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

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8:58 A.M.

Reported by:
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APPLICANTS

Peter Blando

Teresa Liang

Katherine Burns

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P R O C E E D I N G S

8:58 a.m.

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3 CHAIR DICKISON: Calling the meeting of the
4 Applicant Review Panel meeting to order. It is 8:58 and we
5 are here.

6 We'd like to welcome Mr. Peter Blando. Did I say
7 that correctly?

8 MR. BLANDO: That's good, yes.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: For his interview. At this
10 time, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Chris Dawson. He
11 will be reading you the five standard questions.

12 MR. DAWSON: Good morning, Mr. Blando, thank you
13 for being here. I'm going to ask you five standard
14 questions which the Panel has requested that each applicant
15 respond to. Are you ready, sir?

16 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

17 MR. DAWSON: The first question. What skills and
18 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

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

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

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

25 MR. BLANDO: Thank you. For the skills and

1 attributes the Commissioners should possess, I would say
2 it's a mix based on what the goals are. So, it's a
3 combination of the soft skills, so ability to communicate,
4 ability to work within the team. Ability to engage people
5 and get people engaged. Ability to, I guess, to encourage
6 input to not have to -- say, not have some separation.

7 So, as a Commissioner, you will carry the title
8 of Commissioner and that ability to say, well, yes, that's
9 my title but I'm here in the public setting, talk to me,
10 encourage me, and ability to encourage people to provide
11 some information, humility, sense of humor, adaptability.

12 For the hard skills, I would say some experience
13 and skills in conflict management. You can bring together
14 a group of people who have a variety of -- who are diverse
15 and you want that diversity, and that diversity has
16 conflict. Conflict is good, but it needs to be managed.

17 Change management. So, throughout the process we
18 need to be adaptable and do the change.

19 Of course, analytical skills, these folks are
20 going to be looking at data, lots of data, ability to
21 interview and listen, active listening. One of the skills
22 or attributes is inquisitive, and you ask questions.

23 What should they possess collectively? I would
24 say individually and collectively the skills and experience
25 to be in a Commission, in a public setting. People have a

1 lot of experience with committees and different things, but
2 a high profile committee that's very public, and a camera,
3 in a public setting where you have a lot of people coming
4 to a public setting and providing input. Some of them
5 might be emotional and ability to work within that
6 environment.

7 The skills and attributes that each -- so,
8 collectively and each of them should possess some level, as
9 I mentioned already.

10 What can I contribute to the success of the
11 Commission, my background, my education as an engineer, as
12 an MBA, very analytical, problem solving and, by the way,
13 that's one of the skills to have, decision making, as well.
14 I think I bring that to the committee. I will have the
15 decision making skills, the ability to work within a
16 committee setting, a commission setting, the ability to
17 interact with a variety of people from different
18 backgrounds, the experience to work with a lot of data,
19 and, of course, the inquisitiveness. And I hope I also can
20 bring the ability to encourage people to be engaged.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question two. Work on
22 the Commission requires members of different political
23 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010 Commission
24 was selected and formed, the American political
25 conversation has become increasingly polarized, whether in

1 the press, on social media, and even in our own families.

2 What characteristics do you possess, and what
3 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
4 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

5 What will you do to ensure that the work of the
6 Commission is not seen as polarized or hyperpartisan and
7 avoid perceptions of political bias and conflict?

8 MR. BLANDO: Thank you. I would disagree in some
9 case of the hyperpartisanship because I engage with people
10 and they would comment on social media. When you engage
11 with them one-on-one, and individually, and in person they
12 become a different person. They're almost agreeable. It's
13 almost like they have, in some cases, a different persona
14 online. So, the online and the social media sort of brings
15 out the bad in people. I think there's more commonality
16 than people realize and to understand that part.

17 So, how can we protect against hyperpartisanship?
18 Well, it's about bridging the gap and talking about what's
19 mostly common, rather than what is different. And if
20 there's differences, celebrate those differences. And part
21 of it is also acknowledging. So, not being dismissive,
22 saying that I may not agree, but I understand. That's
23 where I don't disagree with your perception. That is your
24 perception. That is your opinion. So, acknowledge them,
25 understand. And this is working within the team and other

1 Commissioners, so part of it is with the people with
2 different parties and different opinions is they're going
3 to have the different perspectives. Listen. And part of
4 it is active listening that ought to be a skill early on.
5 Repeat what they said. And that's a sense of acknowledging
6 what they said. So, you sort of disarm them in a sense
7 because they are engaging with you, and you're engaging
8 with them, telling them I hear you. And in many cases, a
9 lot of people that's all they need.

10 Part of the characteristics I possess, in those
11 settings when you're arguing and you are debating is to be
12 able to take the opposite side. So, if you could argue
13 both sides. So, the analogy is if you could play chess on
14 both sides against yourself, you know. Not unless you
15 understand, you know, what do I see from this side and what
16 do I see from the other side. And I would say there's
17 typically more than one side and more than one thing.

18 The other characteristic again is to find out
19 what's common and to bridge that gap. So, if we're working
20 with the Commissioners, each Commissioner, and we're going
21 to be working for a year. Part of it is there's going to
22 be some down time, less formal time, get to learn about
23 each other. Get to say, yeah, I play softball, too. I'm
24 also a runner, I jog. So, build on those commonalities so
25 you already have a frame of reference that says you are

1 your own tribe. And I think that's part of the thing is
2 that in the hyperpartisanship people forget that they are
3 members of many tribes.

4 So, I, myself, you know, I work for the
5 University of California, I'm a Rotarian, I'm Catholic, I'm
6 Republican. People focus on the Republican and they forget
7 everything else. And part of what I hope to bring is that.

8 So, to ensure that the work is not polarized or
9 hyperpartisan, the perceptions of people are very
10 difficult, you know, and you may not be able to change
11 their perception. But one of the things I would try to
12 hopefully work through in the group is try to have more
13 consensus rather than voting. Voting, and that's what you
14 see most of the time in the political arena is people vote
15 one side versus the other.

16 Compromise is a little bit better. Consensus is
17 where you find what is common and you agree on that and
18 everybody concurs. And I think I've seen some of the
19 videos, a few of the videos here of the group where you are
20 debating who should go next, and that's building the
21 consensus to say, yes, I said no initially, and now I think
22 -- and you've discussed that and all can say yes, now. So,
23 that's a building of consensus that says regardless of what
24 party you belong to, regardless of what opinion the entire
25 group concurred. So, they can't point and say the

1 Republicans voted this way, the Democrats voted this way,
2 there's partisanship there.

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

7 MR. BLANDO: The greatest problem that I see and
8 the greatest worry I would have is that we've drawn the
9 district lines and it's a poor quality. It's bad because
10 it's not reflective of the community or what it is. And
11 the problem is rooted in that we did not get the
12 information, there's a big gap in the information.

13 We're going to get hard data, cold data from the
14 Census and we're going to get other things. When you get
15 to the communities and you're engaging the community, and
16 you have the town hall, whatever public setting, does
17 anybody show up? I've had this issue with some public
18 committees, the Police Accountability Board, where we have
19 public meetings, inviting the public and it's like, well,
20 one person, two people show up, and that's it. And you're
21 struggling to communicate and get people in.

22 Or, who shows up is not reflective of the
23 community. It is a vocal minority perhaps. Well, that
24 skews your information. The committee, how do they get the
25 information to know the neighborhood, to know that there's

1 -- what is the commonality of the neighborhood, in addition
2 to the data that we've collected. And I think that's the
3 one big problem we'll see.

4 And, you know, as an example for this committee
5 and the applicants I looked at the data, and it's like,
6 well, you have an entire Northern California area, we've
7 got three counties, and there's nobody applied. How can
8 you represent that if they don't even show up, they're not
9 even in the pool? And I see that as a difficulty as we go
10 through different places. We'll be in the town, we'll be
11 in the locality, how can I get them to show up.

12 MR. DAWSON: Question four. If you are selected,
13 you will be one of 14 members of the Commission which is
14 charged with working together to create maps of the new
15 districts. Please describe a situation where you had to
16 work collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a
17 common goal.

18 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
19 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
20 conflicts that arose.

21 What lessons would you take from this group
22 experience to the Commission if selected?

23 MR. BLANDO: I can tell you a bad group
24 experience, because typically bad experiences teach you
25 more than good experiences.

1 So, the goal of the project was a work in the
2 University of California. Some work is reflected -- we
3 bill the work, for some of the work. So, in this case we
4 have an ancient billing system that needs to be replaced.
5 Everybody knows it needs to be replaced, everybody
6 complains about it.

7 I was the coordinator for this group. I was not
8 the project sponsor, but I was asked to convene a
9 representative of different departments that use this
10 billing system. And everybody was on the same board that
11 it needs to be replaced and we brought it through. And the
12 conflicts arose with what solutions and what are the --
13 what are the requirements and what's the solutions? What
14 solution should we pick? What product should we pick?

15 What lesson I took was I did not know and I did
16 not undertake the human element. We had the same goal of
17 the billing system needed to be replaced. Everybody
18 already had a solution and their goal was to replace it
19 with their solution. So, I did not recognize the secondary
20 goal or a secondary incentive for people. They're there
21 because of their own. And there were four or five
22 different options. And it was difficult to bring them
23 together because they already had a preconceived system
24 that they wanted to push. That was one.

25 And two, there wasn't any mechanism set up on how

1 to break the deadlock, how to reset the group, how to come
2 back. There wasn't a process for change management. I
3 mentioned that and that's one of the things why. We need
4 to change. We need to adjust. What should we do?

5 And lastly what I took was, and I don't know if
6 that's the same for this Commission, in that case I had a
7 project sponsor in which I can say you need to come in
8 because we're in a deadlock, we need to move forward.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

10 MS. PELLMAN: We have about 16 minutes.

11 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

12 MR. BLANDO: Did you want a good example? I
13 mean, is that --

14 MR. DAWSON: Oh, if you'd like to continue, sure.

15 MR. BLANDO: So, it's more the committee work
16 that I've been in. So, in the Police Accountability Board
17 our goal really is to listen to complaints about officers
18 and decide if that's sustained, not sustained, unfounded or
19 they exonerate the officer. There's details that I can't
20 share with the group.

21 But in our -- so, part of the goal is to review
22 and provide feedback to the police chief. The other part
23 is also to provide -- on that specific incident. The other
24 part is to provide input on policy.

25 My role at the time was just as a member of that

1 committee, of that board. I was the chair of that board
2 later. But the issue I identified, the issue that was
3 going on was we were looking at things independently and
4 not looking at a pattern. And what I brought to the group
5 in that case was I said, well, there seems to be a pattern.
6 And this part is public because it was in the report, and
7 it says there's a lot of reports of -- between UC Davis
8 health staff and UC Davis police officers. And I brought
9 to the fact, well, these are all paid by UC Davis and this
10 is not a member of the public. Can we do something
11 internally to work together as employees, just like any
12 other department would and let's bring that together?

13 So, what lessons I take from this is to sometimes
14 take a step back from this meeting, and this meeting, and
15 this meeting, and let's put some things together and can we
16 discuss that. Is there a pattern that we're seeing here?

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five. A
18 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
19 meeting with people from all over California who come from
20 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of
21 perspectives.

22 If you are selected as a Commissioner, what
23 skills and attributes will make you effective at
24 interacting with people from different backgrounds and who
25 have a variety of perspectives?

1 What experiences have you had that will help you
2 be effective at understanding and appreciating people and
3 communities of different backgrounds and who have a variety
4 of perspectives?

5 MR. BLANDO: So, the skills and attributes, I'll
6 go back to what the first question was so the ability to
7 engage with people. So, that's one of the attributes I
8 have from my experience, and various committees, and
9 various roles, and many of them volunteer roles to engage
10 with people, and to listen to them, to ask questions.

11 In the university, in the different committees,
12 in my experience a lot of that is with different people.
13 In general, a lot of the committees were representative
14 from facility. You had some administrators, you had staff.
15 I usually represented the staff. You had students, both
16 the undergraduate and graduate students. And even with the
17 faculty you had tenured faculty and you had Academic
18 Federation, which is non-tenured faculty. And sometimes
19 there's different ages as well and many of them come from
20 different backgrounds. And at UC Davis, especially, the
21 students can come from different areas of the state.

22 So, ability to work with that and work with the
23 team, and work with them as a team to solve problems, and
24 that's what I have been able to do. But also, when we go
25 group to go back, so that when I was staff and chair, sort

1 of separate myself and go and ask, oh, what does everybody
2 see? What does everybody -- you know, go and reach out to
3 them and ask them questions.

4 One example was a committee hearing, not unlike
5 this, where I was asked to represent the staff and present
6 in a panel. While I was waiting outside there were
7 security folks outside, plain clothes police officers and I
8 just talked to them. I'm here and I need to know what
9 staff, I need to represent what staff think and you guys
10 are also staff. What do you guys think is important. And
11 then, just the sense of how do you interact? You just
12 start interacting.

13 For your AV folks here, I worked in a group that
14 had AV, so one of the things I learned was, well, how do
15 you roll the cables? And they had this specific way to
16 roll a cable so it doesn't get caught and it doesn't get --
17 you know, when they unroll it, it's easy to unroll.

18 So, you listen to those little things and you
19 engage them on those things that they know, and they are
20 expert, and that's a way to interact with people.

21 And the experiences I've had, and basically those
22 are the experience. I believe that's -- so, the
23 experiences I've had that will help to be effective in
24 understanding and appreciating people of communities in
25 different backgrounds and a variety of perspectives, I

1 think my journey in life. So, I'm an immigrant. So, I
2 come here as somebody from a different country, a different
3 culture. I get dropped down into San Francisco. And then,
4 I moved to a very rural town in Orland. And then, back to
5 San Francisco, and then Vacaville, Davis.

6 So, in that case, you know, as a kid growing up
7 you interact with people, and you adjust, and you adapt,
8 and you don't stay in a shell. Part of it is getting to
9 learn what people are doing. And in Orland it's baseball,
10 you do baseball as a kid. You ride around with a bike and
11 people are very accepting. You go in the rural communities
12 and it's like, well, let's just go get our fishing rods,
13 there's some fishing holes over here, and just explore.

14 In the city it's a different kind of exploration,
15 it's a different kind of freedom. It's like, well, with a
16 pocket full of change you can go anywhere. You can go to
17 another city. And that was very interesting.

18 In that experience, too, I've gone to my friends'
19 residences and homes in Orland, both in the country, to how
20 they lived in the country, and I lived in the country as
21 well. But I visited some of the friends who lived in a
22 trailer park. It was very interesting and I hang out with
23 them.

24 In the city I know I've had some friends, and
25 it's later in junior high and high school, to a very dense

1 apartment complex high rise, where this friend had their
2 family of I don't know how many, it seemed like a dozen of
3 them, but they were cramped in there, but that's how they
4 lived. And that's part of understanding the communities
5 and, you know, how they live, where they are.

6 I've also gone to different churches. So, the
7 same venues, going with my friends, so I'm Catholic, but I
8 had a friend whose family was more Evangelical, and I went
9 to their church a couple times. My sister is a Mormon and
10 I went to her church several times as well. So, being
11 engaged and being open to -- I mean that's more extreme.
12 Some people are not -- that's religion, so people are
13 heinous on the subject of religion, but getting to know and
14 engage people that way.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. At this time we will go
16 to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes
17 to ask his or her questions. And we will start with the
18 Chair, Ms. Dickison.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning, Mr. Blando. Thank
20 you for meeting with us today.

21 So, you are currently working at UC Davis, is
22 that correct?

23 MR. BLANDO: That's correct.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, in the Information and
25 Education Technology Department?

1 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What do you do there?

3 MR. BLANDO: I'm the Business Systems Analyst, so
4 I'm actually assigned to the Project Management Office.
5 And I've been assigned to two departments. So, the
6 business systems analyst, their job is a variety of things.
7 So, a lot of what I'm doing right now is trying to gather
8 requirements, somewhat similar to what this committee would
9 need. Work with a group; bring them together, saying what
10 are your needs? What are your wants? What's the problem?
11 What's the system? A lot of it is about change, so
12 something is not working correctly, or when something needs
13 to be more efficient, or they don't know what's wrong but
14 they know it could be better.

15 I do the analysis, so I would interview them, I
16 would talk to them, I would look at their processes, I
17 would provide feedback. In a new system, as I mentioned,
18 I'd gather requirements, write it all down and say, and
19 verify is this really what you want? Is this really what
20 you need? So, what I'll do today, for example, is gather
21 requirements for a new governance risk and compliance
22 system because it's about the cyber security. So, there's
23 a lot of rules around managing data. So, so there's a
24 belief that we need a new system, or we need to investigate
25 new systems, so there's a request for information. And I

1 need to craft up what is the problem, what is it that we
2 need, and sufficient to what vendors will come in and
3 present to the group, to then further refine the
4 requirements. And then, once the requirements are in place
5 walk it through the process of the RFP, which I just did
6 for another project to, say, vendors are bidding, vendors
7 are providing their solution. And checking with the
8 stakeholders to say this is the right, this is the best
9 solution, and then working with them on the implementation.
10 And part of that is taking what they have as their process,
11 so both manual and automated, and looking at it and saying
12 is this what you -- this is the current state, looking at
13 the future state with this system this is what we should
14 do, which is what we should look, and then shepherding
15 through that process.

16 So, in another project that's essentially what
17 I'm doing is it's a vulnerability response management
18 system, which is identifying when there's a vulnerability,
19 reporting to people it's like, hey, this computer has a
20 problem and you've got to fix it. And working through that
21 and saying this is how you use the system, these are the
22 steps to use the system. These are the things outside the
23 system that you have to do yourself. And trying to --
24 learning about the system, learning about the job, and
25 marrying the two so work goes efficiently.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: So, do you work with large data
2 sets at all?

3 MR. BLANDO: One of the projects is about
4 metrics. So, in the cyber security arena, the current
5 project is to find out information from disparate systems,
6 many different systems and a log system. The system we're
7 looking at is End Point Management System. It's what
8 software's on the computer, everybody's computer. And
9 saying, well, there are these old software, old system,
10 unpatched software, unpatched browser, that's the way for
11 the bad guys to get in and hack your system.

12 And getting all that data from thousands of data
13 points and aggregating them, and the project is to
14 aggregate it, deliver it in a dashboard kind of thing to
15 senior leadership. So, this is the deans and the people
16 who report to them that says here's what your college, your
17 area looks like. This is where you need to focus your
18 resources. This is your risk level. Do you accept the
19 risks? Do you want to do something else? Do you want to
20 do something about it? And to do it at an aggregated level
21 for them to actually do something about it as opposed to --
22 because they're at their level too detailed, because that's
23 what the starting point is a lot of detailed information,
24 because it's this computer has this issue. And, well, just
25 roll it up. This department has 50 computers that are at

1 risk.

2 So, that's the big data. So, part of it is
3 developing that system as well, so finding out where we're
4 going to store it, we're going to log it, how frequent and
5 the tool to use, so the tool we're thinking is Tableau.

6 But I know in another department they have other
7 big data and they chose like how to call the data and to
8 present it. So, it's all about visualizing the data so
9 it's easy to make decisions.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: So, have you worked with any
11 datasets such as the Census data or mapping tools at all?

12 MR. BLANDO: Not -- so, in mapping tools, in
13 Tableau there's latitude and longitude as an attribute. In
14 another, older project I was with, I was working on was
15 about facilities, rooms, locks, and those types of things.
16 And that data had location, building, but it also had
17 floors. And the interesting thing with keys is apparently
18 there's a door data, door location. So, an east door could
19 be opened with one key, but you can't go through it with
20 the same -- go the other way with the same key. So, some
21 nuances of location data there.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: Do you think the experiences
23 that you have with working with that kind of data could
24 translate into the work of the Commission and if so, how?

25 MR. BLANDO: When I look at data it's the source,

1 how it's created and the attributes around that data. So,
2 my previous experience it was financial data, which is not
3 just dollars. It's like how did we get that, who's
4 spending it, where's it being spent, when was it spent?

5 When you have location, you definitely have
6 latitude and longitude information, and you can have it
7 broken down into counties, and cities, towns. It's all
8 about the attribute and how you slice up the data. And
9 then, separately, how the system can handle it and
10 visualize it.

11 So, as I mentioned with Tableau, we have -- I've
12 not used it because they're -- I don't need it for the
13 university in what I'm doing, although we talked about it.
14 It was like, well, if I had to put in the data of
15 computers, and their locations, and where they had an
16 issue, we could put that in if we had that dataset. So, to
17 me data is data. It's the attributes that come with it and
18 understanding how those attributes interact.

19 So, geographic data, which would be latitude and
20 longitude, neighborhood, what else is attached to it, and
21 then aggregation from this specific point, this table, to
22 this room, to this building, to this block. So, can we
23 aggregate the data in the relationship with data?

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, in your
25 application you talked about traveling when you were a

1 delegate for the Council of the UC Staff Assemblies. And
2 then, you also talk about serving on the Rotary Group
3 Student Exchange and how you --

4 MR. BLANDO: I made an error there. It's Group
5 Study Exchange, sorry. It's actually the Group Study
6 Exchange, sorry.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

8 MR. BLANDO: I made an error.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Group Student, oh, okay, Study
10 Exchange. And you had to engage and learn enough about
11 different regions in Sacramento, in the Sacramento region.
12 What did you learn about all the different groups as you
13 were going through to various campuses throughout
14 California, and through your Rotary group?

15 MR. BLANDO: Uh-hum.

16 CHAIR DICKISON: What did you learn that will
17 assist you in working with communities throughout
18 California?

19 MR. BLANDO: In general, when you work with these
20 groups, they have things they were proud of and they want
21 to show it off. So, what is it in this area? So, I think
22 like Yuba City, it was like prune capital, I think. And
23 there is -- I forget now where the smallest mountain range
24 is in the world. Sacramento, the City of Trees that's very
25 proud of their trees.

1 When we go through these various UC systems
2 they'll say what they're proud of, not just in each UC
3 campus, but in their community. So, if they're in the city
4 community and how it's easy to get to everything, and how
5 it's active and bustling, where it's another community
6 where, you know, it's San Diego, a very nice beach area.
7 And we got to stay at the -- had dinner at the Scripps's
8 Institute down there.

9 So, these are features and areas in their
10 community that they want to show off and they're very proud
11 of, so in each of them. And part of it is you realize in
12 that role you are -- people want to share. So, it's what
13 they want to share about. I don't know if there's some
14 things they didn't want to share about, which is the
15 reality of the communities. But that's what I gained from
16 them, those are the things, so either geographic features,
17 some things in the economy, some business that they're
18 proud of, or some area that they want to show off.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: So, that covers groups that are
20 willing, and able, and ready to share and engage. So, can
21 you think of some ways you can find or get to communities
22 that are not so willing to engage in the public process?
23 How would you identify it? Because one of the things the
24 Commission needs to do is identify communities of interest
25 throughout California. So, how would you go about finding

1 these difficult to reach communities?

2 MR. BLANDO: Well, as I stated before, we can
3 talk to people working the public forum, so, as the AV
4 group, or somebody else supporting it and cares. Part of
5 it is you go out. You don't stay in your hotel if you're
6 traveling. You have to eat somewhere and you go to the
7 restaurant, and you ask them. As a Rotary member, you
8 might engage the Rotarians to tell me about this community,
9 tell me where I should go. Tell me where people hang out.
10 And just be present and tell them, hey, there's this public
11 forum going on, it's maybe a once-in-a-decade instance and
12 we'd like to hear from you what this community is about.

13 But before you get there, you might be talking to
14 them and say, hey, I'm here, this is what I do. What do
15 you do? You know, on a Commission, as opposed to an
16 individual, so without a title maybe. And that's how I saw
17 my previous roles and even my work role.

18 It gives you an excuse to ask questions so people
19 aren't like, well, why is this person asking questions?
20 Well, it's kind of my business and my role, I need to ask
21 questions. So, as a business analyst I get to ask
22 questions, and nobody -- you know, wouldn't be why are you
23 asking this question? As you folks, as auditors, you get
24 to ask questions, you know, because that's your role.

25 As a Commissioner and to my earlier point on the

1 first few questions, like you can't be standoffish. You
2 can't use your title to provide some distance between you
3 and everybody else. But at the same time use that, your
4 job, as I need to ask, you know, what goes on in this
5 community? What do you do? Where do you go? What's life
6 like over here? And I think that goes back to my early
7 days as a journalist, where I just ask questions. You have
8 a job and your job is to ask questions. And while asking
9 questions you say, we'd like to hear about it. The rest of
10 the group would love to hear your story. And part of that
11 is maybe that's one of the attributes, as I mentioned, is
12 you have to have an inquisitive nature.

13 MS. PELLMAN: And we have 5 minutes and 51
14 seconds.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. What do you think
16 are some of the things that may influence a person's
17 preference when it comes to representation?

18 MR. BLANDO: Well, I would say media definitely
19 influences them a lot. But I would say in a lot of cases
20 it would be their friends, their family, who they associate
21 with, their colleagues at work. Anywhere where there's a
22 commonality. I mean it could be even a baseball team or a
23 softball team that they belong to, a church group. So,
24 those are the things that influence people.

25 And I think I mentioned in one of the essays

1 everything in life really influences you, whether you
2 realize it or not, and it's your interaction. You're being
3 programmed on a daily basis and you need to be aware of it.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: So, you've talked a little bit
5 about your work on committees and you mentioned that you've
6 served on a variety of them, and got public input from
7 serving on those committees. What form of input? Was it
8 all public comment? Was it email, or online comments?

9 MR. BLANDO: So, it's a variety. So, it depends
10 on the committee and the context. So, the Police
11 Accountability Board, as I mentioned it's a public setting,
12 it has to be a public setting that's the way it's
13 prescribed specifically.

14 With Staff Assembly it was a variety of things
15 from the town hall to email, or let me know. We had a
16 publication, so we were able to reach out by email to all
17 the staff and send out here's where we're going, and I
18 could write a piece about one particular area as a question
19 and then say, what do you guys think.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. One of the things that
21 the last Commission encountered was they received a large
22 amount of public input and it was difficult to get through
23 all of it. What have you learned through your interactions
24 with the public, in receiving public input that would help
25 in that instance?

1 MR. BLANDO: I don't know what a lot would be,
2 but the one example I can bring up was during the time the
3 state was going through a budget crisis and the writing was
4 on the wall that we will have furloughs, I was the Staff
5 Assembly Chair and I said we need to get input on what
6 people -- not if they want a furlough or not, but how it
7 should be applied. And that was sent out by email, and
8 there was a survey, and a survey link. And I think at the
9 end there was 5,000 or so respondents, which was the best
10 survey response we've ever had.

11 So, part of it is to say it's important and it
12 will impact you. And the experience with handling the data
13 was it was just a lot of work, it was just a lot of
14 reading. I don't know how that input is delivered, if it
15 was just like an open statement or is it a specific survey
16 with saying here's your -- you know, this is the data side
17 which is fill this field, and there's checkboxes plus
18 comments.

19 In that case there were options, checkboxes,
20 other and then comments. You just filter through it and
21 you just read through it. You organize it. Perhaps
22 there's a commonality, so these things seem to have this
23 theme, these things seem to have this theme, and then you
24 summarize it and you present it.

25 If there's a way to gather it, and digitize it,

1 and use some system to highlight it, so I know there's been
2 some data that you could highlight, what's the most
3 frequent words used, what are they? And some people have
4 used that type of survey before. So, just like an open
5 statement, but let's use the technology to tell me what is
6 the most frequent, the ten most frequent words and it will
7 give you a little visual of that. And then like, well,
8 then, there's more. So, it depends on the data and how you
9 got it. Essays would be the most difficult.

10 MS. PELLMAN: You have 45 seconds.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. One quick, the first
12 eight Commissioners are selected randomly and they select
13 the last six. If you were one of the first eight, what
14 would you look for in the last six?

15 MR. BLANDO: Well, I think it's a -- there's some
16 things that's specifically prescribed by the process. So,
17 there has to be two, two, and two, Democrats, Republicans.
18 So, the question for me is did you guys do your job and
19 these finalists have all the skills which is -- which
20 you're looking for, analytical, diverse, and they
21 understand the -- they're able to be independent -- not
22 independent, but impartial.

23 Beyond that you would look at what you got in the
24 eight. Who are they? What do they have? Is there a gap?
25 So, if I just want to just pose an analogy, you're creating

1 a dream team. What's your dream team? So, what are you
2 missing? Am I missing a specific like a -- like if it was
3 basketball, I'm missing a center and we have to focus on
4 that.

5 Is there a geographic area missing, for example?
6 Is there another demographic like salary range? That's not
7 a political party because those are already prescribed.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

9 MR. DAWSON: So, be fair to each of the
10 Panelists, we'll add an additional minute to Mr. Belnap's
11 and Mr. Coe's allotted time.

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good morning, Mr. Blando. Do
13 you play softball?

14 MR. BLANDO: Not recently.

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Oh, okay.

16 MR. BLANDO: Because all the people I've played
17 with are kids or hurt.

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Some of your examples
19 seemed like you played softball.

20 MR. BLANDO: I have, though.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

22 MR. BLANDO: So, a lot, at some point a lot.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And tell me about the teams
24 you were on in softball?

25 MR. BLANDO: Well, in college I was on a team

1 that for three years did not win a single game. That was
2 particularly difficult. But we played. We still went out
3 and played.

4 I was on a team in graduate school. So, the
5 business school had a first year and second year. It was
6 very competitive year one and year two, and they were very
7 good. I was on a team where we struggled to get players.
8 So, the co-ed teams, specifically. Where it's like,
9 unfortunately, where's the women? We need to get the women
10 because we can't play and we're going to forfeit otherwise.

11 We've had teams where it's later in life and it's
12 like, well, we've got an audience. It's their significant
13 others and even their kids showing up, now.

14 And the last team I played with, it was not my
15 team actually, it was another team and they just needed
16 people, so I didn't know any of them.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah. So, on every team
18 there's kind of a team dynamic that kind of develops over
19 time. And every person kind of plays a role in that team
20 dynamic. What role do you tend to play in your teams,
21 either softball or otherwise?

22 MR. BLANDO: So, most of the time I was the
23 pitcher so they tended to have some level of leadership
24 role, although I'd try to defer. So, in a lot of cases --
25 in one case I was the pitcher and the manager, so I'd draw

1 up the lineup. That's what they asked me to do. In other
2 cases it's just like -- in a few other teams like just put
3 me where you need me and I'll do whatever you need me to
4 do.

5 So, the dynamic, it varies. So, and I would say
6 they were pretty close because they had something in common
7 already to develop as a team. So, in the early years in
8 college the team was from my -- the California Aggies. So,
9 it's the college newspaper. We got together and that was
10 what we did, and so we already had some commonality.

11 The sports writers, they tended to dominate more
12 in that because they were the sports writers, they were the
13 sports guys. And the rest of us are like, okay, whatever,
14 we'll just play along.

15 And then, as I mentioned later in life it was
16 more bringing in their spouses, or their kids, and they
17 just wanted to be out there doing something. And then, we
18 actually, for some people, as I said, when you get older I
19 tell people -- for some people, they were still very
20 competitive. And we told them, you know, we're just out
21 here to have fun, don't hurt yourself, which unfortunately
22 they did.

23 So, the dynamics, it's a bit skewed because they
24 already had something in common, together. I mentioned the
25 last team because really, to me, it was strange because I

1 didn't know -- I knew a couple people, I didn't know the
2 rest, so it was very strange. So, we did not get, what was
3 it, the team dynamics. There's the forming, norming,
4 storming, performing. So, it's just like just got dropped
5 into performing. Just do this thing and we need you for
6 these two games.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Right and that was it?

8 MR. BLANDO: That's it.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah. So, when you envision,
10 if you're placed on the Commission and you have a team of
11 14 other Commissioners, what role do you think you'll play?
12 How do you envision yourself in that dynamic?

13 MR. BLANDO: I'll go back to one of the other --
14 I don't know if I mentioned this earlier. You have to be
15 adaptable.

16 I'll give you an example in the softball team.
17 Somebody else was a pitcher and they were a left-handed
18 pitcher. I'm like, okay go pitch. I don't need to be a
19 pitcher. I'll be in right field, or wherever, or I'll be a
20 catcher. And we did that. So, if there's a strength, I
21 don't need to be there, I'll go somewhere else.

22 In other areas, like the Police Accountability
23 Board, I was like -- they voted on who the chair would be
24 and they voted me in. I don't know exactly the qualities,
25 but somebody nominated me and I didn't say, no, I don't

1 want to do it. I said, okay, and they voted. I didn't
2 even get a chance to say, well, these are my positions,
3 this is how I -- they just did it based on how you are
4 doing.

5 I guess it evolves, so early on you're working as
6 a group, you're feeling out each other. Who's got
7 strengths in which area and you figure it out, and who
8 wants to do what? And in some cases like, well, nobody
9 wants to do this part, I don't know if that will be the
10 case, well, somebody will volunteer or maybe I'll volunteer
11 because nobody else wanted to do that part. And that's
12 usually why I get to volunteer in different things is
13 because nobody wanted to do some things.

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, I want to take that
15 question to the UC Davis Police Accountability Board. Are
16 you still on that board?

17 MR. BLANDO: No.

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: No, okay. How did you come
19 to be on that board?

20 MR. BLANDO: So, the Staff Assembly nominates
21 people, so the chair, the Staff Assembly chair will send
22 people, one or more to, I forget now, the Vice Chancellor
23 of Community Relations, the group in charge of that. And
24 they will interview them to see if they're a fit and they
25 will then be appointed.

1 The Staff Assembly was looking at me because I
2 was on the Pepper Spray Committee and the Police Account
3 ability Board was a direct output -- outcome of the
4 recommendations. Now, I was not there as the first
5 appointed on the Police Accountability Board, nor the
6 second one, and they were looking for somebody. And I
7 said, well, if you can't find anybody, I'll do it. And I
8 did it. So, that's the nature of the volunteer work that I
9 do. So, sometimes I am not pursuing it. I make myself
10 available and they said, sure, you go.

11 In a similar sense, the Pepper Spray Committee
12 was the same thing because of its controversial nature, its
13 difficulty with the staff. Some people are very wary of
14 what will happen, it's very public and I said -- at that
15 time I was stepping down as -- I had just finished a term
16 as Staff Assembly Chair, and they said, well -- the chair
17 coming in said, Peter, you do it. I think you're the best
18 and nobody else is going to do it. And I'm like, all
19 right, I'll do it.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, I do want to ask about
21 that committee in a moment. But I want to stay on the
22 board for a moment. So, you said that you were chair of
23 the board. What were your duties and responsibilities in
24 that role?

25 MR. BLANDO: Well, I worked with the staff

1 support to develop the agenda, or provide the agenda and
2 say this is what we're going to do. And I think when
3 following the Roberts Rules of Order, if anybody has a
4 motion to do -- you know, to discuss, or you know, anybody
5 call the motion accepted, and vote. So, those are the
6 formal parts.

7 And then, just verifying with the staff support
8 if there's -- if there's no complaints, nothing to review
9 should we cancel, should we move on? Is there any other
10 business and as part of the agenda.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And you mentioned that you
12 didn't get that much visitation from the public. How often
13 did you have to have to manage public input in those
14 meetings?

15 MR. BLANDO: I don't know what you mean by
16 manage. There's one or two and it was a simultaneous
17 public forum. One at the UC Davis campus, one in the
18 Sacramento campus, so we'd get one or two, maybe three or
19 four at most, maybe four at most. And one of them was a
20 member of the press. So, managing it is most of the time
21 they're asking questions, what's it about, what do you guys
22 do?

23 In the last couple of public forums that I did
24 attend, it was mandatory for us to attend, there were more
25 emotional presenters, one individual in particular who was

1 very emotional and did not have a good opinion of the
2 police on campus, and would prefer that they are not on
3 campus at all. And she made the committee know her
4 opinions.

5 And I don't know on managing her. So, part of my
6 management there was just responding, since she didn't
7 believe in the police and everything I said, well, we're
8 members of the community. And if we believe that this is
9 not useful, we would not be doing this because it would be
10 a waste of our time. And she sort of stepped back and she
11 actually acknowledged, yeah. Because I think she was a new
12 staff member, a younger staff member, and I didn't know if
13 that was part of her experience, what her experience was
14 before, but she definitely had strong opinions.

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, let's talk about
16 the -- so, is the UC Cruz Reynoso Task Force also called
17 the Pepper Spray Committee?

18 MR. BLANDO: Yeah.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Did that result in a
20 report?

21 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And you guys that were
23 on the committee helped prepare that report?

24 MR. BLANDO: That's correct?

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Or wrote the report, okay.

1 What was your role in drafting or approving that report?

2 MR. BLANDO: So, we all contributed to the
3 wording. We all verified. Part of my role is saying, hey,
4 we discussed this and this is not in there. Or, this is
5 stated this way, I'm not sure, maybe there's a better way
6 to state it. And everybody was providing input to that and
7 that was basically consensus driven, everybody had to
8 concur. There were some nuance where we may not all have
9 agreed on a certain term, but the report as a whole we
10 agreed to. So, contributing to the discussions,
11 contributing to the conclusions, so what the report said,
12 in addition to writing and wordsmithing. Writing and
13 wordsmithing, it's contentious and time consuming, but the
14 meat of it was, well, what is the conclusion that we have
15 from the evidence? Do we agree to this conclusion? And
16 then, finally just stating it.

17 And then afterwards, going to a public forum, a
18 town hall, and then going before cameras. And then, I
19 think that it is Freeborn Hall. I think they're renovating
20 since that -- they've renovating since then, the large
21 hall, and answering questions.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And how did that go?

23 MR. BLANDO: There were a lot of strong opinions,
24 especially from students. I think it went well because the
25 entire group was there, including students. And we were

1 able to -- I think that was part of the benefit of having a
2 diverse committee, we were able to anticipate the logic,
3 and the issues, and the questions. Remember one said, and
4 I think I answered one, I don't recall the specific
5 question, but a student got up and everybody was very
6 agitated, heated, and they made a statement and said -- and
7 then at the end they said did you consider this? And I
8 answered that question and said, yes, we did this, and
9 this, and this and, yes, we did consider it. So, but,
10 yeah, it was contentious but we went through it and we
11 completed it.

12 And I think Cruz Reynoso's issue was that we did
13 not have enough information in our report. Going out it
14 was heavily redacted.

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And you mentioned that
16 the Accountability Board was one outcome from the Pepper
17 Spray Task Force. Any other outcomes from that task force
18 that you can think of?

19 MR. BLANDO: Well, one of the outcomes was who
20 does the police chief report to? So, the police chief was
21 reporting to somebody, I think the Vice Chancellor. I
22 forget the exact role, but more on the administrative
23 section. And then, the police chief then reported to the
24 Provost, which is more of the academic wing. And I think
25 part of it was also the engagement with the students and

1 how people would be -- folks would try to -- not disarm,
2 but work with the students to see if we could remedy the
3 situation before police get there, and not -- it's not
4 about -- part of it, the conclusion was they were using
5 police to enforce policy, not law. And we need to be clear
6 on that. And there's some other nuances like I think part
7 of the committee's discussion was when you convene a
8 meeting and you're making decisions, who's taking notes?
9 How are you convening this? How do you make decisions?
10 And is everybody getting -- providing input?

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, what do these two
12 experiences demonstrate regarding your ability to be
13 impartial?

14 MR. BLANDO: So, in those two roles I have to
15 step back and say it's not my view. I have to represent a
16 larger view. Why am I here? It's because people are not
17 here and they depend on me to state here's the staff view
18 of this issue. Here is the opinion of the staff. Not my
19 view. To listen to the data and the data could -- and
20 listen to people, and understand what the data says, and
21 the information says, and be rational about the conclusion.

22 I think I mentioned this in the things the Cruz
23 Reynoso Task Force was difficult because like, well, it
24 could be very critical of the administration. Well, I'm an
25 employee of that administration. It might be I might turn

1 myself in, my own career. Well, this is the job we have to
2 do and hopefully it doesn't happen, but I'm not going to be
3 biased when I listen to information that says -- I'm not
4 going to lean towards and I have to be aware if I'm leaning
5 towards protecting the administration and why.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah. Do you believe that
7 either of these experiences did end up hurting your career?

8 MS. PELLMAN: We have 4 minutes and 40 seconds.

9 MR. BLANDO: I don't know.

10 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

11 MR. BLANDO: It's not like I applied for a dean
12 job or anything like that. And actually, everybody knows
13 what happened to the Chancellor Katehi, you know,

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Right.

15 MR. BLANDO: The issues there. So, I would say
16 there was a change in administration and I don't think
17 there was ever an opportunity for it to hurt my career. I
18 was not ambitious to go to other things and I don't know --
19 I hope, and this is the thing for the Staff Assembly chair
20 and those positions, I hope it's not something that anybody
21 putting in that position is there because they believe it's
22 going to impact their career because they are engaging in
23 supporting the administration. It would impact their
24 career because of how they conduct themselves, not because
25 of support of the administration.

1 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And do either of these
2 experiences, have they affected your view or appreciation
3 of diversity in having an inclusive group?

4 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: How so?

6 MR. BLANDO: If I was just an employee, an
7 employee in the IT world, my view is this narrow department
8 and issues, technical issues, you know, the stuff for geeks
9 and nerds. That's it. I would not say, hey, there's this
10 other world.

11 And even to that extent, with the Staff Assembly
12 chair position, these other UC campuses, I would never have
13 experienced, hey, this is what they do here, this is what
14 they do here, there's other folks here. These are the
15 interesting things.

16 That is a diversity as opposed to I'm just with
17 my group, my tribe, and that's it. You have to work with
18 other -- when you're put together and you have to work with
19 these other folks. It's like you have to work with these
20 other folks and you get to listen to them. And in some of
21 those committees you're working long hours, and the
22 evenings and, you know, you engage with them and you get to
23 know them, which you see how different they are, but also
24 how there's a lot of similarities.

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. No

1 further questions.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

3 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. Good
4 morning, Mr. Blando, thank you for being here.

5 Something that stuck out to me in your
6 application is that you mentioned that you're a kidney
7 donor.

8 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

9 PANEL MEMBER COE: I don't want to violate any
10 HIPAA laws here or anything, but I was wondering if you'd
11 tell us more about that. What motivated you to donate a
12 kidney?

13 MR. BLANDO: Sure. It was my sister and I knew
14 she was on dialysis. And she was, I thought, because she
15 had two sons would be donating and then, you know, in
16 another gathering and found out, oh, they're not. And I
17 was like, well, and apparently I found out later, because
18 she has issues and her husband also had issues, so it's
19 like the probability that the kids would have health issues
20 down the road genetically is higher.

21 I said, well, at that point I said this is my
22 sister and I have two kidneys, and you can function with
23 one. Well, I'll go through the process and donate the
24 kidney. Which was kind of difficult because she was down
25 south, so I had to fly down. And that's actually how I got

1 into running. I said I need to get healthy because they're
2 not going to take me and they're not going to take it if
3 they think I'm not healthy. So, I said, okay, I'm not in
4 the best shape, so I started running to do that, and I'm
5 still running.

6 So, she's very happy. She sent me a card the
7 other day. But basically I was like, well, she needs one,
8 I've got two.

9 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. I want to
10 talk briefly, and my colleagues have already touched on
11 your several committee memberships you've had over the
12 years, and I'd like to know if there's any particular
13 committee or experience for a committee that will
14 specifically be applicable to the work on this Commission,
15 and what you could bring from your work on those committees
16 that would make you an ideal Commissioner.

17 MR. BLANDO: Perhaps the closest is the Council
18 of UC Staff Assemblies because we had to go to different
19 campuses, so there's the travel. We had to do some formal
20 -- we did have open forums. We did have specific
21 individuals who we worked with apart from the community,
22 which is the campus, to make sure additional campus leaders
23 are there, our Regents are there on some occasions. So,
24 it's combination of both formal and informal as well,
25 because we were -- we had scheduled events and down time.

1 It was like, okay, we need to work together, and part of it
2 is learning how to do two jobs at once. So, I'm still
3 going to be employed. I'm not quitting my job if I'm on
4 the committee, so it's that ability to okay I need to do
5 two jobs. And if some other people on the committee have a
6 similar thing I'll know what they're going through because
7 they have multiple obligations, and this is just one of
8 them. So, it's travel, listen, and gather information.

9 And those at council, these Staff Assemblies also
10 had reports, and they also belonged to subcommittees
11 focused on specific issues, whose output is a
12 recommendation to the UC president. Here's what we see.
13 Here's, you know, this is what we worked on, this is the
14 problem, this is our recommendation.

15 So, that's where I would say is the most
16 similarity that would help is my experience there and like
17 traveling, sort of the disconnect from what you normally
18 do, focusing on a problem focusing on working with people
19 that you don't see every day, but then reacquainting
20 yourself, resetting, working on a task, going home.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: So, you mentioned traveling.
22 You were traveling to different campuses --

23 MR. BLANDO: That's correct.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: -- as part of this. So, in
25 your travels, and I think briefly you've mentioned before

1 to different areas of the state, working with different
2 people of different backgrounds or cultures, what did you
3 learn from your interactions with those people that would
4 make you an effective Commissioner in the context of this
5 work?

6 MR. BLANDO: So, what I learned and from others
7 in the areas is that they want to tell a story, they want
8 to share. And I think that's part of a Commissioner, you
9 just need to find a way to get them to share, and share the
10 right thing. So, I mentioned earlier that people want to
11 show off, but in some of those public forums and when we're
12 in a suit and tie, and we're in the group people are
13 actually saying here are the issues, here's what I see,
14 here's the problems. Now, this is how you guys can help
15 me.

16 So, that's the contrary to here's the area I want
17 to show off, but here's the problem that's going on, here's
18 where the dirt is, and we need to get this cleaned up, or
19 here's where there are issues with the processes.

20 So, I think that part will help tremendously.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: So, I want to switch a little
22 bit to your essay on impartiality. And in that essay you
23 indicate that to be impartial one must first recognize
24 their own biases. How does one go about recognizing and
25 acknowledging their own biases?

1 MR. BLANDO: Well, you recognize your own bias by
2 the emotions of this is where you have to have self-
3 awareness, and self-actualization. So, somebody -- so as
4 an example, somebody comes in and then they're presenting,
5 and it's like and they say they're part of a softball team.
6 Like, oh, I'm part of a softball team. I'm going to start
7 listening to this person because I associate with them.
8 Well, wait a minute, this other group they're not on a
9 softball team, I've never done that. Am I biased there?
10 Am I listening more to this person than this person? I
11 have to be aware of those subtleties because -- and maybe
12 that's part of the emotion. So, when you go into a room
13 and you listen to people, and I think part of human nature
14 is you want to find what's common and who am I going to
15 hang out with? Who is most like me? Or, think like me,
16 dress like me, I don't know, look like me? And you have to
17 think to yourself, no, I'm going to talk to everybody, I'm
18 going to be engaged with everybody equally.

19 Bias recognition is -- you know, I think about
20 it, I actually constantly think, well, why did I do this?
21 So, this is the analytical component and self-
22 actualization, did I do that because it made rational
23 sense? Was it an objective decision? No, because I like
24 it and that's it. And, well, wait a minute, is that -- so,
25 that's fine in your personal life, but in the role of the

1 Commission that's not okay.

2 So, for example today, getting out I was like,
3 well, what shirt should I wear and what tie should I wear?
4 That impacts me. That's my choices, my preferences. If,
5 in a committee I look around and it's like I prefer to
6 listen to and emphasize what this person is because of what
7 they're wearing that's bad. And that's part of the
8 recognition to say, you know -- and part of it is, you
9 know, I take my glasses off sometimes and I'm like, okay,
10 well, let me focus on listening. What is the content of
11 what they're saying, not anything else.

12 So, in some cases you have to -- if you know that
13 you could be influenced by other things, you need to say,
14 okay, let me focus on what is the objective information.
15 That's the analytical, give me the data. Which is
16 difficult because you also want to get the story, you want
17 to listen to their story.

18 PANEL MEMBER COE: Can you give us an example
19 where in the course of making a decision you recognized
20 maybe one of your internal biases and where you had to
21 actively engage yourself into putting that aside to make a
22 decision?

23 MR. BLANDO: So, the example, the Police
24 Accountability Board, the strongly opinionated person.
25 When somebody starts being strongly opinionated and overly

1 emotional, and part of my bias, because I'm more of the
2 analytical, the engineer, it was like they're just going to
3 be emotional, should I turn it off? But that woman
4 actually had some good input. So, what are the input? So,
5 wait a minute, and so this is where I'm listening, and I
6 say wait a minute, and if you imagine if it's like a movie
7 it's like stop, rewind, what was that was said, so keep
8 listening that's important.

9 So, the statement was the Police Accountability
10 Board did not -- was invisible. They have a report once a
11 year and otherwise nobody knows what's going on. Oh,
12 that's important, the lack of visibility except the end.
13 People need to know. I remember that and that's a thing
14 and I was like, well, wait a minute, stop. There's a lot
15 of I won't say ranting, emotional things that may not be
16 relevant to the committee, it may or may not, but you get
17 the point. Wait a minute, there's information there that's
18 relevant.

19 I would say, yes, I was biased to start, but I
20 always have to -- you know, because that's the job to
21 listen to get the information. And part of it might be the
22 emotions. Like, well, they're angry about a specific
23 thing, but ask them a question, why? I didn't need to get
24 there because she was clear. So.

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. I'd like to

1 go back to some things that were discussed I think when Ms.
2 Dickison was asking questions regarding data analysis, and
3 particularly one of your answers that perked my ears up is
4 data visualization, as somebody who's done a lot of that
5 myself. Where or do you see data visualization as a useful
6 tool in the work of the Commission? And if so, in what
7 way?

8 MR. BLANDO: Well, when we're looking at drawing
9 lines, it's the visual of the map. But the visualization
10 might be color coding or doing some other icons to say what
11 is that makeup of the map. So, you imagine the California
12 state map, and the shape, greens and browns, and you zoom
13 in, and you see the cityscapes. But there's something more
14 than that. So, where are the -- from the Census and the
15 other data it's like, well, this area, this is a color-
16 coded or highlighted, this is this area. And then, if you
17 had filters and you had settings like, well, let me see if
18 I apply this filter what does it look like? If I apply
19 this filter, what does this look like? So, filters could
20 be on the race. It could be on their age, the general age
21 group.

22 So, I mean that's part of the visualization. You
23 can have an overlay that says, okay, it's not just this
24 particular racial background for this neighborhood, but
25 there's this age thing which you could have a different

1 color or a different shape.

2 I mean the most recent example right now, the
3 Coronavirus stuff. So, you see a specific location, a
4 size, and in some cases they're using color. So, all of
5 those are visualizations that you can easily see and
6 interpret the data more naturally, I guess, rather than
7 looking at numbers and a spreadsheet, and see the
8 relationship of one area versus another area, versus
9 another area, in whatever way you want to see it, by age,
10 by race, by whatever attributes you have in the data.

11 PANEL MEMBER COE: And who do you envision that
12 would be the target audience for such visualizations?

13 MR. BLANDO: I would say everybody. So, the
14 Commission, definitely, because they have to make a
15 decision. When we go to the public forums I would hope,
16 and say this is what the data shows. Now, tell us if it's
17 wrong. Tell us if we've missed something.

18 And then when it's public, when we've made a
19 decision those data visualizations will be used by
20 everybody who's curious how did this get done this way. I
21 imagine it being used by people running by office to
22 understand here's some demographics, here's the interest
23 groups, perhaps, the commonality.

24 And, yes I should, or maybe somebody interested,
25 yeah, I should run for office because, you know, this is

1 the commonality and I belong to that group and I can
2 represent this area.

3 And I'm sure lawyers will be interested in it
4 afterwards to verify the Commission did its job.

5 PANEL MEMBER COE: One more question on the topic
6 of data visualization. A large backbone of what would go
7 into those visualizations would be the data from the United
8 States Census, which is going to be a large information
9 portal for the Commission to inform their work. But the
10 other side of the work of the Commission is information
11 that's less hard data, and a little squishier in terms of
12 opinions and feelings of diverse residents of the state.
13 If you were making a data visualization for the work of the
14 Commission, how would you incorporate the kind of squishier
15 data, the input from the people in with the visualization,
16 mixing it with the Census data?

17 MR. BLANDO: So, in my experience one of the
18 elements I've done was a hover over. So, in a computer you
19 can do that extra dimension, which is you see the data, you
20 see the information, put the mouse over it, get the
21 additional data. That's one way. It would be difficult on
22 paper. But that's what I mentioned earlier is like you
23 have to go out there for the squishy data.

24 So, I envisioned, so for example one scenario
25 that I could see is like, well, there is a -- where the

1 content from the community is important, if I see a
2 neighborhood and it's a neighborhood of families, it's
3 dense apartment complexes, and the data says that it's
4 mixed race but the average salary is below \$35,000. Well,
5 that's an impoverished community. It might be an immigrant
6 community as well. But I can take that to UC Davis and say
7 that's the married student housing area, they're going to
8 be here. That's the same attributes that they would have
9 is they have families; they are not making a lot of money
10 because they're going to school. School might be -- you
11 know, they might have some grants, some scholarships, and
12 it's dense housing. So, as opposed to an immigrant
13 community. Two varied things, but the Census data could
14 produce the same output.

15 So, how would I -- so, the hover over at this
16 point is the only way I can do that, as opposed to, you
17 know, you put a little footnote in the thing that says this
18 is why it's different. You can do the color coding, you
19 can do a shape. So, I'd have to think about that and see
20 what's the options because I need to understand what are
21 the other layers, what's the other data because I want to
22 know why you shape this, and why you shape somewhere else,
23 and color somewhere else. Like I've got to come up with
24 something different, so maybe it's a pattern. I don't
25 know.

1 MS. PELLMAN: We have 3 minutes and 35 seconds.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you.

3 If you were appointed to the Commission, which
4 aspects of that role do you think that you would enjoy the
5 most and, conversely, which aspects of that role you think
6 you might perhaps struggle with a little bit?

7 MR. BLANDO: I'm more analytical. And I've
8 focused a lot of my volunteer work has forced me to go out
9 and engage. And a lot of things I've done in the past is
10 actually to force me to not be too analytical. Why did I
11 become a journalist when I was an engineering student at UC
12 Davis? Because I know that I will be mostly analytical. I
13 need to exercise the other part which is engage people, ask
14 questions, be out there, do something that I'm not
15 comfortable doing, so I do it.

16 I get enjoyment at the output, but it's not
17 naturally. I will gravitate towards the data, and the
18 information, and the analytics, and how to make a decision
19 based on this. So, engaging people will be -- it's not
20 natural. I've done it. I can do it. I'm skilled at it.
21 But this where, as I mentioned earlier, I have to
22 recognize, yeah, my bias is I tend towards the data. I
23 have to listen to the story. Well, as I mentioned earlier,
24 I have to -- I give myself an excuse now. So, why,
25 because, you know, whether it was before I was Staff

1 Assembly Chair, or a Commissioner, that's what I've got to
2 do. This is the job, I have to do this and listen to
3 people because the output of the decisions depend on it.

4 But I would say it might also be the venue. So,
5 if it's in this venue, very public, and it's structured,
6 you know, I might be more comfortable with it. When it's
7 unstructured, and I say that like an example, like I'm an
8 introvert. So, I've had friends and I've had a
9 relationship with a partner who is more extroverted, so
10 they can -- nobody -- the statement nobody's a stranger, so
11 they can strike up a conversation with anybody, at any
12 time, about anything. I struggle a little bit. But for me
13 it's assured because I have context.

14 If I have context, which is I'm the Commissioner
15 and I'm here to do this, it's a lot easier versus if you
16 drop me in a neighborhood and just go. It's not my natural
17 tendency to engage people and ask them about what's going
18 on.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. No further
20 questions.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Dawson?

22 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Mr. Blando, I have a
23 couple of follow-up questions.

24 You talked about that you came to the states when
25 you were a child. Did I understand that correctly? And

1 then, you grew up in Orland?

2 MR. BLANDO: Yes.

3 MR. DAWSON: And so, one of the criteria for
4 membership on the committee is an appreciation for
5 California's diverse demographics and geography. And the
6 ultimate makeup is supposed to be representative of
7 California's diversity. Now, it's not necessary that
8 somebody live in a place to have appreciation for it. But
9 do you think that your experience growing up in the North
10 Valley gives you a special appreciation for that part of
11 the state?

12 MR. BLANDO: Well, in a rural community in North
13 Valley, it's more the rural area, perhaps. So, the
14 appreciation says who are these people and what do they do?
15 So, in some sense it's lower, a different -- I know growing
16 up I didn't have cable TV. So, they might not have
17 internet access, they might not have fast internet access,
18 so it's a very different way. And in an agrarian, rural
19 community they're job is their land and you do a lot of
20 work. So, part of it is I know, as a child, well, there's
21 no child labor laws in farming, so that's what you did as a
22 child you helped with the farm, and that's how you grew up.
23 You didn't, you know, play games and other things, so
24 that's what you did.

25 So, it's a very different set perhaps when you

1 live up that way and you live in that area, and in a small
2 area where you know everybody, which is the -- almost the
3 opposite, I would say in some cases, where you say you want
4 to get away from people and you want to go to a rural area,
5 where you realize because it's rural and there's so few,
6 everybody knows who does what and who you are. So, that's
7 where you go, and you're at the store and somebody will say
8 to me, hello, Peter, somebody's parent, like you don't do
9 that in a larger community. So, you know everybody.

10 MR. DAWSON: Uh-hum.

11 MR. BLANDO: I don't know if that's the same in
12 the rest of the Northern California area. I can say that
13 was my experience in Orland. An experience of you have to
14 drive miles to go shopping somewhere, to a mall. I know
15 the experience of you have to go -- I don't know where we
16 got the dentist or the healthcare. I remember driving far
17 to take me there. So, and there's fewer amenities than you
18 would see in the cities or highly populated towns than you
19 would there. I think it's changed over time though and
20 they might be more populated there.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So, we have 3 minutes
22 and 50 seconds left in the 90-minute period. Do any of the
23 Panel Members have a follow up?

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Belnap?

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: No follow-up questions.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: I don't, either.

4 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Blando, would you like to make a
5 closing statement to the Panel in your remaining 3 minutes
6 and 30 seconds?

7 MR. BLANDO: Sure. I want to thank the Panel for
8 their work on behalf of the citizens of California, because
9 I think you started with thousands and you had to go
10 through that, and narrow it down to this. And 120
11 interviews is a lot, I can say.

12 I want to say that in my experience it seems to
13 be when this was posted and I saw this, I said, well, it
14 appears that with the qualifications needed, it is one of
15 the most ideal committees I've ever seen for my experience.
16 So, the analytical component is my job and my tendency is
17 the committee work, impartiality from my committee work in
18 the past, and then my life experiences in different areas,
19 growing up in different places, and living in different
20 places in California. I hope to serve, but I understand
21 that there's only so many slots. And for the few other
22 interviews I've taken a look at, they have very impressive
23 qualifications.

24 But I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Our next interview
2 today is at 1:15. So, we are going to go into recess until
3 1:14.

4 (Off the record at 10:27 a.m.)

5 (On the record at 1:13 p.m.)

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon. The time being
7 1:14, we're calling the Applicant Review Panel back to
8 order.

9 I'd like to welcome Teresa Liang. Did I say that
10 correctly?

11 MS. LIANG: Liang. It's close enough.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Liang, okay. Welcome for your
13 interview today. And I'm going to turn it over to Mr.
14 Dawson to read the five standard questions.

15 MR. DAWSON: Good afternoon, Dr. Liang. I'm
16 going to ask you five standard questions that the Panel has
17 requested that each applicant respond to. Are you ready?

18 MS. LIANG: Yes.

19 MR. DAWSON: Question one. What skills and
20 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

21 What skills or competencies should the Commission
22 possess collectively?

23 Of the skills, attributes and competencies that
24 each Commissioner should possess, which do you possess?

25 In summary, how will you contribute to the

1 success of the Commission?

2 MS. LIANG: Okay. Well, first, before I start
3 answering questions, I'd like to thank the Panel for
4 inviting me up here. And also to thank the Panel for the
5 tremendous amount of work it's done. It's a lot of work in
6 a short amount of time.

7 So, getting to the question. What skills and
8 attributes should all Commissioners possess? Well,
9 analytical skills. The skill to apply the legal aspects,
10 to be impartial. Also, I think a strong and important
11 aspect is to have good communication skills, to be able to
12 work well with others. To be able to listen respectfully
13 to other opinions.

14 And for this Commission, especially, I think
15 Commissioners need to have passion and integrity. They
16 need to realize that we're working towards a common goal
17 and an important common goal.

18 And finally, but not least, each Commissioner
19 needs to have time management skills to be able to work
20 efficiently because there is a hard deadline, a timeline
21 here. So, each Commissioner has to be able to read and
22 understand, I assume, a huge amount of documents to be able
23 to distill the documents into an understandable form, and
24 then to apply the applicable laws relevant.

25 Let's see, what skills or competencies should the

1 Commission possess collectively? Well, all of the above.
2 But also, the ability to work together as a cohesive group
3 and to respect each other, to listen respectfully to each
4 other. And again, I think I'm emphasizing this because
5 it's so important, but time management skills because there
6 is a hard deadline for the project to be finished.

7 Of all the skills, and attributes, and
8 competencies that each Commissioner should possess, which
9 one do I possess? I believe all of the above to some
10 extent or other. Throughout my career I've been part of
11 large collaborative groups where there have been several
12 disparate subgroups, with several disparate opinions.

13 For example, when I'm working in a pharmaceutical
14 company, I work with a group trying to decide whether to
15 push through a drug to market. So, I'll be working basic
16 researchers. I'll be working with clinical researchers.
17 I'll be working with business development. I'll be working
18 with regulatory affairs. And I represent the legal patent
19 aspects of the group. So, we all come together and we all
20 discuss our views from our vantage point, and we all listen
21 respectfully to each other.

22 I am a collaborator. I am a good listener. And
23 I will speak up when I feel there's a need to. I believe
24 my scientific and legal training provides the required
25 analytical ability, and the ability to read and absorb a

1 large amount of documentation, and to do it in an effective
2 and timely manner, and then to apply the relevant rules and
3 regulations.

4 How would I contribute to the Commission? Well,
5 because I am a practical person, my contribution would be
6 all of my skills that I mentioned above, but also I have a
7 focus. I focus on the goal. So, I will be able to keep
8 the Commission focused and on time to get to the end of our
9 goals.

10 In the past I have been a bridge between
11 disparate communities. For example, I am a bridge between
12 the legal and the scientific communities and quite often
13 those communities do not at all understand each other. And
14 I have been the liaison between these communities and
15 interpret for each other, for these two communities.

16 I also enjoy being part of a large group, working
17 together for a common good, a common goal. Previously, it
18 was to get a drug to market so that people, patients in
19 need will be treated. Here I hope to contribute my skills
20 to the Commission.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question two. Work on
22 the Commission requires members of different political
23 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010 Commission
24 was selected and formed, the American political
25 conversation has become increasingly polarized, whether in

1 the press, on social media, and even in our own families.

2 What characteristics do you possess, and what
3 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
4 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

5 What will you do to ensure that the work of the
6 Commission is not seen as polarized or hyperpartisan and
7 avoid perceptions of political bias and conflict?

8 MS. LIANG: So, what characteristics do I possess
9 and should the other commissioners possess? I strongly
10 believe that each Commissioner should have the belief that
11 the work of the Commission is essential, and that each
12 Commissioner has to be impartial and working towards the
13 common good for protecting our voting system.

14 My belief here is based on an idealistic and a
15 practical reason. The idealistic reason is because I
16 strongly believe that each person should have their vote
17 weighted equally. And then, we are in a representative
18 democracy after all.

19 Then also, the practical reason. If we allow
20 bias into the Commission, then we leave the California
21 taxpayer, us, we leave us open to expensive litigation and
22 we leave ourselves open to acrimony. And if the voter
23 loses faith in the voting system, they will not engage.
24 So, our democracy will lose.

25 What will I do ensure that the work of the

1 Commission is not seen as polarized or hyperpartisan, and
2 avoid political -- perceptions of political bias and
3 conflict?

4 I will say to be as transparent as possible about
5 the process and to explain the process as much as possible
6 to the public. I believe that most people have a sense of
7 fairness and that if the Commission explains the reasoning,
8 the careful considerations that goes into the reasoning,
9 and allow comments, and to allow the comments to be heard,
10 to have the commenters feel that they are heard, then I
11 think most people will be satisfied with the fairness of
12 the Commission's work.

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

17 MS. LIANG: One pitfall I see is partisanship
18 between the groups on the Commission. It is, after all,
19 five Democrats and five Republicans, and coming from very
20 extreme ends of the political spectrum.

21 Another potential problem is perhaps an
22 intransigent outlier Commissioner who has their own
23 opinion. What I would do depends on the situation. But
24 first, I would try to understand and be informed. Maybe
25 there is a point of view that I had not seen, so I would

1 want to understand that. And then, I would want to talk
2 about it. Point out my point of view, understand the other
3 person's point of view, and perhaps to negotiate. So,
4 that's how I would work through conflict.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question four. If you
6 are selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
7 Commission which is charged with working together to create
8 maps of the new districts. Please describe a situation
9 where you had to work collaboratively with others on a
10 project to achieve a common goal.

11 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
12 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
13 conflicts that arose.

14 What lessons would you take from this group
15 experience to the Commission if selected?

16 MS. LIANG: Okay, as I mentioned previously, I
17 have been on large groups, collaborative groups for example
18 in the pharmaceutical industry to determine whether a drug
19 goes to market. As I described there were disparate groups
20 and people in these collaborative meetings. The basic
21 scientist, the clinical researchers, business development,
22 regulatory affairs, and legal patents.

23 Our goal was to push through a drug to market if
24 it made sense, and that's what we had to discuss.

25 Conflicts arose when one group wanted to push

1 through the drug and perhaps another group did not. The
2 basic researchers would present their data to show that
3 this drug works very well in animal models of human
4 diseases. Then the clinical scientists would say, would
5 present a blueprint for how to take this drug to clinical
6 trial and give us an estimate of the expenses. The
7 marketing people would tell us there's this market, big or
8 small. And then, the regulatory affairs would give us a
9 blueprint of how this drug would be shepherded through the
10 FDA approval process. And then, I would give the group
11 information about whether there is any intellectual
12 property concerns about this drug.

13 So, conflicts arose, for example, when let's say
14 the basic researcher wanted to push the drug ahead, but the
15 marketers -- the marketing executive said there is no
16 market for this. But then, then we would have to discuss
17 maybe there is a market, maybe there's a submarket, maybe
18 there is other ways of marketing this drug.

19 Or, if the clinical people said to do a clinical
20 trial would be very hard, it would be very expensive. Even
21 if the market is large, we have no guarantee that it would
22 be efficacious in the human population. So, would we want
23 to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to take this drug
24 into clinical trial?

25 So, we would also discuss this. Quite often we

1 would not come to a conclusion in the first, second, or
2 third meeting. We would have to go back, we would discuss
3 it some more. We'd go back, we would gather some more
4 information, and each one of them would then present and
5 talk some more until we came to a consensus.

6 However, I have to emphasize we did have to do
7 this in a timely manner because we don't want this drug to
8 either -- to be hanging around and not go to market, or
9 just to be hanging around and costing the company a lot of
10 expense and manpower. So, we had to be efficient, as well
11 as cohesive in our deliberations.

12 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five. A
13 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
14 meeting with people from all over California who come from
15 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of
16 perspectives.

17 If you are selected as a Commissioner, what
18 skills and attributes will make you effective at
19 interacting with people from different backgrounds and who
20 have a variety of perspectives?

21 What experiences have you had that will help you
22 be effective at understanding and appreciating people and
23 communities of different backgrounds and who have a variety
24 of perspectives?

25 MS. LIANG: My skills and attributes are that I'm

1 a good listener and I generally believe that everybody's
2 entitled to express their opinion. I'm also very
3 culturally sensitive and my experiences give me empathy
4 with many groups of people. And I'll explain here. I am
5 of a Chinese ethnic background and I've lived in Southern
6 California for most of my life. I moved to Southern
7 California when I was seven years old. So, I've been the
8 beneficiary of living in this great state and going through
9 our educational system from primary through -- primary
10 school to my post-doctoral fellowship at UCLA.

11 I understand how immigrants think. I was not
12 born in the U.S., so I understand how immigrants think and
13 how they do not trust the government maybe perhaps because
14 of language and/or cultural barriers.

15 I have encountered racial discrimination in my
16 past. Thankfully not very much because we are in a very
17 diverse state. It's just that the state is getting more
18 diverse as we go along. So, I understand the fear in some
19 of these communities and the desire not to engage with the
20 government or government officials.

21 I'm very sensitive to English language usage.
22 Even though English is my primary language, it's not my
23 first language. And because I work with many multinational
24 people in the U.S., and also abroad, I have to be careful
25 about my English language usage. We can be in a room full

1 of English language users, everybody understands English
2 perfectly, but because of the culture there may be
3 misunderstandings arising.

4 For example, in cultures which have a culture of
5 politeness, when somebody else is talking we commonly nod
6 our head, we're always nodding our head when somebody else
7 is talking. I had to stop myself from doing this in my
8 career because people think you are agreeing with them.
9 You're not agreeing with them. You may vehemently
10 disagree. You're nodding your head because you are hearing
11 them, you are hearing what they're saying, not because you
12 agree.

13 My British colleagues, on the other hand, they'll
14 say something like that is interesting, which means in
15 American English that is rubbish, let's drop the subject.

16 So, I understand English language usage very well
17 and I'm very sensitive to the nuances of these different
18 types of usages.

19 I also understand the need to connect to people
20 through their communities. For example, if I wanted to
21 find a person of a specific community, I would have to go
22 to areas that perhaps are not -- that perhaps the general
23 population is not aware of. Say social media, not
24 everybody is on Facebook, even though that's the dominant
25 application in the U.S. If I wanted to find somebody from

1 India, or an Indian group, I would go to WhatsApp. If I
2 were -- the same with the Europeans. Some of the European
3 groups use WhatsApp and the Indian groups use WhatsApp.
4 They don't use text messaging like what we have on our i-
5 Phones.

6 If I was looking for somebody from the Chinese
7 group, I would go to WeChat. If I were looking for
8 somebody from Korea, I would go to LINE. Taiwan uses LINE,
9 also. So, I would go to these different media platforms to
10 find these people and to engage with them.

11 As a long-time California resident, I also
12 understand the concerns of other long-term California
13 residents. I'll say this, I'm older than some of the
14 freeways around here. So, I've seen the change in
15 California through the decades. Once upon a time Southern
16 California, especially Orange County, Irvine, were all
17 farms.

18 My parents would take us on a trip on the
19 weekends to go and buy -- to go to the Japanese farms and
20 to buy some beansprouts, staples that you could not buy in
21 the regular grocery stores. Now, you can go down to your
22 regular Safeway and get beansprouts. So, there is a big
23 change and not everybody is comfortable with this change.
24 So, I understand that and I can empathize because I have
25 lived through this change.

1 I have experience also financial and disparities.
2 So, I can empathize with people from different economic
3 level. When I was young, I lived in a blue collar working
4 neighborhood. And then, when I -- then, when my parents
5 became more prosperous, we moved to a white collar, middle
6 class neighborhood. And I have to say I did experience
7 culture shock moving from the two neighborhoods. It was
8 disconcerting and a little bit distressing in some
9 respects.

10 So, I can understand that there will be
11 miscommunication between the two, the multiple strata of
12 socioeconomic levels in California.

13 Now, how to bridge the distance between disparate
14 communities and the Commission? Simply by getting to know
15 each other. I believe that people are not afraid of what's
16 familiar. Younger people nowadays are very comfortable
17 with the plurality of minorities that we have in this
18 country, more so than say an older person. So, what is
19 familiar is not scary.

20 So, I would encourage the Commission to hold
21 multiple public meetings and to get the public familiar
22 with the goals and the workings of the Commission. So,
23 that's how I would encourage the Commission to interact
24 with the public.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. We will now go to Panel

1 questions. Each Member of the Panel will have 20 minutes
2 for his or her questions. And we will start with the
3 Chair, Ms. Dickison.

4 MS. LIANG: Okay.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Dr. Liang. So, I see
6 here you have a doctorate in experimental pathology?

7 MS. LIANG: Correct.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: And so, you currently work as a
9 patent agent. How did you get into that line of work?

10 MS. LIANG: Serendipity. I was doing my
11 postdoctoral fellow at UCLA when another one of my
12 postdoctoral fellow colleagues came over and said to me,
13 hey, the law firm I'm working for needs a scientific
14 consultant in biology. Would you be interested? I said,
15 sure. And that's how I veered off my scientific career
16 into the legal field. It's both fields are fascinating.
17 It's very interesting.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: And so, your knowledge and skill
19 set in the legal field is through that avenue?

20 MS. LIANG: Yes. As a patent agent I am
21 federally barred. So, that means I had to take the Federal
22 Patent Bar. The Federal Patent Bar is open to lawyers with
23 a certain skill set, a certain knowledge of science. Or,
24 to non-lawyers who can learn enough of the legal rules and
25 regulations surrounding the patent field to pass this Bar.

1 So, it is a legal Bar.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. You answered
3 some of my questions as you were going through the last
4 one. You talked a little bit about your experiences
5 growing up and how that would help you bridge the gap. Are
6 there any other ways those experiences would help you with
7 the work of the Commission?

8 MS. LIANG: Well, like I said, I'm rather
9 culturally sensitive, partially because of my background
10 growing up here in California, but also because once you
11 are at university you can't help but be mixing with a whole
12 bunch of different people from different ethnic
13 backgrounds. And what I've learned most is that if people
14 are nice and tolerate each other's mistakes, then we all
15 get along.

16 For example, eating is a must for everybody and
17 I'm a bit of a foodie, okay. So, when I have parties at my
18 house for all my various colleagues, the easiest thing for
19 me to do is have a hot pot. I don't know if you know what
20 a Chinese hot pot is. But it's, you know, you throw a lot
21 of ingredients into a central pot and you eat out of it. I
22 usually have to have three hot pots at any of my parties.
23 One hot pot for the vegetarians who choose to be vegetarian
24 by choice or are vegetarian by religion, Hindus. Then, I
25 have a pot that is composed of lamb, no pork, no shrimp,

1 for my halal and kosher friends. And then, I have an
2 omnivores' pot for everybody else. So, that's how I manage
3 to get my friends and colleagues together, and just to
4 comingle. Otherwise, you know, if you don't eat together,
5 how can you mingle together in some respects?

6 So, and they are very generous because I know
7 that I am not strictly kosher and I'm not strictly halal,
8 but they are tolerant of the deficiencies and we all get
9 along.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, you talk about
11 in science you've been trained to identify bias, your own
12 and then otherwise. How do you identify your own biases,
13 first?

14 MS. LIANG: That is hard because you try -- you
15 don't want to think of yourself as having bias. But if I
16 feel discomfort about something, then I ask myself why. Is
17 it really discomfort that has a rationale that has a
18 rational reason for it or is it just a gut reaction that
19 has no rational reason for it. And I try to question my
20 own assumptions. Especially, the stronger I feel about
21 something, the more I question it. That's how I try.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: And is that how you deal with
23 your own biases to ensure that they're not coloring your
24 decision making at all?

25 MS. LIANG: If I know, if I realize I have a

1 bias, then I'm very strict with myself. Because a bias has
2 no place in science, has no place in the legal -- well, I
3 take that back, a little bit. It has no place in science.
4 And if you do have any internal biases, you could waste
5 millions of dollars and waste decades of your life. So,
6 that bias is a strongly discouraged characteristic in
7 science.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What about identifying
9 bias in otherwise, or others? Is that what you mean by
10 otherwise?

11 MS. LIANG: Otherwise, I'm not quite sure. But
12 I'm thinking that in others we discuss it. If I feel
13 strongly about something, I will have a discussion with
14 somebody about it. And try to see maybe it's my bias that
15 is interfering, not the other person's bias. Maybe it's
16 something that I didn't see that is a valid point and that
17 needs to be taken into consideration.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: So, one of the things the
19 Commission is going to need to do is identify communities
20 of interest up and down the state. What methods do you
21 think the Commission could employ to identify some of these
22 communities?

23 MS. LIANG: As I mentioned before some of the
24 social media groups, but you have to strategize and figure
25 out which social media platform for which community. It's

1 pretty segregated in that manner, actually.

2 I would also go to grocery stores and do outreach
3 there because everybody goes to a different grocery store,
4 ethnic grocery store for their own comfort food. If I, for
5 example, if you're Filipino, you go to Seafood City, that
6 grocery chain. If you're Chinese, you go to Ranch 99.
7 It's all segregated to some extent. Not deliberately, it's
8 just because of the comfort food that's available at those
9 particular places.

10 And so, depending on what particular ethnic group
11 that you may see a lack of participation, you may want to
12 go over there and talk to the owners of the grocery store,
13 and have some fliers or some information posted there.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, you
15 mentioned growing up in a blue collar neighborhood and that
16 was in Fullerton?

17 MS. LIANG: Yes.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: And then you moved to Claremont.
19 And then, you also mentioned that, you know, you have
20 experience of pros and cons living in suburban and urban
21 areas. And just thinking of those different communities
22 that you've experienced, what do you think is -- what do
23 you think binds those communities together?

24 MS. LIANG: I would say just people. People
25 usually like people, in my experience. So, I think whether

1 you're in an urban setting, or in a suburban setting, or a
2 rural setting your friends of your neighbors. And you get
3 to know your neighbors, and you get to know the people at
4 your church, or synagogue, or temple, and you get -- and
5 people help each other.

6 For example, there's now this app called
7 Nextdoor, and during this Coronavirus situation one of my
8 neighbors sent out an email blast to the whole neighborhood
9 saying I have some citrus fruit, lemons, oranges, and
10 grapefruit in my trees. If anybody wants some, come over
11 and get some because the grocery stores are crazy right
12 now, so just bypass the grocery stores and come over and
13 pluck some from my tree. So, people are nice.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, the way the
15 Commissioners are selected, the first eight are selected
16 randomly through a lottery. And then, those eight are
17 responsible for selecting the next six that will round out
18 the Commission. If you were one of the first eight, what
19 would you be looking for in those other six Commissioners?

20 MS. LIANG: I'd have to take a look and see what
21 skills that the first eight have, and what's lacking, and
22 what attributes are lacking in those eight before being
23 able to select the next six. Whether it's a different
24 ethnic group, or geographical location, it just depends on
25 what the eight have already.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: What would you like to see the
2 Commission ultimately accomplish?

3 MS. LIANG: One reason why I'm so passionate
4 about this Commission is because I was very disappointed in
5 the Supreme Court decision a couple years ago that
6 aggregated the judiciary's role in gerrymandering. I was
7 so mad with it that I became interested in this Commission
8 when I heard about it.

9 And I believe that the Commission needs to --
10 first, I'm thankful that I live in California which set up
11 this Commission more than ten years ago. And so, I believe
12 the Commission not only needs to set the districts and
13 prevent gerrymandering, but also to relieve the voting
14 population of its concerns that there is unfairness in the
15 voting situation.

16 As I mentioned, I'm afraid that if people think
17 it's unfair they'll tune out, tune off, say why should I
18 even bother the way I vote's not going to affect anything.

19 So, I hope that this Commission and its ability
20 to be transparent, and its ability to connect with people,
21 and as many people as possible would allow the general
22 population to feel that there is no issue in California,
23 and that we are still a representative democracy.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. That's all my
25 questions for right now.

1 Mr. Belnap?

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. Thank you
3 for being here? What does a patent agent do?

4 MS. LIANG: Okay. We try to -- and I say try, we
5 try to get patents for our clients or for the companies
6 that we work for. As I had mentioned previously, you can
7 be a patent attorney or a patent agent. Decades ago, the
8 federal government threw open the Patent Bar for non-
9 attorneys because there were -- not every attorney has the
10 requisite scientific ability, scientific knowledge to
11 understand the very intricate inventions.

12 And so, my specialty is biology. Since I have a
13 PhD in pathology, I understand the workings of the human
14 body from an academic stand point. And so, I work for a
15 pharmaceutical company making drugs to treat human
16 diseases. So, I try to obtain patents for my company or
17 for my client.

18 Now, part of my job is also to supervise
19 obtaining patents worldwide, depending on how big the
20 market is for this drug. For example, one of the drugs I
21 worked on makes several hundred million dollars a year for
22 a patent -- for a drug company. And for that particular
23 drug I had to supervise entry into the patent field for
24 over 30 countries. So, I was supervising lawyers from over
25 30 countries and talking to them. Their English is very

1 good written. Not so good, sometimes, spoken. And so, I
2 would supervise these 30 plus lawyers from all over the
3 world, trying to obtain patents under their patent laws.
4 So, I would take their advice and try to tailor a strategy
5 to obtain protection for our drug in their country.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, you represent your
7 company or your client in obtaining patents. One of the
8 things that you talked about in your impartiality essay is
9 your work as a patent agent. So, help me with the link
10 between a patent agent and being impartial.

11 MS. LIANG: Okay. Because -- okay, I'll take the
12 U.S. example because that's what I'm most familiar with.
13 In the U.S. if, for example, the inventorship is wrong on a
14 patent that could potentially invalidate the patent. That
15 means after all that work and expense the patent is not
16 enforceable.

17 So, you have to get the inventorship correct.
18 And, of course, everybody working on a particular project
19 wants to have their particular input acknowledged. And so,
20 many people think that they should be on this patent.
21 However, patent inventorship, or inventorship of a patent
22 is a very strict -- has very strict legal definitions, has
23 very strict -- has lots of case law on it. And so, you
24 have to go through an analysis to see who is properly
25 deemed an inventor.

1 Now, working in a pharmaceutical company, most of
2 these people who have worked on these drugs, they're my
3 friends. So, it's very difficult to tell a friend you're
4 not an inventor, especially since they could get merit
5 points or promotions based on having their name on the
6 patent. So, I have to walk them through the process of
7 determining who is an inventor or not.

8 I have to go through and very decisively, and yet
9 gently because they're my friends, tell them you are not an
10 inventor on this and I cannot do anything for you, even
11 though it may -- even though your promotion depends on
12 this, because you are not properly an inventor because it
13 is -- there's a strict guideline of who are inventors.

14 It's also difficult to tell a client when you're
15 in a law firm, because the client may decide to go to
16 another law firm who has a different idea of whether they
17 are inventors or not. You just have to let that happen.
18 If you don't think that person's an inventor cannot change
19 your mind, cannot bend. You have to let the person walk,
20 if necessary.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. In
22 your analytical skills essay you say: I have the ability
23 to dispassionately analyze Census data and make informed
24 decisions based on the data. Have you worked with Census
25 data before or have you worked with data like Census data?

1 MS. LIANG: Data like Census. For example,
2 epidemiological data. I'm constantly during my academic
3 career, also in the pharmaceutical field looking at
4 epidemiological data, looking at patient cohorts, looking
5 at whether -- looking at, oh, if this drug is not working
6 for this patient cohort, maybe there's a sub-cohort that it
7 could be applied to, stuff like that.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, how big is this data,
9 typically?

10 MS. LIANG: It depends. If it's an orphan drug,
11 maybe a few. Maybe one person, two people, to persons,
12 three people. It could be as small as that.

13 But some of the big epidemiological cohorts are
14 thousands and tens of thousands of people, so you have to
15 look at that.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And when it's tens of
17 thousands of data, what programs do you use to analyze that
18 data?

19 MS. LIANG: I rely on our statisticians. So, I
20 rely on the experts because I am not an expert. But I will
21 be talking to them constantly about it and trying to data
22 mine and see if there's a smaller cohort who would benefit
23 from our drug.

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. Under the
25 diversity essay, appreciation for diversity, you talked a

1 lot about your travels. And I don't need to talk about
2 that. But what I needed to hear from the essay and what I
3 want to ask you is can you provide an example of a project
4 you worked on with people from different backgrounds, a
5 project that demonstrates your appreciation for diversity?

6 MS. LIANG: Well, the projects for example are I
7 supervised 30 or more foreign attorneys. And in one
8 instance when -- in one instance I remember calling
9 Pakistan and when there was a power outage in Pakistan, and
10 tried to get contact them, and they were telling me, oh, we
11 only have power by so and so time, could you call at these
12 times. That was a long time ago, that was 20 years ago, so
13 I think Pakistan's much better now, power outage wise.

14 But I am used to working with people from
15 disparate backgrounds, and disparate viewpoints. And so,
16 and disparate technological abilities to be able to work
17 together.

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. In question
19 four you talked about the pharmaceutical companies that
20 you've worked for, and when you're trying to get a drug to
21 market that there's all these people that come in with
22 different perspectives, and how that -- there could be
23 conflict. What I want to know is how did you personally
24 help resolve the conflict that occurs in those situations?

25 MS. LIANG: Talk, lots of talks. And also,

1 making the process extremely transparent because in
2 patents, inventorship is based on what's called claims, the
3 claims of the invention, which is the description of the
4 invention. So, I would go down the list of claims and talk
5 to the potential inventors and say what did you contribute
6 to this? What did you contribute to this? What was your
7 contribution to this? And so, talk, talk, and talk, trying
8 to figure out what was the underlying contribution and why
9 this person thought they were a contributor. Maybe there
10 was some aspect that I didn't see and sometimes there was.
11 After my initial assessment, maybe there was something that
12 I did not see and somebody came to me and said, hey, I did
13 this, so I should properly be a co-inventor. And I would
14 say, yes. It just depends on what the issue was. I can't
15 be more specific in that, sorry.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. My final question.
17 You said that people are nice.

18 MS. LIANG: Uh-hum, yes. Usually.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, people are generally
20 nice. Yeah, usually. So, can you think of a person in
21 your work or other experiences that was not nice, difficult
22 to work with? And then, I want to know how did you work
23 with that person?

24 MS. LIANG: Okay. As with any group of people
25 there are some people who are not nice. They -- to work

1 with these people, you have to maintain a calm demeanor and
2 to respect their opinions. Some of these people are very
3 intelligent, they just think that they are always right
4 sometimes. So, you have to work with them and talk to
5 them, and see whether -- and basically talk to them and get
6 their point of view, and to be firm in your point of view
7 when you talk to them.

8 So, for the not nice people, you still have to
9 work with them no matter what. Just talk.

10 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. I have no
11 further question.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. Good
14 afternoon, Dr. Liang, thank you for being here. Many of my
15 questions have been addressed already by my colleagues or
16 by your answers.

17 But I did want to discuss something you mentioned
18 in your essay. You talk about your volunteer and donation
19 efforts, which are focused on those in need.

20 MS. LIANG: Uh-hum.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your case, both people and
22 animals, with your donations to the L.A. Food Bank, and the
23 Downtown Women's Center, as well as your volunteer efforts
24 with animal rescue groups. And you state that your focus
25 on those has to do with your ability to empathize with

1 those in need due to your background. You've spoken about
2 your background a little bit already.

3 My question is that ability to empathize that you
4 speak of, how do you think that will help you if you are a
5 member of this Commission?

6 MS. LIANG: I think I can understand where people
7 -- may understand where people come from. For example,
8 somebody who is not a native English speaker, when they
9 come up it's a daunting task for them to come up to a
10 Commission and speak to it, to speak publicly. Sometimes
11 they're hesitant, sometimes they're looking for the proper
12 English word. If you rush them, they will shut up. They
13 will not say another word. They will shut off. You cannot
14 rush people. You have to be there patiently listening and
15 be open to them, to what they're saying, and to encourage
16 them to speak up.

17 So, I have noticed or have had situations in my
18 background where people I know, they wanted to say
19 something, they were rushed or they perceived they were
20 brushed off. In my perception they were not brushed off,
21 it was just a regular American manner in which they were
22 treated. But from their cultural perspective, they were
23 grossly offended. And so, they said no more, don't want to
24 deal with it. Never dealt with it again.

25 So, I have that cultural sensitivity because of

1 my experience.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: I kind of want to continue the
3 thought of cultural sensitivity. In one of your answers to
4 Ms. Dickison earlier, about communities of interest, you
5 talked about social media groups, and grocery stores. Your
6 discussion was primarily focused on racial/ethnic groups in
7 terms of communities. What about other communities that
8 are bound together by different aspects that aren't
9 necessarily ethnicity, how would you go about finding those
10 and getting those communities to engage?

11 Again, I would go to the supermarket or something
12 like that because everybody has to eat, everybody has to
13 buy something. Go to where they congregate, whether it's
14 their church, their synagogue, their temple. That's not
15 quite ethnic, because different people of different ethnic
16 groups can be bound by the same religion.

17 Socioeconomic groups that would be harder. That,
18 I would have to think about a little bit more before I can
19 answer that.

20 PANEL MEMBER COE: So, we talked about those
21 demographic items that could bind people together in a
22 community. What about regional communities? And do you
23 think the cultural sensitivity that you think you possess
24 could be applied to different people in different regions
25 based on the different perspectives they may have,

1 depending on where they reside?

2 MS. LIANG: As I mentioned in my essay I've lived
3 a long time in California. I've lived from Southern
4 California, San Diego, all the way up to San Francisco Bay
5 Area. So, I've lived for a few years here or there, in all
6 these different regions. So, I'm familiar with Northern
7 California and I have -- and Southern California, and San
8 Diego.

9 So, I have also, because I've been here for so
10 long, friends throughout the state, whether it's the
11 Central Valley, whether it's Sacramento. I have friends in
12 Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, as well as San Diego. So, I
13 have contacts that I can connect with, if I have questions
14 about those regions.

15 But also, there are many minority groups in these
16 regions, maybe under-appreciated minority groups that are
17 not on the radar of most people. But they are present and
18 because -- I'll relate this back to my food, being a
19 foodie. I love going and exploring other cultures. So,
20 for example, when driving up from San Diego to, say, San
21 Francisco, I'll stop in Bakersfield because I love the
22 Basque food there. I would stop there and, you know, go to
23 the Basque restaurants and chat, and just find out about
24 the cultures there.

25 So, I just love going to all around California,

1 figuring out the culture, trying the food. I love going to
2 Little Ethiopia in Los Angeles. I love going to Little
3 Tokyo in Los Angeles, all these different places, and just
4 having a good sense of -- and talking to people, and
5 finding out about their culture and their food.

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: And in your travels what have
7 you learned about the people in those areas, their
8 concerns, and their preferences, and those types of things?
9 What have you learned and how would that inform your work
10 as a Commissioner?

11 MS. LIANG: I do -- you know, I just talk with
12 them. I think, for example, water rights are a very
13 important thing in the Central Valley. Farming issues are
14 a very important thing as connected to the water rights are
15 very important in the Central Valley.

16 Once upon a time, when I was growing up in
17 Southern California two cities over Fontana had tons of
18 dairy farms. They all moved up to the Central Valley
19 because land had just gotten too expensive in Southern
20 California.

21 So, I am aware of some of the agricultural
22 concerns in California. We are one -- we are the biggest
23 bread basket for the U.S. We are the fifth or sixth
24 biggest economy in the whole world. I am very -- I find it
25 very interesting when I read about our economy, and our

1 agricultural roots, and our history. And I just love
2 connecting with people and talking about it. So, I think
3 people will talk to me if I am a Commissioner.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. I wanted to
5 ask you something about something you mentioned in your
6 analytical skills essay, and you mentioned that you're
7 trained in the IRAC method, Issue, Rule, Application and
8 Conclusion method.

9 MS. LIANG: Uh-hum.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Do you think this methodology
11 could benefit the Commission in some way?

12 MS. LIANG: It could, I definitely think it
13 could. But I am open to many different analyses' forms.
14 Not everybody thinks the same. You have to respect other
15 people's different way of thinking. They could have a
16 totally -- they could see something that I have totally
17 missed and that has to be respected. And I do respect it.
18 I'm very open. I think it's because of my scientific
19 training that I am so open to other ideas. Because if you
20 make a mistake and if you have a bias in science, like I
21 said you could waste decades of your life chasing the wrong
22 rabbit down the hole.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: So, if you were to be
24 appointed as a Commissioner, which aspects of that role do
25 you think that you would enjoy the most and on the other

1 side what aspects of that role do you think you might
2 struggle with a little bit?

3 MS. LIANG: I'm a data junkie. I love looking at
4 data. I love looking at -- I love order. I love putting
5 together puzzles. So, I think the work will be very
6 enjoyable for me.

7 I do like talking to people, but it is tiring for
8 me to talk to people and to be open and engaging all the
9 time. So, I think that would be not hard for me, but a
10 little bit tiring for me. And I think that the Commission
11 needs to have a lot of open sessions, or open consultation
12 with the public in general. So, I think that would be a
13 little bit tiring for me, but it's something that I would
14 still enjoy to some extent because I like talking to
15 people.

16 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. No
17 additional questions.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Dawson?

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

20 Dr. Liang, I wanted to follow up on that question
21 that you had from Mr. -- your answer to the question that
22 you gave Mr. Coe. You talked about being careful of bias
23 in the data. So, it seems that the Commission will be
24 taking data from a number of different sources, harder data
25 including Census data, and then also sort of softer data,

1 which is more community engagement.

2 MS. LIANG: Uh-hum.

3 MR. DAWSON: So, focusing on the Census data, do
4 you have any concern about bias in that data and, if so,
5 how would you address that?

6 MS. LIANG: I don't believe I have any concerns
7 about bias in my own, in me looking at the data, because I
8 firmly believe that each vote should count as much as
9 possible, and equally to another vote.

10 Now, having said that, I realize that there are
11 practical aspects and that it may not be completely equal.
12 But in the time allowed, I will try to make it as equal as
13 possible.

14 MR. DAWSON: Well, what my question was getting
15 at, and I'm sorry I wasn't very clear, but there is always
16 the possibility of an under count. Certain Californians
17 will not be counted. That's just a fact, but it tends to
18 involve some groups more than others. And is there
19 something that you could do as a Commissioner, with your
20 scientific background, that would allow you and the
21 Commission to deal with that possible -- that possible
22 bias?

23 MS. LIANG: I'd have to look into the data a
24 little bit more before I can answer that question. For
25 example, I know statisticians have algorithms that they can

1 use.

2 MR. DAWSON: Uh-hum.

3 MS. LIANG: But whether that would be appropriate
4 or not in this situation I don't know. I'd have to look
5 into it more before I can answer that. But there are
6 algorithms that they do, statisticians do use. They don't
7 count everybody, they do use algorithms to make up for a
8 certain lack, or fill in certain gaps.

9 MR. DAWSON: Uh-hum.

10 MS. LIANG: Whether that's appropriate or not, at
11 this point I don't know. It depends on the data that comes
12 in.

13 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. I wanted to follow
14 up on one of your answers to the questions, the standard
15 questions. You talked about sort of the subtleties of
16 language, and picking up nuances of when people are
17 speaking, particularly for whom English is not their first
18 language. And could you expand on that? Is that something
19 that you think came out of your immigrant background, or
20 your work experience, or maybe a combination of the both?

21 MS. LIANG: Definitely a combination of both.
22 For work right now I'm very conscious to speak standard
23 English, not American English because it is -- English is
24 the international business language. Everybody knows
25 English when we're working together in big groups around

1 the world. But they may not understand American
2 colloquialism or British colloquialism. It's actually,
3 sometimes the Americans and the British colleagues have the
4 most trouble being understood by the rest of the English
5 speakers from, let's say Thailand, or the Philippines, or
6 even Germany. They have a hard time, sometimes,
7 understanding American colloquialisms.

8 Or the reverse. Sometimes somebody from India
9 will say something and we will all be startled because
10 that's not the normal word usage we have in the U.S. And
11 we would have to clarify what he meant. So, it is -- you
12 have to be sensitive about it.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Did you always want to
14 be a scientist?

15 MS. LIANG: Yes, I did.

16 MR. DAWSON: Did you always want to be a
17 biologist?

18 MS. LIANG: Yes, I did because it's very
19 interesting. It's fascinating out the human body works and
20 how nature works. Why is a constant question I always
21 asked my parents, why, why, why, when I was younger. And
22 so, they said, well, you have to look it up.

23 MR. DAWSON: We have interviewed -- or, I'm
24 sorry, the Panel has interviewed quite a number of
25 attorneys, but you're the only one to mention IRAC as an

1 analytical framework, so I appreciate that.

2 It seems to me that as a scientist you tend to
3 the analysis of hard data, but in your legal career
4 sometimes it's more soft data. Do you have an approach for
5 melding those?

6 MS. LIANG: Yes and no, because in science the
7 data is what it is. You can try to data mine a little bit,
8 but you cannot fudge the scientific data, otherwise you
9 will be hurting somebody, a future patient.

10 Melding it with the legal field, like I said,
11 I've needed to be the bridge between the scientific and the
12 legal communities. Because the scientists will always say
13 yes or no, maybe. Maybe is a very often answer from a
14 scientist. Whereas the legal field wants to have more
15 concrete answers from the scientists.

16 So, I've had to be the interpreter between the
17 two fields. For example, the scientist will say why can't
18 I be an inventor on this? It's just putting my name on a
19 paper. And from the legal stand point I'll say, no, it is
20 not. It means whether the patent falls or not if we get
21 the wrong inventorship.

22 Versus a scientist, they're used to having their
23 name, putting everybody's name on a paper. It's not a big
24 deal for them to be a co-inventor on a patent. But in the
25 legal field it is. So, you have to interpret from both

1 sides.

2 MR. DAWSON: I see. You are registered as no
3 party preference.

4 MS. LIANG: Uh-hum.

5 MR. DAWSON: The Commission will be composed of
6 five Democrats, five Republicans, and four persons not
7 affiliated with either of those two parties.

8 Do you see the nonaffiliated members as having a
9 particular role to play in this structure?

10 MS. LIANG: Definitely as mediators, mediating
11 the two groups. And I believe and I hope that everybody
12 who has been applying for the Commissioner's position
13 realizes that this is beyond party preference. But if not,
14 I think the impartialists are not -- the no party stated will
15 be mediators between the two parties.

16 MR. DAWSON: I see. And do you feel that that is
17 a role that is particularly personally suitable to you?

18 MS. LIANG: I believe so because I have been a
19 bridge between multiple communities, the legal, the
20 scientific, my immigrant community, the community at large,
21 the American community and the international business
22 community I've been a bridge.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I have no more follow-up
24 questions. We have roughly 25 minutes remaining in the 90-
25 minute period. Do any of the Panel Members have any

1 additional follow ups?

2 CHAIR DICKISON: I don't have any.

3 Mr. Belnap?

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: I do not have any follow-up
7 questions.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: No further questions.

9 MR. DAWSON: Okay. So, at this point Dr. Liang,
10 I'd like to offer you the opportunity to make a closing
11 statement to the Panel, if you wish.

12 MS. LIANG: Okay, thank you. So, this will be
13 really brief. So, if chosen to be on the Commission I will
14 passionately strive to fulfill my responsibilities to the
15 Commission in an ethical, pragmatic, and timely manner.
16 That's it. Thank you.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

19 Our next interview today is at 3:00 o'clock, so
20 we are going to recess until 2:59.

21 (Off the record at 2:19 p.m.)

22 (On the record at 2:59 p.m.)

23 CHAIR DICKISON: It being 2:59, calling the
24 Applicant Review Panel meeting back to order.

25 I want to welcome Katherine Burns.

1 MS. BURNS: Thank you.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: For her interview today. And I
3 will turn the meeting over to Mr. Chris Dawson to read you
4 the five standard questions.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Good afternoon, Ms.
6 Burns. I'm going to ask you five standard questions that
7 the Panel has asked each applicant to respond to. Are you
8 ready, ma'am?

9 MS. BURNS: I'm ready. Thank you.

10 MR. DAWSON: The first question. What skills and
11 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

12 What skills or competencies should the Commission
13 possess collectively?

14 Of the skills, attributes and competencies that
15 each Commissioner should possess, which do you possess?

16 In summary, how will you contribute to the
17 success of the Commission?

18 MS. BURNS: So, I think one of the most important
19 skills that the team should have collectively is a sense of
20 collaboration and the ability to work together. Also,
21 critical thinking skills so that they can review
22 information and data, talk about it, have that sense of
23 problem solving and ability to make decisions. And again,
24 I just think that sense of collaboration is so centrally
25 important to the process. Because if the team isn't

1 working well together, they're not going to achieve their
2 goal of finishing the work.

3 And so, along with collaboration I think is a
4 sense of having good listening skills, the ability to have
5 strong communication skills both to express what their
6 ideas are, their opinions, and also to be able to
7 participate equally. So that those who tend to talk a lot
8 maybe give room to those who tend to be more introverted so
9 that they have the opportunity to provide their input as
10 well. And for those who are more introverted, which I'm
11 usually along those lines, to be responsible to offer their
12 input as well, and not just sit back and not be a part of
13 the process.

14 I have had a long history of being a part of
15 collaborative projects, both when I was in the insurance
16 industry and then now, as an educator. And I know from
17 working on successful projects and projects that weren't as
18 successful that, again, this sense of collaboration is
19 super important. And I know that I have the skills to
20 support a team in reaching a great result, finishing a
21 project, and making the best use of everyone's strengths so
22 that we can all work together to achieve the goal.

23 I know that I have had many instances where
24 collaboration -- excuse me, where communication has been
25 critical in giving outsiders and those within the group

1 updates in terms of what the efforts are, what the progress
2 is that we're making, questions that we have so that
3 everyone can be a part of the process and kind of
4 understand what's going on.

5 And I think listening is part of that as well,
6 being patient, listening to others' ideas. And I think
7 I've had a good track record of that as well based on my
8 life experiences and work experiences.

9 So, in short, I think that the sense of
10 collaboration is critical collectively and individually,
11 and my experience all ties into that. I think I would make
12 a great contribution to the Commission.

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

19 What characteristics do you possess, and what
20 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
21 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

22 What will you do to ensure that the work of the
23 Commission is not seen as polarized or hyperpartisan and
24 avoid perceptions of political bias and conflict?

25 MS. BURNS: One of the first things that came to

1 mind as I saw this question is in our culture today how
2 there seems to be a lot of name calling. That if you don't
3 agree with someone's opinion, there's name calling that
4 happens. And, certainly, there's absolutely no room for
5 that on the Commission and there should be no room for that
6 in our society.

7 I have always believed that it's very important
8 in terms of how I view the world to first of all ask
9 questions and listen. I very much appreciate hearing what
10 others have to say and what they believe. It has actually
11 helped me learn a lot as a citizen. I learn from my
12 colleagues, and my friends, and my neighbors based on just
13 conversations and hearing their ideas. So, listening is
14 absolutely critical.

15 And I think that having the ability to think
16 about life in terms of someone else, like living in someone
17 else's shoes for a while. And I will bring up the example
18 of just working as a middle school teacher, which I know
19 this isn't directly related. But the idea that the
20 students that came to me every day are going through a lot,
21 and I was always aware of that. I always tried to imagine
22 what kind of day they were having, where their ideas were
23 coming from because some of them were fairly crazy. But
24 just that listening and being aware that what they have to
25 say is really important to them and I don't ever want to

1 minimize that. I want to appreciate, you know, their
2 opinions. And if I don't agree ask questions, like why do
3 you think that, and not in a confrontational kind of way
4 but really with a genuine feeling that I want to understand
5 what their beliefs are and why.

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

10 MS. BURNS: I think one of the biggest concerns I
11 would have would be that they would not work well together
12 as a group. That there would be inner conflict. That this
13 would get in the way of getting work done.

14 And in my lifetime I've worked on a couple of
15 committees that have had that problem and it's been very
16 frustrating, and has taken a lot of valuable time, and
17 gotten people very frustrated, and angry, and emotional.

18 What I have found is again it gets back to
19 communication and also a sense of purpose. I think it
20 would be very important that the Commission knows their
21 purpose, has the goal in mind, and that everyone
22 understands what that vision is.

23 I think it's important to set norms right out of
24 the gate so that everyone knows their roles and
25 responsibilities. Even just setting some guidelines for

1 how we communicate with one another, that sense of fairness
2 again that we're going to -- we're equal participants.
3 That all of our opinions are very important, and matter,
4 and should be heard.

5 And so, I think that without establishing those
6 norms at the beginning, I think that the group dynamic
7 could really break down. And so, I think that is one of
8 the most critical things in the groups where I've been
9 successful is having just some ground rules that we all
10 follow.

11 And in groups that I've worked in where we've got
12 off to a rough start, we kind of hit the reset button. And
13 I even very recently, with a group I was working with at
14 work had to say, okay, let's just start over. You know,
15 what are we doing here? What's our goal? And how are we
16 going to accomplish this? And sometimes it's even a matter
17 of assigning certain jobs. Maybe someone has a strength in
18 one particular area, that's their task. And whatever my
19 task might be is based on my strengths. And then, putting
20 all those puzzle pieces together. But I think when you
21 have those norms in place you can begin to establish trust
22 and open communication.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question four. If you
24 are selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
25 Commission which is charged with working together to create

1 maps of the new districts. Please describe a situation
2 where you had to work collaboratively with others on a
3 project to achieve a common goal.

4 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
5 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
6 conflicts that arose.

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

9 MS. BURNS: So, probably the largest project,
10 collaborative effort that I've ever been involved in was
11 with a school I was working with in South Stockton. It was
12 a historically low performing school that during the race
13 to the top era was in great -- at a great risk of being
14 closed. And I can understand why there were some arguments
15 being made in favor of closing the school. The thought was
16 that, hey, they've never been successful. The students are
17 not being given to the proper access to a quality
18 education, so we should just close that school.

19 But the problem was that some teachers and I at
20 the school were concerned that it was a location within a
21 neighborhood, kind of an isolated neighborhood in South
22 Stockton. And our fear was where are the kids going to go
23 to school? If they close our local school, they're going
24 to get put on buses. How is that going to look? How is
25 that going to affect their lives when they're on buses all

1 day, away from their friends in their neighborhood.

2 So, we started an effort to convert the school to
3 a charter. And it started with just a little idea. A good
4 friend of mine talked to a school board member and it began
5 to take shape after that. So, I wasn't the first leader on
6 the group, but I was a very active participant. And the
7 entire process took us almost a year to convert the school
8 into a charter. We knew nothing about how to create a
9 charter school, we just had this idea.

10 And so, initially, it again began with this idea
11 of what are our goals, so we mapped out our goals, what do
12 we want. And then, we also included community members. We
13 included school board members. We included local experts
14 who could help us design the school. We set a schedule at
15 meetings. We made sure everyone was heard. We didn't want
16 this just to be the teachers' idea of a school but, really,
17 what did the neighborhood want. So, that parent component,
18 and even the students' opinions were very important to us.

19 We faced many obstacles along the way, mostly
20 because we didn't -- we weren't experts in, again, creating
21 a charter school. We didn't understand all of the laws.
22 And so, as obstacles came before us we would find a
23 community member who could help us, who had special
24 knowledge, that we could meet with and ask all kinds of
25 questions. And it was, in the end, we're really proud of

1 the school that we created and it's still there today.

2 And we also, as it got to the end we had to get
3 final approval for the charter school, so that meant going
4 to a series of school board meetings, state school board
5 meetings, and so we had to prepare for those as well and
6 make decisions about who's going to present our platform,
7 who's going to go over all of our plans. And so, that was
8 a very thoughtful process as well.

9 But we worked really well together as a team
10 because there was open communication and we had a shared
11 vision, and we appreciated everyone's expertise that they
12 brought to the table.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five. A
14 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
15 meeting with people from all over California who come from
16 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of
17 perspectives.

18 If you are selected as a Commissioner, what
19 skills and attributes will make you effective at
20 interacting with people from different backgrounds and who
21 have a variety of different perspectives?

22 What experiences have you had that will help you
23 be effective at understanding and appreciating people and
24 communities of different backgrounds and who have a variety
25 of perspectives?

1 MS. BURNS: So, for myself, I grew up in the Bay
2 Area, so I've had many years of living in the East Bay.
3 After college, I lived in Sacramento, and then I left the
4 state for a while, moved back to the Bay Area. I live in
5 San Joaquin County now. So, I have a great perspective of
6 what it's like to live in these areas.

7 But thinking back to when I was in the insurance
8 industry, I traveled throughout the state visiting a
9 variety of different companies and organizations who were
10 our policyholders, and had contracted for services with us,
11 whether it was for claims services, or safety, risk
12 management, things of that nature.

13 As I traveled throughout the state for that
14 particular job, or when I was in that industry, I met with
15 CEOs, CFOs, human resources officers, and managers. But I
16 also met with line managers in factories, and workers who,
17 you know, were on the factory line every day. And I would
18 get to know a particular business from multiple
19 perspectives.

20 So, one of my favorite places to go, for example,
21 was a plant down in the Central Coast that produces apple
22 juice. And so, we would tour the entire factory from when
23 the apples came off the truck to where they went through
24 and were cleaned, and mashed, and you know, just through
25 the whole process.

1 And so, getting to know all of the people
2 throughout that organization was important for my ability
3 to provide service to them. But it was interesting to me
4 and wonderful to see the unique perspectives that they
5 offered just in terms of that business.

6 As I traveled throughout the state to many
7 different companies and meeting employees, and managers,
8 and what have you, I got to know them as people and also it
9 was pretty wonderful to visit different businesses in
10 geographic areas of the state. And so, I have a great
11 appreciation for everything that we do here. To the point
12 of everywhere I would go I'd say I want to live here. But
13 anyway, I always end up going home.

14 As an educator, I have spent the past several
15 years in my role, I now manage grant programs for a
16 college. It's called Teachers College of San Joaquin. And
17 a lot of that work has taken me throughout the Central
18 Valley and up into the foothills. And I've gotten to know
19 many educators, both teachers and principals,
20 superintendents in a variety of areas. And I've learned a
21 lot from their perspectives in terms of their relationship
22 with their communities. And their views are often
23 different than mine and it's been interesting, again, to
24 learn from them.

25 I just have really taken note, even thinking in

1 terms of politics how I can drive a half-hour away from
2 where I live and see signs of a political, you know, stance
3 that are completely different from the ones in my
4 neighborhood, where I see on everyone's front lawns. And
5 so, I know that there are very diverse opinions among
6 people that I enjoy spending time with, working with, and I
7 love that you put all of those pieces together and it
8 creates, you know, the great system that we have for
9 education.

10 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. At this point we will go
11 to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes
12 to ask his or her questions. And we will start with our
13 Chair, Ms. Dickison.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon, Mrs. Burns. So,
15 you talked a little bit about the fact that you moved
16 around the Bay Area, and Sacramento, and San Joaquin. What
17 did you learn from those experiences in moving around about
18 the communities, and how they may differ from region to
19 region that you can use in working with the Commission?

20 MS. BURNS: So, I found that when I lived in the
21 Bay Area, first I was in a suburban area, but then I lived
22 in Oakland for quite a few years, and worked in San
23 Francisco. What I saw was real estate prices were of
24 concern, traffic congestion. The neighborhood where I
25 lived was very diverse. Neighbors with, again, many

1 different backgrounds, different cultures. We had a really
2 close knit neighborhood where I grew up. And even when I
3 lived in Oakland, my neighbors, we were all really close.
4 And just getting to know people on a personal level and
5 appreciate, you know, the different food they cooked, and
6 the places they had traveled and having those conversations
7 was really amazing.

8 When I moved to Sacramento, it was a little, I
9 would say, more emphasis on suburban. I lived almost in a
10 rural area outside of downtown. And I was in a
11 neighborhood where most of my neighbors all looked alike.
12 We were all white and kind of around the same age. Some
13 had kids, some didn't. I didn't know my neighbors as well
14 there. It seemed like they were commuting to and from
15 work.

16 But I know that one of the biggest concerns where
17 I lived was, at the time, the air quality because they were
18 burning the rice fields. And so, I remember in particular
19 that one of my neighbors had asthma and that affected his
20 asthma, and so we would talk about that a lot.

21 And also, the idea just about smog, and the
22 thought that, oh, this bad air is coming, blowing in from
23 the Bay Area. And so, a little bit of blaming, you know,
24 the Bay Area and the traffic for that. But it was, you
25 know, just a little bit of a different kind of a feel

1 living where I did.

2 When I moved to San Joaquin County, to Stockton,
3 I used to always make fun of Stockton, I will be honest
4 with you. I have some very close friends who live there
5 and that's why I ended up in Stockton. But I used to make
6 fun of, you know, I'll never live there.

7 And once I got to Stockton, it's actually my
8 favorite place that I have ever lived. The people are so
9 kind. There are so many community events going on. Lots
10 of beautiful trees. And I know that what we often talk are
11 water issues because of the San Joaquin Delta and the fight
12 over water.

13 Interestingly, I think about the water a lot and
14 access to water, especially with the drought that we had
15 several years ago. And it was around the time I was going
16 up to the foothills and visiting teachers in Tuolumne
17 County. And they would -- we would talk about water and
18 they'd say, oh, no, the water starts here up in the
19 mountains, and it was just something I hadn't really
20 thought about before. So, we all have this connection with
21 water, and access to water, but looking at it from a
22 different perspective based on where we live.

23 So, the focus on Northern California I know does
24 not represent the entire state, but having lived here I
25 also just want to point out, too, that the political views

1 are different, I think. Growing up in the Bay Area I felt
2 that most of my neighbors were more, you know, like
3 Democratic Party kind of side of things. Now, where I live
4 in San Joaquin County, more of my neighbors -- well, I
5 would say it's kind of -- kind of probably 50/50,
6 Republicans and Democrats. But it does seem to be
7 generally more conservative where I live now, compared to
8 when I was in the Bay Area.

9 But I was going to point out that I have also
10 traveled throughout the state. I have friends in Southern
11 California that I visit quite often. I have friends in
12 Northern California, up near Yreka that I visit, so I get
13 to see the state from many perspectives.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: You talked about the work you
15 did in converting the school into a charter school.

16 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: And one of the things you talked
18 about in your application was during the effort you took
19 care to meet with the local parents and get their input.
20 How did you do that? Was that through public meetings or
21 --

22 MS. BURNS: Actually, what we ended up doing, we
23 met with some informally at coffee shops in the early
24 phases. There was a Starbuck's near our school where we
25 met quite often, and a Denny's, where anyone who knew about

1 this, the initial effort, we would meet. That was kind of
2 our hangout, but sometimes also at the school.

3 As we got through the first couple of months, we
4 established a partnership with a local group of churches,
5 who were neighborhood churches near the school, and they
6 had many connections with the parents and families in our
7 area that the school served. And so, as we progressed
8 through our effort, we tended to meet more at the churches
9 than anywhere else.

10 And we would send emails, and a lot through word
11 of mouth. And the pastors would, at their Sunday
12 gatherings, make announcements so that we could get
13 community members to attend our meetings.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: So, one of the things that the
15 Commission is charged with is determining or identifying
16 communities of interest throughout the state. Based on
17 your experience here, how do you think that would translate
18 into identifying those communities of interest in areas
19 that you don't know anyone?

20 MS. BURNS: What we -- what we did is we asked
21 questions. Even I'm involved in a small group that's
22 starting to take shape now, connected with environmental
23 literacy in California. We invite the people we know to
24 start and then we ask who else should be here? And then
25 that group comes and we continue to ask who else should be

1 here? Who else do we want to talk to? And not just in
2 terms of those who are most focal, but who is going to be
3 impacted by these efforts and decisions, and so who do we
4 want to have at the table, who can we work with? And so,
5 that was the approach we took. There might be a better
6 approach that I'm always happy to learn, but it worked for
7 us at the time.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, you worked in
9 the insurance industry and then went back to school to be a
10 teacher, is that correct?

11 MS. BURNS: I actually -- in a sense, yes.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

13 MS. BURNS: I actually became an intern teacher.
14 So, because of the teacher shortage which has been going on
15 for many years, California has an alternative pathway that
16 allows, if you meet certain requirements you can become a
17 teacher of record in a classroom. And you are an intern.
18 So, you're the teacher of record and you go to school at
19 night. It's a two-year program. And so, that's what I
20 ended up doing.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: What made you decide to change
22 your career and go into teaching, from the insurance
23 industry?

24 MS. BURNS: So, I was at a time in my career
25 wherein I was traveling a lot and I literally would wake up

1 and not know what city I was in, and I just was so tired of
2 the traveling. It was constant. I missed my family, I
3 missed my friends, and so I was reflecting a lot about
4 that.

5 But also, there was a chain of events where the
6 insurance company I went to -- or, I worked for, excuse me,
7 in San Francisco went out of business. And that's
8 ultimately what brought me to Stockton. And when I first
9 moved to Stockton, I remained in the insurance industry but
10 I was still thinking I love this community, what can I do
11 here that's going to have more meaning and allow me to
12 contribute more. And so, just by chance I kept kind of
13 crossing paths with many different educators, whether it
14 was private school, public school.

15 I began doing a lot of volunteer work for
16 academic competitions and it just came together that I
17 thought, well, I want to be -- just an epiphany I want to
18 be a teacher. So, I made the decision to take that route
19 and I'm really glad that I did.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: So, you kind of talked about how
21 you tried not to influence how your students thought.

22 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: You just asked questions to find
24 out what they think.

25 MS. BURNS: Yes.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: What subject matter were you
2 teaching?

3 MS. BURNS: I had -- I worked -- my school was a
4 K through 8 school, so I taught -- there were several years
5 where I just taught math and science. But in later years
6 they decided that a self-contained model was better, which
7 meant I had the same group of students for the whole day,
8 and so I taught all the subjects. And that required me to
9 learn a lot more, remember my skills in English, and social
10 studies.

11 And so, we were a project-based learning school,
12 which is what the focus was of the charter. And so, we
13 taught integrated curriculum that involved math, science,
14 social studies, English, you know with the writing. And
15 so, we wanted always whatever the project was to have some
16 real world connection. And oftentimes that connection was
17 through social issues, whether it was the election or some
18 other thing, maybe the dog shelter. And so, students would
19 be asking all kinds of questions that they would
20 investigate. Because in project-based learning they kind
21 of drive -- they drive it and I'm the director. And they
22 would ask me what do you think? And I'd say, well, what do
23 you think? Because I know that teachers do have a lot of
24 power in the classroom, especially if they're working with
25 really young children. And I would never want to force

1 them to believe something or -- I mean that's not really
2 the right word. Have them feel pressured to, you know, be
3 aligned with my beliefs so that they can make a good
4 impression on me. I want them to think what they think.

5 And I also, at the same time, I think I wrote in
6 my application that I would never want, maybe if I have a
7 student who doesn't agree with me, I wouldn't want them to
8 think anything less of what their opinion is because it's
9 every bit as important as mine. So.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, you talked about
11 that you learned a lot from your students by taking that
12 approach. What did you learn from them?

13 MS. BURNS: I learned that sometimes I'm -- maybe
14 the word learning isn't the right word, maybe it's just
15 refocusing. It's just sometimes the smallest things are so
16 important to my students. Things that I might look over
17 and just kind of take for granted because I've lived
18 through that experience. It could be something as simple
19 as, you know, they're building a warehouse across the
20 street. Where am I going to ride my bike, now? Just
21 everyday issues were super important to them.

22 Another thing that I learned along the way were
23 some of the struggles that my students were going through.
24 And, for example, I had a student who would come to school
25 grouchy every day. He always showed up late. And I would

1 think, oh, you know, he's late, he's going to disrupt my
2 class again. Until one morning I was driving to work and
3 he was behind me, in the car behind me, I could see them in
4 my rearview mirror, and his mom was yelling at him. And I
5 thought, ah, that's how he starts his day. Like that's
6 maybe why he comes in grouchy every day. And I made an
7 effort to talk to him more and just, hey, how's it going.
8 And that was a defining moment for me as a teacher in my
9 early years that I can't just make assumptions like, oh,
10 he's coming into my classroom to be disruptive. There's
11 something else going on and so it's up to me to listen, you
12 know, ask questions, figure out what's going on, and then
13 we can work together a lot better.

14 MS. PELLMAN: You have about six minutes.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. If you're selected
16 as one of the first eight Commissioners, which are selected
17 by lottery, you would be one of the eight that are tasked
18 with selecting the remaining six to round out the
19 Commission. What would you be looking for in those
20 remaining six Commissioners?

21 MS. BURNS: Again, I would be looking for
22 candidates that have the ability to be collaborative, that
23 have the ability to -- you know, critical problem solving
24 or analytical skills so that they can review a lot of
25 information and make decisions.

1 But I also think it's important that we have a
2 balance of people with different ideas. Because my
3 understanding with the point of this Commission, and I can
4 see from everything that's happened it's been a very
5 careful process to make sure that the Commission is
6 representative of everybody in the state as much as it can
7 be. And so, I would be really careful in not wanting
8 everyone to have exactly my same background because I know
9 that my perspective is different than someone who has maybe
10 had different work or life experience. And so, for me that
11 would be important as well.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: What would you ultimately like
13 to see the Commission accomplish?

14 MS. BURNS: I would like to see the Commission
15 accomplish an analysis of all the Census data, looking at
16 communities and population groups that live within those
17 communities, and making appropriate decisions about where
18 the lines should be drawn. And being as fair as possible,
19 listening to community members as much as possible so that
20 ultimately decisions are made with the best interest of our
21 state in mind.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I don't have any
23 further questions at this moment.

24 Mr. Belnap?

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good afternoon. Thank you

1 for being here. At the time of your application you
2 indicated that you're going to the University of Pacific,
3 working on a doctorate in educational leadership.

4 MS. BURNS: Yes.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: But you said your -- it's
6 pending. So, what did that mean it was pending?

7 MS. BURNS: What had happened was that I had
8 defended my dissertation in June, but it takes a while to
9 have everything finalized. My dissertation has to be
10 edited and published, and then it goes through a process
11 with the registrar at the college. And so, ultimately, my
12 degree was conferred in December of 2019.

13 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

14 MS. BURNS: So, I had finished all of the work,
15 just was waiting for the rest.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, in that course of study
17 -- well, what was your dissertation about, just out of
18 curiosity?

19 MS. BURNS: So, my dissertation, because of my
20 work with teachers in rural schools I was very interested
21 in rural communities and what goes on with education in
22 rural communities, and how they're similar and how they're
23 different from suburban or urban communities. So, that was
24 part of the focus. But what I honed in on was math
25 instruction and the work that a group of teachers were

1 doing to kind of build a bridge between a network of
2 schools that were, you know, up to 100 miles apart from one
3 another, and how they ended up working together for the
4 betterment of math instruction to serve their students.
5 So, it was a focus on the teacher groups.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, in this study that
7 you did, or maybe other work you did as part of your
8 education, how much did you use like data analysis?

9 MS. BURNS: Extensively. So, my dissertation was
10 a mixed method study, so I collected interview data, as
11 well as survey data, and then I analyzed that. And looking
12 for statistical significance using computer-based tools,
13 and also doing some of it manually when I -- anyway, the
14 computer-based tools sometimes were a challenge for me and
15 sometimes it was just easier to figure it out manually.

16 And I thrive on that. I thrive on looking at
17 data. I love that data can tell a story and can help shape
18 the way that we make decisions.

19 Before my dissertation and as an educator, we
20 really practiced, learned and practiced the idea of data
21 for informed instruction. So, making decisions about what
22 we teach, and how we teach, and meeting the needs of each
23 individual student based on data. Based on their
24 assessment scores, based on like their everyday kind of
25 assignments that they turn in. There are many different

1 kinds of assessments that are given in the public schools.
2 And they really have no purpose unless we use that data to
3 do something. I would hate to think that the students were
4 going through tests for no reason.

5 And so, we were constantly looking at that
6 information as a team and saying, oh, well, here, you know,
7 I'm kind of weak at teaching writing in this particular
8 section. I would notice maybe my scores weren't as high.
9 So, I would ask my colleagues, well, your scores are
10 higher, what are you doing differently than I am? And so,
11 we'd use data for just every day as a teacher.

12 And then prior to that, in the insurance industry
13 it was critical that we looked at actuary data, we looked
14 at loss data. That helped us provide counseling to
15 different companies. Gee, you're having a lot of truck
16 accidents, you know, here's where we notice they're
17 happening. So, we would look at trends as far as how
18 accidents were happening, where they were happening, maybe
19 who was involved. Maybe you have a particular employee
20 that maybe needs some help for the review of safety
21 procedures. So, data has always been part of my work.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. In
23 your impartiality essay you emphasized the role of a
24 teacher, and you talked about it today with Ms. Dickison.
25 I was wondering, can you think of -- outside of your

1 experience as a teacher, can you think of any other
2 examples where you've had to put aside your personal
3 opinions and interests to achieve a broader objective?

4 MS. BURNS: I noticed that -- again, kind of
5 going back to when I was in the insurance industry, there
6 were times when I wanted to pay a claim, where it seemed
7 like this -- I really -- you know, this was something that
8 I felt was the right thing to do. Morally it was the right
9 thing to do. It's still very hard sometimes when I think
10 back to some decisions that I had to make where a claim
11 wasn't paid. But ultimately we had to go back to the
12 contract and to see what was covered under the insurance
13 policy and what wasn't covered.

14 And so sometimes, unfortunately, you have people
15 in these terrible circumstances where they've lost their
16 house, or their car's been stolen, and within the contract
17 there is no coverage for that. And so, to have to deliver
18 that difficult decision is very difficult, even though I
19 would want to, you know, issue the check. But it was not
20 part of the contract.

21 I think that just on a personal level I tend to
22 be more centrist in my views. When we talk about the
23 political culture and, you know, one side versus the other,
24 I've never really been like that. I've always just been
25 kind of the center. And I listen a lot and, again, just

1 try to understand why people think the way they do. But I
2 don't have any other examples.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Well, that was a fine
4 example, thank you.

5 MS. BURNS: Okay.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, the other question I want
7 to ask you is in your appreciation for diversity essay you
8 emphasized that that experience, where you just talked
9 about today, from transition from that public school to the
10 charter school and how you got input from people. I don't
11 want to ask you about that.

12 What I want to ask you is do you have another
13 experience where -- that demonstrates your appreciation for
14 diversity?

15 MS. BURNS: I don't know if this is -- it's still
16 -- it's still kind of -- it's connected with my work at the
17 school. But getting to know the families that were in, you
18 know, involved and connected with the school. I remember
19 the first time I drove by, because I actually interviewed
20 for the job as a teacher, I had never been to that
21 neighborhood or to the school before. And I remember
22 driving to the school my very first time thinking, okay,
23 what have I gotten myself into. This neighborhood does not
24 look like my neighborhood and wondering, you know, how's
25 this experience going to be. And making sure, you know, is

1 my car locked, where am I parking? Just making some
2 assumptions that when I look back I think they were crazy
3 because it was, you know, one of the best places I've ever
4 worked.

5 But as I got to know families, even before this
6 whole business of the charter school, I was very lucky in
7 that I would get invited to their homes for dinner, or to
8 make tamales, or they would come visit me and bring
9 asparagus. And I loved, especially in talking with my
10 students, how proud they were of their families, and what
11 their parents did. I remember one time having this whole
12 conversation, we were reading a story about the main
13 character had calluses all over her hands, and so we just
14 kind of spent a lot of time talking about that, about
15 calluses, and what do calluses mean?

16 And in the story, it didn't really go into a lot
17 of detail about calluses, but I had explained to them how
18 my father had calluses on his hands, and he did a lot of
19 woodworking, and he worked on cars and things. And so, my
20 students were really excited to talk about their parents
21 and how hard their parents worked. And I just love that in
22 the community where I was working I had students who had
23 wonderful families. They weren't like, exactly like my
24 family, although there were many similarities in some of
25 the values about, you know, going outside and playing, and

1 riding your bike. And your neighbor, you know, if you're
2 not behaving they're going to tell your mom. So, I saw a
3 lot of similarities, but also a lot of differences.

4 I would have never learned how to make tamales
5 had I not taught at that school. I would have never
6 learned about my students', you know, travels outside of
7 the United States to visit family. Anyway, it was just a
8 wonderful experience.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. No
10 further questions.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

12 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Good afternoon,
13 Ms. Burns.

14 MS. BURNS: Hi.

15 PANEL MEMBER COE: It's been talked about a
16 little bit already, but I wanted to talk about your career
17 change to be a teacher.

18 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your application you said
20 you chose that profession in part because you wanted to
21 give back to your community.

22 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: What do you feel that you are
24 giving back to your community as a teacher?

25 MS. BURNS: One of my proudest moments was as an

1 eighth grade teacher. In our district the students had a
2 choice to go to any high school that they wanted to go to.
3 There are many different high school options in Stockton.
4 And traditionally, before, you know, in just the years
5 prior, most of our students kind of filtered into one high
6 school, which is a comprehensive, really large school,
7 thousands of students. And they just really didn't know
8 that they had a choice.

9 And so, one of the things that I instilled was,
10 you know, we started having conversations about high
11 school, and their career interests. And I arranged for
12 field trips to different high schools so they could see
13 what the options were. I involved parents, you know, in
14 meetings. And there are little, specialty high schools in
15 Stockton that would be a great fit for many students.

16 And the last year when I was at the school, more
17 than half of my students were going to some of the
18 specialty high schools. Some with work skills focus, some
19 with a college prep focus, some that were aligned with
20 Delta College, which is the community college in our area.
21 And some went on to the comprehensive high school.

22 But I was excited that they realized that they
23 had choices and that they were empowered to make those
24 choices. And I think I had a role in making that happen.

25 I also had a role just within the creation of the

1 charter school. It completely transformed what was going
2 on in our community. When I first started teaching there
3 we were only allowed to teach math and reading all day
4 long, and P.E. Students did not have access to science or
5 to social studies because those subjects weren't really
6 tested. And when we transformed the school to a project-
7 based learning school now students were having science and
8 social studies, and they were excited to come to school.
9 Our attendance increased. Our behavior is completely
10 transformed. It was so nice and calm, and wonderful to
11 walk around the campus. People getting along, students
12 engaged in their learning. And I believe very strongly
13 that we provided more opportunities for our students than
14 they had had previously. So, I feel I made a definite
15 difference there.

16 And in my role now with, I work for Teachers
17 College of San Joaquin, we are training generations of new
18 teachers to provide equitable learning experiences for all
19 students, no matter where you work, no matter whether
20 you're a student, you know, is excelling and grasping ideas
21 really quickly, then you need to be pushing them, or if
22 they need more support and they're not quite where they
23 need to be at, you need to figure out how are you going to
24 get them ready for where they need to be. Or, with
25 students who have special needs, it should be very

1 inclusive and just everyone should have access. So, we
2 just keep spreading the knowledge.

3 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. In your
4 essay on impartiality, this has I think been touched on a
5 couple of times, but I wanted to ask a slightly different
6 question. You discuss an approach that you've taken to
7 teaching your students. I think Mr. Belnap mentioned you
8 strive to allow them to ask questions -- well, I forget
9 who, somebody asked. Strive to allow them to ask questions
10 about be curious about -- and be curious without you
11 directing their path with your own views.

12 You went on to say that there have been times
13 that using this approach and listening to their views and
14 thoughts has actually caused you to change your opinion on
15 some things.

16 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: And I was wondering if you
18 could give us an example of a time where you received a
19 different perspective that caused you to change your view
20 on something?

21 MS. BURNS: One of the memories that I have is
22 when we were working on a whole unit that was -- the goal
23 was they were reading the Hunger Games novel. And so, we
24 had some writing, obviously reading that they were doing in
25 connection with that. But also, comparing this futuristic

1 society with what our society used to look like and what it
2 looks like now.

3 And just my students' connections that they were
4 making to social media and how behaviors now are being
5 changed, potentially, to influence status in social media.
6 They were making these connections about -- to the novel
7 and how sometimes people aren't behaving in a way that's
8 real so that they can get more publicity. And they talked
9 a lot -- it was just something I hadn't really thought
10 about at the time.

11 And then, that led to questions about just what
12 they were viewing on the media and is that real? And so, I
13 just would have them keep digging, like how can you verify
14 what you, you know, hear in the media? How can you trust
15 what you hear in the media?

16 And so, they were just digging and digging trying
17 to fact check. They would, you know, get caught up on a
18 story and fact check, and just also keep comparing it to
19 maybe what's happened in the past. How is history
20 repeating itself or what can we learn from what we're doing
21 now to make the future better? So, that was very
22 interesting.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your essays you mention
24 that you're aware of your own biases. What might some of
25 those be?

1 MS. BURNS: So, I have biases just because of my
2 life experience growing up. And so, I, going into again
3 teaching in the school where I taught, just that again, the
4 idea of driving down the street that didn't look like where
5 I lived, thinking is someone going to, you know, break into
6 my car. And that's a bias. You know, that's a bias. And
7 I now know from personal experience my car can be broken
8 into anywhere.

9 I have had really good fortune in my life to have
10 many opportunities through education, through work, through
11 people that I've met. People like when I've done my
12 volunteer work that has opened doors for me from
13 opportunities. And I realize that I have opportunities
14 that maybe some others don't have, because they have not
15 had access.

16 And so, I was going to just explain to you about
17 a bias, and I didn't write this in my essay. But there was
18 once a student who was telling me a story about how her
19 father had built her a new bed, and she was talking -- it
20 was made out of wood, and it had blankets, and she -- the
21 reason for having it built was that she, you know, was
22 getting taller. And so, she's explaining this, explaining
23 this. And all through my head as she's talking I thought I
24 need to buy her a mattress and box springs, like they don't
25 have a mattress and box springs. And I was thinking how

1 can I have it delivered to the house? Because that's what
2 I've always had in my life. That's what I've, you know,
3 slept on. But as the conversation was going on I realized
4 she was proud, she was so proud that her father had taken
5 time and care, and was doing this for her.

6 And so, again, just another defining moment was
7 thinking who am I to -- you know, my life is different, my
8 life experience. She has, you know, wonderful things going
9 on at home. And so, that's a bias that I had as well, just
10 trying to kind of think of, you know, what I think of is a
11 good life and thinking, well, that's true for everyone, but
12 it's not always. You know, different is different, so.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: How do you ensure that any of
14 those biases that you may have been aware of don't seep
15 into your decision making process?

16 MS. BURNS: So, one of the things that I have
17 practiced in my later years as an educator, and especially
18 through my dissertation in a very purposeful manner is at
19 the beginning of any kind of data analysis or review,
20 sometimes even writing out what I think might be some
21 obstacles or biases that I need to be aware of, and just
22 keep them in check. And to have, with data analysis, even
23 sometimes another pair of eyes look over, like here's what
24 I'm thinking right now, what do you think?

25 And I think, again, if you are getting diverse

1 viewpoints and being that second set of eyes, or third pair
2 of eyes then you can get a more fair -- you know, a more
3 fair view of reality. It's just having to be very
4 conscious of it. And I don't think I'll ever completely
5 get rid of my bias, but to just try and be aware as much as
6 possible and keep it in check.

7 PANEL MEMBER COE: I wanted to switch gears a
8 little bit onto your essay on your appreciation for
9 diversity.

10 MS. BURNS: Okay.

11 PANEL MEMBER COE: In that essay you discuss your
12 awareness of how your life experiences, your culture and
13 where you live have an effect on how people view issues and
14 what they find important.

15 As a Commissioner, you'll be finding out what is
16 important to many different groups, in different regions of
17 the state in order to make sure they're properly
18 represented. How would you go about learning what is
19 important to various citizens of the state?

20 MS. BURNS: I think in any opportunity possible
21 to listen, to meet with people, talk with them, and just
22 listen. And if possible, if it makes sense to visit a
23 place that maybe I don't have an understanding of or
24 haven't been there before. The listening is just critical
25 and being open to hearing, and really hearing what is being

1 said, and being present during that listening session. And
2 making sure that the person or people are heard.

3 And again, thinking about biases, just putting
4 those aside and really being open, even though it may
5 present something I have not had experience with, you know,
6 an idea I'm not experienced with or I might necessarily
7 agree, and just continuing to ask questions to really
8 understand.

9 PANEL MEMBER COE: So, earlier I think Ms.
10 Dickison was asking about communities of interest. And I
11 want to take a little spin on that, on that topic. I'd
12 imagine in a classroom, as a teacher, there are students
13 that are less engaged, on the quieter side, you don't hear
14 from them a lot. In the Commission's work there are
15 undoubtedly going to be communities who are similar, less
16 engaged, that may be uncomfortable engaging government
17 entities for one reason or another. How do you go about
18 getting those groups of people engaged in the process so
19 you can gather their perspective as you go about making
20 decisions for the Commission?

21 MS. BURNS: So, I have had this happen with
22 students, even to the point where I would put a note on my
23 calendar, be sure to talk to so and so, and being very
24 purposeful. Because sometimes people, and I would imagine
25 communities that are quiet, they're very easily overlooked.

1 Even the neighborhood in the school, you know the school
2 were I served as a quiet community. They didn't attend
3 school board meetings. They were often overlooked. But we
4 worked with them to be more vocal.

5 So, being purposeful about reaching out and
6 making sure that the connections are made with people or
7 groups who are on the more quiet side, or less engaged. I
8 don't think that people are not engaged because they don't
9 care. I think it's because they think no one else cares.
10 That's -- I think maybe that's a bias.

11 I have -- I'm just thinking, too, in my current
12 work with some of the teachers I work with, who aren't
13 speaking up, sometimes they're struggling the most and need
14 the most help, but they're not quite sure how to ask for
15 help, or there's a little bit of shame in asking for help.

16 And so, if I'm proactive and I reach out and
17 check in like how's it going, and I again genuinely want to
18 know how it's going and take time to listen, I think you
19 begin to build trust and build bridges so that you can
20 involve everyone.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. How much time do I
22 have?

23 MS. PELLMAN: Five minutes and 45 seconds.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

25 I'd like to go back for a second to the example

1 you gave on the standard question four that Mr. Dawson
2 asked earlier, about working collaboratively with others on
3 a group, and the example you gave about transforming a
4 school into a charter school to keep it from closing. But
5 I was unclear on your answer where the conflict was within
6 the group.

7 MS. BURNS: Oh,

8 PANEL MEMBER COE: And if you could expand on
9 that, if there was one within that group. And if there
10 wasn't, is there another example you can provide that had
11 some conflict and how you worked through it?

12 MS. BURNS: Okay. So, in the context of that
13 group we had some internal conflict because this idea about
14 becoming a charter school -- so, first we wanted to engage
15 all of the teachers on our campus. And there were many
16 teachers who -- I don't know that it was they didn't agree
17 or they were afraid about speaking up. They were afraid of
18 retaliation, or possibly didn't agree with us.

19 And so, we held a series of meetings just
20 internally with the teachers to communicate like this is
21 our plan, here is what we're doing so far, here are our
22 next steps. Asking them questions about how they felt
23 about what we were doing? Would they be willing to help
24 us? Giving them projects that were aligned with their
25 skills so that we could bring them into the fold.

1 In the end we had two teachers that just didn't
2 think it was a good fit for them and they ultimately made a
3 decision to leave the school.

4 One of our priorities was that teachers invest
5 additional time and stay after school to support students
6 in their learning. And there were a couple teachers that
7 with their family obligations they weren't able to do that.
8 And so, they ultimately left.

9 So, just I would say the conflict wasn't huge
10 internally, but we, just through having conversations and
11 again trying to get perspectives that might shape our goal
12 a little bit differently, or refine it, that seemed to
13 resolve the conflict that we had.

14 We did have conflicts externally. There were
15 some interests that were fighting against the charter. And
16 so, we addressed those with as much communication as we
17 possibly could, inviting the external entities to our
18 meetings to have conversations. Trying to understand, so
19 if you don't agree with our plan, what is your plan? Maybe
20 we can work together or we can, you know, merge our plans.
21 Because, ultimately, we wanted to do what was best for our
22 students.

23 I have worked on other teams that were in just
24 sheer conflict. When I was in insurance, I was part of a
25 team that was involved with -- they were changing the

1 computer software that we used to, you know, manage the
2 claim system. And the people on the team were from all
3 over the United States and had very different viewpoints.
4 We were all just kind of thrown -- we didn't know each
5 other very well before. And so, there was a lot of
6 conflict. There was a lot of kind of jockeying for
7 position on who was going to be the boss, and who was going
8 to make the decisions. Some people who were very focal,
9 some people who were just very quiet.

10 And what I -- I got together with a small group,
11 initially, and how can we solve this problem? You know,
12 how can we get everyone on board? And so, we began just
13 having some social activities so that we could get to know
14 each other a little bit better. And then, in hopes that
15 once we get to know each other that we'll work better
16 together.

17 And so, that started to take hold. And then, we
18 got the thing with the norms. Like who's going to do what?
19 How are we going to work together as a group? And then, it
20 took a very long time to fix that but --

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Are we about out
22 of time?

23 MR. DAWSON: One minute.

24 MS. PELLMAN: One --

25 MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry, one minute and 20

1 seconds.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, really quick. If you
3 were to be appointed to the Commission, which aspects of
4 that role do you think you would enjoy the most and which
5 aspects do you think you might struggle with a little bit?

6 MS. BURNS: I love the idea about analyzing the
7 information that comes in, applying it to maps, seeking
8 advice from experts, putting all those puzzle pieces
9 together. To me that is exhilarating. I love good data
10 part and doing all of that analysis work.

11 I do think the hardest part for me, and I have to
12 be mindful of this, is finding my own voice. I listen a
13 lot. And because I am kind of centrist and this person has
14 an opinion, and this person, and yeah, that seems right,
15 and that seems right that, you know, two people can have
16 different opinions and I can identify with both. I think
17 the biggest struggle is ultimately if a decision had to be
18 made versus one or the other that would be hard for me to
19 do.

20 But I just know that it's something I have to be
21 very conscious about and do what's best so.

22 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. No
23 additional questions.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Dawson?

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 Ms. Burns I have a couple of follow-up questions.
2 I wanted to ask you about your dissertation.

3 MS. BURNS: Okay.

4 MR. DAWSON: So, you said it was about education
5 in rural communities?

6 MS. BURNS: Yes.

7 MR. DAWSON: And was that specific to California
8 or --

9 MS. BURNS: Yes.

10 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Did that involve -- your
11 work, did that involve using mapping software?

12 MS. BURNS: No.

13 MR. DAWSON: Did you analyze maps?

14 MS. BURNS: Not extensively, no.

15 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. As I'm sure you
16 know better than most anybody else, rural high school grads
17 are historically under-represented at UC, including
18 Berkeley, where you got your bachelors. Why does that
19 happen?

20 MS. BURNS: So, surprisingly there is a lot of
21 poverty in rural communities. Access to good paying jobs
22 is somewhat limited in the communities unless you have
23 residents who want to commute, or have the -- well, unless
24 they want to commute to more urban areas. I was going to
25 say telecommute, but one of the things I found in my

1 travels is that we still have many people in our state who
2 don't have Wi-Fi access. And so, telecommuting might not
3 even be an option for some people.

4 I think that another factor that I observed as I
5 was working with the schools is that it's hard to recruit
6 teachers into the areas because typically the pay is lower
7 than urban communities. Typically, and the issue that I
8 dealt with on a day-to-day basis is their access to
9 professional development is very, very limited. And so, if
10 a teacher wants to enter the profession and have
11 opportunities to take classes, and grow, and become, you
12 know, a better teacher in rural communities
13 disproportionately have -- they don't have access to PD.

14 And so, I think that as far as the high school
15 students, I think sometimes it's having access to maybe
16 teachers of computer science, or some of the specialized
17 fields that you might find more prevalence in the Bay Area
18 are more limited in the foothills or rural communities
19 because of a lot of funding issues.

20 MR. DAWSON: So, changing the frame of that to
21 what your job would be on the Commission, if selected? Is
22 that perspective on rural communities as a community of
23 interest, is that something that you think that you could
24 bring to the Commission?

25 MS. BURNS: Because I have not -- well, you know,

1 Stockton has close access to rural communities. I would
2 say definitely where I live is much more of kind of a
3 suburban, urban kind of a feel.

4 I do believe I have a lot of perspective on rural
5 communities. But that said, I have not lived in a rural
6 community. And so, it would just be through the lens of
7 having worked with and researched people in those
8 communities.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Do you think it's
10 important for the Commission to have representation from
11 the San Joaquin Valley, or the Central Valley in general?

12 MS. BURNS: I absolutely think it's critical. I
13 know that often Stockton is -- well, it's my perception
14 that Stockton is often overlooked by larger communities. I
15 know for certain that my students' families are impacted by
16 decisions that are made outside of San Joaquin Valley, and
17 that they're living with that every day.

18 In fact, I have had some instances of being
19 impacted by decisions that are made outside of my
20 community. And I think that it's important to have the
21 voices of people represented who live in either rural
22 communities, or in San Joaquin Valley because any -- again,
23 any decisions that are made are going to impact all of us.
24 And so, to have that voice is critical.

25 MR. DAWSON: So, I want to dig a little deeper on

1 that. The differences, are they political, or are they
2 cultural, or are they ethnic? How would you describe
3 those?

4 MS. BURNS: The differences with like San Joaquin
5 --

6 MR. DAWSON: The Central Valley --

7 MS. BURNS: -- or the Central Valley versus
8 elsewhere?

9 MR. DAWSON: -- compared to elsewhere. Say the
10 Coastal communities.

11 MS. BURNS: I would say there are definitely some
12 political differences. I think that where I live now,
13 again compared to where I have lived throughout my life,
14 the perspective of those in my community tends to be a lot
15 more conservative than where I have lived before. So, I do
16 see some political differences.

17 I see political differences. Again, in my
18 driving around, you get 30 minutes from home and you see
19 the signs for the State of Jefferson. And so I wonder, you
20 know, okay, well, I've even asked people like tell me about
21 that? Why do you have that sign in your yard. And I know
22 that that's aligned with a whole mindset. And my
23 perception is the feeling that people, you know, have been
24 overlooked and not part of the process, so you have this
25 movement for the State of Jefferson. And so, it's

1 important that all of us are represented at the table.

2 In terms of cultural differences, where I live
3 now much more emphasis on agricultural and connections to
4 agriculture. Whether you own land, and own orchards or,
5 you know, raise crops to whether you are working in the
6 fields and supporting like the harvesting of the crops.
7 There's a whole different perspective and a whole different
8 power structure, really, in terms of your connection with
9 the land, and the water.

10 I've known people, even throughout the drought
11 who had different relationships. I know some people who
12 own farms, who were worried about getting their water. And
13 so, anyone who makes decisions that can possibly, you know,
14 impact the Central Valley, I just think the Central Valley
15 should have a say.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I want to go back to one
17 of your responses to one of the standard questions. I
18 can't remember, I think, believe it was number two. You
19 talked about the importance of establishing norms at the
20 start.

21 MS. BURNS: Uh-hum.

22 MR. DAWSON: How do you do that? What steps
23 would you take?

24 MS. BURNS: So, we -- I do this every day. I
25 have workshops with teachers, I teach courses to teachers

1 who are -- people who are wanting to become teachers. And
2 really, just thinking about what is our purpose for being
3 here. And sometimes we'll have some norms that are already
4 established. Like here's our list. What do you guys
5 think? What should we add? What should we not, you know,
6 what should we take out?

7 But sometimes we start with just creating norms
8 right from the get go where everyone has a say. And what's
9 important to you in terms of how we should treat each
10 other? What's important to you in terms of behavior so
11 that we can get the work done that we need to get done?
12 And just literally making a list of everyone's ideas, and
13 pairing ideas up that are similar, taking out ideas that we
14 ultimately decided aren't going to work best for us.

15 And then, also being open to updating the norms
16 if something unexpected comes up later on that we kind of
17 need to have an agreement on how we can address that then,
18 you know, we can always add to them.

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Those were all my follow
20 ups. We have roughly 18 minutes left in the 90-minute
21 period. Do any of the Panel Members have any follow-up
22 questions?

23 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not. Mr. Belnap?

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not, either.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

1 PANEL MEMBER COE: I do not have any follow-up
2 questions.

3 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

4 Ms. Burns, at this point we would like to offer
5 you the opportunity to make a closing statement to the
6 Panel, if you wish.

7 MS. BURNS: Oh, I think more than anything I want
8 to thank you all for the opportunity to be here today.
9 This, so far, has been such a great learning opportunity
10 seeing this process, and the careful consideration for all
11 of the applicants. And I'm really proud to have been part
12 of that.

13 I am confident that if I am selected as a
14 Commission member that I would collaborate well with other
15 persons on the Commission. That I would take care to make
16 sure that everyone's voices are represented. That I would
17 listen. And I would look forward, again, to doing the
18 analysis of the data and making great recommendations for
19 our state. But that's about it.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Ms. Burns, for
22 speaking with us today.

23 MS. BURNS: All right, thank you.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Our next interview will be
25 tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock, so we will go into recess

1 until tomorrow morning at 8:59.

2 (Thereupon, the Applicant Review Panel meeting
3 recessed at 4:12 p.m.)

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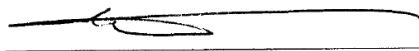
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