about 85,000. It's around 44
4 percent Latino, about 12 percent API, and then 2
5 percent African-American.

6 On my own, I was able -- because I knew
7 the commissioners and who they are, did an analysis
8 of their -- of the diversity of our commission
9 appointments. Not only culturally, but
10 geographically.

11 The commissioners that the city council,
12 and the city council is a group of seven. I
13 presented for my last three years of my serving on
14 the city council that analysis. And challenged our
15 city council that we needed to do a better job of
16 appointing board's commissioners that were more
17 reflective of number one, the cultural background
18 and diversity of our city. And number two, the
19 geographic of our city.

20 The first time I did this, it was
21 surprisingly monolithic in terms of the
22 appointments of the city council of 80 boards and
23 commissioners. You know, as I mentioned earlier,
24 44 percent Latino, 12 percent API. It was more
25 like 85 percent Caucasian. And so we needed to do

1 -- be more thoughtful about how we made our
2 appointments, as well as the geographic diversity
3 of those appointments they were concentrated.

4 Carry this ball forward three years later,
5 that work still needs to be done, but last year as
6 part of the San Mateo County API Caucus, we did our
7 first endorsements for the city council members for
8 the city council elections. It was absolutely
9 refreshing for council candidates on the peninsula
10 to come in and talk to the Endorsement Committee.
11 And I was just the facilitator. They had done on
12 their own the demographics of their city, their own
13 analysis of their own commission appointments, and
14 acknowledged whether they were doing a good job or
15 they needed to do a better job. And if they needed
16 to do a better job, what they were going to do
17 going forward.

18 So the message was slowly getting out
19 there that we need appointments that were
20 reflective of our community as well as not only
21 culturally, but geographically so that all voices
22 from all aspects of the community can be heard on
23 their appointments.

24 CHAIR COE: And what's something that you
25 took from that experience that you think will be

1 most beneficial to the -- to this Commission?

2 MR. GEE: That it's hard work. Not
3 everyone was in supportive of that. To be honest,
4 Mr. Coe, my council colleagues were not all in
5 supportive of that. It took, like I said, three
6 years of presenting that information and that data.
7 And I still do it just on my own, that it is
8 something that is not overcome very easily. It
9 takes time, it takes persistence. It takes
10 conversation.

11 There are those that I will say have
12 honestly just said I'm color blind in what I do.
13 That doesn't recognize the differences that we come
14 to the table with.

15 We can talk about the housing crisis in
16 California, not everybody necessarily has an
17 experience of a single family home with three
18 bedrooms, two bath, three-car garage. They come to
19 the table with a life and cultural experience of
20 family living where there's, or more appropriately,
21 multigenerational family living together in one
22 house. And so those values and those cultural
23 experiences are very important to be able to
24 represent all of California or all of a community.

25 And so when people say they're color blind

1 or they don't value the diversity of our community,
2 of our region, or our state, that means we have to
3 work even harder to show and demonstrate that there
4 are differences and the value of that different
5 input and those contributions that can be made to
6 make better decisions.

7 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

8 In the essay you submitted on
9 impartiality, you discussed your time managing
10 construction projects in the public sector that can
11 often be full of conflict and disagreement. Can
12 you give us a specific example of a time where this
13 occurred and how you handled it?

14 MR. GEE: In the -- yes. I will start at
15 the very beginning in the sense that a lot of my
16 work, as you noted, is in the public sector. And I
17 admonish my staff consistently that in the public
18 sector, you are representing the public owner who
19 is spending public dollars. And the only thing you
20 can do is walk down the line and be fair. You
21 cannot fall on any other side of the -- of that
22 fairness line.

23 I have had public owners, they will remain
24 nameless, that I have fired, because they have used
25 our company name for personal benefit and gain.

1 And that is not acceptable. When we're negotiating
2 change orders and changes, the owner of course
3 wants their project on budget, on schedule. But
4 that doesn't mean that a contractor, an architect,
5 a subconsultant, or a subcontractor has to take
6 work at a loss just to make the owner's budget
7 work. We have to be fair. Fair to the owner and
8 fair to all those involved in a project.

9 One of my lectures that I've given to the
10 hospital organization is about fairness in
11 contracts.

12 Another example I can give you is I do
13 work for community college districts. One of my
14 first encounters with outside counsel for a
15 community college district was in helping that
16 attorney write their construction contracts. And
17 after two hours into a four-hour meeting, the
18 attorney was writing things like, "owner will
19 provide the contractor with as-built information,
20 but the contractor cannot rely on it.

21 Owner -- if the contractor doesn't believe
22 the as-builts showing what was built are accurate,
23 the contractor may ask the owner for the
24 opportunity to do *constructive* investigation. And
25 it kept going on, and on, and on. And after two

1 hours, I had to finally say, you know, I need to
2 ask a question, attorney. What's going on here?
3 These are pretty owner biased construction clauses.
4 And the attorney said, my job was to write as owner
5 biased a contract as legally possible.

6 And I said to the attorney, well don't you
7 think that's going to cost the owner in terms of
8 increased bid prices, or a decreased bid pool? And
9 the attorney said, that's not my problem. I said,
10 we have to find a way to protect the owner, but to
11 be fair.

12 I mentioned earlier there's a lot of
13 construction going on here. If you're a building
14 owner, and you've owned your building for 40 years,
15 but you don't know what's in it, and you want a
16 bidder to say, you know, connect to the pipe down
17 the hall in the wall, and commit to a price to do
18 that. That's not fair.

19 But if we can say we believe that the pipe
20 down the hall is 50 feet away, has three-inch
21 copper, that's what you need to connect to. That's
22 a fair starting point. But if it's different or
23 less, then we can negotiate a price up or down.
24 But you can't just say connect to the pipe down the
25 hall in the wall and commit to a price, and too bad

1 if you guess wrong. That's not fair.

2 And so that's why I talk about fairness in
3 construction contracts and how we deal with it.

4 CHAIR COE: Do you still work in this role
5 in the construction industry?

6 MR. GEE: Do I still?

7 CHAIR COE: Do you still work in the role?

8 MR. GEE: Yes. Yes.

9 CHAIR COE: Okay. How would you balance
10 the responsibilities of that job with the
11 responsibilities of the Commission?

12 MR. GEE: I, you know, when I first ran for
13 elected offices, I went to my president. He says -
14 - his comment was very simple. You meet your
15 deadlines. And that's what I do. My staff has
16 heard me say half fun, half serious, eating and
17 sleeping's overrated. You just, you know, there's
18 plenty of time later to eat and sleep.

19 So I'm not afraid of hard work. I've done
20 that all my life. I travel throughout the state
21 already. I work very hard to coordinate my
22 schedule and my calendar. And so I'm not afraid of
23 hard work. I'm not afraid to meet my deadlines. I
24 have always met my deadlines and that's what I take
25 to everywhere I say yes to. I don't half, go

1 halfway. I am always all in. If I raise my hand,
2 and the other side says Jeff, come on in, I am
3 always in. You get all of me and I meet my
4 deadlines.

5 CHAIR COE: Thank you.

6 So earlier you were talking about
7 experiences in different parts of the -- of the
8 state and that you acknowledged that different
9 areas have, you know, different problems, different
10 -- differences I think is just the broad word you
11 used.

12 Can you tell us something about
13 specifically differences you've noticed in
14 different regions of the state during your time in
15 those regions?

16 MR. GEE: To be -- one of the easiest ones
17 right now is with regard to housing. There are
18 different parts of our state, so I have office in
19 the Bay Area, here in Sacramento, San Diego, I
20 travel to the Inland Empire.

21 There are differences in terms of
22 community acceptance of housing. While in the Bay
23 Area it is very difficult to create housing
24 politically from a community standpoint and others.
25 Other parts of the state like San Diego, they are

1 still open to creation of housing.

2 At a more microcosm level, supportive --
3 what's called supportive housing and affordable
4 housing. One of the big changes since I've applied
5 for this Commission is now I serve on the Board of
6 First Community Housing of San Jose. A nonprofit
7 housing developer that focus on supportive housing
8 and affordable housing. They work very hard in the
9 South Bay, in San Jose to create affordable and
10 supportive housing. They currently have 5,000
11 units that they've created and maintain and
12 operate. That's unique to San Jose. I cannot say
13 that's going to work in Redwood City or some other
14 communities.

15 And so housing is an easy one to recognize
16 the differences in different communities. Some
17 communities are opposed to dense housing. Some
18 just want single family. Some want just market
19 rate. And so that is -- it's very obvious as you
20 start to engage in conversations the different
21 community perspectives about the need for housing.

22 There are even some communities say
23 there's no need for housing. Just send it to the
24 Central Valley and let the super commuters travel
25 two or three hours to get to work. And so we need

1 to be sensitive to that.

2 That cannot also impact the Commission's
3 work to produce a result in terms of new district
4 boundaries and things like that. That is just a
5 very poignant example if you watch what happens to
6 SB -- what happened several times to SB 50,
7 differences between local control and state input
8 and how we moved the ball forward on the housing
9 crisis that we have in the state.

10 CHAIR COE: How much time do I have?

11 MR. DAWSON: Six minutes, 52 seconds.

12 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

13 One of the key tasks the Commission is
14 going to face is identifying communities of
15 interest throughout the state. This can be a
16 difficult task as some communities are easier to
17 find than others.

18 How do you think the Commission should go
19 about identifying communities of interest and how
20 can you avoid maybe overlooking communities that
21 are harder to find?

22 MR. GEE: Very good. California's a big
23 place. And so the people that know best where to
24 find the hard-to-reach communities are the people
25 at the local level. And so we need to engage

1 individuals that have worked in the local
2 communities to ask them number one, where are and
3 who are the hard-to-reach communities? And number
4 two, how best to reach them?

5 In my community, because I've worked very
6 closely to my community and I've reached out to
7 certain people in my community, I know where the
8 hard-to-reach communities are. They know where
9 they are. And they know how to reach them. And it
10 isn't some of the traditional, you know, let's go
11 put door hangers on the doors. In some parts of
12 the community, you can't even get to the front door
13 because of the communities that where they live,
14 they're gated, there's fences, and things like
15 that.

16 And so we have to engage local people and
17 ask them specifically, where are those hard-to-
18 reach communities and how do we get to them so that
19 we can hear what their thoughts and concerns are?
20 We will not know how to do that sitting here in
21 Sacramento. Only the people that have worked
22 locally in those communities, whether it be up
23 north in Humboldt, or in San Bernardino, or in
24 Otai, we need to engage people locally because we
25 will not know, and we will miss if we don't ask

1 locally.

2 CHAIR COE: Thank you. I have one final
3 question.

4 If you were appointed to the Commission,
5 which aspects of that role do you think that you
6 would enjoy the most and perhaps be the most
7 successful at? And conversely, which aspects of
8 that role do you think you might perhaps struggle
9 with?

10 MR. GEE: Probably talking with different
11 communities throughout the state and engaging them,
12 seriously engaging people. Engagement isn't
13 sitting at the podium or at the dais and having a
14 speaker. That's not engagement. That's an
15 exchange, but that's not engagement.

16 Engaging people from different parts of
17 the state of California, working with a team of
18 people that come from different places. That's
19 going to be very new to me because of, you know, 14
20 people representing the entire state of California,
21 or 13 other people, versus six other people from
22 Redwood City. It's going to be very exciting and
23 very different, and learning from each other. And
24 then being able to work across different cultural
25 communities, and that'll be a lot of fun. I look

1 forward to that.

2 The parts that will be probably, I won't
3 say less fun, it's just going to be crunching data.
4 I mean it's just going to be a lot of number
5 crunching and reviewing maps and boundaries, and it
6 will be hard tedious work. I'm not afraid of doing
7 it, don't get me wrong, but that's not what I would
8 consider fun. But it is a necessity of the
9 responsibilities of being a commissioner.

10 CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you.

11 Ms. Dickison, the time is yours.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Gee.

13 MR. GEE: Huh-huh. Good morning.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning. So you
15 work with the Swinerton Management and Consulting?

16 MR. GEE: Yes.

17 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What kind of
18 consulting services do you do for them?

19 MR. GEE: We are consultants to owners on
20 their design and construction projects. So a great
21 example is we just had an election. A school
22 district may have passed, you know, \$200 million in
23 school facility bonds, now they need to know what
24 to do next. We can lay out a Capital Improvement
25 Program, shape the teams by RFQ for architects,

1 manage the design, and then put out the project to
2 bid, and oversee the construction, and closeout.

3 Or an owner can buy off menu a la carte,
4 you know, I just need this service or that service.
5 But in general, that's sort of the menu list of
6 what we can do. Most of my clients are -- are
7 public owners. The State of California in terms of
8 facility construction, local cities, counties,
9 school districts, community college districts, and
10 things like that.

11 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And you also
12 served as the -- on the city council for Redwood
13 City?

14 MR. GEE: Yes.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And before
16 that you were appointed to the Planning Commission
17 and the Architecture Review Committee?

18 MR. GEE: Yes.

19 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What role and
20 responsibilities on those -- on that commission and
21 committee did you fill?

22 MR. GEE: On the -- which one?

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Start with the
24 Planning Commission.

25 MR. GEE: Planning Commission, I was the

1 planning commissioner, I was one of seven. I
2 served for about five years. The request for me to
3 move up to Architectural Review Committee was the
4 challenge. There were a couple of things going on.
5 One was there were two openings, two planning
6 commissioners had ascended to the city council.
7 And the Planning Commission was taking on the
8 responsibility of updating the city's general plan.

9 The general plan had not been updated for
10 a number of years. I'm going to try to recall, I
11 think it was close to 25 years. And so there was a
12 tremendous amount of work. And the city elected
13 not just to do the minimum elements of the general
14 plan but added three additional elements.

15 And so not only did we add elements, not
16 the Commission, but the city council, the city
17 council also asked for a very robust community
18 outreach effort. As we started to get closer
19 toward approving the different elements, the
20 Planning Commission traditionally meets twice a
21 month on a Tuesday evening. We went as far as
22 having a meeting every Tuesday night to get through
23 all the different elements and to have community
24 engagement. And that's what we signed up for.

25 And so at the conclusion of my time on the

1 Planning Commission, I had then, at that point,
2 ascended to be the chair of the Planning Commission
3 and we had completed the general plan update.

4 Prior to that I served on the Architecture
5 Review Committee.

6 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Uh-huh.

7 MR. GEE: I was just a committee member and
8 we were responsible for overseeing architectural
9 design projects in the city of Redwood City. But
10 toward the end of that time, one of the, well not
11 toward the end but during that time the city
12 council also undertook a Downtown Precise Plan.
13 The Downtown Precise Plan was a form-base code, not
14 a prescriptive code, about how downtown Redwood
15 City would be revitalized.

16 When I was appointed, I was the new kid on
17 the block and so I got to go to the night meetings
18 for the downtown task force. It was a citizen task
19 force that put together the vision for Redwood
20 City's downtown, and I was the Architectural Review
21 Committee's liaison. So I got to go to the monthly
22 night meetings as the liaison between that
23 committee and the citizen task force.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So what experiences
25 from those type of activities do you think will --

1 you'll be able to use to assist you with the work
2 at the Commission?

3 MR. GEE: Those two experiences, I think
4 the themes that evolved, emerged from that are
5 several.

6 Number one, you can never have enough
7 engagement. I mentioned earlier on the Planning
8 Commission, you know, we met every week. There
9 were still -- there still are people, no one ever
10 told me, I never had the opportunity. And so you
11 just have to constantly work at notifying the
12 public about opportunities of how to engage. And
13 not everyone's going to come to City Hall, not
14 everyone's going to come to a hearing so there's
15 got to be different ways of communication, and it's
16 not -- not even e-mail these days. There's
17 different ways, so we've got to find a way to
18 engage the community.

19 Persistence. You can't give up. And
20 sometimes, particularly on my experience on the
21 Architectural Review Committee, you even have to
22 pull out a pencil and a piece of paper and sit side
23 by side with someone and show them.

24 I remember very clearly doing an
25 Affordable Housing Project came to Architectural

1 Review Committee and the message wasn't coming
2 across to the architect. So I volunteered to sit
3 side by side with the architect on behalf of my
4 colleagues, pull out a pencil, and show the
5 architect what the Committee was talking about in
6 terms of making that design better.

7 And so sometimes it's just rolling up the
8 sleeves, pulling out pencil and paper, and showing
9 somebody what we're talking about. Because the
10 words sometimes just -- you can't just get all the
11 words right, and you've got to show somebody the
12 difference.

13 And so with regard to the Redistricting
14 Commission, we may have to do that. Just here are
15 the maps, let's pull them out, let's just draw some
16 lines, and see what it looks like and get that
17 message across.

18 So those are some of the themes that come
19 from those two experiences. There's never enough
20 community engagement. A meeting's not community
21 engagement. You have to go to where the people
22 are, the hard-to-reach communities, as Mr. Coe
23 suggested in his earlier question.

24 We have to find ways that different
25 communities engage, and not everybody engages in

1 the same way. And sometimes you just got to roll
2 up the sleeve and sit next to someone and work it
3 out on paper.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you mentioned in
5 your application that as the majority of your
6 clients are cities, counties, school districts, and
7 community college districts. And that you serve as
8 a de facto representative of those agencies at
9 times.

10 Given that the district lines affect those
11 districts, or could affect those districts, how
12 would you respond should a client want to discuss
13 your work with the Commission?

14 MR. GEE: I'm sorry. Could you sort of
15 restate that last part?

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Given that the
17 districts could be affected by the work of the
18 Commission, how would you respond to a client,
19 should they want to discuss your work with the
20 Commission?

21 MR. GEE: My, you know, given the different
22 roles I've had to play, I'm pretty good at
23 compartmentalizing.

24 I've been taught, you know, there are a
25 lot of ways to say no without saying no. Sometimes

1 you have to say no emphatically if they don't get
2 the other ways of saying it. They say, you know,
3 another way of saying that's not an appropriate
4 conversation, or this is confidential work of the
5 Commission, or work in progress.

6 The clients that I've worked with -- our
7 aspiration -- my personal aspiration isn't just to
8 help them be successful with a construction
9 project. There's a tower crane right outside my
10 window, my goal isn't to get rid of the tower crane
11 and get the building built for that client.

12 If you were my client fixing up there, my
13 goal is to become your trusted advisor. So it's
14 not only about the tower crane and the concrete and
15 the rebar, but it may be other business or work
16 issues. And that's why I tell my staff constantly,
17 is our goal is to become our client's trusted
18 advisor.

19 To be able to do that, we need to be
20 respectful of their position, as well as they need
21 to be respectful of ours. And I do draw lines very
22 clearly that, you know, great, thank you very much
23 for that question, but this is a Commission work in
24 progress and really, I'm not allowed to talk about
25 that. Appreciate your interest and concern, when

1 the time is appropriate, the Commission will let
2 you know. Or when the public knows, we'll release
3 that information and I'll make sure you have access
4 to it as soon as it becomes available.

5 There is nothing to be gained by providing
6 information prematurely, informally, or
7 lackadaisically. It is a very formal process with
8 the work we have to do and we need to be respectful
9 of the rules and the guidance, as well as the legal
10 aspects that we have to follow.

11 And for clients that don't understand
12 that, those are clients I don't want to work for.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you also mentioned
14 that you participated in the 2019 Redwood City
15 redrawing of district lines?

16 MR. GEE: yes.

17 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What capacity did you
18 participate in that?

19 MR. GEE: I was an observer, as well as I
20 did my own analysis. I watched and attended city
21 council meetings. I took the data that the
22 demographer produced. I did my own analysis about
23 Citizen Voting-Age Population. Part of the
24 complaint or the genesis of the redistricting
25 effort was that the at-large election did not

1 adequately give the opportunity to underrepresented
2 communities.

3 And so as the maps emerged, I did my own
4 analysis where there were no -- the first maps
5 there were no LCVAPs, Latino Citizen Voting-Age
6 Population majority communities. None. And so as
7 the demographic data was produced, my analysis
8 showed not only could there be one LCVAP, but two
9 LCVAP districts, where it started with none.

10 And I produced that information and shared
11 it with others in the community that asked me for
12 my thoughts and opinion. And it was -- became very
13 obvious as we started to crunch the data that not
14 only was no Latino Citizen Voting-Age Population
15 districts ignoring that the need, they went -- the
16 city created two LCVAP districts, based on the
17 data. And one other minority/majority district.

18 And so it was a -- sort of was a, in that
19 role, more of an analytical role in which I was
20 able to crunch the data and show others that asked
21 me what could be done and what was going on, and
22 the right answer was ultimately chosen by the city
23 council.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So in your essay, it
25 sounded like there was some contention in the

1 process.

2 MR. GEE: Oh, yes.

3 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

4 MR. GEE: There was absolutely contention
5 in the process.

6 Having served on the council with some of
7 the councilmembers, there were those that did not
8 believe in district elections. They were adamantly
9 opposed to it. That the at-large elections served
10 the at-large community and there was no need to,
11 you know, divide the city up into seven districts,
12 particularly those that were the minority/majority
13 or Latino majority. So it was very contentious,
14 and very divisive.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you said also that
16 in some instances the actions of opponents spoke
17 louder than the words being said.

18 Could you explain what you mean in that
19 context?

20 MR. GEE: Sure. I'll piggyback off the
21 example I just gave you is that the work of the
22 Commission needs to be fact based. It needs to be
23 data driven. We cannot make up the numbers. Or at
24 least we shouldn't, but we cannot make up the
25 census numbers.

1 As that debate went on at the city
2 council, there were words spoken such like, I
3 believe in representation from the Latino
4 community. Pretty simple words. Pretty clear.
5 However, when it came to the actions, what was
6 important in the redistricting or the districting
7 process was to look at the data and create Latino
8 Citizen Voting-Age Population districts, not
9 Spanish speaking households. So while the words
10 were spoken here about a Latino majority voting
11 district, the actions over here were to create a
12 Spanish speaking district.

13 Those are two very different things,
14 particularly in the work of the Commission. Just
15 because a household is Spanish speaking, doesn't
16 mean they are LCVAP. My apologies to those
17 watching for speaking acronyms or language like
18 that but it's just a little easier. That's where I
19 characterize the words and the actions don't align.

20 The same thing happened with the Asian
21 community. The community, part of the city where I
22 come from is about 33 percent API Citizen Voting-
23 Age Population. But there was an attempt to redraw
24 a proposed district boundary a lot larger to reduce
25 the API influence in that district. And the

1 argument was, well these are Chinese speaking
2 households over here.

3 Again, the work that the Commission has to
4 do, we have to take the data and stick to that and
5 look for the incongruencies about the words --

6 MS. MOLINO: Five minutes.

7 MR. GEE: -- and the actions.

8 Ms. Dickison, I hope that was
9 illustrative enough.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: It was.

11 MR. GEE: Thank you.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

13 Excuse me. After participating in the
14 process, what lessons could you use from that to
15 ensure the Commission is making room for all the
16 voices to be heard and not drowned out by the
17 loudest voices in the room?

18 MR. GEE: I mean, you're talking about
19 their -- the State Redistricting Commission and
20 those experiences?

21 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Uh-huh. How can you
22 translate that over to the State Commission?

23 MR. GEE: Sure. Absolutely.

24 I think again, earlier as I mentioned,
25 particularly the hard-to-reach communities, they're

1 not going to come to a meeting. And that is very
2 true with the census also. We have to go to them.
3 We have to reach out to where they gather. Whether
4 that be in church, whether that be at a festival,
5 or that be at family gatherings, or a restaurant.

6 It's not any different than it being on
7 the city council. People aren't going to come to
8 City Hall for a city council meeting. We have to
9 go to them. And we have to be in a -- in a venue
10 that's friendly. Even a venue like this, you know,
11 the three tables, the table here, the microphones,
12 the cameras. This isn't for everybody. It's
13 actually not for most people. It's intimidating.
14 It's intimidating to speak at a podium at a council
15 meeting.

16 And so we have to take the fear out of the
17 engagement process, and we have to make the effort
18 to go to those communities and say we want to hear
19 from you. We want your involvement, we want to
20 hear your concerns, we want to hear your issues.
21 That's the biggest lesson learned from those
22 experiences, that the work can't be done in formal
23 halls and things like that. We have to make it
24 friendly and we have to put our feet on the floor
25 and go out into the community and engage.

1 You know sending flyers saying there's a
2 meeting Friday, you know, downtown Sacramento. The
3 usual people will show up. We have to do something
4 different. And we have to do it over, and over,
5 and over.

6 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: If you're selected as
7 one of the first eight commissioners, you will be
8 tasked with selecting the final six to round out
9 the Commission of 14.

10 What will you be looking for in those
11 other six commissioners?

12 MR. GEE: I'll be looking for some of the
13 attributes that I mentioned earlier in the opening
14 questions. Similar to you, reviewing their
15 background, looking at their interview that they
16 made before you. But inquiring about how they work
17 together as a team.

18 At the end of the day, we are a team
19 tasked with a responsibility with a goal that's
20 time bound. And can we get there? Can we work
21 together respectfully? Can we work through
22 differences together? How do you like to work
23 together? What gets you frustrated? Can you make
24 the commitment to be there at meetings?

25 This is not a long time that we have to

1 get the work done. And if, as I mentioned, if
2 there are delays in the data --

3 MS: MOLINO: One minute.

4 MR. GEE: -- we're going to have even less
5 time to get the work done. And so we need to be
6 able to ramp up fairly quickly, roll up our
7 sleeves, and really learn to work together, and
8 tackle the mission that we have, and that we're
9 charged with.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you Mr. Gee.

11 MR. GEE: Thank you.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe.

13 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap.

14 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you for being
15 here.

16 MR. GEE: Thank you.

17 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: You have answered the
18 questions that I had going into this interview, so
19 those are off the table. My colleagues have --
20 have hit on all those points. You've also answered
21 the follow-up questions that I developed throughout
22 this interview, so again, my colleagues are spot
23 on.

24 So I'm going to ask you a question that's
25 kind of the inverse of what Ms. Dickison asked

1 you.

2 So if you were not selected, randomly
3 selected as one of the eight commissioners, why
4 should those eight select you as one of the six
5 remaining commissioners?

6 MR. GEE: Why should -- if I were not one
7 of the first eight, why should those eight consider
8 me as one of the final six?

9 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yes.

10 MR. GEE: Hard work. Experience. Ability
11 to engage communities of differences. Being able
12 to work together collaboratively. Mission goal
13 bound. A doer, and respectful of differences. You
14 know, I'm aspiring to be one of the 14, whether I'm
15 one of the eight or the six, so as long as I'm one
16 of the 14, I'm in, to be blunt about it. But, you
17 know, I'm aspiring to be one of the 14, so.

18 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I don't have any
19 further questions.

20 CHAIR COE: Mr. Dawson.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

22 Mr. Gee, I have a couple follow-up
23 questions if you don't mind.

24 MR. GEE: Okay.

25 MR. DAWSON: In your answer to the second

1 standard question you referred to social media and
2 noted that social media is a potential problem for
3 the Commission.

4 MR. GEE: Mm-hmm.

5 MR. DAWSON: And the way I heard you say
6 it, you sort of framed it as an external -- an
7 externality and something that the Commission would
8 need to be able to ignore when it became too
9 rancorous or pointed.

10 Can you expand on that a bit? Do you have
11 personal experience with when your time on the --
12 on the city council?

13 MR. GEE: Oh yes. I mean, there are people
14 who were -- when they are of a different view than
15 yours, or of a different vote, would light up on
16 social media their anger or even hatred of a
17 decision that I had made.

18 The other aspect of social media is that
19 there needs to be some, and I'm sure there will
20 because of your leadership, some rules about what
21 we do as commissioners on social media too, not to
22 infringe the confidentiality and the work in
23 progress. I think it's great to say, you know,
24 thank you for the honor of interviewing and the
25 appointment but we can't be posting up on social

1 media the work of the Commission.

2 We can use it and there should be rules
3 about how we use it. You know, sharing information
4 about a community meeting, but we cannot be posting
5 up on social media the work of the Commission,
6 particularly the internal works of the Commission.

7 And so it's a very interesting time with
8 social media is that, and we can look at the Covid-
9 19 right now about the different pieces of
10 information out there about the availability of a
11 vaccine. Things like that or if you put tea with
12 this and that it'll cure it. There's a lot of
13 different things available on social media, but it
14 also could be used to try to influence decisions of
15 those policymakers or decision makers. And so we
16 need to be cognizant of that, particularly as a
17 commissioner that we have to ignore that if someone
18 doesn't like the decisions we're making.

19 MR. DAWSON: You actually anticipated my
20 follow up to the follow up. So I'll move on to
21 another thing you said that caught my ear.

22 You had said that in your work as an architect
23 and --

24 MR. GEE: Uh-huh.

25 MR. DAWSON: -- construction manager that

1 it's more than building a building.

2 MR. GEE: Correct.

3 MR. DAWSON: Would it also be fair to say
4 that your work on the CRC, if you're selected,
5 would be more than drawing maps?

6 MR. GEE: Absolutely.

7 MR. DAWSON: Can you expand on that?

8 MR. GEE: I think one of the great
9 opportunities that we as commissioners have,
10 particularly the work across the state, is not only
11 are we representing the Redistricting Commission,
12 but we're representing the state of California. I
13 take that responsibility very seriously.

14 And so as we enter a community, we're
15 representing the great state of California. And
16 how we engage with those communities is how they're
17 going to think about the state of California. And
18 that interaction, that engagement, could be
19 positive, it could be negative. I want it to be
20 positive. I want them to say wow, someone from
21 Sacramento came to my community, came to me and
22 asked me what I thought. How often does that
23 happen?

24 I mean it's a big state, it's 60 million
25 people, but that's our role as commissioner, is to

1 go out there and ask the questions and have
2 thoughtful, respectful engagements. And we can do
3 that because that's what our responsibility is.

4 And so it's more than just drawing maps on
5 a, you know, lines on a map. It's how we engage.
6 And just imagine what we can do, 14 of us, to
7 change the perception of those that don't trust the
8 state, that don't trust government. Well I had a
9 conversation with someone representing the state of
10 California, it was a great experience. What can
11 that do to change engagement going forward for the
12 next census, for that next election, for that next
13 application?

14 And one of the reasons that is special to
15 me for a Chinese-American that was born here to be
16 in an elected office was to represent to the next
17 generation that they can too. Because we're not
18 known as APIs or Chinese-Americans that take on
19 leadership positions easily. And my -- my --
20 what's special to me is being able to show others,
21 yes you can.

22 MR. DAWSON: We talked about how important
23 it is that the Commission be reflective of
24 Californians from all over the state. You are a
25 Bay Area native, lifelong Bay Area citizen. The

1 Bay Area is certainly not underrepresented in the
2 applicant pool. But if you were selected, would
3 you -- how would you be able to represent the
4 interests of folks, for example, from the Central
5 Valley or from north of here?

6 MR. GEE: If I'm selected to be on the
7 Redistrict Commission, I don't view myself as
8 representing the Bay Area. I view myself as that's
9 where I live and that's where I work, but I view
10 myself as a representative of the state of
11 California. And it's my responsibility to go out
12 to the Central Valley, to go up north, to go to the
13 Inland Empire, and engage those communities.

14 And I already do that in different ways
15 through my work. I don't do work just in the Bay
16 Area. I've done projects in the Central Valley.
17 I've been into Merced, and Modesto, and Fresno, and
18 Barstow, and San Diego. Barstow's a little quiet
19 but done two projects in Barstow.

20 That's why I have some thoughts and
21 acknowledgment that there's different parts of our
22 state, and we are not homogenous. We think
23 differently in different parts of our state. And
24 so the short answer is I am a representative of the
25 state of California and I have a responsibility to

1 go there and engage in those communities, not just
2 represent the Bay Area. I do not see myself, if
3 I'm so honored to be selected, to be a Bay Area
4 representative.

5 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Chair, we have roughly 21
6 minutes left in the 90-minute period. Are there
7 any follow ups?

8 CHAIR COE: Any follow ups, Ms. Dickison?

9 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

10 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap?

11 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: None here.

12 CHAIR COE: I have no follow-up questions.

13 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Mr. Gee, at this time,
14 would you like to make a closing statement to the
15 Panel?

16 MR. GEE: Sure.

17 Mr. Dawson, Mr. Belnap, Mr. Coe, Ms.
18 Dickison, thank you for the opportunity to meet
19 with all of you in person and to engage in a
20 conversation. It's an honor to make it to this
21 point in the process. I know there are a number of
22 other steps to go forward. But as I said to -- in
23 the last question, if so chosen, I look at myself
24 as representing the state of California in this
25 very important task ahead.

1 There are a lot of media reports that with
2 changing demographics, people leaving the state
3 that we will likely or may likely lose a seat or
4 two congressionally, as well as the census data
5 will impact different parts of our state. This is
6 a very important work we have to do. It's a very
7 serious task we have ahead of us. We have to do it
8 right.

9 It's going to last for ten years until the
10 next set of data comes out. And there are going to
11 be challenges as that data comes out, I'm pretty
12 sure it won't be as easy as everyone says it's
13 going to be.

14 The experience I've had, the experiences
15 I've had today and I've learned, I can't say they
16 were strategic. They were opportunistic. I didn't
17 start growing up to say I wanted to grow up to be a
18 state redistricting commissioner. I didn't grow up
19 to say I wanted to be the mayor of my city. But
20 they are responsibilities that evolved, and
21 emerged, and presented opportunities where I can
22 bring my skills, my background, my commitment too
23 and make a difference.

24 I've grown up here, not only in the Bay
25 Area, but the state of California. This is home

1 for me. I have no visions of leaving California.
2 So I want to do the right thing for the state of
3 California and give you my service if so selected.

4 Thank you for your time this morning. I
5 really appreciate it and hopefully we'll see what
6 the next step brings. But thank you very much for
7 the opportunity.

8 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Gee.

9 Our next interview is scheduled to start
10 at 10:45, so we'll be in recess until 10:44.

11 (Off the record at 10:10 a.m.)

12 (On the record at 10:44 a.m.)

13 CHAIR COE: Okay, it's 10:44, ready to
14 reconvene this meeting.

15 At this time, I'd like to welcome Dr.
16 Herman DeBose.

17 DR. DEBOSE: Correct.

18 CHAIR COE: Thank you very much for being
19 here, sir.

20 DR. DEBOSE: Thank you.

21 CHAIR COE: Mr. Dawson.

22 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

23 Dr. DeBose, I will ask you five standard
24 questions that each applicant has been asked to
25 respond to.

1 Are you ready, Sir?

2 DR. DEBOSE: Yes.

3 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills
4 and attributes should all Commissioners possess?

5 What skills or competencies should the
6 Commission possess collectively?

7 Of the skills, attributes, and
8 competencies that each commissioner should possess,
9 which do you possess?

10 In summary, how will you contribute to the
11 success of the Commission?

12 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. Well Mr. Dawson and
13 the Committee, I think one of the ways that one
14 should begin to answer this is to look at the roles
15 of the Commission which I'm sure all of you know,
16 but I'll just reiterate, which is to draw district
17 lines, hold public meetings, research and analyze,
18 hire support staff, prepare legal defense.

19 But these skills that one -- and
20 attributes, I look at them as soft and hard skills.
21 The hard skills I would say is communication, both
22 in written -- written and verbal. Assessment
23 skills. Be able to be a mediator. Able to
24 delegate. Supervisorial skills. Data focus. Take
25 a lot of information in, be able to respond to it

1 in a positive manner. Ability to analyze, and a
2 solution seeker. Now those are the hard skills.
3 Those are the skills that -- and the technical
4 skills that one may need.

5 But along with that I think there are soft
6 skills that one should have. And those soft skills
7 I'd say would say are respect for others, even
8 though they may have a different opinion. Self-
9 aware, being aware of your ability to recognize and
10 understand your moods, your emotions, your drive,
11 as well as those of others. Self-regulation. How
12 do you manage your time? How do you manage your
13 time when there is a difference of opinion?
14 Motivation, empathy, and one of the keys is social
15 skills. How do you get along with people? Open
16 mindedness, evened temperament. An honest broker.

17 And then to top all of that off, the one
18 skill that I think anyone serving on a Commission
19 or anything, is the ability to listen. If you
20 cannot listen, then you can't hear. And there is a
21 difference between hearing and listening. Hearing
22 is the sound that we pick up. Listening is taking
23 into consideration what the person has to say.
24 What does it mean? How do you interpret it? And
25 number one is, how do you respond? That comes back

1 to self-regulation.

2 But all these other skills that I laid out
3 are good, but if one does not have the ability to
4 listen, I think some of the other skills will not
5 be worthwhile.

6 What skills or competencies should a
7 Commission possess collectively? I'm going to say
8 critical analysis. Competency, and I'm sure the
9 individuals, the 14 individuals selected will be
10 competent. I would also say they would have the
11 ability to weigh evidence, analyze data, and
12 assess. Self-awareness as a Commission. Self-
13 regulation.

14 One of the keys also is importance of
15 human relations. How do you value people,
16 especially in the task that you are going to ask us
17 to do? Especially people who may have different
18 opinions than you do. How do you begin to take
19 that information in and process it to get to the
20 ultimate goal?

21 The other thing is the dignity and worth
22 of a person. I think the Commission should have
23 that. Once again, listening. And the ability,
24 again, to communicate, written and verbally.
25 Because if you can't put it on paper where people

1 can understand what it is that you're trying to
2 say, it creates some difficulty. And if you're not
3 able to present yourself verbally where, in a clear
4 and concise manner, I think that creates
5 difficulty. And then again professionalism,
6 persistence, and patience.

7 Of the skills, attributes, and
8 competencies that each commissioner possess, which
9 do you possess? I think I'm a critical thinker. I
10 think I can critically analyze stuff. I think my
11 training and my work experience have given me many
12 opportunities to look at a certain amounts of data,
13 take that data and make it relevant where people
14 can read.

15 I've written a book. I've edited books.
16 I've written articles. I've done lesson plans.
17 And so if you aren't able to present that
18 information to others who are beginning to receive
19 it, then it's not important.

20 Once again, the importance of human
21 relations. The dignity of people. You have to
22 make people feel comfortable in your presence
23 because if they are not comfortable, in my opinion,
24 they will not be able to express what it is that
25 they will have. Social skills, and once again,

1 competency. If people feel that you aren't
2 competent, then they will not listen to you. And
3 in the job of the Commission, you have to have
4 trust with the community. And if you don't have
5 that competence that people perceive you to have
6 competence, then you don't get that trust.

7 In summary, how will you contribute to the
8 success of the Commission? Once again, utilizing
9 the skills and the competency I possess. One of
10 the things that I strived on in teaching was trying
11 very hard to create a safe and secure environment.
12 And if one is able to help create a safe and secure
13 environment within the Commission, those 14 people,
14 then people will feel comfortable to say what it is
15 they need to say without fearing that someone is
16 going to attack them.

17 If that atmosphere is there, I think you
18 get clean clear discussions. But if people are
19 afraid to say what they think they need to say
20 because somebody is going to challenge them, you
21 won't get their true opinions.

22 The other piece of is transparency. You
23 have to be able to let those who are looking from
24 the outside know that everything is on the table.
25 That there isn't any hidden agenda.

1 At this point in time in my life I'm
2 retired. I've had a successful career. I'm not
3 looking for another job. I'm not looking for
4 another position, so I have no hidden agenda here,
5 you know. State of California has been very good
6 to me. And so, therefore, it's part that I'm not
7 trying to convince somebody that I need to go
8 someplace else because I've worked for the last 40
9 years and those 40 years have been very beneficial.
10 So I have no hidden agenda, and I'm hoping to make
11 that very, very clear.

12 The other thing I put here is that I will
13 do whatever is required, legally, to make the
14 Commission work. If that means mediating, if that
15 means delegating, if that means listening, if that
16 means compromising. Because with the compromises,
17 you can't see it as a loss. You see it as where
18 both sides win, and you have to figure out a way
19 how to convince both sides that it's something in
20 it for them. And so I see that's where some of my
21 mediation skills may come into play. I do some
22 mediation now, in Small Claims Court with the
23 county of Los Angeles.

24 The other thing I would say is, once
25 again, open communication. Be willing to share

1 with people where you are, and what I would call
2 the safe, secure environment. If we don't have the
3 safe, secure environment, then we can't, in my
4 opinion, do our job.

5 MR. DAWSON: Question 2. Work on the
6 Commission requires members of different political
7 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010
8 Commission was selected and formed, the American
9 political conversation has become increasingly
10 polarized, whether in the press, on social media,
11 and even in our own families.

12 What characteristics do you possess, and
13 what characteristics should your fellow
14 commissioners possess that will protect against
15 hyper-partisanship?

16 What will you do to ensure that the work
17 of the Commission is not seen as polarized or
18 hyper-partisan and avoid perceptions of political
19 bias and conflict?

20 DR. DEBOSE: I'll go back to transparency.
21 Everything we do should be above board. Open
22 communication among the commissioners, among with
23 the citizenry of the state of California. Having
24 people, giving people the opportunity to question,
25 and giving us those in the Commission the

1 opportunity to respond. Once again, ability to
2 listen.

3 Humility. Fair representation for all of
4 those who have a vested interest. Once again, the
5 importance of human relations. How do you get
6 along with people? Are you able to make people
7 feel comfortable? Cultural sensitivity. Taking
8 other people's cultures into consideration when
9 making decisions. How does the decision that one
10 is going to make impact someone who's different
11 from you? Group process skills about thinking
12 about it as a team, not an individual. Because if
13 you don't think it as a team, then it will have
14 some -- some bad effects.

15 Representing the highest forms of
16 democracy. Everyone -- everyone's voices count,
17 and to provide for the greater good of the
18 citizenry of California. How do you make this
19 process work?

20 Your question what will you do to ensure
21 the work of the Commission is not seen as
22 polarized? Once again, transparency. You have to
23 be open. You try to provide all groups an
24 opportunity across the state to address the
25 Commission with their particular concerns. And

1 remembering the overall goal and purpose of the
2 Commission is to draw boundaries which are fair and
3 representatives of the citizenry of the State of
4 California.

5 MR. DAWSON: Question 3. What is the
6 greatest problem the Commission could encounter and
7 what actions would you take to avoid or respond to
8 this problem?

9 DR. DEBOSE: I see that as two parts. It
10 could be internal and external. The internal would
11 be conflict among commissioners. Inability to
12 reach compromises. Open communication breaks down.
13 And forgetting the overall goal and purpose of the
14 Commission. Once again, going back to a safe and
15 secure environment. If those individuals, 14
16 individuals, feels that it's a safe, secure
17 environment, then some of those things should not
18 happen. If those things occur, then we need to
19 figure out how do we go back and bring about this
20 open communication where we don't have internal
21 conflict?

22 The external I think deals with political
23 pressure from different groups in the state of
24 California who wants things to go their particular
25 way. And how do you go about pushing that back to

1 maintain your objective? In this day and age where
2 we live, social media plays a real big part. So as
3 the Commission itself begins to make decisions or
4 begins to talk about drawing boundaries, there will
5 probably be some external pressure from social
6 media questioning things that one may be doing.

7 Now the actions I think I will take to try
8 to make sure that these internal and external
9 things do not occur, once again, transparency.
10 Everything is above board. That you're open with
11 your fellow commissioners. If you're having a
12 public meeting, you're open there. If someone asks
13 you a question and you don't have an answer, don't
14 try to answer it, just say I'll get back to you
15 when I get the answer.

16 As a professor, students would ask me
17 questions all the time and sometimes you just
18 didn't know because you didn't take that into
19 consideration. And I never said to a student or
20 tried to make up an answer. I would say, let me
21 get back to you. And the one thing I always did is
22 when the class began again, I answered that
23 student's question. So if someone asks us a
24 question, I would try to do that.

25 Try to be part of an environment where

1 Commission members feel comfortable to express
2 themselves without hesitation, fear, or
3 retaliation. To deal with outside political
4 pressure, once again being transparent. Being
5 open, no hidden communications. Asking for things
6 in writing and if there are things in writing from
7 other groups, share that with the fellow -- with
8 your fellow commissioners. Everybody is on board.
9 There isn't anything that you're trying to hide.
10 You want everybody to see what it is that you are
11 having to deal with. No predetermined agenda, that
12 you move the agenda along as it goes.

13 And once again, as I said, become a
14 mediator, if necessary, among the commissioners to
15 be able to where people can talk to each other.
16 Because if we ever lose the ability to talk or
17 communicate with each other, then nothing gets
18 done. And there's a short time to do what needs to
19 be done for this Commission so I think it's
20 important that people feel comfortable to talk with
21 each other.

22 MR. DAWSON: Question 4. If you were
23 selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
24 Commission, which is charged with working together
25 to create maps of the new districts. Please

1 describe a situation where you had to work
2 collaboratively with others on a project to achieve
3 a common goal. Tell us the goal of the project.
4 What your role in the group was, and how the group
5 worked through any conflicts that arose.

6 What lessons would you take from this
7 group experience to the Commission, if selected?

8 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. Well the project that
9 I looked at, in 2015 I was vice chair of the L.A.
10 County Mental Health Commission. 2015 the Board of
11 Supervisors made a decision to merge Mental Health,
12 Public Health, and Health. One of the concerns of
13 those of us on the Mental Health Commission was
14 that the Mental Health community would be absorbed
15 within the hospitals.

16 Health Services has a big agenda in L.A.
17 County and the 10 million people. And the health
18 department is one that carries a lot of weight,
19 particularly because hospitals. And we were
20 concerned that if those three departments merged,
21 would Mental Health be lost?

22 One of the concerns centered around that
23 related to what I will call Proposition 63.
24 Proposition 63 is better known as what we call the
25 millionaire's tax, where those who make over a

1 million dollars a year contribute to Mental Health
2 for the state of California. That monies go to
3 provide services for those who are mentally ill.
4 And I think about 29 percent of those dollars come
5 to L.A. County.

6 So our concern was would that money be
7 taken away from those who are in Mental Health.
8 The other concern is in Mental Health, we tried to
9 make sure that those who receive services,
10 patients, had a voice. And our concern was if
11 these departments merge, would those who receive
12 service, with lived experience, would their voice
13 be lost?

14 So we voiced, the Board of Supervisors had
15 an open hearing. Those of us who were on the
16 Commission went forth and expressed these concerns.
17 The Board of Supervisors had made a determination
18 that these three departments would merge. But one
19 of the things that we pushed for was that there
20 should be an advisory panel that would report to
21 the board to indicate how this merger was taking
22 place.

23 And there were roughly 45 members
24 appointed. People from Mental Health, Health,
25 Public Health, people from unions because the

1 workers played a major role in this. And each
2 entity had its own group. And we met, I think we
3 met once every two weeks. And during those
4 meetings we would have people from those
5 departments to come and talk to us about the
6 progress.

7 One of the concerns that I had is that if
8 one is in Mental Health, one gets a designated
9 number. Like those of us who in this interview
10 process have designated numbers. I think mine is
11 15631. So if you went to Mental Health, you may
12 have that number. But if you went to Health
13 Services, you may have another number. And then if
14 you went to Public Health, you may have another
15 number.

16 So Ms. Dickison, if you were the doctor
17 prescribing medication for me in Mental Health, Mr.
18 Coe who he may be my doctor in Health, could not
19 see what you had prescribed. So our concern was
20 there wasn't integration of the services. If
21 you're going to separate or put these departments
22 together, shouldn't there be some way that you can
23 see what the other person is doing so that there
24 can be common services provided.

25 The county said that they would attempt to

1 put those computer systems together because what
2 happened, Mental Health had its computer system,
3 Health had its computer system, and Public Health
4 had its system. So the question for us was, how do
5 you merge these systems so someone is receiving
6 services?

7 Because if someone is in Santa Monica and
8 they end up say down in San Pedro, which is about
9 30 miles away, you should be able to go into the
10 system and see what I got in Santa Monica and what
11 I got in San Pedro. You should be able to pull
12 that together. So that was one of the concerns
13 that we had, would people know that?

14 So we would meet and we would talk about
15 entities, examples like that. How do we bring all
16 of this together? Because the board's purpose, or
17 the goal was, how do you begin to provide more
18 effective services for the citizens of the great
19 county of Los Angeles?

20 And so Dr. Katz, who was the Director of
21 Health Service became the person in charge, and the
22 Director of Mental Health, and the Director of
23 Public Health were also part of that team.

24 Now my role as the vice chair of the
25 Mental Health Commission was to try and ensure that

1 the Mental Health budget, which was the
2 millionaire's tax, would remain for Mental Health
3 Services and that individuals who received Mental
4 Health Services would have the opportunity to be
5 able to voice their opinion.

6 And also we wanted to make sure that there
7 was a systematic way for the three entities to work
8 together to carry out the goal of the board of
9 supervisors, which is to provide quality service.

10 The lessons I learned from participating
11 on this 45-person panel was one needs to have the
12 ability to listen, once again, with an open mind.
13 Weigh the information or data presented from the
14 other side from their point of view and try to see
15 how you can make that coincide with what it is that
16 you were trying to accomplish. Don't be close
17 minded because if you're close minded you don't --
18 there may be some great ideas that are coming in
19 that you don't give yourself the opportunity to
20 hear. Be willing to compromise --

21 MS. MOLINO: Ten minutes.

22 DR. DEBOSE: Be willing to compromise when
23 appropriate and don't review a compromise as a
24 loss. Look at it as a win/win for both sides and
25 be able to communicate and present facts and data

1 with appropriate sources. People can say anything
2 but if you don't have a source to support it, it's
3 not as valid.

4 One of the things I learned in teaching
5 and research is that if I write something in a
6 paper, is there anyone else saying the same thing?
7 If so, do I cite that person? If I cite that
8 person, then I begin to say what I need to say and
9 its credibility.

10 If I am selected as a commissioner, what
11 skills would I bring? I'd take into consideration
12 from my experience at the university. I would say
13 listening. Analytical skills, which gets back to
14 drawing district lines and research. Ability to
15 communicate verbally and written. Management and
16 administrative skills because you have to hire and
17 supervise staff.

18 Then I'm going to say service. Elevate
19 the level of service of the Commission and to the
20 state of California, for the interests of the
21 people in the state of California, not my personal
22 interest. Social justice. Pursue appropriate
23 social changes that will make sure that everybody
24 feels that their vote counts. Respect for
25 individuals and, once again, understanding the

1 importance of human relation.

2 And cultural competency, I think.

3 Acknowledge, and value, and diversity, conducting a
4 cultural assessment. Recognizing and understand
5 the dynamics of differences. And acquiring
6 cultural knowledge when appropriate.

7 What experience have you had that will
8 help? I was a Peace Corps volunteer from 1969 to
9 1972 in Kenya where I had to live and work in a
10 different environment, a different experience. My
11 wife was also a volunteer and we wanted our kids to
12 have that international experience. So when my
13 kids were 13, 9, and 7 we snatched them out of Los
14 Angeles and we moved to Kenya. I worked for Peace
15 Corps, my wife worked for USAID because it was
16 important for us for them to understand.

17 As a social worker I used to work on what
18 they call the Psychiatric Emergency Team, writing
19 5150s, which meant I had to interact with a whole
20 bunch of different people. I've worked in the area
21 of substance abuse. I worked in the
22 area -- I ran an HIV/AIDS program at Compton Health
23 Center. One of my tasks was to tell people that
24 they were HIV positive. This was before we knew
25 any cures.

1 I've done training for UC Davis and as I
2 wrote in my paper, I've done training in 53 of the
3 58 counties. My university experience, my family
4 experience.

5 My three -- all four of my kids have been
6 products of the University of California. Three of
7 them went to Berkeley, one went to Davis. One is a
8 physician here in Sacramento, my middle daughter is
9 an actress in L.A., my third daughter is a school -
10 - works in schools, and my son lives in Bakersfield
11 and is an engineer with Tesla.

12 UC Davis -- the UC system has provided our
13 family with a lot of stuff. So I say that the
14 experience that I've had, my family has had, has
15 given me a background to understand differences and
16 that those differences will allow me to be able to
17 interact with people from different backgrounds.

18 I have relatives who live as far up as
19 Eureka, and as far south as San Diego. And so we
20 travel to those spots, we interact with those
21 individuals. The other piece I'll share, my wife
22 is of Irish/American descent. I have four mixed
23 race kids. My oldest daughter is married to a
24 young man of Jamaican descent. My middle daughter
25 is married to a young man who is Jewish from

1 England. My third daughter is married to a young
2 man who is Nigerian descent. And my son is married
3 to a young lady who is mixed race like himself.

4 So you should see the 15 of us, including
5 the five grandkids, when we go out. So when you
6 talk about diversity, you talk about differences,
7 you talk about understanding differences in the
8 population of the state of California, which is
9 very diverse, which is very different, I live it.
10 I work in it. It's stuff I deal with every day.
11 And it's something that I'm very proud of that the
12 state of California has allowed a diverse family as
13 mine to be successful.

14 As I said, I'm retired. I don't have a
15 hidden agenda so it's this time that I'm wanting to
16 give something back. And I think I possess the
17 skills, the talents, and the competencies, the
18 knowledge, skills, and values as we say in social
19 work, to be able to do a job of this nature. And
20 have the ability to bring people together to
21 discuss sensitive issues, especially as
22 redistricting will be.

23 Am I close?

24 MR. DAWSON: We have roughly five minutes.

25 DR. DEBOSE: Oh, okay. Please.

1 MR. DAWSON: I do need to ask the fifth
2 question. I think you may have, in some sense,
3 already answered it.

4 DR. DEBOS: Oh, I jumped the ahead.

5 MR. DAWSON: But let me ask it.

6 DR. DEBOSE: Okay.

7 MR. DAWSON: A considerable amount of the
8 Commission's work will involve meeting with people
9 from all over California who come from very
10 different backgrounds and a wide variety of
11 perspectives.

12 If you are selected as a commissioner,
13 what skills and attributes will make you effective
14 at interacting with people from different
15 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

16 What experiences have you had that will
17 help you be effective at understanding and
18 appreciating people in communities of different
19 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

20 We have four minutes remaining.

21 DR. DEBOSE: Yeah. Okay. I think I've
22 answered part of that.

23 The other piece I would add is that I was
24 at Cal State Northridge for 25 years. I was chair
25 of the Department of Sociology for six and a half

1 years. Now, if you ever work with a PhD, I'll
2 probably get my hand smacked for this, but PhDs
3 think they're special people because they spent a
4 whole bunch of time in the classroom and just by
5 having those letters behind our names, people make
6 certain assumptions.

7 So imagine sitting at a table with 22 PhDs
8 and they all think they're special. And you have
9 to put together a schedule to meet the needs of
10 2,000 students in Sociology, but you also have to
11 meet the needs of those 22 PhDs who think they're
12 special.

13 And so some people are going to want 8
14 o'clock classes, some people are going to want to
15 start at 12. So the question is how do you take
16 all of this differences with all of this stuff that
17 this people are bringing to you, to try to make
18 things happy for the majority where it will work?

19 And I did that for six and a half years.
20 Everybody didn't always like it, but my goal was to
21 make sure that students had an adequate amount of
22 classes to be able to graduate, at the expense of
23 putting the faculty where they needed to be.

24 CSUN is a designated minority institution,
25 because a significant number of our students are

1 minority and first generation. So I think the
2 experiences that I got out of the classroom, the
3 experiences that I dealt with faculty, not only in
4 my department, but also the departments across
5 campus, gave me an opportunity to work with people
6 who were different from myself. Because there
7 aren't many people who look like me in a university
8 setting. So therefore, that, too, was a unique
9 experience.

10 Sometimes you'd walk into a room and
11 people would say, what do you want? And then you
12 would say, well I'm Dr. DeBose, I'm looking for so
13 and so. Then all of a sudden, the conversation
14 changed. But when you walked in that room
15 initially, they had no idea who you were. So from
16 those experiences, I didn't get upset, I'd just
17 say, this is where we are. But I made sure that
18 those individuals knew who I was by the work that I
19 did at the university in the community.

20 One last piece I'll add is that I was very
21 fortunate to get a grant from L.A. County
22 Probation Department. It was about 1.2, 1.3
23 million dollars over seven years. And what the
24 purpose of the grant was to have CSUN students work
25 with probation officers in high schools, to work

1 with kids who were in the juvenile justice system.
2 Once again, working with a different population.

3 The one thing we did was we sent 25 CSUN
4 students to these different high schools. And the
5 carrot that we used for the kids is that the ones
6 that participated in the program and did well, we'd
7 bring them to campus once a week. Now that may not
8 seem like a big thing but think about kids who have
9 never had the opportunity to step on a college
10 campus.

11 MS. MOLINO: One minute.

12 DR. DEBOSE: And so all of a sudden we
13 have kids who had an interest. And if you can
14 change one person within that particular family, or
15 one in that community, you can begin to change that
16 family.

17 So I would sum up and say that my
18 experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer, as a County
19 employee for 18 years with Los Angeles County in
20 Mental Health, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, and
21 patient's rights, and my 25-year experience at CSUN
22 has given me the opportunity to work with people
23 who are different from me from all walks of life.

24 And I think that is a valuable experience
25 that I would be able to add to the Commission.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Dr. DeBose.

2 We will now move on to panel questions.
3 Each Panel member will have 20 minutes to pose his
4 or her questions.

5 We'll begin with the Chair, Mr. Coe.

6 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson. Good
7 morning, Dr. DeBose.

8 I wanted to ask you something about a
9 phrase I've heard you mention several times, which
10 was, creating a safe and secure environment for --
11 for both members of the Commission to work with
12 each other, and for the public to feel like they
13 can come and talk to the Commission.

14 How do you go about creating an
15 environment like that?

16 DR. DEBOSE: One of the things I think
17 with the Commission is that once the 14 are
18 selected, give us a few minutes of a time to where
19 we can just sit and talk with each other to find
20 out things about -- and not personal stuff, but
21 what's important to that person. What's not
22 important. If something's important to me, but
23 it's not important to you, how to we begin to
24 bridge that gap? How do you begin to feel
25 comfortable to say something that you know that's

1 not important to me, but we can talk about it?

2 Create an opportunity for us to talk. If
3 you're talking to me, how do I create an atmosphere
4 of listening? As I said, listening is very
5 important. There's a big difference between
6 hearing and listening. If you feel comfortable
7 that you can say something to me knowing that it's
8 something that I may not agree with, and we can
9 talk about it, that gives a sense of security and
10 ability for you to say what you may need to say,
11 knowing I may disagree.

12 And if you and I develop that
13 relationship, regardless of where we go or what we
14 do, I may say something, and you may come to me and
15 say well Herman, I didn't agree with that. And I
16 could have the comfort to know to say, well Mr.
17 Coe, why didn't you agree with that? And if we can
18 create an atmosphere of that nature, I think the 14
19 members would begin to feel comfortable to do that.

20 With the community, give them that same
21 opportunity. If they need to ask questions, be
22 honest with our answers. If we don't know, say we
23 don't know. Don't try to fudge it. Because once
24 you tell one lie, you got to tell another lie to
25 cover up that lie. So be open, be honest, and

1 allow people to question you without you getting
2 intimidated.

3 If the community feels they can question
4 those who are -- who is selected on the Commission,
5 and knowing that they will get an honest response,
6 I think that creates an environment where people
7 can say something.

8 If you're asking the Commission a question
9 and we're firing back at you, then you don't feel
10 comfortable. That next person may not feel
11 comfortable to ask their question. And the same
12 thing among those 14 people. If you and I develop
13 a relationship, then Mr. Belnap can say well I can
14 participate in that too. And Ms. Dickison says
15 okay.

16 So all of a sudden we have a sense of
17 community. And once we get this community, the
18 public can see how we work together. If the public
19 sees that the Commission does not work well
20 together then that sends a negative message. But
21 if they see where the Commission works well
22 together, then I think that says to the public they
23 too can ask questions.

24 CHAIR COE: Great, thank you. In your
25 application, and earlier, I think you mentioned

1 that you have conducted training courses in 53 of
2 the 58 counties in the state.

3 DR. DEBOSE: Right.

4 CHAIR COE: Can you tell us a little about
5 those experiences and maybe what you learned from
6 the different people in those different areas, the
7 perspectives they bring?

8 DR. DEBOSE: One of the things I learned
9 is that people in the state of California are
10 different. For the last -- 1973 I moved to
11 California, Los Angeles. I've been in Los Angeles.
12 Los Angeles is different from Eureka. Los Angeles
13 is different from Sacramento.

14 The one thing I learned is that you needed
15 to allow people to express themselves. One of the
16 train -- the trainings I was doing was working with
17 diverse populations. Working with terminally ill
18 people. I did a special training among the Hmong
19 in Fresno.

20 So the things that I -- oh, and one other
21 piece I'll add to that is a significant of those
22 trainings, people invited me back. Because UC
23 Davis would set up who would go do the training and
24 people would ask for me to go back. So I said to
25 myself I must be making a difference or I did well.

1 So the difference I learned is that
2 depending on the makeup of the community, depending
3 on the issues that's specific to that particular
4 area, I needed to focus my training on those
5 particular things. I couldn't provide the same
6 direct training that I would provide in Los
7 Angeles, say in Fresno. I could do a variation. I
8 would look at the population.

9 Like I think it's -- it's one of the
10 counties up -- it's if you leave Sacramento and you
11 drive 40 miles east, Auburn is the city. But if
12 you take a left going up the highway on Auburn. I
13 forgot the name of the community up there. That
14 community is 87 to 80 percent white. So if I'm
15 talking about diversity there, I have to refocus
16 what I'm talking about in regards to diversity.

17 If I'm talking about diversity in Los
18 Angeles, it's completely different. So you had to
19 look and see what is the makeup of that county?
20 What are their particular needs? And then you
21 begin to gear your training to meet that.

22 The thing I learned about myself was that
23 I was flexible enough and not rigid, to have a
24 training and say well I did this in L.A., I'm going
25 to do it in Auburn, I'm going to do it in

1 Sacramento. I would do excessive research to say
2 what are the particular things that are relevant in
3 regards to providing social services in Sacramento,
4 in Auburn, in Eureka, and then try to gear my
5 training to focus on that.

6 So the one thing I would say I learned is
7 that appreciating and learning the differences
8 within the different communities around the state
9 of California in the 58 counties. And I -- and the
10 five counties that I did not train in was Modoc,
11 Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego, and the
12 last one is one that begins with a T.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Tuolumne.

14 DR. DEBOSE: What is it?

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Tuolumne.

16 DR. DEBOSE: Maybe that one. Those were
17 the five counties. I -- I didn't want to do the
18 ones down south because I wanted to see what the
19 rest of the state was about.

20 CHAIR. COE: Okay. Thank you.

21 On your essay on impartiality, and earlier
22 you mentioned being the chair of the Sociology
23 Department at CSU Northridge and you were on the
24 Personnel Planning and Review Committee?

25 DR. DEBOSE: Yes.

1 CHAIR COE: In your essay you talked about
2 that in those roles you had an obligation to be
3 fair and impartial in your decision making.

4 DR. DEBOSE: Yep.

5 CHAIR COE: Can you give us a specific
6 example of a time that you exercised impartiality
7 during the course of your decision making?

8 DR. DEBOSE: Well, there's something
9 called a tenure process that with in a seven-year
10 period, one should try to acquire tenure. Each
11 department sets up its own rules and regulations
12 for their way to acquire tenure.

13 And so my role as chair, I would have to
14 evaluate faculty. Write up a letter. Then if a
15 person is on the tenure process, they got a letter
16 from the chair, a letter from the personnel
17 committee within the Department, a letter from the
18 Dean, a letter from the College Personnel
19 Committee, and then a letter from the Provost. The
20 letter from the Provost is the one that carries the
21 weight because the Provost says you have a job, or
22 you don't have a job. The others are information.

23 So one of the things that you have to do
24 is like, you and I may be the best of friends
25 however, when I have to look and see as chair, have

1 you met the criteria that the Department has set to
2 say that you should get to the next level. And
3 there may be times that you may not have met that
4 criteria. And I would need to say to you, at this
5 time I can't write a letter of support for you to
6 move to tenure, or you to move to a promotion.

7 So hopefully someone in the process would
8 get four positive letters so that when it gets to
9 the Provost, or the Committee that you mention,
10 that it's an easy decision. But sometimes you may
11 have two letters say move forward, two letters that
12 say don't move forward. And that's where that
13 committee comes together. It's a committee made up
14 of individuals from across the campus, from each
15 college, and the members of that particular college
16 votes that person to be on that Committee. So
17 there's representation from each college on the
18 Committee, plus somewhere from the Provost's office
19 and someone from the Faculty Affairs.

20 And so we would get the information just
21 like you got the information here. And we would
22 sit and read and make a decision. Hopefully the
23 decision we made would be impartial, based on the
24 materials presented, not the individual. And there
25 were times that some of us agreed that the person

1 should move forward and we would make a
2 recommendation to the Provost that the person gets
3 tenure and promotion, and there were times that
4 people didn't do that.

5 There was examples as chair, with the Dean
6 we had said one should do service, one should do
7 research, and one should be a good teacher.
8 Looking at those three criteria, I had a faculty
9 member who was an excellent teacher, an excellent
10 researcher, but had not participated in service.
11 Service to the University, service to the
12 Department, and service to the -- and the Dean said
13 I can't -- I can't move this person forward. And I
14 argued. I said but she's doing all these other
15 things great. And the Dean said but she's not
16 doing that.

17 So then I had to go and work with her and
18 say look this is what the Dean said we need to do.
19 You have done this. You have done that. How can I
20 help you get to that point to where you're doing
21 what the Dean says you need to do for you to get to
22 the next level? So we set up a plan with her.

23 And I had to be impartial there because
24 the rules stated that this is what you needed to
25 do, and the Dean was enforcing those particular

1 rules. And I would say my -- I served on that
2 Committee, I think for three years. And each year,
3 I think each year each term you were voted by the
4 members of your college. And the members of the
5 college voted for me to do that each time.

6 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

7 Earlier in one of your responses you
8 mentioned the role that social media could play as
9 a potential hazard to the Commission. And as
10 you're probably aware, the background check that
11 everybody went through --

12 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIR COE: -- there was a flag on some
14 social media posts of yours.

15 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

16 CHAIR COE: I looked at those and I wanted
17 to ask a few questions about those.

18 DR. DEBOSE: Please. Please.

19 CHAIR COE: So the posts that were in
20 question appear to show some partisan views, which
21 having strong views in and of itself isn't
22 necessarily an issue for commissioner. Indeed the
23 regulations state that an applicant for the
24 Commission may have strong views and may have
25 participated in social or political causes so long

1 as the applicant has the capacity and willingness
2 while serving, as a member of the Commission to set
3 aside his or her personal views in order to
4 evaluate information with an open mind and make
5 decisions that are fair to everyone affected.

6 So having partisan views surely isn't an
7 issue on the surface. However, since those views
8 and ideas have been openly published on social
9 media I did want to ask some questions --

10 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

11 CHAIR COE: -- about how this open
12 publication of political views could potentially
13 affect the Commission should you be appointed.

14 So earlier in the second question that was
15 asked by Mr. Dawson regarding the Commission
16 avoiding the perceptions of hyper-partisanship.

17 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

18 CHAIR COE: Should you be appointed to the
19 Commission what effect, if any, do you think your
20 social media post could have on the public's
21 overall perception of the Commission as polarized
22 hyper partisan or politically biased?

23 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. And are you talking
24 collectively or any individual?

25 CHAIR COE: Collectively. Collectively.

1 DR. DEBOSE: Well, I think if you look at
2 them, I'll deal with the one with the photos. That
3 I participated in the march in January of 2017. I
4 think that was when it was done. And at that time
5 I was still teaching. And one of the things I
6 wanted my students to know, that they have a right
7 to participate. And so I took pictures of those.
8 Of what was there. And I shared those photos with
9 my students and some colleagues around.

10 So I -- I don't see how that was partisan
11 in the sense that they were not mine. They were
12 photos that were at this particular march. And I
13 wanted my students, and I wanted friends to see
14 what people were saying in Los Angeles, you know.

15 The -- in regards to Mitch McConnell. If
16 you read what I wrote there, in regards to issues
17 related to voter suppression, gun control, and
18 health care. If you look at the State of Kentucky,
19 it's rated the sixth least in education. It's
20 rated 45th in health care. And there's a high
21 incident of opioid use. And a high incident of
22 people shooting and killing themselves and killing
23 others.

24 And there's a high incident of voter
25 suppression because there's State legislation

1 that's been passed in order to deal with voter
2 suppression.

3 So my comments there, as I said to you,
4 back up stuff with sources, and I have sources to
5 support what I said. I didn't just pull it out of
6 the thin air. So my comments there, I think if you
7 went to certain sources you would see what I just
8 shared with you, because I knew this question would
9 come up and I wanted to make sure that I had
10 documentation to support what I had written there.
11 Yeah.

12 CHAIR COE: So perhaps I should clarify.

13 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

14 CHAIR COE: My question wasn't on the
15 validity of the post. It was how it could
16 potentially affect the public's perception of any
17 partisanship on the Commission, or the Commission
18 as a whole.

19 DR. DEBOSE: I would just say that I don't
20 know how long I've been on Facebook, but over 10 or
21 15 years, there are three. And I would say if
22 people wanted to judge me as partisan because of
23 these three, there's very little that I can do. I
24 would just ask them to look at the totality of who
25 I am and what I'm about. I don't think this

1 summarizes me being partisan to one group or
2 another.

3 MS. MOLINO: Five minutes.

4 DR. DEBOSE: That I was just expressing,
5 especially with the pictures for my students and
6 for those. And the comments that I made, as I
7 said, they are legitimate. I don't -- if someone
8 is going to hold this against me, then
9 that's -- that's where I am. That's where I am.

10 I'm hoping it won't interfere with people
11 saying I'm partisan. Once again, if they look at
12 the facts that are there, that there is supported
13 documentation to say -- to support what I said.

14 CHAIR COE: Okay. thank you. One other
15 question about this.

16 DR. DEBOSE: Please. Please.

17 CHAIR COE: So as you know the Commission
18 is required to be made up of -- of particular
19 breakdown of partisans. So five Democrats, five
20 Republicans, four people who are not affiliated
21 with either one of those.

22 Since you know you will be working with
23 people of a variety of political leanings, do you
24 think -- what affect do you think that social media
25 post could have on your working relationship with

1 other members of the Commission. Both, you know,
2 them to you and you to them?

3 DR. DEBOSE: Once again I go back to what
4 I said, creating a safe, secure environment. If a
5 person has an issue with me, let's talk about it.
6 If we have a differences of opinion, how can we
7 work that out to carry out the goal of the
8 Commission?

9 I would rather for you, or someone else to
10 say to me, you know, I don't appreciate this.
11 Okay, tell me why you don't appreciate it, and then
12 give me the opportunity to say what I need to say.
13 The two of us can come to some happy medium. As I
14 said, compromise is not a loss, it's a win/win
15 because you get to say what you need to say, and
16 the other person gets to say what they need to say.

17 So I see it where it gives us an
18 opportunity to better create the safe, secure,
19 because then that person knows where I'm coming
20 from and I know where that person is coming from.
21 And so if we were in a discussion, I have a better
22 understanding of what that person is saying. And
23 hopefully that person has a better understanding of
24 what I'm saying.

25 And therefore, we would create an

1 environment if others see that we may have these
2 differences, but we are able to sit down and talk
3 and work together, then the whole Commission can
4 also get to that point

5 CHAIR COE: Thank you, sir.

6 One other question if I could squeeze it
7 in here before we run out of time.

8 MR. DAWSON: Two minutes, Mr. Coe.

9 CHAIR COE: Two minutes. Thank you, sir.

10 MR. DAWSON: Two minutes, thirty.

11 CHAIR COE: Two and a half. Okay.

12 Different topic.

13 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

14 CHAIR COE: If you were to be appointed to
15 the Commission, which aspects of that role do you
16 think that you would enjoy the most and perhaps be
17 the best at or be good at? And conversely, which
18 aspects do you think you might struggle with a
19 little bit?

20 DR. DEBOSE: When you say roles, the ones
21 that?

22 CHAIR COE: In your role as a commissioner,
23 what aspect in your role of the commissioner do you
24 think that you would -- you would enjoy the most?

25 DR. DEBOSE: Let me go back and see what

1 the roles are. I think I'd be comfortable with
2 drawing the district lines. Looking at, once again
3 looking at the data, looking at the sources to
4 clarifying. I would really enjoy public meetings.
5 I enjoy engaging in conversations like this, giving
6 people the opportunity to talk to me and me to talk
7 to them. I would really love that.

8 Hiring support staff would be okay. I've
9 done that before in the past. Research and
10 analysis would be good. Probably the legal
11 defense. Preparing legal defense. I'd probably
12 have the most difficulty with. I would want to
13 participate, but it's not my -- one of my areas of
14 expertise. But the one of holding public meetings,
15 I -- I think that would be great. I mean I enjoy
16 this. I enjoy. This is a strength that I think.

17 And I think my training as, you know, in
18 my -- in my master's degree, and my PhD would allow
19 me to have a level of expertise in research and
20 analysis. And like I say, hiring support staff. I
21 had to hire staff when --

22 MS. MOLINO: One minute.

23 DR. DEBOSE: -- I was chair, and therefor
24 that's something I -- but like I said, probably I
25 would have to be schooled on the legal defense of

1 understanding the attorney saying to me, this is
2 what this means, and this.

3 But I would go back, I would read, and I'd
4 find a source to support it. So that if I have to
5 present it, I would only say well Attorney Dawson
6 said this, however, if you look at such and such
7 you can find additional proof to go along with
8 that.

9 CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you Dr. DeBose,
10 appreciate it.

11 DR. DEBOSE: Thank you.

12 MR. DAWSON: Ms. Dickison.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Hi, Dr. DeBose.

14 All right. So we've already talked
15 about -- a little bit about that you were a trainer
16 for UC Davis --

17 DR. DEBOSE: Yes.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: -- extension program.

19 Can you briefly tell us what subject
20 matter that was? Was it multiple types of subject
21 matter or?

22 DR. DEBOSE: Yes. It primarily dealt with what
23 I would say Social Service. Because at that point
24 we were dealing with TANF. TANF stands for, I
25 forgot what the T is, Assistance for Needy

1 Families. I forgot what the T stands for. Someone
2 can google TANF and they could tell us.

3 And so, UC Davis had this contract to do
4 training across the State for Departments of Public
5 Social Service. As for social worker, those were
6 skills. How do you do an assessment? How do you
7 work with difficult clients? How do you work with
8 a diverse population? How do you write case notes?
9 Things of that nature. And so they would send a
10 series of trainers across the state and then we
11 would go to County X and we would do a day of
12 training or two days of training with the staffs
13 throughout the Department of Public Social Service
14 for that particular county.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: And then you also had
16 that you were a principal investigator for that
17 five-year contract with the L.A. County.

18 DR. DEBOSE: Right. Right.

19 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: L.A. County.

20 DR. DEBOSE: Yep.

21 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What were your duties
22 and responsibilities under that contract?

23 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. Well, the Department
24 of Probation in L.A. County decided one way to
25 deal with kids at risk was to put probation

1 officers in the high schools. And in order to put
2 the probation officers in the high school, they had
3 to be people to work with them who could
4 communicate with the kids.

5 CSUN was the only University in Southern
6 California who got one of those grants. And so my
7 role and responsibility was one, to set the program
8 up. Two, interact with probation officers. Three,
9 along with probation officers, develop programs in
10 the schools. And say find students in our
11 Department who had an interest in Criminal Justice,
12 or work with at-risk youth. We created a class.
13 We had what we called Sociology 498. It was a
14 field class. And so I would have say 20 students
15 who specifically for that class, and we would go to
16 those schools.

17 So let's say that Herman is on probation.
18 The Probation Department says Herman must do A, B,
19 C, and D to complete probation. My students would
20 work with the probation officer to say how do we go
21 about getting Herman to comply with what the Court
22 says he needs to do.

23 One of the first things we did was, that
24 is hard for kids, to go to school. So we would
25 have someone from CSUN on campus at 7:30 in the

1 morning, and they would have a checklist, and they
2 would go to every class where students were
3 supposed to be. And if that kid wasn't there, we
4 would go into action.

5 They created programs for the kid after
6 school. Writing programs, mentoring programs. One
7 of the things we found that sometimes these kids
8 didn't have a positive person in their lives. So
9 one of the, the carrots that we put out was that we
10 created a program on campus where we brought the
11 kids to campus once a week. We did photography, we
12 did computer graphics, we did theater. There were
13 five things that we did, and I got other faculty
14 members in the Department -- in the college who
15 were experts in those particular areas.

16 And so we would bring 15 to 30 kids once a
17 week to campus. We'd give them something to eat.
18 We would send them to the different places that
19 they needed to go.

20 My role was to set up the administrative
21 structure. To hire students who were at CSUN,
22 because we had enough money to pay them. And also,
23 to collect data that had to go back to the
24 Probation Department to say, this is what we are
25 doing with your monies. We were good at it at that

1 time. There's a supervisor named Zev Jarislowsky.
2 We shared it with his office and his office gave us
3 additional resources because he thought it was a
4 benefit to San Fernando Valley.

5 So I would say my primary roles was
6 administration, research, hiring, supervision, and
7 mentoring.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Very good.

9 And then you also talked about you served
10 on quite a number of boards and commissions.

11 DR. DEBOSE: Yes.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What can you take
13 from that body of work that will help you with the
14 Commission?

15 DR. DEBOSE: One of the things is, once
16 again. Are you okay?

17 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Yeah.

18 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. One of the things is
19 working with different people. Because some of the
20 groups I serve, I serve, for the last, I think 18
21 years I've been on the LAPD Police Advisory Board.
22 I'm -- have the title of a Reserve Police Officer.
23 A Special Reserve Police Officer. Special means
24 you don't carry a gun. If you're a reserve police
25 officer, you get to carry a gun. I'm a special.

1 And the reason I got the badge that I have is so
2 that I can get in and out of LAPD Headquarters
3 without having to do a whole bunch of stuff, but I
4 don't carry a gun.

5 One of the things we did there was
6 whenever Dr. Piennel put together a training plan
7 to talk about how you better work with citizens of
8 L.A. City, we would get to review. We would get
9 to go to training to watch the police officers go
10 through training. We would go sometimes at 6:30 in
11 the morning and sit there to 12 or 1 o'clock
12 looking at the way they deliver service. If she
13 was putting together a plan, she would share it
14 with us to say here's what it is.

15 Another panel that I worked on was the
16 District Attorney's office with, at this time was
17 Jackie Lacey, who's up for reelection. And one of
18 the things that she put together was how do you
19 begin to get people who are mentally ill out of the
20 criminal justice system? And I was on an Advisory
21 Panel with her because I was vice chair of the L.A.
22 County Mental Health Commission.

23 But the people on that was the L.A.
24 County District Attorney's Office, L.A. County
25 Mental Health, L.A. County Public Defenders, L.A.

1 County Sheriff, L.A. County Superior Court, Long
2 Beach Health and Mental, and the National Alliance,
3 and the ACLU. Very diverse group.

4 But the ultimate goal was, how do we begin
5 to help the district attorney look at policies that
6 will get people into -- out of the Criminal Justice
7 System and into Mental Health.

8 The County Jail in Los Angeles County is
9 the largest mental health institution in the United
10 States of America. We have more mentally ill
11 people in that jail than anywhere else.

12 And so when I had the opportunity to work
13 with her, I thought it was something really big.
14 Because my professional career was then started out
15 in mental health. As I said, I worked on the
16 psychiatric emergency team, but I also worked in
17 the area of patient's rights.

18 When a person was placed on a 5150, the
19 law says within 72 hours, they must have a public
20 hearing, a probable cause hearing. The probable
21 cause hearing says, does that person stay in the
22 hospital or does that person. My job, at that
23 time, was to go into the hospital, talk to the
24 person and say do you want to stay, or do you want
25 to leave?

1 If they wanted to leave, my job was to
2 find out where they were going to go. And then I
3 would present on their behalf to someone from the
4 Mental Health Court. Someone in the hospital would
5 present. So that gave me a whole different
6 perspective of working with different people.

7 All of these Boards and Commissions that
8 I've had the opportunity to work on, I've had to
9 deal with people who were different from me. Who
10 have a different background than I do. Who come
11 from a different perspective. I think the thing I
12 learned from all of that is number one, listen.
13 Number two, be willing to compromise. That you can
14 pick up additional information. The question is
15 how do you evaluate that information?

16 And from there I've learned to be able to
17 walk into situations that are new, and also be able
18 to figure out how do I begin to fit in. How do I
19 begin to make -- make bridges with people? If
20 someone is different or have a different opinion,
21 how do I begin to bridge that to where we can at
22 least talk to each other?

23 And so I would say that's the big lesson
24 of listening, taking in other people's response,
25 other values and opinions, and from there beginning

1 to make an opinion that I think is best for the
2 group.

3 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Staying on
4 that same subject.

5 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

6 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: In your application
7 you talked about your professional life and that
8 you've worked internationally, how it's impacted
9 your interaction with people from different -- that
10 are different from you.

11 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: And how your
13 experiences allowed you to work successfully in
14 cultures different than your own.

15 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: And it forced you to
17 make adjustments socially, politically,
18 environmentally, and economically to be successful.

19 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

20 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Can you share with us
21 some of the adjustments that you had to make and
22 how those will assist you in your ability to
23 connect with groups of people while serving on the
24 Commission?

25 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. Thanks for that

1 question. At the young age of 21, after graduating
2 from college, growing up in North Carolina, which
3 is different from California, I had the opportunity
4 to travel to East Africa to Kenya where I was a
5 volunteer for two and a half years.

6 Now imagine what someone who's 21 who grew
7 up in North Carolina, city of Wilmington, and what
8 those experiences were.

9 Went to a historical Black institution
10 North Carolina A&T. Aggie pride. And all of a
11 sudden you were dropped in East Africa in Kenya.
12 For the first time in your life, you're part of the
13 majority. You walk around in the street and you
14 don't stand out. Everybody's black. Imagine.

15 You talk about social change,
16 environmental change, economic change, and
17 political change. Political change said to me,
18 Black people can run stuff. It's here. They're
19 doing it. They had just received independence from
20 -- from Britain. Jomo Kenyatta had just become
21 President. Odinga was the Vice President. Tom
22 Mboya was coming to the United States. It's all
23 new to me. It's all exciting. There are
24 possibilities.

25 Once I got there, after being there for

1 six months they said to me, we want this to be a
2 government school, but the Education Department
3 said you don't have a government teacher. The
4 people in the community said you sent us this Peace
5 Corps person. He's a government teacher. He can
6 be Principal. Now remember I'm 21 years old, just
7 out of college, you know.

8 And they said, will you be principal so we
9 can get this school? And I said Of course. So I
10 served as principal for a year. The government,
11 the reason they needed it to be government school
12 was that if it was a government school, the
13 government paid the fees.

14 Here in the States we go to school free.
15 There, for the most, people pay to go to school
16 from kindergarten to 12th grade. And then once
17 they get to then University, the University is
18 free. So I had that experience. That was a
19 political experience for me.

20 The other thing about economics is that
21 once I got out of Peace Corps, I had the
22 opportunity to go to the University of Southern
23 California on a full scholarship known as the
24 Norman Topping Scholarship, which gave me access to
25 a whole other set of things that I had no exposure

1 to.

2 Until I went to USC in 1973, I had never
3 sat in a classroom with whites. All my education
4 had been predominantly segregated because of where
5 I grew up. So all of a sudden that's a new
6 experience. That's a cultural experience. What do
7 you do in a classroom when you've never had that
8 opportunity? What are your fears? What are your
9 fears about? Are you good enough? And then you
10 find out, yes, you are good enough. Yes, you can
11 make a subject and verb agree. Yes, you can talk
12 to people, you can have presentation in the
13 classroom. So that was an experience.

14 And then when I got my master's degree, I
15 got paid. That changed my economic aspect of it
16 all so. And the social aspect because I was
17 working in an environment that was completely new
18 to me. As I said working as a psychiatric social
19 worker on the streets of Long Beach, writing 5150s,
20 putting people in the hospital.

21 The other thing about that was that it
22 gave me an opportunity to provide safe security for
23 my children and my wife. And as I shared with you,
24 as we moved along, that we wanted our kids to have
25 this international experience because it was so

1 good for us.

2 I met my wife on September 29th, 1969 at
3 the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel during our Peace Corps
4 staging. I was angry because the government at
5 that time said if your travel was over \$5, you
6 could be reimbursed. My travel was \$4.95 from
7 Wilmington to Raleigh. And I was angry. I was
8 standing, when something said look up, and there
9 she was. I've been with her for 50 years and we
10 have four kids together. She, too, was a
11 volunteer.

12 But that changed my experience also
13 because once again, as I said, she's one of Irish
14 descent. Now think about this, 1969, black male
15 from North Carolina and a white female from
16 California. That's not your everyday story.

17 But California has given us the
18 opportunity socially, politically, economically,
19 environment to make it work. Our political views,
20 some of my political views have changed, my
21 economic status has changed, my social status, and
22 environment has changed.

23 MS. MOLINO: Five minutes.

24 DR. DEBOSE: The other piece of it as I
25 said is that those four areas has allowed my family

1 to grow, develop in the state of California.

2 As I said earlier, my three oldest kids
3 went to UC Berkeley. My son went to UC Davis. We
4 have all progressed because of social, political,
5 economic, and environmental issues that we had to
6 adjust to as we moved forward, you know.

7 And as I said earlier, I don't have to
8 make any economic, politically, social,
9 environmentally changes. I'm retired. My pension
10 is CalPERS, and that. I'm in a good place. And so
11 this is an opportunity, with all of those caveats
12 that you mentioned, for me to be able to give
13 something back to the state has been good to me and
14 my family.

15 And so the political, social, economic,
16 and environmental factors that has contributed to
17 my development, my growth, my children's
18 development, my wife's development, and hopefully
19 my grandchildren's development have been very
20 significant.

21 We're constantly changing as a society, as
22 a community. Socially, politically, economically,
23 and environmentally. We can look at the economic
24 issues we're dealing with today because of the
25 virus, which is having an impact on our social

1 interaction. Do we shake hands? Do we elbow? Are
2 you coughing? What does that mean? Should we all
3 run away from you, you know? Our social atmosphere
4 is changing. The environment is changing. The
5 economic environment is changing. Stock market is
6 going down tremendously, you know.

7 So political, social, economic, and
8 environment has a tremendous impact on all of us.
9 It has changed some of my views of how I view
10 society, how I view the world. And I think it goes
11 back to this 21 year old having the opportunity to
12 leave the shores of the United States and go, and
13 live, and work in East Africa for two and a half
14 years. And then also wanting his kids to have that
15 experience.

16 Imagining -- my oldest daughter who's a
17 physician here in Sacramento. At the age of 13,
18 she was in the ninth grade in Los Angeles and we
19 snatch her out of John Burroughs Middle School and
20 put her into a boarding school. Now imagine a kid
21 from L.A. riding the bus, going where she wants to
22 go, and all of a sudden she's in a boarding school.

23 Up until this day she said we ruined her
24 life. She has no friends. And I say to her if I
25 was a practicing physician, a gastroenterologist,

1 I'd hope my parents would ruin my life. It gave
2 her the opportunity to have a different experience,
3 not only in L.A., but in another part of the world.

4 And so I would think politically,
5 socially, economically, environmental factors play
6 a big role. At least in my life, and how I view
7 things. I hope that answers it.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: How will you use that
9 to help you reach the communities throughout the
10 State?

11 DR. DEBOSE: Once again, having those
12 experiences says to me that people from different
13 parts of this state are different than people who I
14 live and work with in Los Angeles.

15 Those experiences that I've gained
16 throughout my experience, hopefully will be able to
17 be translated to my interactions in my working with
18 them to allow them to see that I'm a person that
19 can be approached. That I'm a person that's
20 transparent. That I'm a person that's willing to
21 engage in a conversation. That I'm a person who's
22 willing to make a compromise. That compromise does
23 not mean a loss. Compromise mean that both sides
24 are willing to give something for the betterment of
25 the group.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: How much time do I
2 have?

3 MR. DAWSON: One minute.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What would you
5 ultimately like to see the Commission accomplish?

6 DR. DEBOSE: Set boundaries in the state
7 of California that allow people to feel that a job
8 was well done to where their vote counts. That if
9 people do not feel that their vote counts, they
10 will not participate in the process. And if people
11 does not -- if people do not participate in the
12 process, then it's -- then we're at a loss.

13 Voting to me is one of the most
14 fundamental rights that make this system works.
15 But if people don't feel --

16 MS. MOLINO: Thirty seconds.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thirty seconds.

18 DR. DEBOSE: People don't feel that they
19 have an opportunity to have their voice heard, why
20 participate?

21 So I'm hoping that if I'm fortunate enough
22 to be one of the 14, how can I make people, how can
23 I help the Commission present to the 39 million
24 people in the state of California, as 2019, I have
25 data to support it, that their voice is heard, that

1 they can be assured that these 14 people took all
2 the facts that they had and drew the maps where
3 people could feel that it's appropriate.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

5 DR. DEBOSE: Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe.

7 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap.

8 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you, Dr.
9 DeBose for being here.

10 DR. DEBOSE: Thank you.

11 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Prior to being a
12 professor at USC Northridge for 25 years, you
13 worked in a variety of positions in L.A. County
14 and the Peace Corps. Your list of work and
15 educational experiences is long and impressive.

16 So my question to you is, what do you feel
17 has guided your career and educational decisions?

18 DR. DEBOSE: Well, one thing growing up
19 poor, you have to figure out a way, how do I no
20 longer be poor. I don't have any skills. My
21 father was a longshoreman. I didn't want to be a
22 longshoreman. So the only thing that I knew was
23 through education.

24 I was fortunate to go to undergraduate
25 school, graduated in four years, and then fortunate

1 to have that Peace Corps experience which allowed
2 me to have the opportunity to go to the University
3 of Southern California. Because as you know, it's
4 a very expensive institution. Coming out of Peace
5 Corps I didn't have the monies. But there was the
6 Norman Topping Scholarship, which the students
7 fought for to make sure that students of color
8 would have an opportunity to attend USC.

9 Once I got to USC, a whole bunch of doors
10 just opened for me that I did not know exist. The
11 way that I got into teaching was that one of my
12 friends said, hey, this guy has a part time
13 position down at Cal State Fullerton, and I think
14 you'd be good at it.

15 So I went to this party thinking to be
16 interviewed and the party itself was the interview.
17 The guy wanted to see how did you interact with
18 people. He didn't want to sit down and talk to
19 you. So two weeks after the party I said to my
20 friend, Shawn, I thought the guy was going to
21 interview me. He said he did. I said when? He
22 said at the party. He just watched how you
23 interacted with people.

24 Well two weeks after that I got a call. I
25 had just graduated from SC, and in January of 1976

1 he said, hey, you want to come down to Fullerton
2 and teach two classes in the Human Service Program?
3 And I said, sure. So I went to Fullerton, and I
4 was there for six years, you know.

5 Working in L.A., I was, I think at that
6 time I was working in Mental Health, working on the
7 PET Team. Then I transferred to the Drug Abuse
8 Program Office because we had another kid and I
9 needed to make more money. And education was the
10 key that I knew to make more money. So I started
11 evaluating drug contracts in the County of Los
12 Angeles.

13 And during that time my friend, Larry
14 Gasco, was working on a PhD at UCLA. And Larry
15 said Herman, ride over to UCLA with me, I got to
16 turn a paper in. So we rode over. And his
17 advisors say hey, would you like to get a PhD? I
18 said, I'm not PhD material. He said, did you take
19 the GRE? I said, yes. Send me your GRE scores and
20 your transcripts. Three weeks later he sent me an
21 application. I applied and they said whoa, you can
22 come get a PhD.

23 Now remember I'm working full time, with a
24 wife and three kids and a house note. So I went to
25 my boss who was a graduate of UCLA, and I said hey

1 I have an opportunity to get a PhD. She said your
2 primary job is writing a report. I said yes. She
3 says as long as you can do your job, I'll give you
4 the opportunity. Classes began at 1 o'clock to 5
5 o'clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays. At that time, I
6 would go to work at 7 o'clock in the morning on
7 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, work to 7. I'd go
8 to work on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 12.

9 At that time, you could drive across L.A.
10 in a half an hour from downtown L.A. to Westwood.
11 And I'd do that. So I did that for two years, you
12 know. Because someone saw that I had potential,
13 and I'll get back to the question of education.

14 That education created additional
15 opportunities for me. And during this time I'm
16 teaching, I'm doing training, and I'm just running
17 around because as I said, I had to have resources.
18 I had a wife, three kids, and a house note. And so
19 I had to find a way. So education, for me, was the
20 key to get to the next level because I don't have
21 any skills. But I can make a subject and verb
22 agree and I can read some data.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you.

24 So a similar question but in the
25 activities section of your application, you list

1 what I counted to be over 20 boards, commissions,
2 and associations you participated in. Why have you
3 been active in these endeavors, and once again, how
4 did you choose which organizations you put your
5 time into?

6 DR. DEBOSE: One of things that I found is
7 that I'm very fortunate to be where I am. And one
8 of the things that I find is that you need to give
9 back. You can't do all of this by yourself.
10 Somebody has to hold your hand to help you get to
11 the next place.

12 When I was at CSUN there was a guy named
13 Dr. Harvey Rich. He saw some potential in me.
14 And he said, I'm going to help you get to the next
15 side. I chose the ones that I thought would be the
16 most beneficial to the community, and to also to
17 people who may not have had an opportunity.

18 I serve on the Police Advisory Committee
19 because you don't see people like me on the Police
20 Advisory Committee. But I have a voice. I have a
21 word to say. Since I wrote that application, I
22 just got appointed to Disabilities Rights of
23 California Legislative Committee. And the reason
24 for that, they interviewed me, and I -- and I
25 presented myself and they said would you like to

1 serve?

2 I served on the L.A. County Mental Health
3 Commission because of my work in mental health. I
4 was appointed by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and
5 I served there for six and a half years. I also
6 served on a statewide organization, and I can't
7 remember the name of it, but it was Mental Health
8 Boards and Commissions across the state of
9 California. Because I wanted to see what other
10 people were doing across the state that I could
11 bring back to L.A. County.

12 L.A. County is 10 to 11 million people.
13 A third of the population of the state of
14 California lives in L.A. County. And so if other
15 people are doing stuff across the state that are
16 benefiting their population, can I also bring some
17 of that stuff back to L.A. County to benefit the
18 citizenry of L.A. County?

19 I also served on the board of the Norman
20 Topping Scholarship at USC. The reason for that,
21 that's how I got through. And if I can give
22 something back to young people who have that
23 opportunity, I'd be more than willing to do that.

24 Other boards I've served on, I don't
25 remember off the top of my head. But I chose

1 things that were important to me that would benefit
2 the community that I thought would have a benefit
3 for my kids, and my grandkids looking down the
4 road. I just didn't pick them haphazardly. I
5 specifically chose the ones.

6 Or even this. I was laying in bed one
7 morning and I turned the radio on and it said do
8 you want to be on a commission? Go to so and so.
9 I got up. I went to my computer and I said, I'm
10 retired. I don't have a financial obligation.
11 This sounds exciting.

12 So I sent the work in and out of, I think
13 it was 22,233 people who applied, I don't know if
14 that's the right number or not, but it's close, I'm
15 one of 120. I mean I may not get any further in
16 this process, but this is something that I chose to
17 do because to me it appears to have some benefit
18 for the people of the state of California, for my
19 wife, for my children, and my grandchildren.

20 And if I have the opportunity to give back
21 without any agenda, I have no agenda right now. If
22 I get this, I'm okay. If I -- if you choose, if
23 you decide to choose others, I'm okay. But it's
24 something that I chose to put myself in the running
25 for.

1 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you.

2 I appreciated your response to Mr. Coe's
3 question with the social media and how you said
4 look at the totality of who I am. And that's why
5 you're here. We looked at the totality of who you
6 are, and I appreciate your statements. My response
7 to that is, well that's not always the way social
8 media works. I mean --

9 DR. DEBOSE: I agree with you.

10 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: One statement can
11 color a person's image of you, just make them think
12 a certain way. And I do have one other question on
13 social media.

14 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

15 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I want to return to
16 that.

17 DR. DEBOSE: Please.

18 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: And I wasn't going to
19 get granular about the individual posts, but you
20 did.

21 DR. DEBOSE: Uh-huh.

22 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: And so what I want to
23 ask you. And the one you dealt with Mitch
24 McConnell, you already brought it up. Is there any
25 part of that post that you would change now? Any

1 piece of it, or --

2 DR. DEBOSE: Well, the words that I used,
3 the write up that I used, the facts are the facts.
4 Probably the way that I may have addressed him may
5 not be appropriate.

6 However, I would still say if you look at
7 the numbers in regards to poverty, voter
8 suppression, healthcare, opioid use. The way I
9 categorized him in the end may have taken away from
10 what I was trying to convey. So that part of it I
11 may redress or rethink about.

12 But the facts that I put there in regards
13 to the State of Kentucky, it's not something I made
14 up.

15 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yeah.

16 DR. DEBOS: But I would agree with you, to
17 a certain extent that the way that I characterized
18 my summary of that may have -- could be different.

19 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yeah.

20 DR. DEBOSE: But I'll stick with my facts.

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Understood.

22 So if you were selected as a commissioner,
23 would you modify your future social media activity?

24 DR. DEBOSE: I don't put anything -- I
25 don't put anything else on social media. I

1 stopped.

2 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay.

3 DR. DEBOSE: My kids yelled at me, said
4 why did you put it in anyway?

5 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yeah.

6 DR. DEBOSE: I don't, you know, I don't
7 put stuff up on Facebook anymore at this point in
8 time. If there is a friend who has a birthday, I
9 may like, or say happy birthday because there are
10 people in my life that I, they go back to high
11 school, from college, and they're on -- they're
12 friends of mine. And so I may see them and wish
13 them happy birthday.

14 One of my friend's wife just died, I sent
15 condolences.

16 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Great. Understood.

17 DR. DEBOSE: But the other stuff at this
18 point, I don't do anymore. I don't do anymore.

19 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: And you would not do
20 that anymore as a commissioner?

21 DR. DEBOSE: Oh no, no, no, I mean I'm
22 getting my hand spanked here.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank you
24 for your time and I have no further questions.

25 CHAIR COE: Mr. Dawson we appear to have a

1 few minutes.

2 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Dr. DeBose I have a
3 couple, actually just really, one follow-up
4 question.

5 I was listening to one of your
6 questions -- one of your answers to the standard
7 questions and you used the phrase cultural
8 competency.

9 DR. DEBOSE: Yes.

10 MR. DAWSON: I was wondering if, could you
11 define that, sir, and then maybe expand on how that
12 would be useful in your work on the Commission?

13 DR. DEBOSE: Yes. Okay. Cultural
14 competency is when you have an understanding of
15 people, not only by race, but all the other isms
16 that we deal with who are different from you. And
17 you have an understanding and appreciation for
18 those individuals.

19 Now there's also another concept of
20 cultural humility. Cultural humility means that
21 you may have walked in those individual's shoes,
22 but competency looks at the categories of
23 acknowledging and valuing diversity. That you
24 acknowledge that there is difference, that there is
25 diversity, and you value it. That it is different

1 from you, but you still value it and appreciate it.

2 It also means conducting what we call a
3 cultural assessment. What are your short spots?
4 What is it that you don't understand? What is it
5 that you may not appreciate? And if the answer, if
6 you come up with the answer, how do you go about
7 bringing those differences back and have an
8 appreciation for it? Recognizing and understanding
9 the dynamics of differences.

10 You and I will have some difference. I'm
11 going to assume I'm older than you. I'm going to
12 assume you are an attorney, we have different
13 viewpoints. I sit on -- right now I sit on the
14 Legal -- The State's Bar Legal Trust Fund
15 Commission where lawyers pay money into this, and
16 then the state bar gives out a thirty-five to fifty
17 million dollars a year to ensure that everybody has
18 an opportunity to get legal services.

19 Well I sit on that Commission doing that.
20 And so that goes back to understanding the
21 dynamics. Everybody doesn't have the resources
22 that those of us are sitting in here. So what does
23 that mean? That means we and our families get to
24 do things that others don't get to do because they
25 don't have the resources.

1 So when I look at something, I have to
2 look at it from a different perspective than
3 someone who may not be as fortunate as I am to sit
4 in this chair.

5 Acquiring cultural knowledge. That if I
6 don't understand something, where can I go find it.
7 Like I said to the group, is that I like to source
8 stuff. So when I tell you something, it's not only
9 coming from me. I can say, well Mr. Dawson wrote
10 in 2018 that A, B, C, and D and here's where you
11 can find it.

12 And then adapting to diversity. As I
13 talked, you know, she asked me about environment,
14 political, social. When I went to East Africa at
15 the age of 21, I had to adapt. I lived in an
16 outhouse without a toilet. I didn't have running
17 water. I didn't have electricity. But I stayed
18 for two and a half years. So I made the
19 adjustments. That's a piece of adapting to
20 diversity.

21 When I came to California. When I went to
22 USC, sitting in the classroom with whites for the
23 first time --

24 MS. MOLINO: Five minutes.

25 DR. DEBOSE: -- that was a big adjustment,

1 you know. My insecurities might have come up. Am
2 I good enough?

3 You know, when I applied for this, I asked
4 myself, am I good enough? They're going to select
5 14 people. Am I good enough to be part of that?
6 So I made it this far and I would say I'm
7 adjusting.

8 And if I'm fortunate enough to be on the
9 Commission I will have to do these things again
10 because there will be 13 people who are different
11 from me. And like I said, Los Angeles is different
12 from the rest of the state. Like I said, I have a
13 kid that lives here in Sacramento. There are
14 adjustments you make in Sacramento. We have the
15 Lakers. You have the Kings. The Lakers just beat
16 Milwaukee and the Clippers. The Kings just lost.
17 You know. You know. And so you make the
18 adjustments. And so you adjust to things.

19 So I hope that kind of explains cultural
20 competency.

21 MR. DAWSON: It does. Thank you.

22 We have four minutes remaining. Are there
23 any follow up questions from the panel?

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I have none.

25 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: None here.

1 CHAIR COE: I have no questions.

2 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

3 So, Dr. DeBose, we have -- oh, I'm sorry.
4 He has 3 minutes, 50 seconds.

5 Would you like to make a closing statement
6 to the Panel?

7 DR. DEBOSE: Oh yes. Yes.

8 I would just like to say the State of
9 California has been good to me. I came to the
10 state of California in 1973 with a wife and a two-
11 year-old, and not knowing what the future was going
12 to bring.

13 I was fortunate enough to get an
14 education. That education led me to get a job, and
15 during that time, jobs had pensions. I was
16 fortunate enough to get an advanced, to get two
17 advanced degrees in the state of California. I've
18 had a quality good life in the state of California.
19 California's been good to my children. It's been
20 good to my grandchildren.

21 And so as I said, I am retired at this
22 point, and I have no hidden agendas, and I have an
23 opportunity, once again to give back, so to speak.

24 And if I'm fortunate enough to be one of
25 the 20, or one of the 60, whatever, I would

1 consider it an honor and a privilege. If I'm not,
2 at least I know I made the effort and that's all
3 you can do. You can make the effort and other
4 people make decisions.

5 Same thing when I applied to the Peace
6 Corps at the age of 20. Same thing when I applied
7 to UCLA and USC. Same thing when I applied for a
8 tenure track position at Northridge. Other people
9 make decisions. All you can do is put your best
10 foot forward and hope the information that you
11 shared convinced them that you are the person for
12 the job.

13 And if you do that, all well and good.
14 But if you know within your heart that you did the
15 best that you can do and you're satisfied with
16 that, even if it's not good enough, you can walk
17 out the room with your head held high.

18 So I would just like to say thanks for the
19 opportunity. Thanks for the questions, and I don't
20 know what else to say. How much time I got?

21 MR. DAWSON: One minute 55 seconds.

22 DR. DEBOSE: Okay. Let's see, what else
23 can I say?

24 MR. DAWSON: We'll have to cut you off,
25 it's been 90 minutes.

1 DR. DEBOSE: This young lady gave me my
2 travel form to fill out. So I think for the most
3 part I'm good.

4 And Ms. Dickison, Mr. Coe, Mr. Belnap,
5 and Attorney Dawson I thank you for the opportunity
6 and I hope it was good for you as it was for me. I
7 enjoyed this process as you asked the questions.
8 Which one do I think I would enjoy the most?
9 Public meetings. I enjoy a stage. I think that's
10 why I went into teaching.

11 If you teach, you've got 25 to 160
12 students and you get to lead the show. And they
13 all have to pay attention because they have to take
14 the exam.

15 So I would just like to say thanks. And
16 if I'm one of the ones, I'm okay. If I'm not, I
17 just say you did the best that you could and you
18 thought there were others that may be more
19 qualified than I. And that's okay, I can live with
20 that. But I thank you for the opportunity for
21 allowing me to present myself.

22 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

23 CHAIR COE: Thank you. Thank you for being
24 here today, Dr. DeBose.

25 Our next interview is at 1:15 so we'll be

1 in recess until 1:14.

2 (Off the record at 12:13 p.m.)

3 (On the record at 1:14 p.m.)

4 CHAIR COE: Okay. I'd like to bring this
5 meeting back to order. This time like to recognize
6 Applicant David Coher to the table.

7 MR. COHER: Thank you.

8 CHAIR COE: Welcome.

9 Mr. Dawson, would you please ask the five
10 standard questions.

11 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 Mr. Coher, I'm going to ask you five
13 questions that we've asked each applicant to
14 respond to.

15 Are you ready, sir?

16 MR. COHER: I am, thank you.

17 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills
18 and attributes should all commissioners possess?

19 What skills or competencies should the
20 Commission possess collectively?

21 Of the skills, attributes, and
22 competencies that each commissioner should possess,
23 which do you possess?

24 In summary, how will you contribute to the
25 success of the Commission?

1 MR. COHER: Thank you. Thank you for your
2 time this afternoon. Appreciate it. So as you can
3 see, I've put together some thoughts on this to, so
4 I'll speak from these notes, if you don't mind.

5 In terms of the skills that I think would
6 be beneficial for all commissioners to possess to
7 some degree, first and foremost would be listening.
8 And by that I mean not only the ability to be
9 taking in the information, but also that ability to
10 truly listen to what's not being said. Kind of the
11 subtext that's being communicated by your fellow
12 commissioners or even members of the public, as
13 we're taking in information, if I am selected, as
14 we're taking in the information from those who come
15 before the Commission.

16 Another skill that would be highly
17 valuable would be the ability to work by committee.
18 That is, understanding how to bridge those divides
19 and maintain relationships so as to work on a
20 continuing basis to tackle problems going forward.

21 Analytical skills, as are documented in
22 the application process, are going to be key. That
23 ability to apply logical thinking, to be able to
24 take the larger problem and break it down into the
25 smaller subparts is important. I think two key

1 subparts of that are both the ability to pay
2 attention to detail, looking at which details are
3 important and which details will take you down a
4 bunny trail, if you will. That is, being able to
5 sift through those which really ties in the other
6 subpart of an ability to see the broader issues.

7 Those, that is to say again, sometimes
8 when you break down a large problem into multiple
9 smaller problems, some of them are problems that
10 need to be solved to get to the greatest solution.
11 Some are other ones which can send you off course.
12 And so understanding how to focus your attention on
13 those issues that matter, I think, will be a key
14 part of those analytical skills required for
15 commissioners.

16 Impartiality. And by that I mean not
17 just, you know, kind of the standard ephemeral
18 language, but understanding the inherent biases
19 that one brings to the table, and being able to
20 then adjust for that. That is, to be able to
21 listen and perhaps consider, you know, to rethink
22 the opinions that you came in with because of that
23 impartiality.

24 Conflict resolution also I think is going
25 to be something that's going to be key when you're

1 talking about dealing with such personal and
2 emotional matters where it's going to be -- you're
3 dealing with folks' communities, and how you define
4 their communities almost in a judge-like role. And
5 so given that, having that ability to work through
6 problems and resolve disputes within the Commission
7 I think is going to be important.

8 And then finally, the final skill,
9 although it may sound somewhat obvious, for lack of
10 a better word, cartography. And by that, I don't
11 necessarily mean mapmaking, but more of an
12 understanding of the story that a map can tell you.
13 You know, there's the phrase that a picture says a
14 thousand words, and I think that that's true as
15 well of maps. When you look at them, when you look
16 at where -- and when you understand where they came
17 from, what the purpose they were made for, it can
18 tell you a lot. You know, we learn this in
19 history, but perhaps some of us don't remember as
20 well after school.

21 In terms of attributes, I think patience
22 is going to be a key one, and I'll touch upon that
23 some more in some of my other answers. But both in
24 terms of patience with, you know, our fellow
25 commissioners, also patience with members of the

1 public and their understanding of the process.

2 In my service on the Planning Commission with
3 the City of Pasadena, oftentimes we'll have members
4 of the public who come and will speak on a matter.
5 It'll be their first time before such a body. They
6 won't have a familiarity with the rules, the
7 customs. And some commissioners, it can become
8 easy to become annoyed with that, because if you've
9 been doing this regularly and you're, you know,
10 you're part of the process, you understand these
11 rules, and it can become, you can very quickly
12 become jaded. And it's important to remember that
13 a lot of the folks coming before us, that would be
14 coming before the Commission, will be not familiar
15 with those finer points of the formalities of the
16 Commission.

17 In terms of attributes, I think that being
18 outgoing is going to be important, you know,
19 enjoying meeting new people. We're going to be
20 traveling to new parts of the state, learning about
21 new communities, or communities that may be new to
22 us, you know. Being community-minded overall also
23 I think will be important because having that
24 commitment to improving the community, and in this
25 particular case, improving the political

1 conversation through our work will be an important
2 attribute as well.

3 I think that's a pretty exhaustive list.
4 There are a couple subparts and I'll address them.

5 So Subpart A, in terms of which skills and
6 competencies should the Commission possess
7 collectively, I think all of them. However, it's
8 obviously going to be to varying degrees amongst
9 the commissioners that are selected. But it will
10 be important to have a balance of those skills and
11 attributes amongst the commissioners and upon the
12 final body.

13 And so if I understand the process -- the
14 selection process correctly, we're going to have
15 the eight who are chosen through random selection
16 process. They're then going to have responsibility
17 to select an additional six. I think that those
18 skills and attributes -- that the eight need to
19 look at their skills and attributes, and then from
20 there reflect where can we have improvement from
21 these additional six so as to balance out.

22 And then, of course, I think if everybody
23 has patience, or at least tries to, with their very
24 best, then that will be beneficial for the
25 Commission being productive.

1 In terms of where I sit on this list, you
2 know, some of these I believe I'm stronger in than
3 others. I believe that through my past legal work,
4 I have good analytical skills. I've shown that. I
5 believe I discussed that some in the essays as part
6 of the application.

7 Attention to detail, as you know, some of
8 my past roles leading compliance organizations
9 where attention to detail was important to that
10 work. And an ability to see the broader issues as
11 was important when I had leadership roles in cyber
12 security.

13 Certainly, there's always room for
14 improvement, though, in others such as, you know,
15 there's some where you look at it and you say
16 something like listening or impartiality, oh, well
17 I can -- I can do that. But I don't see those as
18 necessarily a checkbox. It's something where we
19 have to be regularly working to improve. You know,
20 in my role as I mentioned earlier, being a planning
21 commissioner, and so there, it's something where
22 you have to -- you have to really think about your
23 impartiality and think about what are the prior
24 assumptions that you're bringing to the table when
25 you're considering an issue.

1 You know, listening is always something
2 that we can improve upon. Certainly as a Cub Scout
3 den leader, I certainly could have used a little
4 better listening sometimes.

5 In any case, finally answering the Subpart
6 C, in summary, I'm hoping that I can bring a
7 combination of these skills and attributes to my
8 work for the Commission. If selected, I believe
9 that this will drive me to work diligently to
10 hopefully be a part of delivering the best possible
11 work product for California.

12 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

13 Question 2. Work on the Commission
14 requires members of different political backgrounds
15 to work together. Since the 2010 Commission was
16 selected and formed, the American political
17 conversation has become increasingly polarized,
18 whether in the press, on social media, and even in
19 our own families.

20 What characteristics do you possess and
21 what characteristics should your fellow
22 commissioners possess that will protect against
23 hyper-partisanship?

24 What will you do to ensure that the work
25 of the Commission is not seen as polarized or

1 hyper-partisan and avoid perceptions of political
2 bias and conflict?

3 MR. COHER: Thank you. So in terms of what
4 I've discussed before, the skills and attributes
5 that I think would be desirable in a commissioner,
6 listening and patience I think would be the most
7 important to addressing this issue of potential for
8 hyper-partisanship.

9 My experience -- I think everybody's had
10 interesting and perhaps unfortunate experiences,
11 especially over the past few years with this issue.
12 But mine has been that a lot of the partisanship is
13 driven by a feeling of not being heard, that folks
14 feel either that they are not being listened to or
15 their concerns are not being considered valid, and
16 that that lack of appreciation for their beliefs or
17 their opinions is what's driving them oftentimes,
18 those who are interested in engaging in hyper-
19 partisanship, are -- what's driving them is, hey,
20 nobody's listening to me anyway. Let's just go
21 ahead, let me -- let me kind of, why not be
22 difficult? Why not screw up the process, so to
23 speak? So I think that that's where the most work
24 can be done to help avoid the Commission's work
25 becoming hyper-partisan.

1 Beyond that, I think an appreciate for
2 differences, and not just in terms of working with
3 people of different characteristics, whether that's
4 ethnicity or communities, or the like, but also
5 having learned from those interactions with others
6 and being able to integrate that learning into how
7 you work going forward.

8 You know, I've had an opportunity in my
9 background where I've had a number of situations
10 where I've worked with or interacted with folks who
11 are of a different nature by a variety of
12 characteristics, and I think in that background
13 I've learned to gain an appreciation for those --
14 for those different perspectives than what I
15 initially brought to the table.

16 In terms of what I could do if selected as
17 a commissioner for helping to minimize or avoid
18 such hyper-partisanship, beyond what I've talked
19 about is also, I think, community engagement is
20 going to be key. And community engagement,
21 hopefully engaging members of the public who don't
22 traditionally participate in this or similar
23 processes.

24 To that extent, that's going to mean I
25 think, you know, some possible ways could be

1 assisting staff in terms of engaging the media or
2 supporting outreach to communities. Obviously,
3 that's something that would have to be directed by
4 more professional staff in terms of what's
5 appropriate and not for engagement, but to be
6 supportive of that and makes oneself -- make
7 oneself available.

8 Another key way would be doing my
9 homework, frankly. I've found that when working on
10 matters that I don't have an intimate familiarity
11 with, merely doing some research, learning about
12 other communities to the extent that you can ahead
13 of time before your hearing or other event, it
14 shows that you care even though you're not an
15 expert. I don't think that people are expecting
16 everyone to be an expert in the matters that are
17 most important to them, but I do think that people
18 expect you to care enough to take some time to do
19 your homework and learn about the subject.

20 I think that shows through. It'll show
21 through in the questions that you ask, whether
22 members of the public or otherwise, and I believe
23 that it goes a long way towards building
24 credibility when you're working on a matter that,
25 again, you may not have had a familiarity before it

1 came before you, but just being willing to do that
2 background work.

3 And then I think there's a couple of
4 sources of information that the Commission may
5 utilize that will provide help in terms of defining
6 communities of interest. And because it is coming
7 from nonpartisan sources, may be helpful to
8 undercut some of the hyper-partisanship. One
9 example would be that since the last Commission,
10 there's been over a hundred jurisdictions across
11 the state that have drawn district lines. These
12 are primarily nonpartisan bodies. Various cities
13 and counties have gone to district elections.

14 There are this sphere of influence maps
15 that are drafted by many communities around the
16 state which can be helpful, not only for that
17 particular political jurisdiction, but also for
18 understanding where that community is growing.
19 When you're dealing with, as is probably going to
20 be key to much of this Commission's final work
21 product, not just where was the population as of X
22 date, but where is that going. Because that's
23 going to define the communities of interest for the
24 legislators and congressmen and women who are
25 elected in the late 2020s off of the potential work

1 product of this Commission, right? So keeping an
2 eye towards that.

3 And then finally, utilizing the GIS data
4 from zoning, as well as socioeconomic census data
5 can be helpful for defining communities of
6 interest, which to bring it back to the question
7 you posed, I think undercuts the partisanship
8 arguments.

9 MS. PELLMAN: We have about 14 minutes.

10 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

11 MR. COHER: Thank you.

12 MR. DAWSON: Question 3. What is the
13 greatest problem the Commission could encounter,
14 and what actions would you take to avoid or respond
15 to this problem?

16 MR. COHER: So I identified a couple
17 potential problems. I don't know which one I would
18 necessarily categorize as the greatest potential
19 problem. But first would be a -- you identify the
20 hyper-partisan infection, the risk of that hyper-
21 partisan infection in the standard questions.
22 There's both that coming from the public and coming
23 from within the body itself and we'll discuss more,
24 but I think some as I discussed during the skills
25 and attributes part, there are some things that

1 commissioners can do to help neutralize that from
2 fellow commissioners, excuse me, and to help
3 neutralize that, excuse me, or those accusations
4 coming from the public.

5 A lack of public participation also could
6 be a potential problem. You know, this is the
7 second Commission. The first Commission was
8 something where it probably got a lot of attention
9 for being first, something new, something
10 different. Is this going to be a body where
11 people, you know, say, well, that's okay, it's kind
12 of old hat, if you will. What -- you know, and
13 some of the things that we can be doing to work
14 against that.

15 There's a risk, of course, of being caught
16 in a legal morass. You know, the idea that look,
17 it is unfortunately likely that there will be some
18 litigation that will come. The question is not
19 protecting against and preventing anybody from
20 filing a lawsuit, but rather what we can do in the
21 work, again, if selected, but what would be
22 possible in the work to limit the length of those
23 lawsuits, right, so as to forestall those
24 challenges.

25 One thing that I think is actually going

1 to be a pretty substantial risk is drowning in
2 data. And I talked about this a little bit in my
3 essays with my application. But you have a number
4 of widely available tools now. You have a
5 tremendous amount of data that's out there
6 available to the public now in this field.

7 Also with the advent of social media,
8 which didn't exist anywhere near as it does today
9 during the last Commission's work, the opportunity
10 for many more interest groups forming quickly. And
11 I think there's a real risk of having too much
12 information available to the Commission which gets
13 back to when I was talking about the analytical
14 skills, that ability to kind of sift through and
15 figure out what is a key question, what is not.

16 So those are the potential problems that I
17 see.

18 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

19 MR. COHER: Thank you.

20 MR. DAWSON: Question 4. If you were
21 selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
22 Commission which is charged with working together
23 to create maps of the new districts.

24 Please describe a situation where you had
25 to work collaboratively with others on a project to

1 achieve a common goal. Tell us the goal of the
2 project, what your role in the group was, and how
3 the group worked through any conflicts that arose.

4 What lessons would you take from this
5 group experience to the Commission, if selected?

6 And I note there's about 10 minutes
7 remaining.

8 MR. COHER: Okay. Thank you.

9 So in terms of a particular project, I
10 discussed one in the essays that were part of my
11 application. The Life Insurance Program contract
12 for the state bar, which I was on the group
13 insurance program's committee at the time.

14 Briefly overcapping that issue, it was
15 something where you had a -- there was a -- it was
16 a situation where we could have not acted, but
17 every month of continued inaction meant that there
18 was more value leaking out and not benefiting the
19 program participants or the pro bono legal programs
20 that were being funded by the, essentially, profits
21 of this program.

22 And so our -- my trying to get a solution
23 together, there was not driven necessarily by a
24 need to solve it, but rather a desire to solve it.

25 I won't rehash the whole essay here, but I

1 will talk about another project I had. It was a
2 work project. So during my time working in cyber
3 security, there is a registration program that the
4 company I was working for at the time, still
5 employed by Southern California Edison, had these
6 NERC registrations. NERC is a regulatory body,
7 granted powers by the Federal Energy Regulatory
8 Commission for overseeing utilities. In our case,
9 we had three separate registered entities that were
10 tied to three separate parts of the company.

11 And this had come about from -- for a
12 variety of reasons, you know, long story short, old
13 Spanish customs kind of a thing. And so the idea
14 was, you know, we really should be combining this.
15 We have three sets of paperwork. We have three
16 opportunities to trip up. We have three different
17 senior level executives who have responsibility for
18 these different areas that need to be interacting,
19 we should be combining these together and getting
20 the benefit of having a single registration and
21 having a -- speaking with a single voice.

22 But that, as you can imagine, meant that
23 you were going to have to be taking power at the
24 least from two senior executives. And so these
25 senior executives, very high up in the

1 organization, somehow it fell to myself, a manager
2 at the time, not as high up in the organization, to
3 convince them to relinquish the area of
4 responsibility for these entities.

5 And what the real challenge was was not
6 necessarily the paperwork or the cajoling, but more
7 of getting these executives and their people with
8 responsibilities for these matters to have comfort
9 around the amount of input they would have in the
10 process going forward, and to have comfort around
11 the amount of control that they would have over the
12 new entity. And so what that meant was taking the
13 time to step back, sit down with each group, figure
14 out where their -- where they were concerned, where
15 their pet interests were, figuring out the areas
16 that they did not care about, hoping that aligned
17 with areas that they did care about, and then
18 trying to match that up.

19 And after having those separate, those
20 series of separate meetings, then bringing
21 everybody together because then you could add an
22 overall picture of the conversation to be had.

23 And so I think from both of these examples
24 I talked about, I would say that the lessons I've
25 taken away are to watch for problems, to be looking

1 for that from early on. When you do see a
2 potential issue, to act quickly on the matter. You
3 know, taking that extra effort. Right? Taking the
4 time to have those additional meetings, to have the
5 additional conversations, to be understanding what
6 the underlying concerns are. I think that's
7 important towards getting to the eventual goal.

8 Excuse me.

9 And then, you know, something in reviewing
10 this question earlier on the trip up here, I
11 thought of something else. You know, sometimes you
12 have to be willing to take a loss on a matter. So
13 I had a matter recently that came before the
14 Planning Commission. It involved the cannabis
15 permits for retail cannabis locations in the City
16 of Pasadena. It's been a highly contentious
17 matter, as you can imagine, as it has been all
18 throughout the state.

19 We had some regulations that were adopted
20 by the city council and then submitted to the
21 voters as a proposition. However, the regulations,
22 quite frankly, are one of those as a horse designed
23 by a committee is better known as a camel kind of a
24 situation. And so there were -- there were issues
25 there.

1 Because of the way that things were set
2 up, it actually fell to the Planning Commission to
3 make the decisions on these matters. And I had
4 brought to the Commission, I went in thinking that
5 I'd had the conversations, I'd done the work that I
6 had the votes needed to be able to move the matter
7 forward to improve the situation. As I got into
8 the meeting and we went through the conversation,
9 realized that I did not. And it was something
10 where unfortunately the position I had tried to
11 advance was not successful.

12 However, that conversation then led to
13 other conversations which did then engender the
14 city council to make changes which were positive
15 for the program overall, I felt. And while not
16 necessarily what I had desired or would have
17 dictated were I able to do so, were beneficial
18 overall and I think that my willingness to continue
19 to move forward with the conversation in that forum
20 led to that eventual success.

21 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Coher, I want to make sure
22 that you have opportunity to answer the last
23 question. We have about three --

24 MR. COHER: Thank you.

25 MR. DAWSON: -- 3 minutes and 40 seconds

1 remaining.

2 Question 5. A considerable amount of the
3 Commission's work will involve meeting with people
4 from all over California who come from a very --
5 who come very different backgrounds and a wide
6 variety of perspectives.

7 If you're selected as a commissioner, what
8 skills and attributes will make you effective at
9 interacting with people from different backgrounds
10 and who have a variety of perspectives?

11 What experiences have you had that will
12 help you be effective at understanding and
13 appreciating people in communities of different
14 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

15 MR. COHER: So I've talked about a variety
16 of the skills and attributes that I think would be
17 helpful in this regard. You know, in terms of
18 listening, impartiality, conflict resolution, of
19 course the patience that I've talked about several
20 times.

21 I'll talk a little bit about some of my
22 experiences just in broad sketches as I know time
23 is dwindling here. So myself, I was raised in a
24 majority minority neighborhood which I think gave
25 me a different perspective in terms of learning

1 about race and ethnic differences from kind of a
2 different side.

3 I also learned that how you present on
4 these matters is definitive of others' perceptions
5 and that perception is reality in many respects.
6 That is to say that people what they see is the
7 reality to them. Right? It takes a lot to get
8 through those perceptions.

9 Coming from a relatively modest background
10 but then being able to have the blessings of
11 attending private universities, I think I was able
12 to learn how to blend in but without losing
13 oneself. I think this is important in terms of
14 learning how to empathize with others and which of
15 course is going to inform how to work with other
16 commissioners.

17 And then more recently, having served as a
18 little league coach in a socioeconomically mixed
19 neighborhood is something where I've learned to
20 even, despite what I thought I had a good
21 understanding of the varied backgrounds and, you
22 know, but I also realized that it's different
23 circumstances in different times means that
24 sometimes you can relate and sometimes you can't
25 necessarily relate but that doesn't mean you can't

1 appreciate.

2 I hope we haven't gone over time.

3 MR. DAWSON: We're just about out of time
4 now.

5 MR. COHER: Okay.

6 MR. DAWSON: So at this point we'd like to
7 go to questions from the panel. Each panel member
8 will have 20 minutes to pose his or her questions.

9 And we'll begin with today's chair, Mr.
10 Coe.

11 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

12 Mr. Coher, in your -- your application
13 lists a number of activities that you're involved
14 with including serving on the Ownership Committee
15 for the Hoover Dam.

16 MR. COHER: Yes, yes.

17 CHAIR COE: How did you get involved in
18 that effort?

19 MR. COHER: Well, actually it's -- so I
20 don't own a portion of Hoover Dam, obviously. It's
21 Southern California Edison, my employer, and so
22 when the dam was built, not to get in the whole
23 history, although, it is an interesting history.
24 But essentially it was built by a partnership of
25 several electric entities, Southern California

1 Edison, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and
2 Power being the primary sponsors of it. But it's a
3 federal project, a separate federal corporation,
4 and there is a governing board.

5 The way that the dam's ownership works is
6 that it's by your percentage of what you offtake
7 from the dam. And so Edison as one of the larger
8 offtakers or recipients of a greater portion of the
9 electricity produced has a seat on this ownership
10 board. And through that, through my work, I have
11 been the person appointed to that seat for a couple
12 of years now.

13 CHAIR COE: What is your role on that
14 committee?

15 MR. COHER: So the committee will meet
16 quarterly. It reviews the budget of the dam. It
17 reviews also the -- that means both in terms of the
18 operations and maintenance budget and the capital
19 improvements budget. The capital improvements are
20 where most of the maintenance work goes into. When
21 I say, when you think of larger maintenance work
22 rather than just your day-to-day maintenance, which
23 is part of the O&M.

24 In any case, the budgets are approved by
25 the -- by the committee. And in terms of making

1 larger selections, for example, the -- this
2 currently a situation where there's a number of
3 electricity markets that the dam could become a
4 participant in and we're trying to select which
5 market is going to be most -- what's going to be
6 the most beneficial for the facility. And
7 obviously that has input from the owners who have
8 our own varied interests.

9 CHAIR COE: So this is just one of many
10 boards and committees and community efforts that
11 you're involved in on top of your regular
12 employment.

13 MR. COHER: Correct.

14 CHAIR COE: So how do you think you would
15 balance all of these responsibilities with the
16 responsibilities of the Commission should you be
17 appointed?

18 MR. COHER: Yeah. I am expecting that if I
19 am appointed to the Commission that I will be
20 resigning many of those duties. I've given this
21 matter thought in terms of consideration of the
22 time commitment that's required. I think that the
23 Commission obviously there's a 12- to 18-month
24 period with a significant time commitment at which
25 for that period I suspect it's really going to be

1 taking up my extracurricular bandwidth, if you
2 will.

3 And so I would, I imagine upon appointment
4 I would be resigning from the Planning Commission
5 in Pasadena, transferring over the work
6 responsibilities of the ownership committee, the
7 Boulder Canyon Project. Also some of my other work
8 that I'm currently doing that I mentioned, you
9 know, volunteering for Cub Scout den leader and
10 little league coach and things of that nature would
11 be taking a back seat for the time that I'm on the
12 Commission.

13 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you. In your --

14 MR. COHER: Thank you. It's a good
15 question.

16 CHAIR COE: I'm sorry, go ahead.

17 MR. COHER: No, it's just, I'll say it's
18 something that, you know, obviously once I got
19 through the process to this point and it became a
20 little more real, I had to really say, okay, what
21 is that going to mean.

22 So I'll also, I've had conversations with
23 the folks that I would be talking to and let them
24 know, hey, if I'm able to get through this and be
25 appointed, then, you know, please start thinking

1 about others who can work in these various roles.
2 So.

3 CHAIR COE: Okay. In your essays and
4 earlier answers, you've mentioned having met and
5 worked with diverse groups of people in various
6 roles.

7 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

8 CHAIR COE: You mentioned noting or
9 understanding differences in some of these
10 different diverse groups that you met.

11 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

12 CHAIR COE: What are those differences that
13 you've noticed, what have you learned, and how
14 would that play into your role as a commissioner
15 having to meet people with different perspectives?

16 MR. COHER: Yeah. So I think -- well, one,
17 I can think of a number of examples. Excuse me, so
18 what I think I have learned is by working with
19 different groups in different contexts. And
20 working with them over a period of time, whether
21 that means work in a traditional work sense or as
22 in the example of my family.

23 So, excuse me, I think I mentioned in my
24 essay, my wife's family is a mix of faiths. I,
25 myself, was raised in the Jewish faith. However,

1 much of my wife's family is Muslim. So that's
2 something that initially was interesting. But over
3 time and through living together, I've come to
4 learn more and more about where the perspective
5 these individuals are coming from. Okay.

6 I think another example would be as I
7 discussed earlier talking about some of the folks
8 on when I was a little league coach and some of the
9 other parents on the team, the perspectives that
10 they brought both, you know, from in terms of what
11 they valued for their children. Right. And I'm
12 sure there's a wide variety of little league
13 coaching stories we could go through.

14 But in terms of, you know, seeing what
15 they valued for their children, what they wanted
16 their children to accomplish, what they wanted --
17 what they thought the appropriate price was for
18 that helped me to understand a different
19 perspective on my own values and what I thought was
20 important for myself and for my children.

21 Also helped me to understand in looking at
22 when you meet people who come from a different
23 background who see that the world may be formed in
24 a certain way and you think it's a different way.
25 Having that time with them to understand why they

1 see the world in that way helps you to, not that
2 you necessarily have to lose yourself in your
3 appreciation or understanding of how the world is
4 formed, but to be able to understand why they think
5 that way. I think that that is key to being able
6 to view decisions impartially, to be able to
7 understand where someone else comes from.

8 I hope that answered the question.

9 CHAIR COE: Yeah, I think so.

10 MR. COHER: Okay.

11 CHAIR COE: So you're based in Pasadena,
12 L.A. County; is that right?

13 MR. COHER: That's correct.

14 CHAIR COE: Have you spent most of your
15 time in that area in the state? Or have you, in
16 terms of is that where you've lived most of the
17 time you've lived in the state?

18 MR. COHER: Most of the time that I've
19 lived in the state, yes, I have lived in Los
20 Angeles County area. I grew up down in Long Beach.
21 Left -- left the state for graduate school, and
22 then worked on the East Coast for a number of
23 years, then came back but to Los Angeles County.

24 I have had a number of opportunities,
25 though, to travel extensively throughout the state

1 and work throughout the state.

2 So when I first joined Southern California
3 Edison, I was in the law department, still an
4 attorney at that time, and I was handling real
5 estate litigation matters involving our
6 transmission lines which transfers throughout
7 Southern California Edison's territory, covers
8 about half the land mass of the state. The areas
9 that I covered at that time included initially the
10 Inland Empire and then later the Central Coast and
11 the Central Valley.

12 At that time, there was a tremendous
13 building boom. This is right before the great
14 recession hit and so there were a lot of legal
15 matters that arose primarily in Central Valley, in
16 Kern, Tulare, and Fresno Counties. I don't know if
17 you're familiar with the community of Shaver Lake,
18 but there's a large Edison facility. It's
19 basically if you go to Fresno and just a little
20 east into the Sierra Nevadas, there's a town called
21 Shaver Lake where there's a lake by that name that
22 Southern California Edison owns. They own several
23 facilities there.

24 And so there's real estate issues up there
25 and then if you kind of draw a line in your mind

1 going south through the Central Valley along
2 primarily following Highway 99, though about 15, 20
3 miles to the east on down through the valley
4 cutting through Kern County and then up over the
5 Grapevine.

6 And so I had a fair amount of time spent
7 in the Central Valley meeting with property owners,
8 homeowners, as well as farmers throughout those
9 areas working with them on issues that arose. Also
10 during my time working on the state bar, Group
11 Insurance Programs Committee, I had a number of,
12 there's a number of times where we had work really
13 across the state, although primarily in the more
14 urban areas doing that work and that include
15 places, the committee met regularly in San
16 Francisco and Los Angeles, but also there was work
17 San Diego, Monterrey, Sacramento, Davis, some of
18 the other, but again more urban areas.

19 CHAIR COE: So in your experience in these
20 different regions of the state, --

21 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

22 CHAIR COE: -- what did you learn about the
23 people that reside there and different perspectives
24 that they may have based on --

25 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

1 CHAIR COE: -- where they live?

2 MR. COHER: Yeah. I, you know, I forget
3 the author of the book but there's a book I read a
4 long time ago, it's called The Seven States of
5 California. And it's kind of this idea of much in
6 the way that you guys have gone about kind of
7 designating applicants from various regions that
8 there -- these regions are by any other manner of
9 definition really states in their own right.

10 And I really saw that in action, that
11 there is just a different perspective in many
12 places. And it's not a perspective in the
13 traditional -- in the sense of a traditional divide
14 of a Republican or Democrat or other, you know,
15 it's not just about urban or rural because you
16 could have, excuse me, folks who are from -- or,
17 you know, more urban areas in other parts of the
18 state.

19 Like if you go to San Diego, San Diego is
20 a very large metropolitan area and yet it's in many
21 respects kind of the perspective that people bring
22 is very different than what you see in most of the
23 Bay Area, for example. Right? Even in terms of
24 the rural areas when you look to the rural areas of
25 say, you know, someplace up north, like a Mendocino

1 County kind of a rural farmer versus a farmer from
2 the Central Valley versus a farmer from the
3 Imperial Valley. They're bringing very different
4 perspectives and that's because of a variety, some
5 cultural but also some just the impact of geography
6 and economics on what they're bringing to the
7 table.

8 What I -- what I learned from that is that
9 you have to -- when you approach somebody anew to
10 work on a matter, such as when I was working as an
11 attorney for Edison, you're taking on a role where
12 by the time they've brought, you know, a lawyer
13 from headquarters to the matter, there's been some
14 kind of a dispute. There's been some tension that
15 has arisen. And yet you have to as best you can
16 try to calm that prior tension and reassure who
17 you're working -- whomever you're working with that
18 you're hear to listen to them anew. Right?

19 Because they're thinking, they're bringing
20 to the conversation all of the baggage of the last
21 conversation they had with whomever the last person
22 they dealt with which obviously didn't go well
23 because it turned into enough of a dispute that
24 they brought a lawyer into the matter. So, you
25 know, you can approach it as a lawyer, you could

1 come in and say, okay, that's fine, here are our
2 rights, here's what we're going to do, and go to
3 court and fight through all that. But that's not
4 going to leave anybody happy, quite frankly.
5 Because even if you do "win" in court, you're going
6 to end up having spent a lot of time and a lot of
7 money when you didn't have to, and it's going to be
8 a continuing problem for years to come.

9 Because these are matters where you're
10 talking about infrastructure that's there for years
11 to come, I quickly realized that you have to come
12 kind of with an open mind to folks, gather their
13 perspective of what they're bringing to the table.
14 And from there, then try to put your position into
15 terms that make sense in their worldview. So to
16 shift that some to their worldview.

17 MS. PELLMAN: You have about 4 minutes and
18 20 seconds.

19 CHAIR COE: Thank you.

20 MR. COHER: Thank you.

21 CHAIR COE: One of the key tasks the
22 commissioner is going to face is identifying
23 communities of interest throughout the state. I
24 think you've already referenced some ones. Some of
25 the communities are easier to find than others.

1 How do you think the Commission should go
2 about identifying communities of interest and how
3 can it avoid overlooking some of the harder to find
4 communities?

5 MR. COHER: Yes. So that, as you
6 mentioned, I talked a little bit about this earlier
7 in terms of some of the perhaps less well-known
8 data sets available for that information. But also
9 frankly, I think that those communities of interest
10 are something that beyond what you can determine
11 from data, it's something that's going to have to
12 be identified by the public.

13 And that's where the community engagement
14 aspect comes in, in my view, that you have to get
15 folks to come out. And I know that's not going to
16 be an easy thing to do. And so I don't kind of
17 what the game plan is for that and what can be done
18 in that vein but I think that's one of the things
19 I'm going to be looking to work on early on, if I
20 am appointed to the Commission.

21 Because if you don't get that, then what
22 it ends up as is essentially an exercise in the,
23 you know, battle of the experts. Right? Oh, well,
24 the data says that we should draw the line this way
25 because of this particular racial group. And, well

1 there's, yes, but then you have to consider this
2 particular ethnic group over here, you know. And
3 obviously, there's some of the more well-known
4 communities of interest throughout the state, you
5 know, the Sikh community in Fresno, the Vietnamese
6 community in northern Orange County, things of that
7 nature.

8 But beyond that, in terms of identifying
9 connections that you might not necessarily make
10 beyond what's immediately apparent, it's going to
11 have to be about getting the community engagement.

12 CHAIR COE: We're about out of time?

13 MR. DAWSON: Two minutes.

14 CHAIR COE: Two minutes, okay.

15 If you were to be appointed to the
16 Commission, what aspects of being a commissioner do
17 you think that you would enjoy the most? And
18 conversely, which aspects of it do you think you
19 might perhaps struggle with a little bit?

20 MR. COHER: Well for me the part that's
21 most interesting I think is frankly going around
22 the state and meeting so many different folks. I
23 really enjoy that. That's one aspect of that, you
24 know, I see my former boss around the office at
25 Edison. I still tell him I miss that.

1 I miss getting out there and meeting
2 different people and getting to different
3 communities and knowing about, you know, this, you
4 know, whatever, the kind of the local treats,
5 whether it's a particular great restaurant, some
6 hole-in-the wall restaurant, right? Or some
7 particular sight that may not be as well known.
8 I really, I enjoy that. I enjoy, I think that
9 there's so much variety in California. There's so
10 much to continue to learn from throughout the state
11 that there's going to be a lot of great opportunity
12 for that part it.

13 In terms of the parts that I may struggle
14 with, I don't know. That's a good question I
15 hadn't really thought of before. I suspect it
16 probably would be in terms of narrowing my
17 commitments as you identified early on. You know,
18 it's something that, as I said, I've given some
19 thought recently to but decided to continue to
20 pursue at this point because I think it's such a
21 great opportunity for this period of time to be
22 able to get out there and really just meeting new
23 folks, learning about new communities. Yeah, I
24 think there's a lot of interesting -- a lot of
25 interesting areas of California to explore.

1 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you. It's time.

2 Ms. Dickison.

3 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: All right.

4 Mr. Coher, thank you for coming today.

5 So you've already talked about that you
6 are on the City of Pasadena Planning Commission?

7 MR. COHER: Yes.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What was the
9 timeframe for that? Are you still on that?

10 MR. COHER: I am still on the Commission.
11 I was initially appointed in August of 2015. Easy
12 to remember because the first meeting was my
13 birthday. And my current term would last should I
14 not be appointed to this Commission and serve out
15 my time, it would through 2022.

16 However, currently I am the chair of the
17 Commission --

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Uh-huh.

19 MR. COHER: -- and that chairmanship lasts
20 through June 30th of this year. And that would
21 most likely coincide, if I am appointed to the
22 Commission, I'd most likely coincide with the end
23 of my service on the Planning Commission.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Based on one of your
25 letters of recommendation, I understand that during

1 this time you led the adoption of the city plan as
2 quite a long process.

3 MR. COHER: It was. I wouldn't say that I
4 necessarily led the adoption of the general plan
5 but, myself, but I was a part of that process. And
6 it was a lengthy process and it, initial work
7 preceded my time.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. How involved
9 were the residents during -- of that appointment?

10 MR. COHER: Quite involved.

11 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

12 MR. COHER: You know, I don't -- I don't
13 know the statistics offhand of the number of
14 community meetings and the like, but I think that
15 was something where actually it was a good example.
16 I think it was a good lesson to be learned there
17 where the initial general plan was a smaller group
18 of individuals within, both within the city
19 government and influential citizens who had a
20 particular desire of a particular plan direction
21 that kind of, for lack of a better word, blew up on
22 them in that there were some communities of
23 interest that did not want to see their interest
24 overridden.

25 And so those communities got together to

1 stall the plan which then meant it had to go back
2 out. And at that time, there was quite a bit of
3 community information gathering of having kind of
4 workshops and open events of that nature so as to
5 bring people in. I think it's one thing that I
6 really do have commend the planning staff in
7 Pasadena on. They have been innovative in thinking
8 of different ways to bring folks in rather than
9 having a more formalized setting.

10 You know, for many, the formalized setting
11 can be intimidating and especially if it's
12 something where you're not used to that process, if
13 you're not familiar with the finer points of it, it
14 can overwhelm. And that can be a huge distraction
15 so that people say, you know, why am I going to go
16 put myself out there like that.

17 But if you have more informal gatherings -
18 - now of course, you know, there's the larger issue
19 of the Brown Act in all of this, right? And how
20 to work within the Brown Act and not just within
21 the letter but also the spirit of the Brown Act to
22 be able to have these interactions. But that's
23 something where again I do have commend the staff
24 of the Planning Department in the city because
25 they've done a great job of that. Not just through

1 the general plan process but also through specific
2 plans that we're currently working on which are
3 subdocuments then to your general plan for a city's
4 planning process. They've continued to think of
5 new and innovative ways to bring folks in and
6 leverage whether it's social media, community
7 gatherings, all of that. I think that's been
8 beneficial.

9 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you mentioned that
10 certain communities of interest --

11 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: -- got involved and
13 kind of changed that.

14 MR. COHER: Yeah.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So in that area, what
16 are the types of communities of interest that
17 you're seeing in your area?

18 MR. COHER: So Pasadena right now, it's
19 interesting because, you know, in many ways it's as
20 the -- an early suburb of Los Angeles in having
21 Hollywood in Los Angeles, much of what defines a
22 suburb in, you know, our popular imagination is
23 driven by Pasadena. You know, so many examples of
24 various movie shoots and whatnot that have occurred
25 in and around Pasadena.

1 You know, that -- but yet currently, it's
2 something worth becoming highly urbanized when the
3 subway system or mass transit system returned to
4 Los Angeles in the '90s. I, at the time, was
5 growing up down in Long Beach where one line came
6 down called the Blue Line. But Pasadena actually
7 actively tried to get the Gold Line built and
8 through and to come into Pasadena. That has driven
9 a lot of urbanization, a lot of growth in terms of
10 high-density development.

11 A lot of that kind of high-density
12 development that, you know, has been causing a lot
13 of division and consternation a few blocks away
14 from the various proposals that have been discussed
15 over the past year or two, we've seen that in
16 action in Pasadena already because of that early
17 planning.

18 And what that means in terms of the
19 communities of interest is that you have -- you
20 have the folks who want the single family homes
21 versus the folks who want to have high-density and
22 the various attractions that come with that.
23 You have your traditional, well-to-do
24 neighborhoods. You have the neighborhoods that
25 traditionally have been middle class or working

1 class that are seeing the impacts of gentrification
2 come in that is changing in some instances the
3 nature of the community itself and the backlash
4 from that. Some of those are racial distinctions
5 but a lot of them are economic and class
6 distinctions.

7 And you're seeing folks that are seeing,
8 you know, my children can't afford to live in the
9 neighborhood where I raised them where I was
10 raised. So while, you know, it is California,
11 right? Everything's brand new here. But, you
12 know, you do have multigenerational families that
13 now are leaving Pasadena. The next generation is
14 moving out whether it's further out or leaving the
15 state or otherwise because of the economic
16 pressures. And so you're seeing these divides
17 overlap.

18 As I mentioned, you know, there's some of
19 that, you know, you have a very strong traditional
20 middle class or well-to-do African-American
21 community in the northwest portion of the city.
22 You know, most famously home to Jackie Robinson as
23 when he grew up. But that community, some portions
24 of that community are being impacted because of the
25 economic divide and other portions of that

1 community are not being impacted because of the
2 economic divide which is creating a distinction
3 within that -- that -- so it's not a homogeneous
4 group just because of a racial distinction, there
5 are subdistinctions within that and so as you start
6 to peel back the onion, you get an understanding of
7 these unique, political, you know, as they say
8 politics make strange bedfellows. It's, you see
9 that in action because of the development that has
10 come to the city and the changes that it's brought
11 about.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Carrying on with that
13 same idea, there's -- when you're setting the
14 priorities for how you draw the districts, there's
15 --

16 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

17 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: -- the fourth level
18 that includes cities, counties, neighborhoods --

19 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

20 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: -- and communities of
21 interest.

22 MR. COHER: Right.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: And there is no
24 distinction on prioritization in any of those.

25 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So with what you just
2 talked about, how can what you've learned through
3 Pasadena help the Commission deal with things like
4 that? And when you have cities, counties, and
5 different communities of interest --

6 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: -- that are
8 conflicting with each other while you're trying to
9 draw lines.

10 MR. COHER: Yeah. That's -- well it's
11 certainly a difficult question. I think, you know,
12 what's important, what I would find important, were
13 I to be appointed to the Commission, would be to
14 look to those communities of interest in looking
15 for like interests rather than necessarily falling
16 directly along a particular city or county lines or
17 other, you know, political jurisdictions.

18 I think that's because -- so, you know,
19 Pasadena is an interesting example because it's a
20 city that grabs several different areas of
21 geography and so actually those geographic
22 distinctions would, you know, just kind of
23 picturing in my head, right, with having the
24 localized knowledge there, I think those geographic
25 distinctions would actually drive the community of

1 interest conversation as well.

2 I know geographic is not necessarily
3 identified as one of the factors. However, I think
4 that that's, you know, geography has always been
5 impactful to where we build and how we build just,
6 you know, for thousands of years, right? So
7 looking to that can also inform the conversation.

8 But the communities of interest aspect,
9 it's interesting because it is, it's not a well-
10 defined concept. It's somewhat ephemeral.
11 However, given the nature of this work, it kind of
12 has to be. It has to be some way to put that that
13 ephemeral element into it when otherwise it's an
14 itemized checklist of matters that you're going
15 down.

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: You talked about
17 earlier -- I think maybe not.

18 So the first eight commissioners will
19 select the remaining six. And so if -- the first
20 eight are selected by lottery random draw.

21 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

22 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: If you were one of
23 the first eight, what would you be looking for in
24 trying to determine who should make out or who
25 should, you should select in that next six to round

1 out the Commission?

2 MR. COHER: Yeah. So I think, I don't know
3 sitting here because I don't know what the resumes
4 and characteristics of those eight are going to be.
5 You know, obviously I know myself and I know where
6 my gaps are and where I could benefit but I think
7 it'd be important for each of the eight of us to
8 look at what's missing from the eight of us both in
9 terms of some of the more traditional diversity
10 metrics by which I mean, you know, race, ethnicity,
11 sexual orientation, of course gender, and those
12 categories.

13 But also to be looking at the skills and
14 competencies where there's opportunity for
15 improvement or where we can add some bench strength
16 amongst the six folks who if I remember correctly
17 are going to be amongst the -- what the math, 44
18 people who then remain on the list at that time,
19 whatever the number is. But looking through those
20 44 or however many applications and looking for the
21 areas where beyond just the standard metrics, we
22 can also see opportunities.

23 And I think personally I'll be looking at
24 certain things like, you know, I've been talking
25 about community engagement, how to get folks out,

1 and getting them participating in the process. If
2 there's an opportunity amongst those six to have
3 folks who are going to be better able to help with
4 that, I think that would be a key feature. But,
5 you know, without knowing the eight folks, I can't
6 give you a straight up answer right now. I'm
7 sorry.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

9 MR. COHER: Thank you.

10 MS. PELLMAN: We have about five and a half
11 minutes.

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. One last
13 question.

14 What would you ultimately like to see the
15 Commission accomplish?

16 MR. COHER: That's a -- that's a good
17 question because it's -- I have a couple of ideas
18 I'm trying to stitch it together into a single
19 sentence, right?

20 PANEL MEMBE DICKISON: Okay.

21 MR. COHER: Something succinct. I would
22 like to see the Commission, and I say this whether
23 I'm an appointee or not. Quite frankly, I'd like
24 to see Commission be able to help move the
25 conversation, the political conversation forward.

1 I don't want to hearken back to oh, a day gone by
2 kind of oh, you know, this or that was the one key
3 feature and that's where things quote, unquote fell
4 apart or anything like that.

5 I don't think it's as simple as that. I
6 think that we're -- we're really looking at
7 California as having a whole new level of
8 diversity. I could argue the history of the state
9 has been that constantly moving forward. And so
10 it's about how do we address that. And what the
11 Commission does at the end of the day is just a
12 map. But that map, as I think I alluded to
13 earlier, is going to be telling a story of what the
14 -- what the state values. And that's going to
15 determine who we select as our leaders and the
16 decisions that they're going to be capable of
17 making. Right?

18 You know, at the end of the day, you want
19 your legislators and your congresspersons, your
20 representatives, to be responsive to their
21 constituencies. So by forming the constituencies,
22 you're deciding what they are going to value. And
23 so my hope is that we can select, we can design it
24 in a way, we as a state can design that in a way
25 that can drive conversation where our elected

1 representatives are looking to add greater value
2 rather than necessarily such a -- such group
3 partisanship as we see in some circles at the
4 moment.

5 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

6 MR. COHER: Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe.

8 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap, questions?

9 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yeah. Thank you for being
10 here.

11 MR. COHER: Thank you.

12 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Before I forget, I
13 want to follow up on something from Question 1.

14 You talked about one of the competencies
15 that the Commission should have is in cartography
16 or maps.

17 MR. COHER: Yeah.

18 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: What's your
19 experience with either preparing, using --

20 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: -- some involvement
22 with maps?

23 MR. COHER: Uh-huh. So, I don't have any
24 formal professional experience with maps in terms
25 of as an individual preparing them or otherwise

1 designing them. I'd say the closest professional
2 experience has been in my work as a real estate
3 attorney in a past life.

4 Although, I will tell you there are some
5 fascinating stories that you can gather from them.
6 So one in particular, I had a situation where I was
7 working on an easement rights case that was in Kern
8 County is in an area called Weedpatch. And in
9 digging through these old documents dating back, I
10 forget exactly the dates of the earlier documents,
11 but I do know there's some documents, some changes
12 that came about in the early 1930s. And I thought
13 that was interesting and so I started digging into
14 it a little more.

15 And I come to find out that, I don't know
16 if you guys remember in Of Mice and Men, the John
17 Steinbeck book, where he talks about the first camp
18 that they come to, that the Joad family comes to
19 when they reach California. Well that camp was in
20 Weedpatch. That was actually on the land in the
21 nineteen -- I'm sorry, in the 2000s, they then
22 built a housing, a track of housing development
23 outside of Bakersfield and then got into some legal
24 issues.

25 But I found that absolutely fascinating

1 that there could be that incredible historical
2 connection that could come about all from just
3 pulling on a thread within these documents. Right?
4 And these are title documents. I don't know if you
5 ever had the unfortunate experience of going
6 through the title report when you, for a piece of
7 property by home or otherwise. And they're pretty
8 boring documents otherwise. But, you know, there's
9 something that can be found in there.

10 And I think that it's important to
11 understand that because when somebody's putting
12 together a map, they're also bringing to that task
13 their view of the world. And so you can really
14 discern a lot out of even a very technical document
15 like that.

16 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

17 So you graduated from USC in Public
18 Administration.

19 MR. COHER: I did.

20 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Went on to get your
21 J.D. from Georgetown.

22 MR. COHER: Yes.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Why did you decide to
24 pursue a law degree?

25 MR. COHER: Initially I wanted to be a

1 deputy district attorney. I wanted to practice
2 back in the Long Beach area. That was my -- that
3 was my goal in going to college.

4 However, while -- while at Georgetown, I
5 did have the opportunity to work for a summer at
6 the district attorney's office at the Century
7 Regional facility. However, at that time, the L.A.
8 County District Attorney's Office was not hiring,
9 they had a hiring freeze on. And so I lived on the
10 East Coast for a while, I thought, all right, well,
11 you know, why don't I go and practice in New York,
12 have an opportunity to try living somewhere
13 different. I felt like I needed to get out and
14 have a bit of a different experience in life.

15 I had actually, I'd only spent two years
16 at USC because I attended community college and
17 then was able to transfer to SC for college. So I
18 felt like I wanted to have more opportunity to try
19 something different. That took me to work for a
20 law firm in New York. And then by the time I
21 returned to Los Angeles, yeah, I was several years
22 into my career and it just wasn't a good choice for
23 me at that time to go to the district attorney's
24 office. But that was -- that was my original goal.

25 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Do you consider

1 yourself a practicing lawyer?

2 MR. COHER: I consider myself a recovering
3 attorney. I like to joke that I wake up every
4 morning and try not to get into unnecessary fights.
5 But no, I -- so I do still have my bar card, pay
6 the dues. It's something where, you know, I put a
7 lot of work into that and so I feel -- I just don't
8 feel right necessarily to let it go. However, I
9 certainly -- I wouldn't let myself go into a court
10 of law to argue on my behalf let alone someone
11 else's. So.

12 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: And so if
13 someone -- just at a real high level, what is your
14 occupation? Is it principal manager? Or?

15 MR. COHER: It is. So I -- my formal title
16 is principal manager of Energy Contracts
17 Management. And what that means is that the way it
18 works broadly speaking is the investor-owned
19 utilities will buy our power from third parties.
20 That's either through long-term contracts which
21 will be for long periods, 10, 20-year periods. Or
22 on the market and much shorter transactions in
23 terms of days, perhaps even weeks.

24 For SCE, it's about two-thirds of the
25 power that we sell to customers is purchased

1 through these long-term contracts, and so I lead
2 the team of contract managers who manage those day-
3 to-day relationships with the various owners of
4 those power plants, excuse me, and work out changes
5 to those contracts as come up. You know, when you
6 do a deal for a 20-year period of time, right?
7 Obviously the world changes during that time. So.

8 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. So in your
9 application there was a gap and I think you filled
10 some of that gap for me.

11 MR. COHER: Oh, okay.

12 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So between 2002 after
13 you got your J.D. from Georgetown --

14 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

15 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: -- and 2007 when you
16 became manager for Southern California Edison, that
17 five-year period, some of it was spent on the East
18 Coast.

19 MR. COHER: Yes, yes. So if you don't
20 mind, let me just run --

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yeah. Okay.

22 MR. COHER: -- through it quick.

23 Okay. So in 2002 I graduated from law
24 school, practiced with a law firm in New York for
25 two years. At that time while in New York, I

1 happened to, I met my now wife. She grew up in the
2 Pasadena area and so, you know, I had to travel
3 across the country to meet a girl who grew up 25
4 miles away. But nonetheless, we ended up coming
5 back together in 2004.

6 From 2004 through 2007 I worked for law
7 firms in Los Angeles. In 2007, I then joined
8 Edison in the law department and I was there as an
9 attorney for four years. And then moved over to
10 the business side. I had an opportunity to move to
11 the business side. I was invited by one of our
12 vice presidents, which I understood to mean that I
13 better take this opportunity.

14 But it's been great, it's been a great
15 opportunity. I've really enjoyed a lot of the work
16 that I've done. I've had a variety of experiences,
17 I think you can see. And so I'd say my period as a
18 practicing attorney ended in 2011.

19 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. And what kind
20 of law did you practice in New York?

21 MR. COHER: It was insurance coverage work.
22 And that is determining whether or not an insurance
23 policy covers a particular occurrence and then to
24 what extent. And that often means -- often that
25 enters litigation when you're talking about very

1 large incidents, very large companies, and lots of
2 different insurance policies. They have these
3 charts of stacking the insurance policies up and
4 it's a bit of an art form.

5 It was, but it was, you know, corporate
6 law in New York.

7 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: You might have
8 already answered this --

9 MR. COHER: Yeah.

10 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: -- but I don't
11 remember the answer.

12 How did you come about being on the city's
13 planning commission? That's not elected? That's
14 appointed? Or?

15 MR. COHER: It is, that's correct. It is
16 appointed. It's an appointed role. I have been
17 appointed by my local councilman, Tyrone Hampton,
18 who wrote one of the letters of recommendation for
19 my application.

20 Tyrone and I met actually shortly after we
21 moved to the neighborhood. That was I believe in
22 2012. And he was actually, we met when he was
23 running for school board at the time, became
24 friendly. And then when he ran for city council, I
25 was a supporter of his, worked on the campaign and

1 so we had an interesting race there. That council
2 race actually got into some of the what we were
3 talking about earlier in terms of the communities
4 of interest within that portion of Pasadena.

5 And then it was a runoff, and then a
6 recount. He ended up actually winning by I think
7 it was something like 27 votes out of 5,000 at the
8 time. It was very close. But in any case, he knew
9 that I had a background in -- by that time that was
10 2015, he knew that I had a background as handling
11 real estate litigation for Edison several years
12 prior and so I had that experience and he asked me
13 to help him by serving on planning.

14 And it's -- it's been fun, I've got to
15 say. Because I kind of -- I enjoy some of the
16 wonkier policy aspects of it. So it's been a good
17 time so far.

18 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So what are one or
19 two things that you've learned as on the city
20 planning commission, either as chair or member,
21 that --

22 MR. COHER: Yeah.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: -- will benefit you
24 as a commissioner?

25 MR. COHER: I think, you know, it's tough

1 for me necessarily point to specifically saying,
2 oh, I learned this from my service on the Planning
3 Commission. But broadly I'd say that working with
4 others even when there's times where -- when you
5 don't necessarily agree with them.

6 In fact, we recently -- well I talked a
7 little bit about the one issue where I managed to
8 come out of the meeting, I thought I was going into
9 the meeting, I thought we had support, I thought we
10 had a compromise, came out of the meeting as the
11 only vote for the full thing. So people kind of
12 splintered on both sides of me.

13 But what I learn -- what I've learned is
14 that you have to be working across that proverbial
15 aisle, and you have to maintain the relationship
16 for the next issue. So while you may be working
17 with someone on a particular issue and this
18 particular time you guys may not agree, the next
19 time that person could be a part of the coalition
20 that is able to get something done on the next
21 issue or the issue thereafter.

22 And so it's more about maintaining that
23 friendship through -- that it's not necessarily the
24 votes or the policy aspects that take precedence
25 but rather those relationships and maintaining

1 those.

2 The other thing I've learned is that
3 it's -- I've got to be careful kind of how I word
4 this. But well I'll say for myself, I don't have a
5 professional vested interest necessarily in the
6 work of the Planning Commission. I'm not a
7 developer, I'm not an architect or an engineer. I
8 don't get any work from any of these folks so that
9 gives me a lot of more freedom and leeway.

10 And I think that's valuable. That's one
11 thing that appeals to me about the Redistricting
12 Commission as well as something where, you know, as
13 you can tell from looking at my application and my
14 experience, I have an interest in politics, but
15 it's not a personal professional vested interest,
16 right? I'm not running for anything. I'm not a
17 former candidate or anything like that. So I think
18 there's an opportunity to be able to, you know, do
19 the work of the Commission without necessarily
20 having to worry about is this going to have some
21 secondary impacts on something else, business or
22 professional relationships otherwise.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

24 So no further questions.

25 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

2 Mr. Coher, I have one follow-up question
3 I'd like to follow up on. Something that you'd
4 said in response to the first standard question
5 about the importance of the Commission or members
6 of the Commission to understand, to recognize and
7 understand their inherent biases.

8 MR. COHER: Uh-huh.

9 MR. DAWSON: Can you talk about your
10 inherent biases are and how you would account and
11 recognize those?

12 MR. COHER: I can.

13 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

14 MR. COHER: Hopefully I can here. Quickly
15 as well.

16 Yeah. I think, you know, when I talk
17 about inherent bias, I'm thinking about the
18 approach, kind of the worldview one brings. So for
19 example, myself I am married with two children,
20 living in a very traditional suburb. Right? Kind
21 of a, you know, something of it is this life that
22 has these certain things that I value, right?
23 Right. I'm, for me, my children and family are
24 very important. Right.

25 That doesn't necessarily mean that

1 everybody is desiring of having children and
2 looking to have children and have a family. Right.
3 And it's, there are quite legitimate different
4 choices that don't include any of the aspects I
5 just rattled off that are key to who I am in my
6 life.

7 And so I think it's about necessarily
8 understanding those differences, what are the
9 things that I value, and what do those values imply
10 about the kind of my worldview. In understanding
11 that, I can then take a step back and say, okay, if
12 I'm approaching a particular issue, am I looking at
13 it in this way because I value these particular
14 features, these particular aspects. I value,
15 excuse me, you know, I value families. Right? And
16 so, you know, my son -- my daughter played in
17 little league, my son plays in little league. You
18 know, little league, you know, has a certain value
19 to my family. Right?

20 To take that kind of to an extreme, would
21 that then mean that it makes sense to define the
22 little league district of a particular area as a
23 community of interest? Right? You know, that
24 might be a bit extreme. I don't know that anybody
25 would necessarily go that far. But I -- you have

1 to appreciate that that doesn't matter to a large
2 number of people. And in understanding that, you
3 can also then say well what does matter to folks
4 who may not see on their radar. Right?

5 And then also I think secondarily is to
6 say trying to apply that same analysis to how
7 others are approaching a problem. Because if I'm
8 going to be looking to these others to try and
9 build a coalition to get work done on the
10 Commission, I need to understand where they're
11 coming from as well and what are their equivalent
12 biases.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

14 I have no further questions.

15 MR. DAWSON: Do any of the panel members
16 have any further follow ups? We have about five
17 minutes left.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

19 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Belnap?

20 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not have any
21 follow up questions.

22 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Coher, at this time we
23 have just about five minutes left.

24 Would you like to make a closing statement
25 to the panel?

1 MR. COHER: I would. I have prepared a
2 brief closing statement. So most assured as I know
3 some of my other prepared comments were rather
4 lengthy. So thank you for your patience in that
5 regard.

6 No, I just, I wanted to thank you for your
7 time. Looking at the numbers as I've been
8 monitoring the process, it's been a tremendous
9 amount of work and a lot that all of you have been
10 reading through. A lot of material to review and
11 to balance against one another.

12 So I'd say as an applicant, I appreciate
13 the time that everyone has been put in with respect
14 to my application, to the work and the review.
15 Obviously, you know, I've seen some of the -- some
16 of the hearings and an interview or two in trying
17 to get ready for today, online. You know, the
18 questions show that you've done the homework, as I
19 was saying, and really have put in the effort here.

20 And then more broadly I'd like to say just
21 as a Californian if I am not eventually appointed
22 through either the two steps, that thank you for
23 the effort, and I'm hopeful that it's going to lead
24 to a good, strong Commission that can hopefully do
25 some positive work.

1 CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Coher.
2 Our next interview begins at 3:00 p.m.
3 We'll be in recess until 2:59.

4 (Off the record at 2:40 p.m.)

5 (On the record at 2:59 p.m.)

6 CHAIR COE: Okay. I'd like to bring this
7 meeting back to order.

8 At this time, I'd like to welcome to the
9 table Mr. James Mendelson.

10 Welcome, sir.

11 MR. MENDELSON: Thank you. Good afternoon.

12 CHAIR COE: Good afternoon to you.

13 Mr. Dawson, please ask the five standard
14 questions, please.

15 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 Mr. Mendelson, I'll be asking you five
17 standard questions that each applicant has been
18 asked to respond to.

19 Are you ready, sir?

20 MR. MENDELSON: I'm ready.

21 MR. DAWSON: Question 1. What skills and
22 attributes should all commissioners possess?

23 What skills or competencies should the
24 Commission possess collectively?

25 Of the skills, attributes, and

1 competencies that each commissioner should possess,
2 which do you possess?

3 In summary, how will you contribute to the
4 success of the Commission?

5 MR. MENDELSON: So I understand you want to
6 talk about the skills and attributes that of
7 commissioners which they possess collectively and
8 which ones I feel that I possess.

9 Before I go into the ones that appear to
10 be pretty standardized in the California Code of
11 Regulations, I would just add that without
12 referencing the Code of Regulations, the things
13 that popped out to the top of my mind was
14 integrity, the ability to listen, the ability not
15 just to sit there and have somebody else tell them
16 something and be thinking off in left field about
17 something else, but to actually listen and stay
18 tuned in. Compassion, tolerance, and balanced.

19 And of course the California Code of
20 Regulations breaks it down into three attributes.
21 The first being the relevant analytical scales --
22 skills, excuse me. The second one being
23 impartiality. And lastly is the appreciation for
24 diversity. I could break it down and talk a lot
25 about what they talk about like the -- under

1 relevant analytical skills. They'll talk about the
2 ability to read and understand dense and technical
3 material, how to participate effectively in public
4 hearings, how to formulate questions that are
5 likely to provide relevant answers.

6 But unless the panel wants me to go
7 through all that, what I'd rather do is talk about
8 my experience and how it relates to these. I would
9 submit as far as that middle question, what should
10 the panel possess collectively, I think each member
11 of the -- or not the panel, I'm sorry, the
12 Commission. Each commissioner needs to possess all
13 three of those key attributes. The relevant
14 analytical skills, impartiality, and they also have
15 to have the appreciation for diversity.

16 So I'll kind of fold in now and go into
17 the last one and that's try to relate how I feel I
18 can relate or contribute to those skills.

19 And the first one talks about the ability
20 to read and comprehend dense and technical
21 material. My background, which I assume you
22 probably briefly familiarized yourself with, I only
23 really had two full-time careers. I'm now retired
24 but working very actively in the Rotary. So the
25 first career I was a Marine Corps pilot for about

1 26 years following graduation from the Naval
2 Academy.

3 Secondly, I became a district attorney in
4 Orange County, California and served there for 19,
5 probably about 19 ½ years. Since retiring in early
6 2018, I became involved into the Rotary. I joined
7 a Rotary Club and I rapidly was selected to be
8 president-elect. And just so you have a better
9 idea where I'm coming from, as president-elect, I
10 would take over this July and serve as president
11 through July of 2021.

12 The president this year is an individual
13 that [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED]
15 [REDACTED] so they asked me to become
16 president this year. I said, I'm not trained up.
17 I need to go, they have special training, but I'll
18 run the meetings for them. And just in fact so you
19 understand where I'm coming from when I start
20 talking about diversity and some of the Rotary
21 values, I have since last July been running all the
22 meetings. I'm effectively a president even though
23 called president-elect.

24 So having given you an idea where I feel
25 that I prob -- and it's not easy to sit up here and

1 go I, I, I, and talk about myself. That's not my
2 real style, but I think that it's probably
3 something you have to do as a candidate to be a
4 commissioner.

5 So looking at the ability to read
6 technical, dense technical material and the like
7 like that, graduating from the Naval Academy even
8 though I minored in International Relations, we had
9 a B.S. degree so we took all kinds of courses
10 from, you know, advanced integral calculus,
11 thermodynamics, electrical engineering, and the
12 like.

13 And then as a pilot in the Marine Corps,
14 you're involved not only with technically
15 understanding the airplane and the various airplane
16 systems, and I went from F-4 which was almost like
17 vacuum tube systems, to the F-18 which is state-of-
18 the art systems that get upgraded every year with
19 computer programs. But you also have a lot of
20 technical manuals, not just the systems of the
21 airplane, but performance manuals that have all
22 kinds of graphs and curves so that when you fight
23 the airplane, you can look at the different turning
24 performance characteristics, radius of turn, turn
25 rate, things that sustain G capability so that you

1 analyze your capability to fight enemy aircrafts.

2 So I would submit that I have through
3 those experiences been able to, even though you're
4 going to say well you're a lawyer in your second,
5 lawyers can't understand all that technical stuff
6 that much. But I would submit that the first
7 career of my two and a half careers, if you will, I
8 did get exposed to that.

9 The ability to participate in a public
10 hearing as a district attorney for 19 years, I was
11 a trial attorney for all but I think about the last
12 eight or nine months. So not only are you
13 participating in public hearings, but you have to
14 know how to listen carefully and report to the
15 testimony. And then you're -- as you do that,
16 you're doing that last key attribute that the Code
17 of Regulations talks about and that's having the
18 ability to formulate questions that will obtain
19 relevant evidence. If you're in the middle of a
20 trial and you're asking questions that are
21 irrelevant, you're not doing your job very well.

22 The Code of Regulations goes on and talks
23 about the requirement to have basic mathematical
24 skills and familiarity with computers and working
25 with them. And I would submit to you that, again,

1 through all the things that I've talked about
2 previously, I've obviously been exposed to
3 computers and mathematical skills.

4 You need to have the ability to access
5 credibility of information and distinguish facts
6 from opinions and that's -- that's a key task which
7 a trial attorney has to do, specifically a
8 prosecutor. A typical homicide case, and I ended
9 up spending about eight years in gangs, prosecuting
10 mostly at the end there homicides and then the
11 homicide unit, prosecuting straight homicides. A
12 case file would be well over thousands of pages.
13 So you had to sort through all that and distinguish
14 facts from opinions.

15 Obviously, we're also having to understand
16 complex problems involving factual ambiguities.
17 Anytime you go to court and there's a trial going
18 on, the other side's going to try to throw in as
19 much factual ambiguity, the defense is if you're a
20 prosecutor, that they possibility can, and you
21 obviously have to be able to work with that and
22 deal with that.

23 One of the other things the Code of
24 Regulations talks about is the necessity to be able
25 to apply appropriate legal standards and understand

1 legal principles. It goes without saying that if
2 you're a prosecutor for 19 years, that's your bread
3 and butter. And you obviously if you're in court
4 and you're trying to convince juries and you're
5 having judges make rulings and the like, if you
6 don't have an appreciation for the importance of
7 applying proper legal standards, you'd be in
8 trouble. Effective communications skills, both
9 written and oral go hand-in-hand with being a
10 prosecutor being an attorney.

11 You have to have an ability to interact
12 effectively with other commissioners, develop
13 consensus on proposed things. I think later on in
14 some of these standard questions, I would try to
15 then at that point not repeat myself, address how
16 you actually go out there and can build consensus.
17 These analytical skills the Code tells your --
18 demonstrated through your occupations and various
19 sources and I've pretty much gone right into that
20 already.

21 It talks about receiving expert advice,
22 particularly of a legal nature, and applying that
23 advice to decisions. Expert advice of a legal
24 nature, yes. Also and I think it also is relevant
25 to a commissioner's abilities, experiences is -- is

1 expert advice in general. And you deal with -- as
2 a trial attorney, you're dealing with experts. It
3 might be an expert on DNA. It might be an expert
4 on how to interpret telephone records and call
5 detail records with thousands of pages of
6 information about what cell tower a phone's hitting
7 off. It might be ballistic information. It might
8 a coroner coming in there trying to distinguish
9 different causes of death. So that is an attribute
10 that a commissioner needs to have and that's where
11 my experience has been.

12 Last one is participation in group
13 decision making such as a member of a Commission
14 board or joint task force. I believe that some of
15 the follow-on standard seven questions will answer
16 that so I'd like to defer addressing that till we
17 get there.

18 And that will lead me into the second
19 major attribute, and that's the impartiality. And
20 that's you're dealing with different types of
21 interest. One is personal interest, which can be
22 personal financial interest. One can be biases
23 against individual groups or geographic areas, and
24 then support or opposition to any candidates,
25 political parties, social, political causes, and

1 the like.

2 And I guess everybody has biases.
3 Everybody. Whether they totally admit it to
4 themselves, they have strong beliefs and biases.
5 And if you've read my essays, you know that both of
6 my careers, I'm a firm believer that you have to
7 use what the airline industry formulated and it's
8 called compartmentalization. And that deals with a
9 pilot that maybe has trouble at home, maybe has
10 financial troubles, parents are sick, kids are
11 sick. But when he straps on that airplane and puts
12 a hundred passengers in there, he has to
13 compartmentalize those and move them out so he puts
14 100 percent of his attention.

15 In a different vein, something a tool that
16 I try to use as a prosecutor because you're talking
17 to jurors and you get a bunch of licensed drivers
18 that come into that jury pool. And each of them
19 has their own biases and beliefs and everything
20 else. And you tell that number one, obviously we
21 need you to be fair and impartial so that you can
22 follow the law. But if you can recognize those
23 biases and those beliefs and then we ask the juror,
24 can take those and put those aside and give
25 everybody an equal chance and be fair and

1 impartial.

2 And to me, that's a gist of impartiality.
3 Personally I would tell you that I don't have any
4 personal financial stake, I'm not overly allegiant
5 to any political parties or candidates. However, I
6 would admit that I do have political -- or not
7 political, but I have strong beliefs and to be
8 frank with you it's about the direction that some
9 of the things are going in California.

10 However, I have the ability to
11 compartmentalize that and put that aside and not
12 allow my personal belief that maybe what the
13 Assembly did here or maybe what the governor did
14 there is not right. I can put that aside and I can
15 look at the mission of the Commission in the
16 redistricting and not have that influence me.

17 So that brings me to the appreciation of
18 California's diversity and that's both diversity in
19 the population as far as their racial composition,
20 ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, economic
21 status. And the other one, of course, is the
22 ability to understand the diversity and the
23 geography of this state where it goes everywhere
24 from the desert out there by Blythe up to the
25 coast, the mountains, the cities, the urban areas,

1 the suburban areas, industrial areas, and farming
2 areas.

3 I have an appreciation for diversity
4 twofold or actually probably threefold, as I sit
5 here. First fold would be in the Marine Corps
6 because in the Marine Corps, there's -- we would
7 bring people in from all stratas of life, different
8 races, different sexes, and we kind of had a saying
9 they're all green. They're all Marine green. But
10 you had appreciation that those people in their
11 diverse areas, they have different interests, they
12 have different motivations. They come from a
13 different culture.

14 Carried over, as a district attorney, you
15 deal with people from the most diverse of
16 backgrounds. You deal from people that live in
17 coastal mansions that are either potential jurors
18 or crime victims, occasionally defendants. You
19 deal with people that are homeless. You deal with
20 people that are mentally ill. You deal with people
21 that are drug addicts. You deal with people that
22 are gay. You deal with people that are straight.
23 Either as defendants, as witnesses, or additionally
24 as victims and you learn again that when you're
25 dealing with these people, you have to have

1 empathy. You have to have understanding, you have
2 to have compassion, where they're coming from and
3 appreciation.

4 So I would say, as I look at this, my
5 contributions to the success of the Commission, and
6 again, I don't really like to sit here and have to
7 toot my horn, but I feel that I have not only the
8 relevant analytical skills, I have impartiality and
9 I have an appreciation for diversity.

10 And I told you threefold for diversity.
11 And that's even though in the very short time I've
12 been in Rotary, which at one point in time had the
13 reputation of just being a bunch of old white men,
14 and it's not that at all. I actually had the
15 opportunity of going to an international convention
16 in Hamburg and see people from 130 different
17 nations that come together all putting service
18 above self.

19 And I came to a new appreciation because
20 you always hear how the state of California, the
21 military, or whatever organization is better off
22 because of diversity. But that was an eye-opening
23 experience to see all these Rotarians come together
24 from all countries in the world. Ukraine, with the
25 strife that they have there. From Asia, Africa,

1 and everywhere else. And you think they can all
2 work together. So I had a -- that also forms my
3 appreciation for diversity.

4 MS. PELLMAN: We have about 14 minutes.

5 MR. DAWSON: Yes. I want to make sure that
6 we're able to get to all five of the standard
7 questions.

8 MR. MENDELSON: Yes, sir.

9 MR. DAWSON: Question 2. Work on the
10 Commission requires members of different political
11 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010
12 Commission was selected and formed, the American
13 political conversation has become increasingly
14 polarized whether in the press, on social media,
15 and even in our own families.

16 What characteristics do you possess and
17 characteristics should your fellow commissioners
18 possess that will protect against hyper-
19 partisanship?

20 What will you do to ensure that the work
21 of the Commission is not seen as polarized or
22 hyper-partisan and avoid perceptions of political
23 bias and conflict?

24 MR. MENDELSON: First of all, I find it
25 extremely disturbing what's happened. I believed

1 it references in there, in the last ten years to
2 the political discourse. And I attribute that to
3 both sides of the aisle, both sides of the
4 political spectrum.

5 I personally abhor how we see, and I'm not
6 pointing fingers at any one party, but we see
7 elected representatives that aren't working
8 together, aren't collaborating, and the level of
9 discussion has degraded to what you would expect in
10 a locker room. I find that very disturbing.

11 However, I go back to the
12 compartmentalization and the need to put aside how
13 disturbed you're about that and you have to be able
14 to sit down and seek to try to obtain mutually
15 beneficial solutions to problems. And that's where
16 you get into how do you collaborate and do that
17 sort of thing, which I think we're going to get
18 into in a minute. I don't want to eat up all my
19 time here.

20 I think the one thing you have to do is
21 you have to lead by example and you have to use
22 that ability I told you about of listening.
23 Because if you're sitting there and when you get
24 into this hyper-partisan atmosphere and there's
25 people start throwing things and name calling, it's

1 easy to jump in early and start arguing in the
2 fray. But you got to let the other side get that
3 all out and put that aside, and then you have to
4 lead by example.

5 MR. DAWSON: Question 3. What is the
6 greatest problem the Commission could encounter,
7 and what actions would you take to avoid or respond
8 to this problem?

9 MR. MENDELSON: At first I thought it might
10 have to do with group dynamics when you get a group
11 of 14 different Type A people and I've seen that
12 play out and observing getting to know various
13 grand juries and different organizations. But upon
14 a little bit more reflection, looking into it, I
15 noticed that Dr. Aguirre when he wrote a summary
16 report of the last decade's Commission or the one
17 that's, our first Commission, back in 2016, he
18 talked about the need to be suspicious, how future
19 commissions needed to be suspicious and how next
20 decade's Commission may want to make decisions
21 about manipulation of the input process.

22 And I've read some other materials, some
23 organizations that are supposedly fact-finding
24 organizations put out. I think there's reason to
25 be suspicious that when you do go out and you seek

1 this public input, you try to put aside anybody
2 worrying about any incumbent or anybody worried
3 about political candidate, there are -- probably
4 has been and there's a great potential that people
5 can manipulate the system.

6 In a public comment, you have, and it
7 appears from reading this summary right here, you
8 have people that come in from special interest
9 groups and everything else, some of them may be
10 getting money on the side. It appears that this
11 last Commission didn't really have the time or
12 didn't go into extensive fact-finding to find out
13 perhaps without naming one party or the other.

14 And I'm just saying perhaps, I don't have
15 enough evidence, but there's enough to say that one
16 party or the other manipulated the system. But I
17 think there's enough out there to say that the next
18 Commission has to be very careful that they don't
19 get manipulated.

20 And the way you have to get around that
21 is, you have to vet the people that are coming in
22 and making public comment. And it sounds like in
23 the 36 hearings or whatever they did last year,
24 they had problems sometimes having enough time for
25 public comment and also doing enough research to

1 make sure that you actually vet who's talking to
2 you. And you find out are you dealing with one of
3 these disenfranchised groups or you're dealing with
4 somebody that's perhaps is trying to manipulate the
5 system.

6 And as I sit here today, not having gone
7 through any commissioner training, to me I think
8 that's probably the greatest pitfall. And I --
9 what action I would take again would be to examine
10 the motives of the public speakers and to make sure
11 that what they're doing is within the purview of
12 the U.S. Constitution, the California Constitution
13 of Voting Rights Act of 1965.

14 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

15 Question 4. If you are selected, you'll
16 be one of 14 members of the Commission which is
17 charged with working together to create maps of the
18 new district. Please describe a situation where
19 you had to work collaboratively with others on a
20 project to achieve a common goal. Tell us the goal
21 of the project, what your role in the group was,
22 and how the group works through any conflicts that
23 arose.

24 What lessons would you take from this
25 group experience to the Commission, if selected?

1 MR. MENDELSON: Back in the time frame of
2 about 2008 through 2010, I was part of a task
3 organization called Operation Stormfront. It was
4 individuals from both the Orange County Sheriff's
5 Department; the Orange County District Attorney's
6 Office; the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and
7 Firearms; the State Department of Justice; and the
8 U.S. Secret Service.

9 And it was -- it was formed because there
10 was a large proliferation of white racist gang
11 members that mostly who were incarcerated in jails
12 and prisons, mostly from the Aryan Brotherhood or
13 PENI, Public Enemy Number 1, that were sitting
14 there and controlling a lot of criminal drug and
15 weapons trafficking on the street. And most
16 importantly, there was about nine cases of them
17 putting solicitations for murder out or hits on
18 individuals that they felt hadn't been there.

19 And this was uncovered through telephone,
20 legal telephone monitoring of jail inmate
21 conversations and intelligence gathering efforts
22 people in the sheriff's department. We also
23 brought in the U.S. Attorney's Office. So we all
24 sat together and tried to figure out how we were
25 going to go about having the biggest impact,

1 Operation Stormfront was the name of it, to take
2 these people down.

3 So it required all these diverse
4 organizations with different interests to work
5 together. The two project -- my role in that was I
6 was the state prosecutor, I was the sole state
7 prosecutor that was responsible in this effort
8 which ended up returning nine grand jury
9 indictments prosecuting at the state level 20
10 defendants, the majority of which were on
11 solicitation of murder.

12 There was also a U.S. Attorney present.
13 When you have a group dynamic like that, I think
14 the one thing that kind of came out to me is
15 everybody's trying to work together but everybody's
16 got their own little piece of the pie. So you have
17 to have some sort of unity of command. Somebody
18 needs to be in charge.

19 The result was highly successful. We took
20 out tons of weapons and we prosecuted a lot of bad
21 guys. The breakdown was, the intent was that
22 whichever agency, the state or the federal, could
23 get the most time, incarceration time for these
24 people would be the lead investigation or would be
25 the agency that would take forth and prosecute

1 them. But because there wasn't somebody on top of
2 that, there was no real overall unity of command at
3 that level. It shows the problems when you get
4 into the group dynamics and you have a group of
5 Type A people and who's going to be the leader.

6 And when I try to take that back to the
7 Commission, I noticed from reading Dr. Aguirre's
8 report last year, they were able to have a rotating
9 commissioner, they'd have a commissioner and a
10 vice-commissioner both --

11 MS. PELLMAN: We have about five minutes.

12 MR. MENDELSON: -- both of different
13 parties.

14 And where I come to the importance of this
15 group dynamic is I had a lot of time observing
16 various grand juries through the years. They're a
17 bunch of Type A people, very similar to the
18 Commission. They have a grand jury foreperson.
19 With a good grand jury foreperson, they'd be
20 talking about reunions. With a bad grand jury
21 foreperson, somebody would say when you're
22 reunions? And they'd say at funerals.

23 MR. DAWSON: Question 5. A considerable
24 amount of the Commission's work will involve
25 meeting with people from all over California who

1 come from very different backgrounds and with a
2 wide variety of perspectives.

3 If you were selected as a commissioner,
4 what skills and attributes will make you effective
5 at interacting with people from different
6 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

7 What experiences have you had that will
8 help you be effective at understanding and
9 appreciating people in communities of different
10 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

11 MR. MENDELSON: I'm going to kind of go
12 about that, I'm going to address the ones about
13 which skills or attributes I personally feel I have
14 and that's good listener, a good judge of
15 character, empathy, and feel like I have an ability
16 to relate to them.

17 As far as the rest of the question, I
18 would submit that I answered that when I talked
19 about diversity and how I interplayed with people
20 not only in the Marine Corps but most specifically
21 with the various categories of people you come into
22 contact to with the district attorney, as a
23 district attorney.

24 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. We now have a
25 period of time for the panel members to ask

1 questions with a 20-minute time limit.

2 And we'll begin with the chairperson, Mr.
3 Coe.

4 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

5 Mr. Mendelson, good afternoon.

6 MR. MENDELSON: Good afternoon.

7 CHAIR COE: I'm interested in your
8 experience as a fighter pilot in the Marine Corps
9 that you referenced and that we read about in your
10 essays.

11 That is I think a pretty unique
12 perspective and skill in this applicant pool. So
13 I'm curious if you can tell us how you think this
14 particular experience could be beneficial of the
15 work of the Commission and kind of uniquely
16 beneficial to the Commission.

17 Is there anything that you can take from
18 that that you think you could bring to this effort?

19 MR. MENDELSON: Well I mean, at the very
20 smaller end of -- scale end of that was the ability
21 to understand and comprehend technical material.
22 Obviously looked at maps, aerial photographs, and
23 the like. But at the more important end, I think
24 it is if I contrast being a fighter pilot with
25 being an attorney.

1 As an attorney, you're pretty much -- at
2 least the philosophy of the office I worked in,
3 you're on your own, you go to court by yourself.
4 And your -- there's not any teamwork.

5 As a fighter pilot, if you launch out, you
6 may escorting a package of bombers, you've got
7 other fighters, you've got tankers. You're all
8 working together as a group. And teamwork becomes
9 critical. And in that particular -- that takes it
10 to the extreme of that unit -- what you're flying
11 with a division of flyers or whatever, you're only
12 as good as the weakest link.

13 Fighter pilots are aggressive, they're
14 confident. I don't think those are necessarily bad
15 attributes for a commissioner. But I think the
16 biggest area where the fighter pilot experience
17 carries over is the teamwork.

18 CHAIR COE: So kind of continuing off the
19 idea of your experience as a fighter pilot. In
20 your impartiality essay, you discuss how that
21 experience -- and your experience as an attorney,
22 helped you hone the ability to be impartial.

23 Can you provide us with a couple of
24 specific examples where you had to exercise
25 impartiality? Particularly where you maybe had to

1 set aside your self-interest?

2 MR. MENDELSON: Well, as an attorney, you -
3 - we had a couple of cases that were pretty big.
4 One we had a Peruvian we called her the Black Widow
5 because she basically killed her husband with the
6 help of a lover. And there was no doubt in my mind
7 that she was guilty. The agency involved, the
8 policy department had arrested her and questioned
9 her. She denied everything. The agency spent
10 hours and hours and hours of investigating that.

11 And you have a burning or overwhelming
12 desire to prosecute that person and go to court.
13 But you also have an ethical duty as a deputy
14 district attorney or as a prosecutor that unless
15 you have a firm belief that you can prove that case
16 beyond a reasonable doubt, you can't prosecute it.

17 You deal with things that you don't like.
18 You knew -- I mean, there's no doubt this woman had
19 done that, but had to sit down with the agency and
20 had to actually get a group together of district
21 attorneys and we did -- they call it -- you call it
22 a turkey shoot where you review the facts of the
23 case. And I mean, there was thousands of pages of
24 evidence, there was phone records, ended up having
25 to sit there and tell the agency you need to go

1 back and you need to work this case more.

2 And I did not have a reputation as not
3 being an aggressive prosecutor. But that's where
4 you -- that decision had to be made.

5 Very similar case where we had a 1994
6 school teacher in Huntington Beach walk down the
7 street and a couple of guys were taking a leak in
8 the street in front of his wife. And he got in a
9 shoving match with them and said that's gross. And
10 they said go home wetback. So he did go home and
11 got a gun, he came back and he assassinated them at
12 point blank range.

13 He moved to Colorado and some -- this was
14 1995 and in like 2016 or '17, his wife was having a
15 mental issue and she ended up in a mental hospital.
16 She thought her husband was dead, because she was
17 hallucinating. And she talked about how he had
18 gone out and killed these kids in the middle of the
19 -- in the middle of the night, he went home, got a
20 gun, left, and killed them.

21 We went up on wiretaps and everything else
22 up trying to get his kids to call him and say
23 what's this, we heard you did this. They were real
24 smart, he didn't say anything about it.

25 But again, faced with that same ethical

1 dilemma. I hope this kind of answers your
2 question. That you're sitting here facing with
3 immense pressure and everything else. And
4 eventually it worked out. We got this guy, he's in
5 state prison. But you have to give in to the
6 ethical requirements of the case.

7 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

8 In one of your essays, I forget which, you
9 mentioned getting an award for going above and
10 beyond the call of duty in combating hate.

11 Was it the task force you worked on that
12 got you that or was that something else?

13 MR. MENDELSON: Well, there was two of
14 them. I re -- twice I received the Sherwood, which
15 is the Anti-Defamation League's award. That was
16 because I got -- in 2004, I got sent out early to
17 Huntington Beach to work in their police department
18 because of threats against judges and cops by some
19 of these white racist gangs.

20 Being an older type guy and the DA, I was
21 asked if I would go out there and I did that. So
22 that work in and of itself got me the two ADL
23 awards.

24 The other award was exactly part of the
25 Stormfront where I was working together with the

1 feds.

2 CHAIR COE: So aside from -- I want to
3 speak a little bit, switch gears to the role you've
4 been playing in the Rotary since your retirement.

5 You spoke a little about how you've been
6 running their meetings. And clearly that's a skill
7 that could transfer to -- to the Commission and the
8 work of a Commission.

9 Is there anything else in your
10 participation in your role on the Rotary that would
11 be a benefit to the Commission?

12 MR. MENDELSON: Well, in addition to
13 running the meetings because that's basically
14 ringing a bell and having somebody recite the
15 Pledge and lining up guest speakers, I'm also been
16 running the board meetings. And running the board
17 meetings is very similar because you have
18 Chairmen from different areas, vocational, service,
19 international service, youth services, and the
20 like. And I think there is a lot of carryover
21 between running the board meetings and trying to
22 get everybody together.

23 And you have -- you learn a lot about, and
24 even with all of my other experiences, I've learned
25 a lot about dealing with the dynamics again of this

1 group. Because you can sit there and try to
2 provide leadership to them and say, hey, let's go
3 do this. But if you -- if it's not coming from
4 them, you may not get any buy-in and you might be
5 doing them all themselves.

6 So you have to learn how to say hey, Mr.
7 C, what do you think about this? And you've got to
8 get them and you've got to ask them, and you've got
9 to get the ideas coming from them.

10 I think there's a carryover to that if
11 you're sitting around the Commission, and again,
12 I've never sat around, but you're talking and
13 you're trying to deliberate. Instead of gee of
14 saying hey, we need to draw this this way, you got
15 to start building that collaborative skill. You're
16 not looking for compromise or surrender, but you're
17 saying what are your interests? Which of those are
18 critical?

19 And you're looking over at another
20 individual and you're saying what are your
21 interests? Which of those are critical? And then
22 you brainstorm upon those critical issues and you
23 try to reach the consensus where everybody gets --
24 you get what's critical to everybody but you don't
25 worry about what's not critical.

1 So I think that the board, being chairman
2 of the board and seeing some other leaders. I've
3 seen leaders in the military, I've seen leaders in
4 the justice system. But I've learned a lot just in
5 the short time of Rotary which I think has
6 carryover application to the Commission.

7 CHAIR COE: Great thank you.

8 One of the -- one of the biggest tasks the
9 Commission's going to face is to identify
10 communities of interest across the state. Some of
11 these communities are easier to find than others.

12 How -- how would you have the Commission
13 go about identifying communities of interest and
14 how would you hopefully avoid potentially
15 overlooking some of the harder to find communities?

16 MR. MENDELSON: Well, first thing from
17 looking at Dr. Aguirre's report back in 2016. I
18 think that -- he admitted that their Commission
19 could have probably done a better job of defining
20 communities of interest.

21 There is no empirical litmus paper test
22 that automatically says it, it has to be defined
23 and the public needs to be educated on and
24 hopefully that's taking place right now before this
25 next ten years Commission takes place.

1 There is some guidance out there that
2 first of all communities of interest have to be in
3 complete compliance with the United States
4 Constitution, the California Constitution Voting
5 Civil Rights Act in 1965. They are not drawn for
6 the purpose of favoring an incumbent or an
7 individual political party.

8 One of the things that you're trying to do
9 is you're trying to prevent somebody burdening a
10 group, an interest group's voting rights. So I
11 believe there is some guidance out there that to a
12 degree, you want to have geographical -- and I
13 can't pronounce this word -- contiguity.

14 CHAIR COE: Contiguity.

15 MR. MENDELSON: Thank you, sir. You want
16 to have that, you want to have compactness. You
17 want to respect for existing municipal and county
18 boundaries as much as possible. But what you don't
19 want is to have somebody say go into Little Saigon
20 and say, you know, I'm running because Little
21 Saigon is on the boundary let's say of Santa Ana.
22 And we need move you guys over here to Long Beach a
23 little bit so that I can get more Hispanic people
24 in here so I can get elected. You have to watch
25 out for that, that's not what it is.

1 I think there's another case where there
2 was an attempt for somebody to convince the last
3 Commission, that we need to have a community of
4 interest that's on either side of an almost
5 impassable mountain range that you couldn't drive
6 from one side to the other.

7 So it's not a well-defined area, it's one
8 of the big challenges I think exists because
9 there's to me because sometimes you do try to look
10 at things that are real empirical and real
11 objective, just becomes a little bit more
12 subjective, but I go back to if you start with the
13 idea of those precepts, compliance with the
14 constitutions and the Civil Rights Act and then as
15 much as possible you try to -- you try to take
16 communities, boundaries of cities and counties and
17 the like, and you look at the diverse populations
18 of those areas, that's where you have to go to come
19 up with it. That's one of the very hard challenges
20 that I think a Redistricting Commission has.

21 CHAIR COE: What about some of those
22 communities that might to be harder to find that
23 maybe aren't, they're not grouped on the census,
24 for instance, it's harder to find these groups, how
25 would you go about finding those?

1 MR. MENDELSON: As I sit here and try to
2 address that real quickly, I think you have to have
3 pretty good public outreach. You need to know what
4 you're dealing with. You don't just sit back and
5 necessarily wait for them to come to you.

6 They may not all show up at public
7 hearings. I don't know how much of a challenge
8 there is to get people to public hearings. And
9 while I mention that, I just take a brief second to
10 say as a -- as a Marine aviator, we closed down El
11 Toro and moved it down to Miramar. And I did take
12 -- as working airspace issues as a liaison with the
13 FAA, did participate in a lot of public hearings
14 where it was all under the NEPA, National
15 Environmental Protection Act, where a lot of
16 citizens came -- I got a feel for a public hearing
17 can be like and how irate people can be and all
18 that.

19 And how does that relate back to what you
20 asked me? I would say you have public hearings but
21 you got -- you have a responsibility to the
22 citizens of California, the people that you don't
23 want to unduly burden from their ability to vote to
24 make sure you sniff them out.

25 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

1 If you were appointed to the Commission,
2 which -- which aspects of the role of commissioner
3 do you think that you would enjoy the most? And
4 conversely, which -- which aspect do you think that
5 you might perhaps struggle a little bit with?

6 MR. MENDELSON: I think the one I would
7 enjoy the most, it goes back to -- I've kind of
8 been about service my whole life, I've never been
9 motivated by profit. So you are serving the --
10 you're serving this country as well as the state.

11 And in serving them, one of my hopes would
12 be to be able in this day of all this rancorous
13 political bickering to show and establish through
14 this Commission in its redistricting efforts where
15 it's getting input from the public and drawing maps
16 and making sure that it's not being unduly
17 influence that you set an example of we can go back
18 to where politicians from both sides of the aisle
19 sit down together and accomplish something and can
20 work together even going into the Commission, they
21 probably had their own political and alliances.

22 But you set an example. And we need an
23 example in this state and country and it's one
24 brick at a time. So that would be to me the most
25 satisfying things.

1 I think the most frustrating thing, and
2 I'm keying off a lot about reading Dr. Aguirre's
3 report, and a lot of it may have been growing pains
4 the first time around, but they're dealing with a
5 lot of bureaucracy. You're dealing with the state
6 bureaucracy. You know, there was issues, I think
7 that now that your agency is going to go ahead and
8 hold on to all the training before that got off to
9 the Secretary of State. You've got to deal with
10 issues with contracting. With when you get an
11 executive director and you have -- you get
12 employees, the employees are working with the
13 executive director. It's just all that
14 bureaucratic stuff that you have to deal with. To
15 me, that would be the most frustrating.

16 MS. PELLMAN: We have five minutes.

17 CHAIR COE: Okay. I don't have any further
18 questions.

19 Ms. Dickison.

20 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Hello, Mr. Mendelson.

21 MR. MENDELSON: Good morning, ma'am.

22 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you for coming
23 today.

24 MR. MENDELSON: Or good afternoon. I'm
25 sorry.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So I see that you
2 earned a J.D. later right before you retired from
3 the Marine Corps.

4 MR. MENDELSON: That's correct.

5 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What made you decide
6 to go into law or to --

7 MR. MENDELSON: Well, my motivation was I
8 love flying. I flew a lot, a whole lot. I wanted
9 to be an airline pilot and practice aviation law on
10 the side. That was my motivation to go to law
11 school.

12 That got -- and they'll you say well, how
13 the heck did you end up being a deputy district
14 attorney? My first wife, without burdening you
15 with a lot, she became terminally ill with breast
16 cancer. I still had young kids at home. I'm
17 halfway through law school. And I said, I can't go
18 be an airline pilot and do a little aviation law on
19 the side because you can't afford to be away from
20 home when you have young kids.

21 So I said where can I go practice law and
22 look myself in the mirror and feel okay about it?
23 And through professors I had and everything else, I
24 said well, I could go be a district attorney and
25 not feel bad about it.

1 So hopefully that answers your question.

2 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

3 So you talked a little bit about
4 compartmentalization and how pilots use that. Can
5 you kind of outline how that concept will -- how
6 you can apply that concept to the Commission?

7 MR. MENDELSON: Well, I think each one of
8 the commissioners need to come in and recognize
9 that they probably got some pretty conceived
10 biases. And I think we're fortunate because your
11 selection process does a tremendous amount of
12 vetting. If we could vet politicians like this, we
13 might have a whole lot better functioning
14 government at all levels.

15 But having said that, commissioners can
16 still come in there and some of them are going to
17 say I'm a real hardcore D or I'm a real hardcore R
18 or I believe this or that or the other. If they
19 can recognize those beliefs and say let's look at
20 the mission statement of the California
21 Redistricting Commission and what we need to do is
22 come together in a nonpartisan matter -- manner.

23 And in order to do that, they have to say
24 I'm going to compartmentalize all those beliefs and
25 allegiances or whatever biases they have, everybody

1 has them, some people are less honest than others
2 about them. But I think it's still the same skill.
3 I think it's the same thing you do with the jurors
4 when you say can you be fair and impartial?
5 Because a lot of them are going to sit there and
6 look at this guy and say well, where he comes from
7 or -- there's cases where people say oh, he's a
8 police officer, I don't believe a thing police
9 officers say. And other people will say oh, I
10 totally -- police officer, I believe anything they
11 say.

12 Once they recognize that and then
13 compartmentalize it, and I think there's a
14 carryover. It's a little bit intangible. I really
15 think there's a carryover that each commissioner --
16 or the Commission needs to come together and
17 recognize we've all got that but here's our common
18 goal of what we want. We want to get these
19 districts drawn on maps, doing it in a fair and
20 impartial way. And in order to do that, I think
21 they need to put aside where they came into the
22 Commission from beforehand.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So I see that you're
24 from Fallbrook? That's where you live?

25 MR. MENDELSON: That's correct.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thinking about
2 Fallbrook and the community concerns in that area,
3 can you think of any community interest in
4 Fallbrook and what is the specific thing that's
5 binding that community together?

6 MR. MENDELSON: There's different community
7 interests in Fallbrook. Most -- it's -- it's
8 largely a retire -- I mean, a heavily retired
9 community, but it's got a large population of
10 service members, Marines, it's right out the back
11 gate of Camp Pendleton. Some of the Marines are
12 retired.

13 It's got a lot of poorer people. People
14 that are working the crops, the fields. It's got a
15 small part of homeless people. It's got quite a
16 mixture of different people.

17 But I think what binds it together is
18 probably its small town nature. It's -- it sits
19 apart from the freeways. It's -- it's a small,
20 it's the avocado capital of the world. People like
21 it because of that small town thing.

22 If you looked at our Rotary, we're real
23 active helping the food pantry. We're real active
24 helping the beautification projects. We're real
25 active helping the foundation for senior care.

1 People are very involved in Fallbrook. And
2 nobody's -- nobody's trying to disenfranchise, you
3 know, if you go to Fallbrook High School, there's a
4 whole lot of kids there that don't speak English.
5 But it's still, it's a good school, it's drawn
6 together. I think we bind people together from
7 different -- different diverse groups.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What do you
9 think are some of the factors that might drive the
10 preferences of some groups for what kind of
11 representation that they want?

12 MR. MENDELSON: Well, you have to look at
13 their own individual status. I mean, if you're
14 talking about somebody that likes in La Jolla or
15 Corona Del Mar in a multimillion dollar mansion,
16 they've got one thing. If you're talking about
17 somebody out there in El Centro that works in the
18 fields out there harvesting cabbage, they've got
19 other concerns.

20 And there's people all over the state.
21 You're ask -- and correct me, if I'm wrong, you're
22 asking -- actually, could you repeat the question?

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What do you think are
24 some of the factors that drive the preferences
25 people might have on who they want to represent

1 them in government?

2 MR. MENDELSON: I think it's their own
3 individual lot in life. I think that people want
4 people to represent them. And most of these people
5 I don't think are necessarily saying I need a
6 Democrat or I need a Republican.

7 I think there's a lot of people in -- now
8 there may be in the more affluent areas, but the --
9 a lot of people in the state are just more concern
10 with I need representation for me. I live in an
11 agricultural area. I live up here and we're trying
12 to do this farming and they're coming in there and
13 they're ripping up the land because they're going
14 to build a high-speed bullet train through here.
15 And who's going to protect my interest? I'm a
16 walnut farmer.

17 So I think it depends on where that
18 individual person comes from. If it's a person up
19 in Silicon Valley, even if they're working at one
20 of those big firms, they're just trying to survive
21 and have housing and not have to commute for hours.

22 If it's somebody in San Francisco,
23 downtown San Francisco, they've probably got
24 concerns about who's going to represent me and help
25 us clean up the homeless problem that we have

1 there?

2 Or it could be somebody, there's going to
3 be different issues about what are we going to do
4 about this sanctuary city problem whichever way.
5 Again, that's probably a pretty good area right
6 there where if you had a bunch of commissioners in
7 there, you might have to really tell them, hey,
8 we've got to start compartmentalizing this when we
9 start talking about sanctuary cities. Because I
10 think it can arouse strong emotions on either part.
11 And we could get into side arguments as to why
12 sanctuary cities exists based on political
13 motivation.

14 But there's a strong example going back to
15 previous question where commissioners are going to
16 have to compartmentalize to address it.

17 But as far as the diverse interest of who
18 people want to represent them, it's going to depend
19 on their lot in life. And just like that whole
20 diversity thing about these people from all these
21 different ethnic groups, racial groups, genders,
22 sexuality, and people that live in different areas
23 that live up in, you know, the part of California
24 where they want to secede and become the state of
25 Jefferson, as opposed to people that live in the

1 Central Valley or people all over the state. So.

2 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So in your
3 essay you talked about conducting criminal trials
4 and how you had to appeal jurors of all backgrounds
5 and employ professionals, all races, genders,
6 sexual orientations, those lived in mansions or
7 resided in high density slum areas.

8 What did you learn in having to appeal to
9 all these different groups of people that you can
10 take and use in the work in the Commission?

11 MR. MENDELSON: Well, I think you have to
12 dissect things down to where it makes sense to
13 people of all educational levels, people of all
14 economic levels and everything else.

15 In a jury, in a criminal case, you had to
16 have all 12. So you couldn't sit there and just
17 look at the person that you knew that was wearing a
18 nice coat and tie and was living in a big mansion.
19 You also had people that were unemployed, postal
20 employees. So you have to kind of know how to
21 relate to the people in all these different social
22 strata and different cultures.

23 And the same thing would hold true in
24 Commission and drawing these maps, you have to be
25 willing to listen and understand. As I understand

1 it, you're having these hearings and people are
2 going to come in and they're going to address you
3 and they're going to propose different maps and
4 boundaries. And when all is said and done, the
5 commissioners have to sit down themselves and draw
6 those maps out there.

7 And so you have to make sure that you're
8 factoring in the input of all these various
9 interests. Or if you don't do that, then you're
10 unduly burdening potential voters' rights.

11 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So if you were
12 selected as one of the first eight commissioners
13 through the random drawing, describe how you would
14 determine what you would be looking for in the
15 final six commissioners to fill out the Commission.

16 MR. MENDELSON: Well, the first thing I'd
17 say about that is from reading Dr. Aguirre's
18 report, I noticed there was discussion in there
19 about the training and how the first eight
20 commissioners, you know, receive some training on
21 how to select the other six.

22 One of his complaints was that they
23 received a whole bunch of training and then the
24 other six when they were finally selected, they
25 were relegated to having to go back and watch it on

1 videotapes. And he try to say the first eight
2 ought to be just trained on selection criteria for
3 the other six.

4 So I think that the Secretary of State was
5 doing that training, I'm not sure. But whoever
6 does that training obviously is going to put some
7 input. So if you're a selected first eight
8 commissioner, then you need to listen to that
9 training and see how much of that is discretionary
10 and how much of that is -- I don't know if there's
11 anything mandated in statute, but you take that
12 training apart and then you just go right back to
13 the same attributes that you want to have.

14 You want to have people that have the
15 relevant analytical skills. People that are
16 impartial and people that have appreciation for
17 diversity. And you want diversity. Perhaps if I
18 do the math, I think you're down to 20 -- let's
19 see, you've got -- you're going to start with 60,
20 you're going to get rid of 24, and then you're
21 going to get eight. So you're down in the upper
22 20s to come up with six somewhere.

23 So you're probably looking through there.
24 And again, you want to have some diversity
25 representation in the Commission. And that may not

1 be just where there -- what race they are, what sex
2 they are. But it may be what -- what life
3 experiences do they have? Where are they coming
4 from?

5 You know, last time they had a farmer,
6 they have shopkeepers, they have attorneys and
7 everything else. You probably don't want to stack
8 your next six selections with all attorneys.

9 But again, depending on what you're told
10 your goal and mission is when you're in the first
11 eight and you're instructed, I think that absent
12 any other instruction, you're looking at the
13 relevant -- those key attributes and you're looking
14 at diversity not only of -- of personal diversity
15 but diversity of life experiences that will better
16 allow commissioner to recognize what you talked
17 about and that's perhaps some of those people that
18 aren't that well represented or acknowledged or
19 people that aren't aware of.

20 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.
21 Ultimately, what would you like to see the
22 Commission accomplish?

23 MR. MENDELSON: I would like to see the
24 Commission in a nonpartisan matter draw up
25 boundaries that -- and I hate to keep repeating

1 myself but are in compliance with the U.S.
2 Constitution, California Constitution of Voting
3 Civil Rights Act without falling prey to any undue
4 influence by special interest groups that perhaps
5 are not totally recognized of what they're trying
6 to do, to hear the average citizen, to hear those
7 people out there that have those interests and make
8 sure that you have enough public relations to track
9 them in to these public meetings.

10 And then as I said, to set the example
11 that we can get people from both sides of the aisle
12 to come in and work together collaboratively
13 without having to yell, call each other names, and
14 everything else. But set an example one brick at a
15 time that we need to go back to the days where --
16 where people can work together regardless of their
17 political affiliations.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

19 I don't have any questions.

20 Mr. Coe.

21 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap.

22 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you for being
23 here.

24 I want to talk to you about your time in -
25 - or your time that's currently with the Rotary.

1 You talk about the four-way test when you examining
2 any decision.

3 I'd like you to talk to us about what the
4 four-way test is and then give us an example of how
5 you use that to make a decision.

6 MR. MENDELSON: Well, the four-way test is
7 supposed to govern everything that somebody thinks,
8 says, or does.

9 The first one is it the truth. And I'll
10 be honest with you, when I went to -- I got invited
11 to Rotary meeting for two years before I retired by
12 our veterinarian. When first time I went in there,
13 I saw that up there and said is it the truth.
14 After spending 19 years in a courtroom, I said wow,
15 I'm attracted to that. But first one is it the
16 truth.

17 Second one is it fair to all concerned?
18 Will it build goodwill and better friendships? And
19 will it be beneficial to all concerned? And I
20 think you can take at least three of those and say
21 that when a Commission sits there and draws up
22 these boundaries doing all their process, first of
23 all, is it the truth? Kind of goes to are people
24 coming in here and not trying to misrepresent
25 what's going on?

1 Is it fair to all concerned? Boy, if
2 that's not one of the cornerstones of what this
3 Commission's supposed to do, I don't know. Will it
4 build goodwill or better friendships? That's
5 probably the least important one. But is it
6 beneficial to all concerned? In other words, are
7 we disenfranchising some group in how we sit there
8 and move these boundaries?

9 And I think that's -- I think you apply
10 that. And, you know, I'm not -- I wouldn't say
11 that I want to go in there -- if I was selected as
12 a commissioner, okay, let me tell you guys, we've
13 got to do the four-way test. And, you know, try to
14 tie it in that way. But I think as you interact
15 with the Commission and if you end up assuming some
16 sort of leadership role on some subcommittee or
17 whatever, you really use those precepts to guide
18 you and it kind of ends up being leadership by
19 example and hopefully they permeate through and
20 carry over to all the Commission's actions.

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

22 So reading your background report, there's
23 a statement in there and I want to give you a
24 chance to respond. I'm not saying that I'm
25 concerned by this sentence, but I think you should

1 have the opportunity to -- to address it.

2 It says, online news article reported that
3 the applicant recognized that he may have made a
4 legal error when prosecuting a case before the
5 grand jury in or around 2014.

6 Do you want to speak to that error?

7 MR. MENDELSON: I'll be glad to. There was
8 -- I don't know if anybody in here's familiar. The
9 Orange County District Attorney's Office ended up
10 suffering -- it was an informant usage scandal that
11 ended up causing the judge to actually, and a guy
12 named Dekraai -- you probably heard of the Seal
13 Beach went in there and massacred a bunch of women
14 in a beauty salon in Seal Beach. And he ended up
15 not getting a death penalty because it was a huge
16 informant scandal.

17 And pretty much everybody that was
18 prosecuting homicides was called in to testify by
19 the defense attorney that was raising this issue.
20 And I could literally talk to you for hours about
21 it. I tried to refresh my memory to make sure that
22 I could be real distinct about what I said.
23 Because I went online and there's only two places
24 where I suspect that came from.

25 One would be an article -- a newspaper

1 that used to be in existence called the OC --
2 OC Weekly. And I don't know how you describe them,
3 each community probably has them but half of them
4 are ads for escorts and used to be ads for, you
5 know, head shops and stuff like that. And they had
6 kind of a slanted thing. It might have been in
7 there.

8 Or it could have been in the Los Angeles
9 Daily Journal. I don't subscribe to the Daily
10 Journal anymore so I'm not sure if it was in there.
11 Or it might have been in the OC Weekly. When I
12 went online, they had disbanded and somehow they've
13 dumped all their archives. So I couldn't go back
14 there.

15 I can only tell you to the best of my
16 recollection, I was called to testify. I was one
17 of probably 30 or 40 witnesses. And I was grilled
18 about a guy named Joey Govey who was a Aryan --
19 PENI Aryan Brotherhood guy and he was involved in a
20 solicitation to murder. I had taken the case to
21 the grand jury to get an indictment on him. And
22 there was an issue as to when you get a gang
23 enhancement which allows you to if a crime is done
24 for the benefit of, at the direction of, or to
25 further assist a criminal street gang, you get an

1 additional term of sentence.

2 And they were questioning me about
3 whether, when I was being examined, whether Joey
4 Govey was PENI or Aryan Brotherhood. And I tried
5 to -- I tried to explain that it didn't really
6 matter but I was adamant, I mean, I raised my voice
7 and said there was no conspiracy to violate any
8 inmate's rights.

9 Because that was the allegation, the press
10 ran with this stuff and it's still simmering out
11 there. And I don't know of anybody in the DA's
12 office that was doing that. But as a means of
13 trying to over -- or emphasize my adamant statement
14 that there was no conspiracy to violate an inmate's
15 rights, I tried to make myself look reasonable by
16 saying maybe, you know, I may have misspoken to the
17 grand jury about this.

18 But legally it was insignificant because
19 the grand jury returned an indictment and there's a
20 means and a vehicle where a defense could go in
21 there and say we want to run a 1583 motion and have
22 that indictment set aside. That was never done. I
23 would say that that in and of itself is evidence
24 that what I did wasn't unethical or improper.

25 And again, I wish I could go back and find

1 the article because I could probably better recall
2 exactly what was said. When I left the DA's
3 office, I did not bring a transcript of that
4 testimony. But I can assure you that it was
5 nothing unethical or that should cause this
6 Commission concern about my integrity.

7 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank
8 you. In your response to Question 1, you're
9 talking about how everyone has biases and you talk
10 about the need to compartmentalize.

11 A statement you made -- and then I want to
12 ask you a question about is that you had some
13 strong beliefs about how things are going in
14 California but you're going to put those aside and
15 those are not going to influence you.

16 What I'm wondering is what are those
17 concerns that you have about the direction, things
18 are going in California that you indicate that you
19 need to set aside?

20 MR. MENDELSON: Well, I think it goes back
21 to the legislature. Just like the U.S. Congress
22 does not work together for the most part. I don't
23 see a lot of people on either side of the aisle
24 working together saying we need to -- we need to do
25 this.

1 I see more of, you know, the -- some of
2 the AG's efforts and I'm not -- I'm not identifying
3 with any political party but I think too much of
4 the effort is let's sit there and talk about the
5 people in D.C. and let's -- let's sue them, let's
6 throw up every roadblock we can to them instead of
7 saying, let's be concerned about the citizens of
8 California.

9 Each side's got things that they need to
10 bring to the table and they need to represent. But
11 I don't see that happening. And that's very
12 frustrating to me.

13 So when I go into a Commission, I sit
14 down. I think it's going to be five Republicans
15 and five Democrats and it doesn't really matter
16 which side I'm on. But when I see people sitting
17 over there on the other side and I say boy, I look
18 at what they're doing, whether it's an R or a D in
19 D.C. or an R and D in California, I've got to say,
20 whoa, don't prejudge this person. Just put that in
21 the back of your mind, compartmentalize that and
22 turn on your listening ears and hear what he has to
23 say and go from there.

24 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

25 Those are all the questions that I'd like

1 to ask.

2 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson.

3 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

4 I'd actually just like to follow up on the
5 question that Mr. Belnap asked.

6 Obviously the Commission will have -- the
7 main role is drawing the lines of districts.

8 Do you think that more competitive
9 districts will have an effect, positive or
10 negative, on this dysfunction that you -- that you
11 identified in the legislature or in Congress?

12 MR. MENDELSON: Mr. Dawson, I'm not sure
13 that more competitive districts is something that
14 we're supposed to be concerned with in the
15 Commission in drawing these boundaries. It's not
16 really a degree of how competitive.

17 It seems to me that almost falls into wow,
18 we've got to make this more competitive because
19 this particular incumbent or this particular party
20 there needs to get a little -- little advantage.
21 And that's not what it's about. What it's about is
22 making sure that those citizens on the ground,
23 those people that register to vote and go in and
24 cast their ballots have a fair say and aren't moved
25 around so as to balance it out for one political

1 party or the other.

2 And maybe there was some accusations that
3 party X did it before, I'm going to be concerned
4 that party Y might try to do it because party Y
5 goes, oh, we got snookered by party X. So it
6 doesn't matter which party it is and it's not a
7 matter -- I don't see anywhere where the precepts
8 say competitiveness is what we're aiming for when
9 we draw these boundaries.

10 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Do you still have
11 an active bar license?

12 MR. MENDELSON: I do. And can I explain?

13 MR. DAWSON: Oh, yes, please.

14 MR. MENDELSON: My wife and I -- right now
15 I'm not practicing law. Rotary is keeping me busy.
16 And I see this, if I am selected, is something I'll
17 do.

18 I could practice law but the reason why I
19 really keep it active and didn't go inactive is my
20 wife and I go down to the University of San Diego
21 and help judge moot court.

22 MR. DAWSON: All right. Did you grow up in
23 California?

24 MR. MENDELSON: No, I was an Army brat. I
25 lived in California in Claremont maybe when I was

1 four or five. I was stationed here in '78, and
2 then I was stationed here again, I've been here
3 since 1991.

4 MR. DAWSON: I see. So it was the Marine
5 Corps that brought you out to California, other
6 than when you were moved here with your folks.

7 MR. MENDELSON: Yes, sir.

8 MR. DAWSON: So I have asked this of other
9 applicants who came to California as -- as adults,
10 who were not born here.

11 Is that -- is there a perspective that you
12 can bring having grown up outside of California,
13 seeing what California is like that could inform
14 your work on the Commission?

15 MR. MENDELSON: You know, I'd like to say
16 yes. I see California looking a lot different than
17 it did in nineteen -- actually, let me think.
18 Nineteen -- yeah, I got here in '91. I think it
19 looks a lot different than it did in 1991, to be
20 honest with you.

21 I've lived a lot of places, mainly
22 Florida, Texas, Virginia. But I probably be
23 exaggerating if I said that as a military Marine
24 officer in those states, I picked up a whole lot
25 more that I can bring to California. So I can't --

1 I can't make that leap.

2 MR. DAWSON: Well, let me focus on the
3 statement you just made about how much it's changed
4 since 1991.

5 Can you expand on that?

6 MR. MENDELSON: Well, I think if you just
7 look at the makeup of our legislature. And again,
8 I'm trying to get away from saying it. But, you
9 know, all the -- virtually all the elections are
10 going to one party.

11 Does that mean that I'm sitting here with
12 a secret agenda to come in there and say we've got
13 to equal that out? No, it doesn't.

14 I -- I have enough integrity to know that
15 what we got to do is we've got to get politicians
16 from both sides working together and then the chips
17 fall where they were. Because these people,
18 wherever they came from, are entitled to have their
19 own say.

20 But California's changed demographically.
21 It's not just party registration. If you look up
22 at, you know, a lot of things that were proposed in
23 California. I mean, there's a time when California
24 proposed I think it was Prop 187. And we've
25 completely gone away from that.

1 That's not a bad thing, but I'm not here
2 to advocate for or hoping to advocate for one part
3 or the other. I'm hoping to advocate for the
4 individual citizen out there to have his fair say
5 without being used as a pawn to move his voting
6 place somewhere else so that, you know, whether
7 you're talking about the state assembly, whether
8 you're talking about the state senate, the board of
9 equalizations or the 53 or however many congressmen
10 we still have.

11 That's what it's about.

12 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Thank you.

13 I'd like to maybe switch gears a little
14 bit and go back to your response to the first
15 standard question.

16 One of the things you talked about was how
17 important it is to assess the credibility of the
18 information input. I realize that in your
19 experience as a pilot, that probably goes for
20 everything like how do you read a weather map and
21 can I rely upon that. As an attorney, you're
22 assessing the credibility of witnesses on your side
23 on the other.

24 How would you go about in your work on the
25 Commission in assessing the credibility, the

1 reliability of the information that you'll be
2 receiving?

3 MR. MENDELSON: Well, I mean, I think a lot
4 -- I'm assuming that a lot of this we're talking
5 about information people come into public hearings,
6 people bring in maps and they make representations.

7 And I think I kind of glean this from Dr.
8 Aguirre's report that, you know, you may need to
9 vet -- vet who these people are a little bit and
10 see if they have any special interests or anything.

11 And I'm not sure if -- I don't even know
12 if the testimony -- I don't think the testimony in
13 public hearings is under oath. So I think one of
14 the tools is you probably have to utilize what we
15 have today that they didn't have as much back in
16 1990, '91, and that's social media. And you
17 probably need somebody working with the Commission
18 can vet these people in social media.

19 There might be a guy named Bob S. And I'm
20 making that up. And you may find out that Bob S.
21 is standing up in front of the Commission
22 representing City X and he lives hundreds of miles
23 away. And by vetting those people, that would
24 cause you concern. Doesn't mean automatically what
25 he's saying is not correct or credible but that's

1 just a factor that you use in making your
2 credibility determination.

3 MR. DAWSON: What about the, I would call
4 the harder data such as census information? That's
5 going to be a major input on the Commission's work.

6 How do you feel about assessing the
7 reliability of that data?

8 MR. MENDELSON: Because of some of the
9 problems we've had with voting and I'm assuming
10 that the census -- I'm not sure that the census
11 being computerized is a whole better, but the
12 Commission cannot take on the task of validating
13 the accuracy of the census.

14 So I think the Commission, given its
15 limited scope, is pretty much going to have to take
16 that and assume that if there's irregularities in
17 the census, other organizations will -- will go to
18 court and try to point that out.

19 But if you're an American in this day and
20 age and some -- something's computerized like that,
21 whether it's caucus in City A or it's ballots in
22 Florida, you've got to be -- you've got to be a
23 little bit skeptical.

24 MR. DAWSON: I see.

25 I have no more questions. We have about

1 16 minutes left in the period.

2 Are there any follow ups from the panel?

3 Ms. Dickison?

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I don't have any.

5 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Belnap?

6 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not have any
7 follow-up questions.

8 MR. DAWSON: All right.

9 Well then, at this time, Mr. Mendelson,
10 I'd like to offer you an opportunity to make a
11 closing statement if you'd like.

12 MR. MENDELSON: Well, very briefly, I would
13 do likewise to the candidate I heard before and
14 that's thank the Commission. I think that it's
15 extremely important. It's got to be a rigorous job
16 to read through all this and sit here. The CHP
17 officer in the back was showing me the schedule of
18 what you guys are doing. So hats off to you.

19 But I think vetting this Commission is
20 important. I'm -- I don't need to repeat myself,
21 you've heard what I had to say. I think that I've
22 got those attributes. I really do believe that I
23 could compartmentalize. I don't have a hidden
24 agenda. What would want to -- I really do mean it
25 when I say I'd like to see this as an example where

1 people can come together from both sides of the
2 aisle or along with neutrals and come up with a
3 system where everybody in the state has a fair say.

4 And having said that, I thank you all. I
5 recognize that I'm an old white guy so that
6 probably puts me in a disadvantage. But I've tried
7 to be as honest with you as I can do today.

8 And thank you very much for hearing me
9 out.

10 CHAIR COE: Thank you for being here, Mr.
11 Mendelson.

12 Our next interview isn't until tomorrow
13 morning at 9 a.m. So we will be in recess until
14 8:59 a.m. tomorrow.

15 (Thereupon the Panel recessed at 5:22 p.m.)
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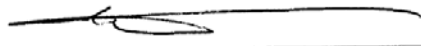
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