

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (CSA)
2020 CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION (CRC)

In the matter of
2020 CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION (CRC)
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

Telephonic

621 Capitol Mall, 10th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2020
8:59 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Ryan Coe, Chair

Angela Dickison, Vice Chair

Ben Belnap, Panel Member

Staff Present

Christopher Dawson, Panel Counsel

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II

Interviewees

Robert Reader

Derric Taylor

Judith Francis

Anasuya Polacek

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P R O C E E D I N G S

8:59 a.m.

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2
3 CHAIR COE: The time being 8:59, I'd like to bring
4 this meeting out of recess.

5 Just quick standard announcements as we start
6 today's meeting. Please silence all cell phones and
7 devices in the room, and take phone calls in the hallway
8 outside if necessary. Restroom is out the door to the
9 left, and in the event of an emergency, please follow the
10 instructions of the State Auditor's staff.

11 I want to make sure that the other folks are all on
12 the line and can hear us that are remote today.

13 Ms. Dickison, are you hearing us okay?

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I am hearing you fine.

15 CHAIR COE: Are ASL interpreters hearing us okay?
16 They're good? All right. That's the universal symbol
17 there.

18 Court Reporter, can you hear us okay? We're good.
19 Okay. Fantastic.

20 Madame Secretary, can you hear us as well?

21 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, I can hear you. It does look
22 like Mr. Reader's audio is on mute right now.

23 CHAIR COE: Okay.

24 MS. PELLMAN: There you go.

25 CHAIR COE: Fantastic.

1 And Mr. Reader, you can hear us as well?

2 MR. READER: I can.

3 CHAIR COE: Great. Okay. So I'd like to welcome
4 Mr. Reader, Mr. Robert Reader, for his interview today, and
5 seeing as everybody is present, on the line, can hear us,
6 I'd like to turn the time over to Mr. Dawson for the
7 standard five questions, please.

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

9 Mr. Reader, I am going to ask you five standard
10 questions that the Panel has asked that each Applicant
11 respond to. Are you ready, sir?

12 MR. READER: I believe I am.

13 MR. DAWSON: First question: What skills and
14 attributes should all Commissioners possess? What skills
15 or competencies should the Commission possess collectively?

16 Of the skills, attributes, and competencies that
17 each Commissioner should possess, which do you possess? In
18 summary, how will you contribute to the success of the
19 Commission?

20 MR. READER: Want me to give you the answers?

21 MR. DAWSON: Yes, please.

22 MR. READER: The skills and attributes that I
23 possess. I believe that a Commissioner should be fair,
24 impartial, lawful, and honest, the ability to communicate
25 and express a viewpoint while listening to and

1 understanding the different perspectives and points of
2 view, be prepared to work hard, have analytic ability and
3 the ability to interpret data, and have the ability to
4 build positive relationships, and the most important out of
5 all those beautiful things that we just talked about, the
6 Commission must have courage to make decisions.

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

13 What characteristics do you possess, and what
14 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
15 that will protect against hyperpartisanship? What will you
16 do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as
17 polarized or hyperpartisan, and avoid perceptions of
18 political bias and conflict?

19 MR. READER: Could you repeat that question for me
20 again, please?

21 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Would you like me to start from
22 the beginning?

23 MR. READER: Please.

24 MR. DAWSON: Work on the Commission requires
25 members of different political backgrounds to work

1 together. Since the 2010 Commission was selected and
2 formed, the American political conversation has become
3 increasingly polarized, whether in the press, on social
4 media, and even in our own families.

5 What characteristics do you possess, and what
6 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
7 that will protect against hyperpartisanship? What will you
8 do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as
9 polarized or hyperpartisan, and avoid perceptions of
10 political bias and conflict?

11 MR. READER: I believe the Commissioner must be a
12 keen listener. He has to have the ability to weigh
13 concerns and discover new perspectives to arrive at some
14 type of consensus. He must be genuinely open, have an
15 honest dialogue to achieve a consensus, show appreciation
16 for tact, diplomacy, and eagerness, and understand one
17 another. That's paramount. Acknowledge -- we will
18 continue?

19 MR. DAWSON: Please.

20 MR. READER: Okay. Acknowledge there will be a
21 different perspective on a subject where not everyone will
22 agree on, and they will act -- that will act in the same
23 way, with enthusiasm and positivity. I would like to use
24 the example or analogy by Chris Mascato (phonetic), the
25 elephant in the room.

1 Imagine an elephant would walk into the room. The
2 individual will look at it as the most beautiful in the
3 world, or they would imagine that it's a threat, or it's a
4 monster, but ultimately it would make a difference how one
5 perceives it. That would influence the way a person
6 understood it, and if we admit that we have a bias or a
7 blind spot, that could be an issue, and by acknowledging
8 it, we can work through it as a Commission and get
9 something done.

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

14 MR. READER: Repeat the question again, please.

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

18 MR. READER: The one that -- the greatest problem
19 that I see the Commission could have -- we have three
20 types. One, we have internal, which is basically our
21 biggest problem, which would be the Commissioners, and you
22 have a lot of internal fighting and disagreement, and if
23 that continues for 10 years, it could create a problem
24 where you never get anything done. You have to look at it
25 as a marriage for 10 years, and you have to -- and, again,

1 remember, we are the governing body of the state somewhat,
2 so that could be an issue. So we have to be able to work
3 together.

4 The other I see is the external. We're talking
5 state politicians. They have a problem sometimes, and we
6 have to kind of work and satisfy them, as well as the
7 people of California. We also have the public opposition,
8 which creates, perhaps, some dissent.

9 All in all, as an ex-counselor, I would use
10 conflict mediation in order to deescalate the problem. I
11 would try to notice or at least watch their body language,
12 and listen to their voice very carefully, and I would try
13 to establish or try to pinpoint conflict, if I could.
14 Again, going back, this whole thing, we talk about three
15 things, internal, external, and public. Our biggest
16 problem is going to be with our Commissioners within, and,
17 again, we're looking at a 10-year marriage. That could be
18 wonderful, or it could be bad.

19 MR. DAWSON: Question four: If you are selected,
20 you will be one of 14 members of the Commission, which is
21 charged with working together to create maps of the new
22 districts. Please describe a situation where you had to
23 work collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a
24 common goal. Tell us the goal of the project, what your
25 role in the group was, and how the group worked through any

1 conflicts that arose. What lessons would you take from
2 this group experience to the Commission, if selected?

3 MR. READER: The experience that I had dates back
4 when I was at Bakersfield College, when I was teaching, in
5 1977. I was the director of the Martin Luther King,
6 Junior, Center for Social Change. The president of the
7 college came to me and requested I develop a multicultural
8 program, and so I sat down, and I wrote some goals and
9 objectives of what I planned to achieve.

10 I came up with a plan, and then, at that point, I
11 went and got on the advisory board, and on the advisory
12 board, I sat down and I run my idea that I had written to
13 them, and we all went over it. We diced and sliced it, and
14 make it workable, things that I wanted and things that they
15 wanted, so we kind of found a happy medium.

16 Some were reluctant to participate in the overall
17 vision of what I was trying to accomplish, because they
18 felt that they had -- we already had a Chicano culture
19 center there, and it encompasses a lot of the things that
20 was -- at that time would be more race relations, would be
21 more a lot of things within the community.

22 So we had to really try to work things through, and
23 my goal with that particular situation, I had to work with
24 the people that opposed the idea. I had to kind of bring
25 them along to my side. So what I would do, I went out and

1 did my research. I went and did my research, and I went to
2 various colleges, and found where they had other programs,
3 which is what I was trying to establish, and I brought back
4 facts and information, and showed how well that particular
5 situation worked for their college, and explained to them,
6 and brought them on board, and when they saw that, they
7 were in agreement to some degree.

8 I pointed out the benefit of having a multicultural
9 center. It wasn't just a center, like the Chicano Center,
10 which is ethnocentric, where it was only being
11 (indiscernible) Hispanics. My center was for all races,
12 not just one, and so I convinced them to -- what it was all
13 about, and I pointed the benefits of having the
14 multicultural program available.

15 We talked about community involvement. We talked
16 about student involvement. We talked about the
17 celebration, what we were going to do, the community events
18 and how we were going to interact with the community. We
19 established connection with the Black Student Union that
20 was on campus, but I'm not necessary (sic) if that was on
21 campus of BC, but we also reached out to other colleges,
22 and we had meetings throughout the state with different
23 black multicultural centers like mine. We established
24 connections with organizations. We sponsored sports camps.
25 We set up academic and tutoring programs for the kids at

1 risk.

2 So those are the kind of things that we did, and
3 then I think there was another question. You said what?
4 We became an all-in-one, inclusive body organization, not
5 just one. I think you had another question with that,
6 didn't you?

7 MR. DAWSON: What lessons would you take from this
8 group experience?

9 MR. READER: Okay. Yes. The lesson that I take
10 from that whole process there is that I had to be attentive
11 when I was putting this together. I had to listen to other
12 people's views and ideas. Being attentive is key, being
13 sympathetic and sensitive around objections.

14 So, in other words, if someone doesn't necessarily
15 like your idea, or what you're saying, what they're saying,
16 you're not supposed to just jump on them and beat them up
17 and take them out. You have to kind of work around them to
18 buy into what you're trying to achieve. And so, to me,
19 that's very important. We don't want to become
20 ethnocentric. We want to represent all the people. We
21 want to find a common ground, and trust and rapport with
22 others.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five: A
24 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
25 meeting with people from all over California who come from

1 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of
2 perspectives.

3 If you are selected as a Commissioner, what skills
4 and attributes will make you effective at interacting with
5 people from different backgrounds and who have a variety of
6 perspectives?

7 What experiences have you had that will help you be
8 effective at understanding and appreciating people and
9 communities of different backgrounds and who have a variety
10 of perspectives?

11 MR. READER: Okay. I believe the person will have
12 to have good or excellent communication skills. He has to
13 be a good listener, and when I say a "good listener," you
14 have to be a good listener, and I always -- when I do
15 things and when I'm involved in certain things, I try to
16 listen to make sure I hear things correctly, and I have a
17 little addage I always use, is that "Always put your brain
18 in gear before you open your mouth, because you may have to
19 cross that bridge again down the road." So you're very
20 careful, and you have to be a good listener, and it's not a
21 "My way or the highway" kind of attitude. You have to kind
22 of walk through it so everybody is happy.

23 My work in educating makes me a great facilitator.
24 I'm an advocate for justice and equality. I resolve
25 conflicts, at least, I try to. I try and resolve conflict

1 and disagreement whenever it comes about. I deal with -- I
2 try to stay -- I try to be very impartial about things
3 that's around me. I don't try to put my ideas and force my
4 opinion on different people. I try to work so we'll all be
5 happy with the situation.

6 Could you read the other question that you had?

7 MR. DAWSON: The second part of the question was,
8 what experiences have you had that will make you effective
9 at understanding and appreciating people and communities of
10 different backgrounds and who have a variety of
11 perspectives?

12 MR. READER: Okay. I look at my experience. I've
13 dealt with the Cultural Ethnic Diversity , where we had all
14 races and we had to deal with everyone. I came from a
15 family of -- a very diverse family. I'm biracial. I went
16 through education. I went through elementary, junior high
17 school, which was predominantly a diverse population of all
18 races. I went to high school, where it was predominantly
19 mixed, of all races. I went to the community college and
20 high school that were diverse, and then I went away to
21 Oregon State, where it was all predominantly all white,
22 and I had to navigate that whole scene, and I got my B.S.
23 degree and my master's degree at Oregon State in education.

24 In my 41 years that I've been a college educator,
25 in a 75-percent minority student population, from a diverse

1 economic and cultural background, I find it to be very
2 challenging at some times. Going back when I was a
3 director of Martin Luther King Center, we tried to address
4 all those issues. I developed programs for the -- a
5 program that provided celebrations for the community
6 members, and, also, I'm a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha
7 fraternity, the oldest black Greek organization in the
8 nation.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

10 At this point we'll go to Panel questions. Each
11 Panel member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her
12 questions. We'll start with the chair, Mr. Coe.

13 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

14 Good morning, Mr. Reader. Thank you for taking the
15 time to speak with us today.

16 MR. READER: Thank you.

17 CHAIR COE: In your application, it demonstrates a
18 rather diverse background in terms of experiences. You
19 have experience in real estate, in owning small businesses,
20 working in higher education, and also serving on a
21 fact-finding committee to determine if the United States
22 should participate in the 1980 Olympic Games in Russia.

23 MR. READER: Yes.

24 CHAIR COE: How do you think all of these different
25 experiences could help the work of this Commission, should

1 you be appointed?

2 MR. READER: Well, I look at it as, with my
3 diversity, I could bring a lot to the table, as a minority
4 individual. With all my experiences -- and I've been
5 around a while -- I bring my life experiences to serve the
6 city, the county, the state, in a public service-like
7 manner and with honor.

8 CHAIR COE: Thank you. In your impartiality essay,
9 you speak of your service on a college's hiring committee
10 for new staff. You discuss how the team discussed biases,
11 and how they could creep into the hiring process. Can you
12 tell us a little more about that?

13 MR. READER: Well, when I served on the various
14 committees for hiring new staff members, we would
15 always -- the committee would sit down, a group of us. We
16 would sit down and we would go over the biases and the
17 hiring practices that had happened in the past, and we
18 would look at it and try to modify those portions so it
19 would be fair, and standardize it so it would be fair and
20 equitable in the process. So you have to have -- you have
21 to talk about biases. You have to talk about the hiring
22 process, what's expected, what kind of individual that
23 we're trying to fulfill, trying to fill that job at that
24 particular time.

25 CHAIR COE: What kind of biases were being

1 discussed? Was it inherent biases or internal biases of
2 people on the hiring committee?

3 MR. READER: No. It was just biases in terms of
4 the race relations, make sure it was fair and equitable,
5 that we addressed all the issues of hiring, make sure we
6 stayed true to form to the state hiring guidelines and
7 those kinds of things, along with the racial
8 (indiscernible) as well.

9 CHAIR COE: I see. How do you think that that
10 experience could help you with the work of this Commission?

11 MR. READER: Well, I think it could help -- I can
12 help the Commission because I can bring my experience that
13 I've had over the years to address some of those issues,
14 like biases, because I am biracial, so I can kind of
15 navigate both sides of the fence. I can do things that,
16 with help, maybe, hopefully, balance the Commission, so we
17 won't get a lot of infighting and all that kind of stuff.

18 CHAIR COE: Thank you. In your essays and in some
19 of your discussion this morning, you've given some examples
20 of having worked with a variety of diverse individuals
21 throughout your experiences. What have you learned about
22 those individuals, those diverse groups of people, their
23 perspectives, their concerns, that would help make you an
24 effective representative for them on this Commission?

25 MR. READER: Well, I have a feel for their ideas,

1 their culture, their desires, their wants, because
2 everybody's wants are different, and so, by me
3 knowing -- at least I've been around a variety of different
4 cultures. I have a feel for what makes them drive or what
5 they want, and I think I can relate to that, and bring a
6 consensus, and represent them fairly.

7 CHAIR COE: A similar question, but more
8 geographically based. I see that you're from Kern County.
9 I'd like you to speak a little bit about your experiences
10 in other regions of the state, and what you may have
11 learned from the people in those regions about their
12 concerns and their perspectives that would make you an
13 effective representative for them on this Commission.

14 MR. READER: Well, I haven't had a whole lot of
15 experience throughout the state, but I've been to places.
16 I've been around places, because of my photography, and I
17 intermingle with people, and we talk, but I can only speak,
18 really, about Bakersfield, because I have more experience
19 there than I have otherwise.

20 I go to Oakland quite often, because my kids are up
21 there. I understand the dynamics of what they're going
22 through, particularly in Oakland, where they're having
23 (indiscernible) where my son lives, and Oakland is
24 very -- it's kind of a poor environment, for the most part.
25 So I listen to them. I listen to the blacks. I listen to

1 the Hispanics. I listen to the other races, and try -- and
2 even when I go to soccer matches with my grandson and
3 granddaughter, I talk with different people.

4 I kind of -- sometimes we get into politics, and
5 sometimes we try to stay true to form, to watch the soccer
6 game, but, when you talk to them, you get a chance to feel
7 exactly how they're hurting, and things not being done like
8 it should be, and I think, as being a Commissioner, I can
9 bring some of that, because I have a feel for what they're
10 looking for, what they would like to have, and I can at
11 least be a voice for them on the Commission, even though
12 I'm not around that area that often, but I do have a feel
13 for it. I'm (indiscernible), so I have a good feel for
14 Bakersfield, because I'm around it, I'm interacting, and I
15 have a feel for it.

16 CHAIR COE: Thank you. So one of the most
17 important roles the Commission is going to have to play, or
18 tasks they're going to have to approach, is identifying
19 communities of interest all across the state. Some of
20 those communities are easier to locate than others. Some
21 of them are harder to identify and are less engaged.

22 How would you go about identifying communities of
23 interest across the state, particularly trying to find
24 those that are more difficult to identify and locate?

25 MR. READER: Boy, that's a tall order. I can tell

1 you, we can have 15 committees trying to find where people
2 are. The only thing I can suggest would be, is what we're
3 doing now, currently. We're looking at the census, and we
4 try to get out as many people we can get out, in terms of
5 whether it's volunteer and paid, or anything of that
6 nature, so you get the accurate representation, because,
7 after all, if we can get the census correct, the money
8 flows in. It goes where it's supposed to go.

9 But we have to have boots on the ground to find
10 out, and we have to know -- we can't be limited in terms of
11 the manpower. You have to go out and recruit, add to your
12 overall situation, so you can expand your whole -- so you
13 text those areas that you're talking about to get to the
14 necessary -- what am I looking for? -- results that you're
15 looking for.

16 CHAIR COE: Some of these communities that you may
17 find in the work of the Commission may be less comfortable
18 becoming engaged with organizations like the Commission.
19 They may have concerns about that for one reason or
20 another. What would you do as a Commissioner to make some
21 of these communities feel more comfortable to come forward
22 and share their perspective, to help inform the work of the
23 Commission?

24 MR. READER: Well, actually, I'd be an active
25 participant, where I would actually go to those areas and

1 try to basically convince them that we're good, we're an
2 advocate for them, but you have to be exposed, be out
3 there, and convince them, so they won't be afraid to come
4 out greet you. So you have to make yourself available.
5 You have to get exposed, or do whatever it takes to build
6 their confidence. So you have to be out there with them.

7 CHAIR COE: Thank you. If you were to be appointed
8 to the Commission, which aspects of that role do you think
9 that you would enjoy the most, and, conversely, which
10 aspects of that role do you think you might perhaps
11 struggle with a little bit?

12 MR. READER: I'm sort of a worker bee, and I like
13 being back to back, in the back room, doing the grunt work.
14 Being out in the front is not so much my forte, but I can
15 do it if I have to. But I think I could be stronger if I
16 was in the back, underground, involved in the community,
17 getting places, doing things, and making sure that I'm
18 saying what needs to be said about the state Commission,
19 the work that we do, those kinds of things.

20 CHAIR COE: And which aspects of the role do you
21 think you might struggle with a little bit?

22 MR. READER: Public speaking. I can do it, but I'm
23 not that comfortable with it.

24 CHAIR COE: Understood. Thank you. I have no
25 further questions.

1 Ms. Dickison, I believe the time is now yours.

2 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning, Mr. Reader.

3 MR. READER: Yes. How are you doing?

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Good. So you're currently
5 self-employed. Is that correct?

6 MR. READER: No, I'm retired.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: You're retired. So you're
8 not self-employed with --

9 MR. READER: I still work as a real estate broker,
10 and I still do -- I don't actively go out and try to get
11 jobs. I'm (indiscernible), but I'm still current. My
12 license is still current, and I do sell real estate every
13 once in a while.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

15 MR. READER: But I am retired, for most part.

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So, in your previous
17 employment or self-employment, I think it stated that you
18 built homes. Were those individual or developments?

19 MR. READER: Say that again, please.

20 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: In your previous
21 self-employment, your application, I think, stated that you
22 built homes?

23 MR. READER: I did, yes.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Was that individual homes or
25 was that developments?

1 MR. READER: Yes, single-family residences.

2 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And then you also
3 determined market values for -- was that for homes you were
4 building, selling, or buying?

5 MR. READER: Well, not for me. I couldn't do that
6 at all, because that's different, a conflict of interest
7 with my own jobs, but I did do real estate appraising for
8 banks and mortgage companies, and I'd try to get them to
9 come around, and I'd get them fair market price, fair
10 market value, by looking at the sales and comps that's
11 there, and reporting back to the banks, mortgage loan,
12 lending companies.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: And that was mostly in -- was
14 that mostly in Bakersfield?

15 MR. READER: Yes.

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And then are you still
17 doing photography?

18 MR. READER: I am.

19 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What is the main
20 subject of your photography?

21 MR. READER: I do landscape photography, I do
22 cityscapes, and then I do interior.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

24 MR. READER: You can go to my website and see my
25 work.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So what areas of the state
2 have you photographed besides Kern County?

3 MR. READER: All over.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: All over?

5 MR. READER: I've gone to Carmel. I've gone down
6 south. I've gone to Mammoth. I've gone to the Joshua
7 Trees. I've been all over.

8 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And in your travels
9 and doing your photography, how much interaction did you
10 have with the various communities or individuals from those
11 communities?

12 MR. READER: I had a lot of interaction,
13 particularly when you have to go out to eat.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

15 MR. READER: You run across a lot of people, and I
16 tend to be very friendly and approachable, and then, a lot
17 of times, with your camera gear on your back when you walk
18 into a restaurant or something. People take notice and
19 they come up to you, "Do you do photography?," those kinds
20 of things. And so it was easy for me to interact, but we
21 never talked about anything other than just the fact
22 that -- they would share sometimes about their family, and
23 we never got anything in terms of how their life is or
24 anything like -- it was very superficial.

25 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

1 MR. READER: And I always try to make them -- I try
2 to be open, make them laugh, and I even volunteered
3 (indiscernible), and they say, "It's lovely."

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you really didn't get into
5 anything about learning anything about those communities,
6 and what issues or concerns they might have?

7 MR. READER: No. It was, you get out there and you
8 talk, and, on occasion, someone would mention something,
9 but we never got into anything (indiscernible).

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What about the
11 communities in Bakersfield or Kern County when you were
12 doing your work in real estate? What did you learn? Did
13 you learn anything about those communities and what their
14 needs were?

15 MR. READER: Yes, when you're building homes or out
16 and about in the community, and I knew a lot -- I ran into
17 a lot of people, particularly in the Hispanic and the black
18 community, because you have sections, like you do
19 everywhere else. You have sections where you have the
20 haves and the have-nots, and since I was raised in the area
21 where basically you will see the have-nots, you develop
22 friendship, and over the years, I've stayed in touch with
23 those individuals, and some made it out, some didn't, and
24 they're still sharing the same things that I shared when I
25 was growing up.

1 So it hasn't really changed a whole lot, but, at
2 the same time, my heart goes out to them, because they
3 haven't been able to escape that chain, I guess you might
4 say, but we talk when I run around, and I get into various
5 beginnings (sic). I see people who have it out of the
6 ghetto, as you say, like me, and I see them, and we talk
7 about what I've done back there, and what they've done, and
8 we have a very good dialogue.

9 As a group, by me being in the Alpha Phi Alpha
10 fraternity, we do a lot of things with the black community.
11 We do things for the Hispanic community. So I'm actively
12 involved in the community with that particular group, and
13 we do things. For example, at the fraternity, we raise
14 money, and we put that statute back in Washington, D.C.,
15 with Doctor Martin Luther King. So we do a lot of things.
16 I try to stay active in that regard, to support the
17 community where I came from.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, thinking
19 about, you know, the issues that you've recognized in the
20 communities and in Bakersfield, do you think that
21 there's -- what do you think you've learned from that that
22 you would be able to use when working with communities
23 throughout the state in different regions?

24 MR. READER: Well, one of the most important
25 things, I think, is humility. You have to be -- you have

1 to have humility when you work with people, because you
2 can't go in there with an attitude. You have to be
3 understanding. You have to be compassionate, if you want
4 them to come along, because, by and large, you'll find that
5 the black community is not very trusting, particularly when
6 it comes to the police, those kinds of things, and rightly
7 so, but we try to bring them along and make them feel good
8 about what they believe, though you can't do a lot, but you
9 do what you can to help. You understand that they're being
10 (indiscernible).

11 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So we've already talked -- or
12 you've talked a little bit about the Martin Luther King
13 Center for Social Change.

14 MR. READER: Yes.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I understand that you founded
16 and directed that at the Bakersfield College, correct?

17 MR. READER: (Indiscernible.)

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What drew you to do that?

19 MR. READER: Well, it had to do with my president.
20 He's since passed, but I'll tell you what. He was an
21 advocate for minorities, and he came to me one day in my
22 office, and he says, "Robert," he says, "I want you to
23 write me a program about starting something with Martin
24 Luther King Center."

25 So he put me to the task to do that, and he pulled

1 some strings. He found me a room, found me some furniture.
2 He found me all the stuff that I needed to get started. He
3 made this one room, and actually a room about this size
4 here, and he basically set it up, and all I had to do was
5 just provide the guidance.

6 So what I did, I went ahead, and he asked me to put
7 it together. I sat down, and I wrote up my goals and
8 objectives, what I wanted to do. It was like a five-year
9 term as to how far I'm going to go. I projected five years
10 into the future, and I set up my goals and objectives
11 quarterly, and then, again, I brought my advisory board on
12 board, and we sat down, and we had a very -- we went over
13 all of those things, the goals and objectives.

14 We modified them to -- not only my goals. Since I
15 wrote it, it was my idea, but I also made it inclusive to
16 include the advisory board's ideas, because they had some
17 good ideas. I'm not the only one that has ideas, and I
18 tried to fuse all that together to make it work, and I did,
19 and I had it for five years, and we did some good things.
20 We did things for the community, and my focus was primarily
21 on -- we went out there and we had sports camps.

22 If you notice, my background is in sports. Again,
23 I'm a track-and-field guy, but we had soccer camps. We had
24 basketball camps. We had wrestling camps. We had all
25 those things, and we dealt with like three- to 15-year-old

1 kids, come to the camps on the weekends, and it was a way
2 for them to get away, out of the environment. We had a
3 bus. We would go out, pick them up, bring them, and let
4 them participate. We'd take them back, drop them off.

5 So, really, it was a great, great opportunity for
6 me, and I was quite honored that he would ask me to write
7 something up. Again, it wasn't easy, because we did have
8 some dissenters on the committee, and so I had to convince
9 them. So I did everything I could to bring them aboard. I
10 took their ideas, made it work, and my own ideas, and so,
11 by doing so, I made them inclusive, it went forth, and they
12 got on board. We wrote these things, and that's how we got
13 these celebrations things, got involved with the Max
14 Student Union. We got involved with a lot of different
15 things, and everybody walked away happy. The students were
16 happy. So it was a really, really great program, but it's
17 no longer any more. Sad, but it was good while I had it.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So part of your
19 role in that -- you stated that you were the liaison, or a
20 liaison, between the college and the community?

21 MR. READER: Yes.

22 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: In what way were you that
23 liaison?

24 MR. READER: Well, I was a recruiter. I went out
25 and recruited students, particularly the high school. We

1 would go out and -- we would go out and talk to the
2 students about Bakersfield College. We would talk about
3 their goals. We would talk about a lot of different
4 things, and we would actually set up programs so they
5 wouldn't have to come to the college. We would actually go
6 out there and register them. So we did a lot of things
7 like that, being proactive, trying to make things easy for
8 the students, and to make sure that they came to
9 Bakersfield College.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you. So what do
11 you think you've learned from those interactions that would
12 help you with the work of the Commission?

13 MR. READER: Repeat the question again, please.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What have you -- what did you
15 learn from the interactions with reaching out to the
16 community that will help with the work of the Commission?

17 MR. READER: Well, the thing that I consider most
18 important is, when you're working with people, you have to
19 show humility. You can't go out there and try to force
20 your way on them. So you have to kind of work with them,
21 to kind of bring them in, to have them feel comfortable
22 with you. So those are the things that I've learned when I
23 was working. You have to be kind and thoughtful, and make
24 them think that you really want them to be a part of the
25 set.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you talked about -- you
2 have quite a few different types of diverse experiences.
3 Did you work with any data of any sort, or big data, in any
4 of your previous positions?

5 MR. READER: The only data that I worked with is
6 when I did things for banks. I would look at the
7 market doings, particularly when you're doing an appraisal.
8 You have to sit down, and we have to determine a fair
9 market value. You would go through, you would do your
10 research in terms of your compatibility, the property that
11 you're doing the appraisal on. Then you have to go out and
12 find a match, particularly when it comes to sales.

13 You have to do kind of a -- you have to look at the
14 data, and they had certain parameters that you had to
15 operate within, particularly when you're looking at sales
16 prices. You can do only do -- for some of the square
17 footage, you would have to -- you could only go 200 feet
18 above and 200 feet below, and on rare occasions, you would
19 go beyond that.

20 For the most part, you'd work within that framework
21 to ascertain the value, and then you'd do what you call a
22 market extraction. Then you'd go in and get the various
23 comps that you would normally have, and you would put them
24 side by side, and then you would make adjustments according
25 to likes and dislikes, and you would put together a value

1 on what's there and what's not, and just have to go through
2 methodically and pick out what's right, make an adjustment
3 on the square footage, whether it's high or low. So
4 everything has to end up at the middle mark.

5 So you're trying to -- you work with data in that
6 regard, and you also try to make sure that you give a fair
7 representation of the property and the condition of the
8 property. So those are the things that we -- I dealt with
9 a lot of stats in that regard.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

11 MR. READER: And, again, when I was a -- when I got
12 my master's degree in counseling, there was a course that I
13 took, something like a stats class, and it was called
14 "Methods," and it was a probability and stats course that
15 we had to do to pass the (indiscernible).

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So, when you were using the
17 data for real estate, did you pull data from various
18 sources? And how did you determine what would be the best
19 source of data and evaluate the reliability of that data?

20 MR. READER: Well, the thing is, when you're doing
21 appraisals, you have certain guidelines you have to work
22 within. If you do a house, you have to do everything what
23 you call "like kinds." In other words, you have to find
24 property -- for example, if a property had a pool, if your
25 property had a pool, but the price range is right there,

1 and it's very close to the price, and you use it as part of
2 your overall determination of value, well, then, what
3 you'll do, you'll bring it back in.

4 You make the adjustment on this price range like
5 that, but you would come in and say, "Okay. You got a
6 pool. This person doesn't have a pool." So what you do,
7 you would do an upwards adjustment, take 10 or \$15,000 for
8 the pool, if you had a small pool, or, if you didn't have a
9 pool, and the subject didn't have a pool, and you found one
10 that had a pool, you'd do just the opposite, the other way,
11 to take it off so that everything balances. So you're
12 eliminating that pool as an item.

13 So, based upon that -- and it's called "market
14 extraction" -- you look at -- you have a variety of -- you
15 use the county records that -- you find your value. You
16 would use other types of Internet to find companies had
17 sales you would use. So you would gather all of this stuff
18 together, and then you would sit down and you'd just look
19 at it, and then you would put it together, and then you'd
20 come up with a market value.

21 MS. PELLMAN: We have about three minutes, 20
22 seconds remaining.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

24 So the way that the Commission is selected, the
25 first eight Commissions (sic) are selected randomly, and

1 then they select the remaining six Commissioners. Should
2 you be selected as one of the first eight, what would you
3 be looking for in the remaining six?

4 MR. READER: The remaining six, I would assume,
5 based on what I gave you early on -- I would look at them.
6 They would have to have some of the things that I mentioned
7 early on in my ideal, and, I mean, it's a lot, but I really
8 feel that the things that I mentioned early on, I think,
9 with fairness, impartiality, and, like, we're building
10 relationships, they have to have that, and they can have
11 more, but I think they have to have a core value.

12 Now, someone else may look at it something
13 different, but I'm looking at it, those four things that
14 they must have, and, again, one of the things I really,
15 really think that we all should have is, have the courage
16 to step up to the plate and represent the people in
17 California, because it's very diverse, and you're going to
18 put California, with its diversity, on your back for the
19 next 10 years.

20 Again, like I said before, it's like a marriage.
21 You know, you're not going to be happy with some of the
22 things that they do, but, at the same time, you're going to
23 try to do what's right to make everybody happy.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

25 Mr. Coe, I have no more questions at this point.

1 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Dickison.

2 Mr. Belnap, the floor is yours.

3 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Good morning, Mr. Reader.

4 Most of my questions have been asked, so I'm going to focus
5 on your impartiality essay. So, for nearly four decades,
6 you were a college counselor at Bakersfield College.

7 MR. READER: Yes.

8 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: How does a college counselor
9 need to exercise impartiality?

10 MR. READER: He has to be fair. He has to be fair
11 in how he looks at things, how he navigates the settings in
12 the community or in the college system. You have to be
13 fair and impartial. You have to be able to guide the
14 students, show them data, so they can make a determination
15 as to how they're going to get there, and when.

16 So you just have to kind of just work with your
17 students. You have to have fair access. They have to have
18 access to me, and I make sure that I have the access and
19 the services available for them to take advantage of, and
20 if they don't have -- if they don't know how to get there,
21 then it's my job as a counselor -- it's my job to make sure
22 I point them in the right direction so they can make a
23 wise, good decisions.

24 You know, the thing, what's so good about this
25 whole thing, when I'm working with my students, I feel so

1 good about it sometimes, but you never know how you're
2 making an impact on an individual. You know, what feels
3 good about me is when I have a student come back to me
4 years later, that I haven't had contact for years, and they
5 say, "Mr. Reader, I really appreciate what you've done for
6 me, and you showed me what to do," and I get that all the
7 time. I had some students come into see me and say that if
8 it hadn't been for you I would have, never, ever finish
9 school.

10 For example, I had a student of mine. His name was
11 Mack Montana (phonetic), never forget him. He had a rough
12 life, and he didn't know exactly what he was doing. He
13 came to me, and I said, "Did you finish school?" I said,
14 "You're still in school?" He said, "No." I said, "Mack, I
15 want you to go back to school now." I didn't know if he
16 was going to take my advice, but guess what he did?

17 He took my advice, went back to school, and he went
18 on, finished up, got his degree in sociology. He works for
19 the corrections -- an institution today. And in all that,
20 he -- I'm kind of choking up because it's come up, so
21 excuse me. But this part, this is why I choked up, because
22 he said to me, "You're just like my father," and it got
23 me.. You could tell. So, when you make an impact like
24 that, it means a lot to me. I'll get to this in a minute
25 (sic).

1 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you for sharing that
2 experience, Mr. Reader. As you think back on your days as
3 a counselor, can you think of times where, when you were
4 counseling with a student, you had to set aside your own
5 personal views in order to help them come to a good
6 educational plan for them?

7 MR. READER: All the time. Some people come in
8 there, and you have to sit down and you have to listen to
9 them, not once, not twice, several times, and you still
10 may not get to them, but eventually you hope that you could
11 get to them, and I would say 50 percent of the problem is
12 the fact that they're young and inexperienced, and so, in
13 my job as a counselor, I told them it was my job to make
14 sure that I give them the best opportunity, because I saw
15 all the good in them, and I pushed very hard to make sure
16 that they achieved their success that I knew they could.

17 Then I had one -- I won't cry on this one. I had a
18 girl that, before I retired, which is 10 years ago, came
19 back to me, and I'd known her for a while. I met her at
20 the college, you know, on campus, and I told her, I said,
21 "You know what?" She had no confidence at all. I says,
22 "You know what?" I says, "You talk well. You write very
23 beautifully." And I said, "I don't see why" -- I said,
24 "You're losing out on life."

25 She didn't pay any attention, but she had the

1 talent, and I kept driving it home and driving it home.
2 She went into the service. She came back, and then she
3 came to me again. I said, "Are you in school?" She says,
4 "No." I says, "You need to get in school, because you have
5 a talent to do something with it."

6 So I didn't know if she was going to do anything,
7 but, the very next week, she went and signed up, started
8 her education. Last year, she graduated, and got her AA
9 degree, and she invited me to her graduation, and I went
10 there, and it was wonderful.

11 So, those kinds of things. You've got to kind of
12 stay with those students, work with them, and no matter how
13 hard it is, you always want to show them the right way, the
14 best way, and provide information for them to make that
15 decision. That's important for them because what they do
16 now is going to come to them down the road, and my attitude
17 is, I always tell them, "It's not how long you take, as
18 long as you arrive."

19 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So another question related
20 to impartiality. You were also a small business owner?

21 MR. READER: Yes.

22 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So how does -- or how did you
23 have to exercise impartiality in that role, as a small
24 business owner?

25 MR. READER: Well, you know, it's funny because,

1 when you have a small business, you have to worry about a
2 lot of things, but I always try to bring -- when I would
3 hire people, I would always try to bring them on. I had my
4 goals in mind, what I wanted to do with my business.

5 I tried to find the correct fit for my business,
6 and I would always try to get them involved in making a
7 decision, because I don't want it to become "It's my store.
8 You do as I do, I do as I say" attitude. My attitude was,
9 "It's my store. Our common goal is, we want to get to
10 point B easy as possible, and be profitable."

11 So, in order for me to do that, I had to hire
12 people that I thought would be able to do that, but, at the
13 same time, I had to hire people that had a vision that they
14 can do the same thing that I did. In other words, when
15 they get to a point, they'd have their own business as
16 well.

17 So I would bring in their -- and some of -- and, lo
18 and behold, a lot of them had some good ideas that I
19 actually implemented in my own business, which made me more
20 successful, and I thought that was what you do. You find
21 somebody to augment (sic) your weaknesses.

22 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank you. I
23 don't have any further questions.

24 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson, the time is yours.

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

1 Good morning again, Mr. Reader. I wanted to follow
2 up on a couple of your responses, some to the standard
3 questions and others to -- responses that you gave to the
4 Panel Members. In your answer to Standard Question 1, you
5 said if I understood you correctly, one of the most
6 important things that the Commission needs is courage.

7 MR. READER: Correct.

8 MR. DAWSON: Can you define what "courage" means in
9 this context, and what would be the result if the
10 Commission was not courageous?

11 MR. READER: Well, the thing is, being courage
12 (sic), I feel that you have to be courageous enough to take
13 the hits that you're going to get as a Commissioner,
14 because some of the decisions that you make may not be
15 agreeable r for your Commissioners. Some might be afraid
16 to step forward, because, remember the most problems you're
17 going to have is probably from other Commissioners, and if
18 you don't have the courage to state your mind, but be
19 respectful, you will never get anything accomplished.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. In one of your responses
21 to a question that Ms. Dickison had raised, you talked
22 about avoiding a conflict of interest in your work in real
23 estate.

24 MR. READER: Yes.

25 MR. DAWSON: I guess it's a -- there's a tension

1 between being a real estate appraiser and being a real
2 estate developer. Can you describe an experience where you
3 had to set aside your personal interest in this context?

4 MR. READER: Well, anything that I'm -- anything
5 that -- by law, anything that you're involved in, if it has
6 your name on it, you can't touch it. You have to get
7 somebody else to do your work. Otherwise, you can go to
8 jail behind it.

9 So you always try to step aside. If it was my
10 property, I don't -- and the banks, the banks won't take
11 it, if you give your own appraisal on the property. So you
12 basically -- you're hands-off when it comes to your own
13 personal property. You've got to be very transparent, to
14 eliminate any type of ambiguity.

15 MR. DAWSON: I see. So, in that same part of your
16 application -- this is the essay on impartiality -- you
17 described serving on the USA fact finding committee about
18 whether the USA should participate in the Moscow Olympics
19 in 1980. Am I correct?

20 MR. READER: Right.

21 MR. DAWSON: How did you come to be part of that
22 committee?

23 MR. READER: Well, the Olympic Committee chose me,
24 and that's how I got on the committee, but, at the same
25 time, I was an athlete. I had competed on the AAU. I've

1 traveled all over the world, and I got to know people, and
2 they knew what I can do, my capability as an athlete, but,
3 as I got -- as I left the athletic world and became a
4 professor, I stayed in contact with some of the people that
5 knew me, and they brought me on board because they said
6 that I had a good balance in terms of good feel as to what
7 needs to happen to help the athletes along the way.

8 So my whole deal when I went over there was to
9 basically promote the athletes, and when we got there, we
10 found that it wasn't -- because of all the stuff they were
11 doing over there in Russia, it just wouldn't benefit sports
12 to even think about going there. So, as a consensus, the
13 group decided, "Well, we need to be there," and that's what
14 made the decision, why we didn't go.

15 MR. DAWSON: And that advised USIOC-- is that
16 correct, USOC?

17 MR. READER: Right.

18 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Thank you. Let me just follow
19 up. I think I understood you to say you're a lifelong
20 resident of Kern County?

21 MR. READER: All my life, except when I was -- I'm
22 from Louisiana, Monroe, Louisiana, but I was raised in
23 California most of my life since I was eight years of age,
24 younger.

25 MR. DAWSON: And then your time in Corvallis as

1 well, right?

2 MR. READER: And the time in Corvallis, yes.

3 MR. DAWSON: So California politics and government
4 tends to be dominated by the coastal areas, San Francisco,
5 L.A., San Diego, but, as a resident of Kern County and the
6 Central Valley, what are some of the concerns of the
7 Central Valley that the coastal communities don't or can't
8 understand?

9 MR. READER: The pollution, because, if you're on
10 the coast, you never get to -- you really never get to see
11 any pollution, because the wind blows it out. This is
12 where it blows it to. It blows it to Bakersfield,
13 California, and during the summer months, it's really,
14 really, really bad.

15 Pollution, basically, it's one of the worst cities.
16 When it comes to Bakersfield, it's classified as one of the
17 worst cities when it comes to pollution. So, with all the
18 wind in San Francisco, and over on the coast in San
19 Barbara, down in L.A., we get it blown down, just what
20 settles. It settles at the base of the Grapevine, where,
21 basically, it creates a problem for us down here. So
22 pollution is number one.

23 The graduation rates from high school could be
24 another issue. They're kind of -- they're the lowest,
25 particularly when it comes to minorities and Hispanic, or

1 people of color. The oil drilling is a problem down here.
2 We have fracking, at least, we did. I'm not sure if they
3 still do it now or if it's been on hold.

4 So we have a lot of internal issues that we have to
5 deal with down here, as opposed to the coastal areas don't
6 have to deal with, because of all the additional
7 infractions, and it creates a lot of health issues
8 that -- for example, I'm not sure how -- the health issue
9 for the minorities, or you get the Valley Fever kind of
10 thing.

11 I'm not sure if that's part of -- but we have these
12 issues, and I'm sure we're not unique. You can actually
13 get it all over the state, but I think it happens more
14 frequently in Bakersfield, in Tulare County and those
15 areas, where we have a lot of agriculture, where they're
16 digging up the dirt and all that stuff. So you have to be
17 careful.

18 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So I see that you have
19 been a college counselor and coach for many, many years,
20 nearly four decades. How have the concerns of young
21 Californians changed over that time, and, conversely, how
22 have they -- what has remained the same?

23 MR. READER: Repeat the question again, please.
24 One thing I wanted to -- talking about the last -- we were
25 talking about income disparity. That was an issue. Okay.

1 Go ahead.

2 MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry. I wanted to ask you about
3 your experience as a long-time college counselor and coach.
4 You were around young Californians, but, over that period
5 of time, how have the concerns of young Californians
6 changed, and how have they remained the same?

7 MR. READER: Well, it hasn't changed so much. It's
8 pretty much the same, but the only thing is in terms of
9 what has changed, and I think is disturbing to me, is the
10 fact that they've gotten more into the technology aspect.
11 They've lost the humanistic, the connection side of it.
12 They really do things on the Internet, talk to you on the
13 phone, text, things I don't particularly care for too much,
14 but I do it.

15 I think the whole dynamics is, "We've graduated,
16 we've grown a little bit," but the overall reactions are
17 still the same, pretty much. The attitude, the food, the
18 scarcity that we have, there's a lot of things that still
19 exist that was happening back when I was in college.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I have one last question.
21 You talked about in your real estate work -- I assume that
22 you worked with maps. Did you use census data or GIS data
23 in your work there?

24 MR. READER: Not a lot. In terms of -- you're
25 talking about when I was an appraiser?

1 MR. DAWSON: Yes.

2 MR. READER: Yes. I didn't use a lot of it,
3 because a lot of stuff that I did was here in Bakersfield
4 and Tulare County, those areas. I didn't do a whole lot of
5 it, so I don't have a lot of experience in that, but it
6 shouldn't be -- it couldn't be that hard.

7 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

8 I have no further follow-ups. If any of the Panels
9 have follow-up questions?

10 CHAIR COE: Ms. Dickison, do you have any follow-up
11 questions?

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

13 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap?

14 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not, either.

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

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

17 Mr. Reader, at this point --

18 Madame Secretary, could I have a time check,
19 please.

20 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 27 minutes remaining.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

22 Mr. Reader, at this point, I think everyone is
23 finished with their questions, and we'd like to offer you
24 the opportunity to make a closing statement to the Panel,
25 if you wish.

1 MR. READER: Sure. I'd like to take the
2 opportunity to thank all of the Panel, and how they've
3 worked with me in terms of getting this done, because I was
4 ready to come up to Sacramento to do the interview in
5 person, and I haven't done an interview like this in almost
6 50 years.

7 I only did two before this, one for the high school
8 and one for the community college, and I took the community
9 college job, and, 50 years later, I end up doing another
10 interview, which is kind of crazy, and maybe that's why I'm
11 a little uncomfortable at this point, the fact that I
12 haven't been doing this on a regular basis, and being
13 retired 10 years from college, and so you kind of lose the
14 edge a little bit, but I appreciate all that you guys are
15 doing, and if I'm lucky enough to get beyond this point, I
16 will do the best that I possibly can to make you guys proud
17 of me, make the state proud of me.

18 I appreciate all that you've done, and, hopefully,
19 that you -- by getting me in this room and keeping me from
20 getting the virus -- and, as you can see, I've got my
21 little bottle with me, to make sure I don't walk away with
22 anything that I'm not supposed to have. But, all in all, I
23 appreciate it, and I'm just thankful that I made it this
24 far with you guys, and I hope I get to go further, and
25 thank you very much.

1 CHAIR COE: And thank you, Mr. Reader, for taking
2 the time this morning to speak with us.

3 Our next interview is scheduled at 10:45, so we
4 will be in recess until 10:44.

5 (A recess was held from 10:05 a.m. to 10:44 a.m.)

6 CHAIR COE: The time is 10:44. I'd like to come out
7 of recess.

8 I'd like to verify, Ms. Dickison, you're with us.

9 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Yes, I am.

10 CHAIR COE: We'd like to welcome Mr. Derric Taylor
11 for his interview this morning.

12 Mr. Taylor, can you hear us okay?

13 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, I can. Thank you.

14 CHAIR COE: Great. I'd like to turn the time over
15 to Mr. Dawson to ask the five standard questions, please.

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

17 Sir, I'm going to read you the five standard
18 questions that the Panel has asked each Applicant to
19 respond to. Are you ready, sir?

20 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, I am.

21 MR. DAWSON: First question: What skills and
22 attributes should all Commissioners possess? What skills
23 or competencies should the Commission possess collectively?
24 Of the skills, attributes, and competencies that each
25 Commissioner should possess, which do you possess? In

1 summary, how will you contribute to the success of the
2 Commission?

3 MR. TAYLOR: Great question. I think this is one
4 of the tantamount issues of the Commission. So, to a
5 certain degree, all of the Commissioners should be
6 individuals that have a desire to serve as individuals that
7 are analytical, have a respect for the diversity of
8 California, which are the prescriptions of the Commissioner
9 role.

10 I feel overwhelmingly, though, that each
11 Commissioner should have a distinct desire to be fair and
12 impartial, and within that desire to be fair and impartial,
13 everything else will come into play. So, if you have a
14 desire to be fair and impartial, and you're deliberate in
15 your attempts to do that, you'll respect other individuals.
16 You'll seek out information. You will analyze and
17 synthesize the information that you're given to come to
18 sound decisions.

19 I feel that I possess those qualities. My job as
20 an investigator with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's
21 Department enables me to function in that manner. It is my
22 job to be fair and impartial on an everyday platform.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question two: Work on the
24 Commission requires members of different political
25 backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010 Commission

1 was selected and formed, the American political
2 conversation has become increasingly polarized, whether in
3 the press, on social media, and even in our own families.

4 What characteristics do you possess, and what
5 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
6 that will protect against hyperpartisanship? What will you
7 do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as
8 polarized or hyperpartisan, and avoid perceptions of
9 political bias and conflict?

10 MR. TAYLOR: Those characteristics that were asked,
11 of what will make a Commissioner goes hand in hand with
12 this second question. If we're fair and impartial, we look
13 for those common grounds, so that we can come to a
14 consensus or to a sound conclusion. When you're able to do
15 that, you can steer away from the hyperpartisanship.

16 What happens is that you can -- in an effort to be
17 fair and impartial, you put systems or processes in place
18 that can lead to evidence-based conclusions. You look for
19 empirical evidence so that you can make sound decisions.

20 We also look for -- what I would think in the
21 Commissioner, we would look for ways to be transparent in
22 our processes, in our dealings, and we would encourage
23 participation. So maximum participation from the public
24 lends itself to transparency, which lends itself to
25 empirical evidence, so that we can make sound decisions

1 based on that evidence going forward.

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

6 MR. TAYLOR: The greatest challenge is probably
7 coming to consensus. With a Commission of 14, there could
8 be a lot of different opinions, a lot of strong views.
9 We're assuming that these Commissioners will be
10 strong-willed individuals. They all have courage of their
11 convictions, and they would like to get their points
12 across.

13 So I think consensus is the hardest obstacle for
14 the Commission. However, I believe, when you seek the
15 common ground, and we look for conclusions that are based
16 on evidence that we can find, then we have a road map to
17 consensus, and once we are able to break down our arguments
18 or the positions of the Commissioners, we would be able to
19 go forward on our decisions.

20 My job as an investigator, I have often had to
21 break down those arguments in that form. So I have to look
22 at my cases as they're presented, look at the evidence
23 that's before me, and I have to make a conclusion based on
24 the evidence. So we find the common grounds on what
25 evidence exists.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question four: If you are
2 selected, you will be one of 14 members of the Commission,
3 which is charged with working together to create maps of
4 the new districts.

5 Please describe a situation where you had to work
6 collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a
7 common goal. Tell us the goal of the project, what your
8 role in the group was, and how the group worked through any
9 conflicts that arose. What lessons would you take from
10 this group experience to the Commission, if selected?

11 MR. TAYLOR: Continuing to use my job as an
12 example, a few years ago, I was fortunate enough to be on a
13 multiagency taskforce, and in that taskforce, we were
14 charged with reducing violent crime within the San Gabriel
15 Valley area, and in doing so, we brought people from
16 different agencies, with different practices or modes of
17 operation, and we would have to construct investigations to
18 reduce violent crime, and during those meetings, or each
19 investigation of a case, you have various levels of
20 responsibilities.

21 So, for one case, you might be the head
22 investigating officer, and you're responsible for doling
23 out or delegating the responsibilities of the other
24 investigators, and so you're responsible for the direction
25 of that investigation and its impact on the community

1 immediately around you, and so there would be debate or
2 disagreements between the direction an investigation should
3 go, or how it should be handled, or how an informant should
4 be used.

5 So, again, we would try to, in those moments when
6 there's disagreements -- and I would, also -- we would try
7 to reduce it down to what our purpose is, and the purpose
8 is, for that taskforce, was to reduce violence, and how
9 would this, or this action, or this procedure, or this
10 process -- how would that take us to our common goal?

11 So we would explain, "Well, given this action, this
12 would probably be the circumstances, and this would be the
13 affect on the community." And so we're able to look at the
14 outcomes, the probable outcomes, to see if that fit into
15 our overall goals, and then to go forward from there.

16 So my role at any given time, at any given
17 responsibility, would be to present outcomes, and we would
18 debate and discuss those given circumstances, debate the
19 outcomes, to achieve our goals, and I think that ultimately
20 worked to our advantage. The taskforce, while I was
21 present or seated in our city, was highly effective. We
22 were able to reduce crime at a level not seen in recent
23 years, and so that was a very positive outcome.

24 So you take from that, or those meetings,
25 especially, when we debate that, that you have to listen to

1 your fellow officers, your fellow investigators, which
2 would be your fellow Commissioners. You have to
3 objectively look at what they present, and then move
4 forward to see if it reaches the common goal. On the
5 Commission, it's the same thing. We lay out what is
6 our -- what are we trying to accomplish, and will this
7 process or act help us to reach that goal?

8 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five: A
9 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
10 meeting with people from all over California who come from
11 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of
12 perspectives. If you are selected as a Commissioner, what
13 skills and attributes will make you effective at
14 interacting with people from different backgrounds and who
15 have a variety of perspectives? What experiences have you
16 had that will help you be effective at understanding and
17 appreciating people and communities of different
18 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

19 MR. TAYLOR: Another great question. One of the
20 best things or one of the things that I enjoy about law
21 enforcement is that you meet everyone. You meet
22 individuals from every background. You meet the young, you
23 meet the old. You meet every ethnicity. You meet every
24 demographic. You meet individuals that like you, that
25 don't.

1 So you interact with every segment that California
2 has to offer, and you do it in different forms. You not
3 only do it when they're requesting help, but you do it as
4 you're getting lunch, because people like to interact with
5 police officers, in uniform and out of uniform, when they
6 find out who you are.

7 So I think those interactions throughout my career
8 has caused me to appreciate everyone for who they are.
9 Everyone, there's commonality, and it's all -- the human
10 race, the human animal, is a lot more similar than we are
11 dissimilar. So that has brought me to the belief that we
12 are all looking for the same thing, and that's
13 representation. We're all looking for that American Dream.
14 So I think that point of view helps ground me, and that we
15 all have some of the same issues.

16 Now, if I take that to a personal level, I'm a
17 Southern California kid. I was born in Los Angeles. I
18 moved to the San Gabriel Valley, Altadena, Pasadena, when I
19 was young. I went to schools throughout the city and
20 through the neighboring cities, and I always tell my
21 children, as we're talking about some of my elementary
22 school, is that I traveled from what would be the foothills
23 of the San Gabriel, Altadena, all the way to Alhambra to go
24 to school.

25 I rode the public transit, the RTD, as it was

1 called then, and in traveling, I would pass through every
2 community there was, the Asian community that is Alhambra,
3 the African-American and Caucasian community that is
4 Pasadena, the working-class community, would pass through
5 the Latino community, and so I think that I sucked up or I
6 became a part of all those places as I traveled, just going
7 back and forth to school.

8 I was fortunate enough to go to high school in
9 Pasadena at a time when the high school was very diverse,
10 and so I had friends from every segment, and I think that
11 made me a more appreciative person, and I actually think it
12 made me a better police officer when I eventually joined
13 the Sheriff's Department, and I compound that with the fact
14 that I went away to school.

15 So I didn't go to undergrad, I didn't go to college
16 in California. I went away to Morehouse College in
17 Georgia, and I was confronted with a different culture, and
18 not so much as these are different people, but just a
19 different way of life, and that was also added with the
20 fact that, at Morehouse, there were so many students from
21 other parts of the country.

22 So I got to learn the perspective of other people.
23 I got to know the perspective of people in a rural
24 community. I got to learn the perspective of people in
25 more densely populated communities. I got to learn the

1 perspective of people down south, and people north, and you
2 get to see how their perspective is shaped, and why
3 different issues are important to them.

4 My love for California brought me back home again.
5 I'm a California kid, so I came back home, and, as those of
6 us that are here, have been here for a while, one of the
7 benefits of Southern California is, I think, we have every
8 community represented in what's around us.

9 So I enjoy snow skiing. So, if you go snow skiing,
10 the people that you meet snow skiing are different than the
11 people that you meet at the beach. I enjoy going to the
12 beach, but those individuals from Manhattan Beach, a little
13 different than those individuals in Wrightwood, and their
14 concerns are different. I enjoy hiking trails. So, when
15 you're on a trail, you meet a different individual. His
16 concerns, his perspective, is different than those
17 individuals.

18 It was some years ago, but I took my wife and my
19 brother and we went winetasting. So we went to Santa
20 Barbara, and we were speaking to some of the people in
21 Santa Barbara. We were speaking to some of the business
22 owners, some of the vineyards, people that worked in
23 vineyards, and their concerns are different. Of course,
24 all these individuals share a commonality, but their
25 concerns may be different.

1 Now, my enjoyment of all these things has led me to
2 bond with their perspective, and I acknowledge their
3 concern, and I can see their point, especially in a
4 political environment. I wouldn't want to vineyards to be
5 gone. I wouldn't want the beach to be gone. I wouldn't
6 want the mountains to be gone. So I think, if we're
7 respective (sic) of those levels on a micro and a macro
8 level, we can make sound decisions that are good for
9 communities and good for us all.

10 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

11 At this point, we will go to Panel questions. Each
12 Panel Member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her
13 questions, and we will start with the Chair, Mr. Coe.

14 CHAIR COE: Good morning, Mr. Taylor. Thank you
15 for taking the time to speak with us today.

16 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning. How are you?

17 CHAIR COE: I'm well. Just out of curiosity,
18 what's the significance of the movie poster behind you?

19 MR. TAYLOR: So my wife -- Bonnie and Clyde. I've
20 been married for 20-plus years, and I think that my wife
21 and I are going to stick it out.

22 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you. In your application,
23 and as you discussed already this morning, you're a
24 graduate of Morehouse College in Georgia, you mentioned.
25 Obviously, one of the most notable alumni at Morehouse is

1 one of the most influential figures in modern history, and
2 that's Doctor Martin Luther King, Junior. What was it like
3 attending the same university as Doctor King, and what
4 effect did that have on you personally?

5 MR. TAYLOR: Wow. He was, him and among other
6 notable alumni, you know, Spike Lee, Samuel Jackson, Edwin
7 Moses, their social impact -- they are men of action. You
8 walk around with the weight. You're expected, or the hope
9 is, that you become a man of substance, a man of purpose.

10 The underlying thought at Morehouse is that "We
11 will train you to be a man of substance, a man of action."
12 The saying is that Morehouse holds a crown above your head,
13 and they want you to grow into that crown. So, when you're
14 on campus, before you become a Morehouse man and you're man
15 of Morehouse, you're groomed to be a man of action, to take
16 stock in who you are, to try to affect your realm of
17 influence, to be a man of purpose.

18 CHAIR COE: And how much does that ideal that was
19 kind of ingrained in you at Morehouse -- how much did that
20 idea, do you think, affect the course of your life, the
21 trajectory of your -- do you think you would have ended up
22 in the same place had you not had that kind of ideal kind
23 of instilled in you with your experience at Morehouse, or
24 do you think that it changed the trajectory of where your
25 life went?

1 MR. TAYLOR: So we're influenced by our
2 surroundings, so I would be remiss if I didn't say I didn't
3 learn a strong work ethic from my father. I would be
4 remiss if I didn't say that my mom didn't put a sense of
5 responsibility in who I am. At the basis of my desire to
6 serve was my mom being the leader of my Cub Scout troop,
7 and the president of my Little League, and on the PTA. So
8 there's an element of service that my mom instilled in me.
9 There's an element of work ethic that my dad instilled in
10 me.

11 For a year before I went off to Morehouse, I went
12 to Mt. SAC, Mt. San Antonio College, a junior college close
13 to us, and I took a logic class, and in the logic class,
14 the individual that wrote my recommendation to go to
15 Morehouse -- I only went to junior college for a year -- he
16 stated that Morehouse College and myself -- "Morehouse and
17 Derric would be a great meeting of the minds."

18 So I think he saw that desire to service, to
19 elevating myself, to elevate those around me at the time,
20 and thought that this was a good place for me to land, and
21 that it would serve me well. I think that continued as I
22 got older. So Morehouse helps to shape the person that you
23 are, but, of course, those seeds have to be in the
24 individual that you are.

25 CHAIR COE: Thank you for that, and some of your

1 discussion this morning already in relation to standard
2 question five about all the different communities that
3 you've interacted with throughout your life, and I'm
4 wondering what it is, if you could pick one thing, that you
5 have learned from your interaction with those diverse
6 groups of people that you think would make you a
7 particularly effective representative for them on this
8 Commission.

9 MR. TAYLOR: I think all of -- and it might even
10 lend itself to my recommenders, who are diverse, the people
11 who I spoke to about attempting to obtain this position, is
12 they said that the thought is that I am sober-minded or
13 sound in my views. In other words, I try to make good,
14 sound decisions.

15 I think my decision making and judgment is
16 respected amongst my peers, and so, if I extrapolate that
17 onto the Commission, I think I would do the same. I would
18 take the evidence as presented, look at the needs of a
19 given community, look at it both on a micro and a macro
20 level, and make a sound decision within the context of our
21 group.

22 CHAIR COE: So kind of a similar question, but, as
23 you mentioned, you were born and raised in Southern
24 California, and aside from your time, I think, at
25 Morehouse, you've been generally in that region for your

1 entire life. Is that right?

2 MR. TAYLOR: Yes. I've lived in Southern
3 California my entire life.

4 CHAIR COE: So what about interactions with people
5 in other regions of the state, outside of your home region,
6 and what experiences have you had with people outside your
7 home region? What did you learn from those individuals
8 about their perspectives and their concerns regionally that
9 may be different from Los Angeles? What have you learned
10 from those folks that would make you an effective
11 representative for them on this Commission?

12 MR. TAYLOR: Again, it all falls back to the common
13 bond that we all share. So, just in my life experience, in
14 my time on the Sheriff's Department, and people that I've
15 interacted with, I've met people from every part of the
16 state. So I have friends that live up north.

17 I have friends that have moved up north and that,
18 when we talk, we discuss what's going on in those places.
19 I have friends that have moved further south, San Diego, so
20 friends in Oakland, friends in San Francisco, friends that
21 commute back and forth. They live in both places as a
22 course of their business. So, in my interaction with them,
23 I still see what is common, common to us.

24 So someone from an agricultural or rural
25 environment, I understand that they have issues surrounding

1 water, development, and immigration, and those are relevant
2 issues because that's what sustains life, and those points.
3 People from the city, from where I live, I understand that
4 they have issues surrounding redevelopment, gentrification,
5 attracting business, to housing. Those are all relevant
6 issues.

7 So, although I've been centered here, I have
8 friends, my wife has friends. I have a number of friends
9 that have attended college in those cities. So I again
10 think that the commonality, the issues that are relevant to
11 those places, still ties us all together, so that I can
12 fairly represent those individuals as well.

13 CHAIR COE: Thank you for that. I'd like to switch
14 topics a little bit to the topic of impartiality, and I'm
15 wondering if you can give us an example of a time
16 where -- maybe an example of work experience in law
17 enforcement where you had made a decision about something
18 that you thought was the right course of action, then you
19 maybe received some additional information that perhaps
20 maybe caused you to change your mind. Is there an example
21 of something like that that you've experienced?

22 MR. TAYLOR: So I think, still in general, since
23 it's one of the best ways to look at your issues, you are
24 often faced with a given set of facts when a case is
25 presented to you, and it can look as if -- and now that

1 we're -- what we're speaking, yes (sic).

2 So I had a particular case where it looked as if
3 this individual had committed a particular crime, and even
4 some of my fellow investigators thought that this was for
5 certain the individual that did it, but the case still must
6 run its course. You know, it's our job to follow all the
7 information that's given to us.

8 Over the course of a month or two, and piecemeal,
9 we started getting additional information, and in that
10 particular case, it switched from that individual to the
11 person that actually had committed this particular crime,
12 and it was fascinating that -- and, you know, we always
13 tell each other truth is stranger than fiction, but it was
14 fascinating to follow the evidence as it moved from what
15 definitively looked like the individual to a whole
16 different person that was sort of on the periphery of what
17 was happening.

18 It also stood as a -- it can stand as the standard
19 bearer, is that we have to be fair and impartial. We have
20 to follow evidence as it comes. We would be remiss and we
21 would be negligent in our duties if we didn't follow our
22 steps and processes.

23 CHAIR COE: Thank you. One of the biggest jobs the
24 Commission is going to have is to identify communities of
25 interest throughout the state. Some of those may be easier

1 to identify than others. Some are harder to identify.
2 They're less engaged, and they're not as easily
3 identifiable. Do you think that your extensive experience
4 being engaged with communities in your role as a law
5 enforcement officer would be an asset to the Commission in
6 regards to identifying communities of interest?

7 MR. TAYLOR: I do. I almost view these
8 Commissioners as investigators, much the same as I view
9 auditors as investigators. I've, throughout my career,
10 been able to talk with people. Having a team of
11 individuals, of course, is good, because individuals choose
12 the people that they want to talk to, but I've been able to
13 talk. That's been one of my strengths throughout my
14 career, and so being able to talk to people, to engage them
15 in conversation, would be an asset when trying to find
16 those communities of interest that aren't as visible or
17 easily seen.

18 So yes, I do think that my law enforcement
19 experience would be of benefit, and that's compounded with
20 the data and the information that we also have available to
21 us. So those conversations, in conjunction with data,
22 would be a strength.

23 CHAIR COE: Okay. So some communities, as you may
24 have experienced in your role as a law enforcement officer,
25 are less comfortable coming forward and speaking with

1 organizations or with government sometimes, for various
2 reasons.

3 How would you, as a Commissioner, or how did you,
4 as a law enforcement officer, make some of those
5 communities that may have been less engaged or concerned
6 about engaging -- how would you go through a process of
7 making them feel comfortable to engage with the Commission
8 and provide their perspectives to help inform the
9 Commission in its work?

10 MR. TAYLOR: Sometimes, when good old-fashioned
11 persistence doesn't work, you just choose a different
12 route, a different avenue, and in today's modern age -- and
13 who would have thought it when I entered law enforcement
14 some years ago? So, if I have an individual that doesn't
15 want to speak to me, they don't answer their phone when I
16 come by -- they don't answer the phone when I call, they
17 don't answer the door when I come by -- sometimes a text
18 message will do, and that's a different way to reach out to
19 someone, for whatever reason, might be hesitant to talk to
20 law enforcement.

21 I've made contacts with individuals I needed to
22 speak with on Facebook, on Instagram, through social media,
23 through community leaders, through their friends, through
24 the periphery. So I think you just try to find an avenue
25 that's comfortable for them, and I've even had to use other

1 people, if someone wasn't comfortable speaking with me, to
2 send another investigator they might be comfortable with.
3 So you try to find where that individual is, so that you
4 can make the contact necessary, and so, given the role as a
5 Commissioner, you try to meet the people where they are, so
6 that they can be fairly represented and so that their
7 issues can come forward.

8 CHAIR COE: Thank you.

9 Madame Secretary, can I get a time check, please.

10 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have three minutes, 30
11 seconds remaining.

12 CHAIR COE: Thank you.

13 Mr. Taylor, if you were to be appointed to the
14 Commission, which aspects of that role do you think that
15 you would enjoy the most, and, conversely, which aspects of
16 that role do you think you might struggle with a little
17 bit?

18 MR. TAYLOR: I would find this whole endeavor to be
19 enjoyable. My undergraduate degree is in accounting, so
20 the data and the numbers of it I find fascinating. Even
21 though I'm not practicing accounting, that still seems to
22 be where my heart lies. The social science of it all is
23 fascinating. I would find the interaction, the
24 learning -- it would all be -- I find this to be a
25 worthwhile endeavor.

1 The only drawback to this is I'm a family man, so,
2 of course, time away from your family is time lost, but I
3 think, with my family's belief in service, it's what we
4 expect. My family is willing to sacrifice some time so
5 that you can contribute to a worthwhile endeavor. So I
6 find this to be fascinating. I'm not sure what I wouldn't
7 enjoy about it, and the time away would be the most
8 regrettable, but that's what we've been bred to do.

9 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. I don't have
10 any further questions.

11 Ms. Dickison, the time is now yours.

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

13 Good morning, Mr. Taylor.

14 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you mentioned that you
16 have your degree in accounting. So what prompted the
17 career in law enforcement after getting your degree in
18 accounting?

19 MR. TAYLOR: So, as I mentioned before, my mom
20 believes in service, and she showed that service by
21 engaging in the things that I've done throughout my life.
22 I've played baseball throughout my college career, and even
23 recreationally as an adult, and my mom was always the
24 biggest cheerleader. She always played a role in my
25 extracurriculars.

1 There was a time when I thought that law
2 enforcement was uneven in its application towards
3 minorities, and, while it's not a perfect profession, I
4 didn't quite understand some of the inner workings of the
5 profession, of law enforcement, and my mom's challenge to
6 me was "Don't complain about a problem. Go become the
7 solution." And so, being challenged by my mom, I went and
8 I applied, and, 20-some-odd years later, I find it to be a
9 very rewarding career.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, in your
11 diversity essay, you talked about coming into contact with
12 people of different backgrounds, and you stated that you've
13 been able to see the needs of various family units and
14 communities.

15 What have you learned of the needs of communities
16 you've interacted with that could bind them together as a
17 community of interest?

18 MR. TAYLOR: So the city where I worked is often
19 divided into north, south, east, and west, and traveling
20 back and forth between the cities and talking to the
21 individuals, you may see a need for job training among the
22 young people on every side of the city, a place for them to
23 congregate, socialize, to have a central place to study, to
24 have a place where resources are available to all,
25 tutoring.

1 So you can speak to the parents on one side of the
2 city, and speak to the parents on another side of the city,
3 and see that particular need, and so that can marry
4 together, those two, that community. That could be a
5 community of interest based on the needs of that
6 demographic, that group.

7 Now, another side of the city, there may be more of
8 a need for government resources. So there might be a need
9 to bring in business development, and so this community
10 possibly needs someone that can push or support that
11 business development or redevelopment for that particular
12 community.

13 So, in conversation with the people, I would say
14 you start to see the needs. You start to see what is
15 common from one part of the city to another part of the
16 city, and how they have a shared interest in what happens
17 in this particular tract or radius.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. How much
19 knowledge do you have of the other regions of the state?

20 MR. TAYLOR: So I would say it's a cursory
21 knowledge. I haven't lived up north, so I understand that
22 it's a different community. I've spoken with many people
23 up north, that came from up north or currently work for the
24 Sheriff's Department that were formerly up in Tulare
25 County.

1 So I understand some of the issues that they talk
2 about, but it's a cursory knowledge, just in visiting San
3 Francisco or visiting Oakland, or traveling down to San
4 Diego, or traveling to Temecula. So it's cursory
5 knowledge.

6 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. But, thinking of what
7 you've learned about the needs of the communities that
8 you've worked with, how can you use that knowledge to help
9 you identify communities of interest or community needs in
10 other areas of the state?

11 MR. TAYLOR: So you research those. You research
12 those areas. So, given what the agenda would be, given
13 what the Commission is working on at the moment, you
14 research those areas. That's one of the wonderful things
15 about the Internet, is that so much information is
16 available to us now, and then you compound that with the
17 meetings. You combine that with social media. You combine
18 those with other avenues of contact, and you can get a
19 working knowledge of what's happening, and it can go beyond
20 the cursory information.

21 It's funny because I've worked station detectives,
22 but, at any given time, you specialize in a particular
23 element, so you can specialize in robberies for a period of
24 time, or assaults, or white collar crimes, or identity
25 theft, and sometimes, when you move from case to case, you

1 don't have any experience in that area. Sometimes this is
2 the first time or the second time you have a case, and you
3 have to dive into what that case consists of. So you have
4 to fill yourself with the background, and then you can go
5 forward to make a sound decision.

6 So, for the regions that I'm not as familiar with,
7 or have a cursory knowledge of, I would fill myself with
8 the backgrounds, and I would dive into what that area
9 consists of, and I'd review some of the resources that are
10 available to me. So my friends that are from those
11 regions, I get to reach out and I get to talk to them more,
12 and combine that with learning more about those regions,
13 and I think that information would make me -- could bring
14 me up to speed to be an effective representative.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, in your
16 activities, you talked about that you've been involved in a
17 number of professional, social, and volunteer activities
18 whose premise has been for the betterment of surrounding
19 community. What caused you to seek those types of
20 activities?

21 MR. TAYLOR: It has always been my goal to leave
22 the world in a better place, and I like to even bring that
23 in the micro, even smaller. I would like anyone that comes
24 in contact with me to be a better person because of it. So
25 I've sought organizations that have that same purpose, "How

1 can we leave our community, how can we leave our
2 surrounding area, better than what we found it?" And I
3 think I will always be of that mind set. I want to make
4 the world a better place. That's one of the things I'm
5 trying to instill in my children, to leave this world in a
6 better place than you found it.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So you've engaged
8 in mentoring youth, fundraising for scholarships, and voter
9 registration. What did you learn from your engagements in
10 mentoring youth that will help you in reaching out and
11 connecting with diverse groups of people in other regions?

12 MR. TAYLOR: So I think, with young people, they
13 really want you to listen, and I think that's a skill that
14 would translate up and down, up and down the ladder,
15 whether talking with young people or talking with old
16 people. I'm often in contact with seniors, and they want
17 someone to listen, and so I think that's one of the biggest
18 qualities I can learn with them.

19 If you listen, and you can hear what individuals
20 are saying, you'll find what the commonality would be
21 within that community of interest. So you have to be
22 engaged, you have to be participatory, and you have to
23 listen to what people are saying, so that you can identify
24 their need.

25 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: What steps do you think the

1 Commission can take to ensure that communities know that
2 the Commission not only listened, but heard what they said
3 and considered their comments?

4 MR. TAYLOR: You know, I think the Commission
5 should encourage as much participation as it can. It
6 should inspire the public to contribute. I think it should
7 be redundant in its efforts. I don't believe, if you do
8 some things once and only once -- and given the logistics
9 sometimes, that's all you can do, but I think efforts
10 should be to do things on multiple fronts.

11 So a community meeting is nice, but sometimes two
12 community meetings may be better, to give everyone an
13 opportunity to be heard. Reaching people on one platform
14 is nice. Multiple platforms is better. I think about my
15 application for the Commission. I'm fairly computer-savvy.
16 At least, I'm able to use a computer. But, if there was a
17 venue where it was only publicized, I may never have heard
18 it or saw this opportunity.

19 So I think multiple platforms, reaching out to the
20 public, when given the opportunity, being redundant in your
21 processes will enable everyone to participate. The more
22 participation, the better. That would fight the
23 hyperpartisanship, it would be transparent, and it would
24 help us to be an effective Commission.

25 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

1 Secretary, can I get a time check?

2 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have six minutes, 33
3 seconds.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

5 In your work as an investigator, I'm sure you had
6 to look at various types of information or evidence and
7 determine the reliability or validity of that information.
8 How can you use that when you're looking -- those skills
9 when you're looking at information or data that the
10 Commission will be using to draw the lines?

11 MR. TAYLOR: It's always helpful when you can
12 corroborate information, and that's what we attempt to do.
13 So we'll get information from a source, and you want
14 something that you can corroborate that source with. So,
15 as a Commission, we would take in that information, and,
16 hopefully, we can corroborate that information with data,
17 another source, or some other piece of evidence. You want
18 to be able to -- even though it's coming from one point,
19 you want to be able to hold it as somewhat objective, that
20 this person said it, but this seems to be the pattern, and
21 this is the empirical evidence.

22 So, as an investigator, you always want to try to
23 corroborate, and we would do the same on the Commission.
24 We'd want to try to validate the information that comes in,
25 because often people speak in superlatives, and often

1 people speak from an emotional standpoint. So you want to
2 try to filter that information, and stream from it what is
3 objective, what is subjective, and to move forward to make
4 sound decisions.

5 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. The way the
6 Commission is selected, the first eight are selected
7 randomly, and then they are tasked with selecting the final
8 six Commissioners to round out the Commission. If you are
9 selected as one of the first eight, what would you be
10 looking for in those final six Commissioners?

11 MR. TAYLOR: I would be looking for individuals
12 that can supplement that team environment. So I'm viewing
13 the Commission as a team, in parlance, as a colloquialism,
14 a bureau, as we would think of it in my profession, and so
15 we have to function well as a bureau.

16 If there's individuals that have good interpersonal
17 skills on the team, as constituted with the initial
18 Commissioners, then we might look for someone that is
19 strong on the admin side, or someone who has that strong
20 structural (sic), while still possessing those other
21 qualities that make a good Commissioner. So I would be
22 looking for people that can round out the team, so to
23 speak, and again using one of my extracurricular
24 activities, I don't want a baseball team full of batters.
25 We need some pitchers.

1 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you. I have no
2 further questions at this time.

3 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Ms. Dickison.
4 Mr. Belnap.

5 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you, Mr. Taylor, for
6 taking the time to interview with us today. In your
7 answers today, you talked about evidence, and
8 evidence-based decision making. As it relates to the work
9 of the Commission, what are the types of evidence that the
10 Commissioners would be gathering, evaluating, and using?

11 MR. TAYLOR: So evidence is testimony as well, so I
12 don't want people to think that word of mouth or statements
13 from individuals aren't evidence. Evidence is also
14 testimony, but we're looking at past maps. We're looking
15 at census data. We're looking at election data. We're
16 looking at the evidence or the testimony at open meetings.
17 We're looking at speaking to community leaders. So we're
18 looking at social media. We're trying to find those
19 patterns. All those items exist as evidence and can help
20 you make a decision.

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you. Do you believe
22 that, as a Commissioner, you will encounter people who are
23 wary of or even have a bias against law enforcement, and,
24 if so, how will you respond to these individuals?

25 MR. TAYLOR: Actually, at times, law enforcement

1 has a love/hate relationship with the community. My
2 mechanism has always been to inspire a conversation. When
3 given an opportunity, I challenge and I ask people, "Why?
4 What is your issue?" So I try to engage in conversation.
5 I try to find what their issue is, where the problems lie,
6 and see if there's a common ground within there.

7 I am self-critical. I am open to criticism. I'm
8 ready to admit when law enforcement as a whole, myself in
9 particular, have done something wrong, for lack of a better
10 word, and I am always explaining why the processes are this
11 way and what the purpose of it is. I think, when people
12 see what the purpose is, then they can see the common
13 ground.

14 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank you. So
15 I'd like you to describe an experience or an example that
16 demonstrates that, as your time as an investigator, you
17 were able to put aside your own belief, maybe even your own
18 biases, to come to an appropriate conclusion to an
19 investigation.

20 MR. TAYLOR: Yes. I used an example in my essay
21 where I had a particular case, and most people sort of
22 automatically turn on a switch when it comes to domestic
23 violence, and I had a case that involved a domestic
24 violence incident, and often those domestic violence
25 incidents lean towards, and the data shows, and the

1 literature shows how often males are arrested.

2 So I'm investigating this case, and you're fighting
3 that natural -- you're fighting that desire to say that
4 this is a male's crime, and you sift through it, and you
5 see that this individual didn't precipitate this set of
6 events, and the evidence shows that this was a case where
7 the female was the dominant aggressor, and you shift, based
8 on the evidence, to arrest the appropriate person. I think
9 that's an instance where you fight what might be your
10 natural direction, your own biases, to make an effective
11 decision.

12 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. In the
13 activity section of your application, you indicate that
14 you've had the privilege to work on several committees and
15 with various groups, but you didn't name all those
16 committees and groups. Can you provide a few examples, in
17 particular, where you worked with people of a variety of
18 backgrounds to come to a common objective?

19 MR. TAYLOR: So I'm a member of Alpha Phi Alpha
20 fraternity. We have several committees. We have our
21 mentoring, our voters' registration, and we work in those
22 committees to try to find what's the most effective way to
23 connect with the committee (sic) to make our mentorships
24 available.

25 I'm a member of the Manly Deeds Scholarship

1 Foundation, so we're working to effectively fundraise, put
2 on our golf tournament, to connect with kids to offer our
3 scholarships, and to connect with the community so that
4 they are aware of our scholarships, so that they can make
5 use of those funds.

6 So it's primarily been in that context, and on
7 those committees, you have people of different opinions.
8 They want to engage the public in different ways, and you
9 just have to come to a consensus of how best to affect
10 those goals.

11 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. I don't
12 have any further questions.

13 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson.

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

15 Mr. Taylor, I'd like to just follow up on a couple
16 of questions, some responses that you'd made to the
17 standard questions. Standard question two, I understood
18 you to say that, in your opinion, maximum public
19 participation promotes transparency, which promotes a
20 successful process. Can you expand on your thought on
21 that? I'm interested to hear what you were getting at.

22 MR. TAYLOR: Yes. So, under the belief that
23 decisions are made behind closed doors, or decisions are
24 made that affect individuals without their input, and
25 especially if there's an adverse effect to it, that leads

1 itself to the thought that these individuals did something
2 in their own best interest. So the idea is, is that I want
3 to show the public that I'm working for them.

4 In my cases, I want to show the public that I'm
5 working for them as far as it is -- as far as I'm legally
6 able, I will show you the steps. I will show the suspect
7 the steps I took in an investigation, because this is their
8 process as well. Due process belongs to us all. It's not
9 for a victim. Due process belongs to us all. So
10 transparency in that context, in that parlance, is due
11 process.

12 I want due process to be obvious. If I get maximum
13 participation from the public, they see the due process,
14 and it lends itself to a transparent process, and they can
15 see that we were working for them, that this was not
16 something that was working against them.

17 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you. So, sort of along
18 the same vein of thought, in 2010, the Commission went out
19 and they did a series of public meetings up and down the
20 state, trying to get input from the public about
21 communities of interest, and in one of their reports, they
22 indicated that they found that some of the folks who were
23 coming up purporting to be representing grassroots
24 interests really weren't who they said they were, that they
25 might have been there for a political or a partisan

1 purpose.

2 Do you think that your experience as a law
3 enforcement officer could help you sort of suss out who is
4 honest and who is who they say they are?

5 MR. TAYLOR: So, again, truth is often stranger
6 than fiction, and you meet -- in the course of my business,
7 I meet people from every angle that there are, so that's
8 when the importance of trying to corroborate what an
9 individual says. So you might get a leaning, and it helps
10 you to seek out the information to corroborate what an
11 individual says. So something, your intuition, which is a
12 form of perception -- your intuition leads you to seek
13 information, and as long as you have processes around that,
14 you try to corroborate the information that's given.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. In your response to
16 standard question four, which was about your group
17 experience, you talked about working on an interagency
18 taskforce. What jurisdictions were those?

19 MR. TAYLOR: So it's the San Gabriel Valley Safe
20 Streets Taskforce. It was the FBI, Pasadena Police
21 Department, Pomona Police Department, various sheriff
22 stations. There are a number of sheriff stations, because
23 it's a county area and contract cities. So all those
24 agencies worked together.

25 When we would have a case that would sort of lead

1 to a neighboring agency, LAPD would come in. So all of
2 the -- Alhambra PD or Temple City, Temple City
3 Sheriff -- so all those agencies that would have been
4 affected by violent crime in the San Gabriel Valley were at
5 the nexus of that taskforce.

6 MR. DAWSON: Did that involve public participation
7 as well? Was there public input?

8 MR. TAYLOR: No. That was strictly -- I guess the
9 underpinnings of it were law enforcement. Public always
10 comments on our interactions within the city. So you would
11 have people that would contact the various stations, or the
12 board of supervisors, or the city manager of Pasadena, or
13 the chief of police of Pasadena, and they would comment on
14 our actions within the city, and those filter down to us on
15 the taskforce, and we have to adjust accordingly, or
16 justify our actions. So, from that extent, there's always
17 public comment on what law enforcement does.

18 MR. DAWSON: But there were no public meetings?

19 MR. TAYLOR: No public meetings, no.

20 MR. DAWSON: What kind of data did the taskforce
21 use? Was it mapping data, census data, that sort of stuff?

22 MR. TAYLOR: We used some mapping data, but it was
23 all relative to where crime is happening in the city, and
24 it's judged against populations, and populations of
25 neighboring areas.

1 MR. DAWSON: Were there expert geographers or
2 demographers called in help you analyze this data, or was
3 it sort of at the police officer level?

4 MR. TAYLOR: No. We would synthesize the
5 information on our own or through our crime analysis.

6 MR. DAWSON: I see. I wanted to follow up on a
7 question that Ms. Dickison asked about how the first eight
8 are selected at random, and then the second six are
9 selected by the first eight, and you were indicating that
10 the second six really needed to have those sort of
11 attributes of fairness and analytical ability, but my
12 question is about -- the entire makeup of the Commission is
13 intended to reflect the diversity of California's
14 demographics and geography. So I'm curious as to how much
15 weight you would put onto having geographic balance.

16 MR. TAYLOR: I think geographic balance is
17 important. As we talked about, being a subject matter
18 expert, it helps to have someone there. Oftentimes we
19 think of diversity as in placing an individual that is
20 constructed or represents a specific demographic, and I
21 think what literature has shown is that, when we have
22 people of various backgrounds, they bring that knowledge to
23 the table.

24 So having people that are represented
25 geographically, having people that are represented

1 economically, demographically, ethnically, you bring that
2 body of knowledge to the board, so the board, the
3 Commission, it will be better for its diversification.
4 That will be one of the benefits of it, because they bring
5 that knowledge base with them. So, although I can become a
6 subject expert for Tulare County, if I have someone from
7 that region, we together can identify those communities of
8 interest, in that we, as a team, can function at a higher
9 level.

10 MR. DAWSON: I see. Thank you. I noticed that you
11 recently just returned to school to earn your master's.
12 What brought that about?

13 MR. TAYLOR: I believe that you should continually
14 be learning, and we should always want to know the "whys"
15 of why we're doing things, and so, as a check and balance
16 for myself, I thought it necessary to go to school, to
17 return to school, to continue to hone my skills, as a form
18 of professional advancement, as a way to hone my skills
19 even better.

20 MR. DAWSON: And that was while you were still
21 working full-time?

22 MR. TAYLOR: Absolutely.

23 MR. DAWSON: And did you have to drive down to
24 Irvine every day or so?

25 MR. TAYLOR: No. There's an online function to the

1 degree. So there were times when I could go on campus, but
2 the world of the Internet is amazing, and I think we're all
3 experiencing that now with the pandemic. My child's high
4 school especially did not miss a beat. My brother-in-law
5 and my sister-in-law are currently in college, so they show
6 me how, on line, it's just a part of their lexicon. It's a
7 part of their learning environment.

8 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

9 Those were all of my follow-up questions, Mr.
10 Chair. If there are any additional follow-ups from the
11 Penal?

12 CHAIR COE: Ms. Dickison, do you have any follow-up
13 questions?

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not have any follow-up
15 questions.

16 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap?

17 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not.

18 CHAIR COE: I have no follow-up questions.
19 Counsel?

20 MR. DAWSON: Madame Secretary, could I have a time
21 check, please.

22 MS. PELLMAN: We have 16 minutes and 37 seconds
23 remaining.

24 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

25 Mr. Taylor, at this point, I think we're all done

1 with Panel questions. I would like to offer you the
2 opportunity to make a closing statement to the Panel, if
3 you wish.

4 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. Just in short, again, I
5 thank you for the opportunity. I would love to be of
6 service if given the chance. I think that this Commission
7 has done something that is revolutionary in seeking its
8 diversity and enabling or empowering the vote of each and
9 every citizen throughout California. I full believe that
10 that's what it's doing. So I am thankful for this
11 opportunity. I think it would be best served by the
12 diversity. Thank you.

13 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Taylor, for
14 speaking with us today.

15 Our next interview is scheduled for 1:15 p.m. So
16 we'll be in recess until 1:14.

17 (A recess was held from 11:50 a.m. to 1:14 p.m.)

18 CHAIR COE: Okay. I'd like to go ahead and bring
19 this meeting back to order. I'd like to welcome Ms. Judith
20 Francis for her interview today.

21 Ms. Francis, can you hear us okay?

22 MS. FRANCIS: Yes, I can.

23 CHAIR COE: Great.

24 MS. FRANCIS: Can you hear me?

25 CHAIR COE: I can, indeed. Thank you.

1 I'd like to turn the time over to Mr. Dawson to ask
2 the five standard questions, please.

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

4 Ms. Francis, I'm going to ask you five standard
5 questions that the Panel has requested that each Applicant
6 respond to. Are you ready, ma'am?

7 MS. FRANCIS: I am.

8 MR. DAWSON: First question: What skills and
9 attributes should all Commissioners possess? What skills
10 or competencies should the Commission possess collectively?

11 Of the skills, attributes, and competencies that
12 each Commissioner should possess, which do you possess? In
13 summary, how will you contribute to the success of the
14 Commission?

15 MS. FRANCIS: All Commissioners need to start with
16 a basic understanding of and respect for the democratic
17 base principles. Our government is by the people, of the
18 people, for the people. I didn't say that in the right
19 order, but that means the authority is from the bottom up,
20 and not from the top down. Thus full participation and
21 decision making, of which elections is one of the most
22 important aspects, is essential.

23 While the rule of majority is paramount, a
24 democracy also entails protection of the minority. The
25 Constitution has certain safeguards built in, such as

1 checks and balances, the three independent pillars of
2 government, executive, congressional, judicial. However,
3 these checks and balances are only as strong as the voters
4 make them.

5 Last, but certainly not least, the ability to be
6 impartial, to be ready to establish districts that protect
7 the power and integrity of various communities of interest,
8 rather than favoring one's own party. This objective is
9 the very reason this Commission exists.

10 As far as the skills and competencies,
11 collectively, Commissioners must possess analytical,
12 organizational, and logistics skills. They must be able to
13 work collectively, listen intently even to ideas that are
14 different from your own, have a deep respect for and
15 understanding of cultural diversity, understand the basic
16 mechanics of mapping and the requirements of contiguous
17 districting, as well as various rules and limitations of
18 establishing districts, have a good level of computer
19 competency, read and interpret graphs, charts, statistics.

20 However, the Commission is not just about the here
21 and now. It must have a certain amount of vision, attempt
22 to analyze and forecast trends, and the probable effect on
23 voting, keeping in mind that the Commission's work will
24 cover a 10-year period, until the next census.

25 Women have always been a force to contend with, but

1 that power has grown by leaps and bounds. What future
2 impact -- how long will voting be affected -- or how will
3 voting be affected by the Dreamers, if and when they get a
4 path to citizenship? Currently, Latino populations are
5 growing faster than the national average. What impact
6 might that have two to four or six years from now?

7 The Bay Area, with extremely high housing costs,
8 has begun building microunits. How will that impact
9 density and other issues that will come before voters?

10 The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in
11 the world. California alone incarcerates more per capita
12 than most First World countries. If that trend changes, or
13 if the law is limiting voting rights of incarcerated
14 citizens, what impact will that have down the line?

15 Out-of-state U.S. students that establish state
16 residency after one year and thus vote on local issues,
17 voting districts dominated by college students, all of
18 these things that might affect the future are things that
19 the Commission should look at as well.

20 California also is at the forefront of
21 environmental awareness. The Commission must be able to
22 research the various industries present in or adjacent to
23 the communities of interest, determine their potential
24 impact, and discuss how, if at all, this information should
25 influence on voting districts drawn. Some examples are oil

1 refineries, hospitals, industrial farms, and many others
2 which lead to chemicals, potential accidents, or contagious
3 threats might impact communities of interest.

4 The Commission must be able to make difficult
5 decisions, and justify such decisions with compiled and
6 reliable data.

7 As for the skills that I possess, I believe that my
8 background, including both formal education and life
9 experiences, has prepared me in all of these areas. My
10 first career, as a secondary teacher in both inner-city and
11 non-inner-city high schools, entailed interaction with a
12 myriad of races, cultures, and attitudes from students,
13 faculty, and parents.

14 As an undergrad, I had absolutely no intention of
15 being a teacher. In my sophomore year, I attended the
16 Sorbonne University in Paris, France, where I developed
17 fluency in French. My nine-month stay in France totally
18 changed my outlook on race, my self-perception, and my
19 assumptions about others.

20 In my junior year at UCLA, I volunteered as a tutor
21 in a program UCLA developed for students from Watts, after
22 the first riots in Watts. I was assigned to teach English,
23 tutor English. The students, though A and B students at
24 their high schools, made serious errors in English grammar
25 while speaking. I used foreign language skills development

1 tests -- or, excuse me, exercises -- to improve their
2 standard English.

3 I also developed a very positive relationship with
4 several of the students. I visited their homes in the
5 projects for the first time, and their schools. I was
6 truly astonished at the discrepancy between their limited
7 educational opportunities and my own. That was a deciding
8 factor in deciding to become a teacher.

9 One incredible occurrence 25 years later. After
10 having become a diplomat serving in West Africa, the staff
11 was summoned to a presentation by a meeting attorney from
12 USAID. Lo and behold, it turned out to be one of the
13 former students I tutored.

14 At the end of his presentation, he came up to me,
15 also amazed at our meeting halfway around the world 25
16 years later, and he whispered in my ear, "I know you were
17 listening. Did I make any mistakes?" And my answer was
18 "Yes, I was, and no, you didn't," grinning from ear to ear.

19 Throughout my career, I've pulled aside many young,
20 bright, upcoming diplomats who nevertheless would make
21 noticeable grammatical errors. I would explain discreetly
22 that most would never say anything about those errors, but
23 they would have a glass ceiling on their advancement. Each
24 of them expressed gratefulness, and said that no one had
25 ever pointed it out or made corrections, and they improved

1 tremendously. In this regard, I believe that our tendency
2 toward political correctness can also have a detrimental
3 effect.

4 My second career was as a family law attorney. As
5 an undergraduate language major, I always enjoyed writing
6 and had strong writing skills. However, in law school, I
7 learned a totally different style of writing, with emphasis
8 on brevity, conciseness, and clarity without embellishment.
9 I'm comfortable with both styles.

10 In my private practice, I consulted with clients,
11 many of whom were quite emotional. I wrote briefs, made
12 court appearances, maintained records. Though inactive,
13 I'm still in good standing with the California Bar.

14 After law school, I completed an MBA, which added
15 an entirely new set of skills and knowledge. The courses
16 in finance, statistics, computer marketing, et cetera,
17 honed my quantitative skills. At that time, UCLA was
18 ranked in the top 10 business schools in the nation, and
19 was the only public school in that category.

20 While teaching and during my practice of law, I ran
21 a small business tutoring French and Spanish privately.
22 During my teaching career, they did not pay us during the
23 summer months. I was a certified Red Cross water safety
24 instructor, and taught swimming in the summer to children
25 and adults. So I've run businesses.

1 My third and longest career was as a U.S. diplomat,
2 a foreign service officer with the Department of State.
3 Twenty-one of my 24 years with State was spent abroad, in
4 eight different postings, only two of which were English-
5 speaking.

6 I have worked with innumerable committees, some
7 quite contentious, during my years with the State
8 Department. I personally financed and oversaw the
9 construction of a five-room kindergarten in a small,
10 impoverished village in Ghana, West Africa, which is still
11 thriving.

12 As the management counselor in various U.S.
13 embassies, I had to be in charge of all the logistics,
14 forecast future requirements, work with spreadsheets, and
15 analyze data for budgetary and procurement requirements. I
16 worked with multinational staff personnel, and had to
17 understand their perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses.

18 A survival course offered by the State Department
19 was one of the most challenging I've ever experienced, but
20 one of its components included learning more than I ever
21 wanted to know about using a compass, understanding
22 coordinates, and reading maps, put those to use by dropping
23 us in the middle of a sort of a jungle area, it seemed
24 like, you know, forest, and giving us a certain amount of
25 time to find our way back just using a compass.

1 Fortunately, we were a group of four.

2 My family upbringing, my undergraduate foreign
3 language major, my lengthy experience living abroad all
4 have provided me with extraordinary opportunities to truly
5 experience and understand diversity, its benefit and
6 challenges.

7 How would I contribute to the success of this
8 Commission? I work well with others, regardless of their
9 views, values, ethnicity, age, or orientation. I've always
10 had leadership roles, and know how to do research, meet
11 deadlines, and complete projects. I always have, and look
12 forward to enhancing even more, a solid history of exposure
13 to several different cultural communities.

14 I understand that those communities are not
15 necessarily homogenous. They often experience serious age
16 and gender differences. In immigrant communities,
17 especially, there are often common patterns. The parents,
18 who were raised abroad, often want to maintain their
19 culture, honor wisdom that comes with age, ensure that
20 their children learn their native language, respect
21 authority.

22 Their grown children, who are raised in the U.S.,
23 often have a greater belief that it is youth that will save
24 the world, resist their parents' urging to learn the native
25 language, believe in individuality and uniqueness rather

1 than conformity, and are totally integrated into the
2 American way of life.

3 These two groups, though the same ethnicity and may
4 live in the geographic region, may well represent very
5 different electoral voting blocs. The Commission must seek
6 to understand and accommodate that discrepancy.

7 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

8 MS. FRANCIS: Thank you.

9 MR. DAWSON: Madame Secretary, could I have a time
10 check, please.

11 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 16 minutes, 59 seconds
12 remaining.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

14 Ms. Francis, I want to make sure that you have the
15 opportunity to answer all five of the standard questions.

16 MS. FRANCIS: Okay.

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

23 What characteristics do you possess, and what
24 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
25 that will protect against hyperpartisanship? What will you

1 do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as
2 polarized or hyperpartisan, and avoid perceptions of
3 political bias and conflict?

4 MS. FRANCIS: Working at a U.S. embassy is a
5 perfect training ground in dealing with hyperpartisanship.
6 Though the ambassador represents the State Department, he
7 or she has several entities under his or her authority that
8 must work together.

9 In any U.S. embassy, the spectrum represented
10 covers from right to left and in between. You have the
11 military, the CIA, USAID, Peace Corps, and several other
12 agencies, all with their own budgets, objectives, and
13 agendas.

14 The section under my authority, as management
15 officer, represented a microcosm of the entire embassy.
16 They often attended my weekly internal staff meetings with
17 cups touting the excellence of the likes of Rush Limbaugh
18 to Louis Farrakhan. I would make a joke about them, and
19 then proceed with the meeting agenda. However, I would
20 also, on an individual basis, seek to understand the
21 various viewpoints, have discussions, and see whether I
22 could understand where people were coming from.

23 I'm still in communication, after many years, with
24 persons from both sides of the spectrum. I've earned their
25 respect, and I'm still able to have open dialogue, even

1 though we agree to disagree on certain issues.

2 I was also responsible for enforcing the Hatch Act,
3 to ensure that none of these employees engaged in partisan
4 politics publicly. I would instruct American embassy
5 personnel to remove bumper stickers, regardless of who they
6 supported, from cars with diplomatic license plates. Most
7 would comply without argument. A few I had to be a bit
8 more persuasive with.

9 In short, I possess an even-keeled, unshakeable
10 temperament, I know how to find commonality among various
11 factions, and I have a deep, abiding belief that every
12 viewpoint has value.

13 As to the next part of that question, the
14 Commission must strive for as much transparency as
15 possible. It must also seek the widest public
16 participation as it can muster. It must support all of its
17 decisions with solid, defensible rationale and data.

18 As far as what is the problem -- I think you said,
19 "What problem would the Commission encounter?" Even though
20 the question is in the singular, I think that there are
21 four major problems.

22 MR. DAWSON: Ms. Francis, I actually hadn't gotten
23 to that question, but would you like me to ask it?

24 MS. FRANCIS: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

25 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Okay.

1 MS. FRANCIS: I thought that was part B.

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

5 MS. FRANCIS: Okay. For me, there are four
6 separate problems that are important. I think the greatest
7 one would be public apathy. If the Commission can't get
8 active buy-in and public participation, this could
9 definitely affect the perception of bias. It might also
10 favor certain constituencies. The public could start
11 perceiving it as not a fair process.

12 To avoid or respond to this problem, the Commission
13 must fully study and research each of the various
14 communities of interest, be willing to meet them at the
15 location and at the times that are mostly likely to produce
16 the greatest turnout. The Commission would need to
17 advertise any and all of its meetings in the media most
18 used by these communities, be it newspapers, church
19 bulletins, favorite radio stations, et cetera.

20 Of course, this also brings up the uncertainty of
21 the length of time and ultimate impact of the COVID-19
22 virus. No one at this point knows whether or not there
23 will be permanent changes due to the scare, or to what
24 extent it will influence the ways in which we can
25 communicate with various communities.

1 The ability to meet with and obtain meaningful and
2 accurate input could be impacted. The timing and
3 scheduling of such meetings could help some and hurt other
4 communities of interest. The fact that we don't know how
5 long this will last, or whether life as we knew it would
6 ever return, further complicates the Commission's work.

7 Another potential problem, the third, could be
8 lawsuits which could bog down and negatively impact the
9 entire process. It might not be completely in the
10 Commission's power to avoid lawsuits, but, by being
11 diligent in documenting and factually supporting each of
12 its decisions, it may be able to minimize the delay and
13 shorten the time to resolve them, should they occur.

14 The fourth and final problem that I perceive.
15 Another community of interest could be the enormous
16 homeless population that exists throughout California.
17 We're beginning to get a fairly good idea as to the
18 numbers, but what do we know about them as voters?
19 Regardless of their voting propensities, how are their
20 interests and needs addressed by our system? To what
21 extent can the Commission's decisions impact the homeless?

22 Thank you.

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

1 the new districts. Please describe a situation where you
2 had to work collaboratively with others on a project to
3 achieve a common goal. Tell us the goal of the project,
4 what your role in the group was, and how the group worked
5 through any conflicts that arose. What lessons would you
6 take from this group experience to the Commission, if
7 selected?

8 MS. FRANCIS: As the top-ranking management
9 officer, I was responsible for the entire embassy. I had
10 to oversee human resources, procurement, housing, general
11 services, warehousing, and motor pool.

12 Additionally, in both Jamaica and Ghana, I had to
13 oversee the entire process of building new embassies in
14 both places. I chaired community meetings to answer the
15 questions, explain the process, negotiate certain aspects
16 of the impending construction, and, at times, calm the
17 anger of local residents concerned with the congestion,
18 inconvenience, and security issues that a U.S. embassy
19 might cause in their residential district. I created a
20 myriad of spreadsheets showing timeliness, cost of
21 materials, budgets, government regulation, et cetera.

22 In Senegal, West Africa, I was in charge of the
23 complicated bidding process for an embassy guard contract,
24 which involved research of local laws, all written in
25 French, as well as knowledge of U.S. regulations, and

1 constant written communications with the State Department.
2 The process was difficult and extremely contentious,
3 pitting the ambassador, the State Department, and the
4 various bidders on conflicting sides. Many sleepless
5 nights were passed, but I managed to complete the process,
6 and earned a commendation.

7 These experiences, once again, demonstrated my
8 ability to stay calm, work meticulously, meet deadlines,
9 negotiate effectively, and remain aware of what each
10 faction represented in self-interest, desired outcome, and
11 level of personal commitment. These lessons should be
12 applicable to the Commission.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

14 MS. FRANCIS: Thank you.

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

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

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

1 of perspectives?

2 MS. FRANCIS: As previously mentioned, I've had
3 extensive exposure, since childhood, to various
4 ethnicities. A bit of biographical background.

5 My father grew up in California, graduated from
6 UCLA, then attended Meharry Medical School, one of the two
7 med schools open to blacks at that time, to become a
8 doctor. He did his residency in Texas, where he met and
9 married my mother, and established the first medical clinic
10 that treated blacks in Beaumont, Texas.

11 He was one of many professionals that helped
12 support some black dockworkers striking in Galveston, an
13 action which angered the white establishment. Upon seeing
14 a Ku Klux Klan cross burning in our front lawn, my parents
15 knew that that was the time to pack up and leave. I was
16 only six months old. Once in California, my oldest brother
17 was the first black student to attend our public elementary
18 school.

19 My school friends were of various ethnic
20 backgrounds, Jewish, Armenian, Italian. Upon visiting
21 their homes, I noticed how they spoke differently at home
22 than at school, what is now called "code-switching." One
23 of my friends had two deaf parents. I was intrigued by the
24 silence and watching her sign as she communicated with her
25 parents.

1 By fifth grade, a Japanese-American and one other
2 black girl joined our class. In fact, my introduction to
3 foreign language learning was thanks to two Japanese
4 neighbors and playmates who were second-generation Nisei
5 born in Manzanar War Relocation Center during the war.
6 They attended Japanese school on Saturday, and studied
7 their lessons daily before we could play.

8 I studied with them. It was a chore for them, but
9 fun for me, and I learned that I had a propensity for
10 languages. They finally told me I had to shut up when
11 their parents came in, because, if I pronounced better than
12 they did, they got in trouble.

13 Junior high was my introduction to a substantial
14 number of other black students, and, ironically, my second
15 experience with language learning. When accused of talking
16 and acting like a white girl, I, too, learned to
17 code-switch. However, I will be eternally grateful for the
18 early multilingual and multiethnic exposure, and the way it
19 influenced my lifelong fascination with languages and
20 cultures.

21 Another reason for my reason for interaction with
22 diversity is my lifelong involvement in outdoor activities
23 and sports. I was a member of UCLA's women's swim team.
24 I've been an active tennis player throughout my life, an
25 avid snow skier, and often did a lot of champion sport

1 fishing, and waterskiing. My kids were involved in soccer,
2 baseball, football, and karate. All of these activities
3 exposed me to different demographic groups, racial,
4 financial, and geographic.

5 I grew up privileged. However, I am eternally
6 grateful for having parents who instilled values, and made
7 sure that my brothers and I did not confuse being fortunate
8 with being superior or more intelligent. We were taught
9 that our duty was to give back, help others to become
10 successful, and be part of the solution, not part of the
11 problem.

12 Through educational experiences, also, I've learned
13 valuable lessons in making me aware of my own biases, two
14 that I'd like to share. At UCLA, in the fifth-year teacher
15 training curriculum, one professor, Doctor Popham, believed
16 in pretest and post-test to prove what we'd learned during
17 each lecture.

18 One day, he was lecturing on inner city teaching
19 and issues. He announced that he had two presentations for
20 us. As usual, the pretest would be distributed, which
21 covered the substantial issues.

22 The first presenter, a black lady with a headwrap,
23 large earrings, and an African print blouse, began her
24 address with "I thank you all for the opportunity to speak.
25 I have came (sic) here today to tell you about issues in

1 the inner city." The rest of her discourse was laced with
2 egregious grammar. After she spoke, most did poorly on the
3 test. Shortly thereafter, the very same lady came out,
4 reappeared, professionally dressed, and gave the same
5 discourse in impeccable English. The test scores shot up.

6 Doctor Popham then proceeded with the real issue,
7 that our biases sometimes block our ability or willingness
8 to listen with an open mind. The lifelong lesson this
9 experience afforded me helped me to recognize and
10 counteract potential biases that can interfere with active
11 listening.

12 A few years later, I was privileged to represent
13 the State Department concerning NAFTA in a high-level
14 meeting chaired by Mr. Frost, the chairman of Frost
15 National Bank, a Fortune 500 company in San Antonio, Texas.
16 His slow Texas drawl may have previously been interpreted
17 differently. Instead, I was fascinated by how skillfully,
18 yet politely, he kept the meeting on track. The finesse
19 with which he would interrupt anyone getting off track from
20 the agenda was done in such a way as to make the person
21 feel proud of what he or she had just contributed.

22 MS. PELLMAN: Excuse me. We have two minutes, 30
23 seconds remaining.

24 MS. FRANCIS: Okay. As a black foreign-language
25 teacher in a classroom that was mostly white and Hispanic,

1 the classroom was arranged with an aisle down the middle
2 and students on either side. I immediately noticed that
3 they segregated themselves, all whites on one side, Latinos
4 on the other. Rather than ignoring it, I converted a tense
5 situation into a learning moment, where we had an open
6 discussion about diversity. This changed attitudes and
7 (indiscernible) new friendships.

8 For several years, I've been an active member of
9 the Friendship Force Los Angeles, a chapter of an
10 international organization based in Atlanta which foments
11 understanding of other cultures through personal
12 interaction. I've done homestays in Mexico and Guadeloupe.
13 I have had visitors in my home from Costa Rica, Japan,
14 Brazil, and other countries, which has provided a unique
15 opportunity to develop a far deeper understanding and
16 appreciation of different customs and cultures.

17 I made sure to teach the kids not only the
18 language, but more about the culture of the various target
19 languages. In one high school (indiscernible)
20 predominantly black, but still had substantial racial
21 diversity. I was approached by a few students wanting to
22 form a black student union and asking me to be their
23 sponsor. I convinced them to make it a black culture and
24 education club, and make it inclusive of all interested
25 students. It turned out to be --

1 MS. PELLMAN: Forty-five seconds remaining.

2 MS. FRANCIS: -- the most popular club on campus.
3 We had a few white and Asian students who were active and
4 constructive in their participation and contributed
5 greatly. Several former students, black, white, Asian, and
6 Latino, have kept in contact over the years, and have
7 provided feedback on how fair, though tough, I was as a
8 teacher. Thank you.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

10 At this point, we will go to questions from each of
11 the Panel Members. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes
12 to ask his or her questions, and we'll start with the
13 Chair, Mr. Coe.

14 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

15 Good afternoon again, Ms. Francis. Thank you for
16 speaking with us today. In your application, you wrote:

17 "Being a part of a Commission which
18 represents the diversity of our society
19 is one step in guaranteeing the fairness
20 and thoroughness of redistricting
21 guidelines."

22 This is obviously a huge part of what the
23 Commission will attempt to do. It is easy to say, but
24 difficult, I think, to actually do in practice. How can a
25 Commission of only 14 people successfully represent the

1 diversity of California society?

2 MS. FRANCIS: Well, at the beginning, at least, the
3 very fact that we come from different -- you know, should I
4 be part of the Commission? -- that we come from different
5 backgrounds, I think, goes greatly toward making sure that
6 there's a variety of viewpoints and experiences
7 represented.

8 As a matter of fact, I'd like to read something
9 that -- I recently wrote -- "wrote" -- I recently read a
10 book by Susan Rice, a former U.S. diplomat to the U.N., and
11 I really was impressed by one of the quotes from there:

12 "We are the most diverse nation on earth,
13 and it benefits the U.S. to model that
14 diversity to the world, yet, all too
15 often, we fail to leverage our greatest
16 strength. Meanwhile, numerous recent
17 studies have validated that, whether in
18 the private sector, nonprofit world, or
19 government, more diverse teams make
20 better decisions and achieve measurably
21 better outcomes."

22 I think the Commission can't be perfect. It can't
23 represent all groups. But I think that it's a very good
24 start that it needs to make sure that diversity exists.

25 CHAIR COE: Thank you. Similar question to the

1 last one, but instead of being focused on the Commission as
2 a whole, it is more focused on you personally as an
3 Applicant.

4 You stated in your application that, in your
5 experience as both a teacher and as a diplomat for the
6 United States Department of State, you've lived and worked
7 in several locations, and have worked with people of
8 several races, ethnicities, socioeconomic, political, and
9 social backgrounds, both here in California and in foreign
10 countries.

11 What will you take from these experiences that will
12 help you, as a Commissioner, successfully represent the
13 broad expanse of diversity in California?

14 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I think that, if and when, you
15 know, if I'm on the Commission, and we go to different
16 areas, and get to know different communities of interest,
17 I'm used to communicating with various groups, and I've so
18 far been quite successful at it.

19 Also, I don't just listen to the words. I look at
20 body language. I would try to find out as much as I could
21 about the culture of that group, because sometimes it's
22 considered rude to contradict somebody of authority,
23 period, and so the kind of feedback that you would get at a
24 meeting might not be as open and honest as you would like
25 it to be.

1 At several times, if you really look at the body
2 language, the inflection, and other things like that, you
3 get a much better idea of how much of the honest opinion
4 you're getting, and I think that's important. You know,
5 it's an experience that I've had many, many times.

6 CHAIR COE: Thank you. You mentioned communities
7 of interest, and that's going to be one of the biggest
8 tasks in front of the Commission, is to identify
9 communities of interest all across the state. Some of
10 these communities are harder to identify than others, for
11 various reasons.

12 Do you believe that your extensive experience
13 working in foreign countries, in many different
14 environments and cultures, would be an asset to the
15 Commission in regards to identifying communities of
16 interest here in California?

17 MS. FRANCIS: I certainly do. I think that, you
18 know, I would have to start out by research outside of
19 those communities, and get an idea of who lives there, what
20 the -- you know, if we're talking about ethnic or
21 different -- you know, socioeconomic or whatever, and then
22 make contact with people, and try to really elicit
23 participation and ideas.

24 Sometimes it means, you know, going there and
25 finding out what's the most important meeting place -- is

1 it a restaurant? Is it a church? Is it a community
2 center, or whatever? -- and actually going there and start
3 interacting with people. But yes, I think I'm comfortable
4 doing that.

5 CHAIR COE: So, continuing on that theme -- and you
6 kind of touched on it a moment ago -- that some communities
7 are less engaged. You know, they may not feel comfortable
8 engaging with authority figures, as you mentioned, or with
9 government entities such as a Commission, but, since their
10 perspective is still important, very important, for the
11 process, and for the Commission to make informed decisions,
12 how would you go about trying to make those communities
13 feel more comfortable to come forward and share their
14 perspectives, to help inform the Commission in their work?

15 MS. FRANCIS: It makes me think of something
16 that -- you know, I served in a temporary situation in
17 Cuba, and this is before we actually had, supposedly,
18 relations with it, and I would do things like get on a
19 public bus, and people would start conversations, and be
20 surprised that I was American.

21 Of course, now, with the COVID-19, I don't know how
22 much some of this would be effective, but, you know, I'd go
23 to restaurants, and I made friends with just ordinary
24 Cubans, and was invited to their home.

25 Are you still there? Can you hear me? Hello?

1 CHAIR COE: We can still hear you. We've lost your
2 video.

3 MS. FRANCIS: Okay. Yes. I don't see anybody. Do
4 I just continue?

5 CHAIR COE: Yes, please do.

6 MS. FRANCIS: Okay. Anyway, I was able to actually
7 go to be invited to homes, and see a whole different aspect
8 than most of the diplomats that were there saw, and I think
9 the idea of being able to hobnob with the common folks is
10 really important, and it opens people up that otherwise
11 tend to be very suspicious or afraid or whatever.

12 CHAIR COE: Thank you. I wanted to ask you a
13 question about something you talked about in standard
14 question five, and you gave an example of how you were made
15 aware of your own biases, and how things like that, biases,
16 inherent biases, could interfere with active listening,
17 that you've gone through a process of really recognizing
18 that. That example made that very clear to me.

19 My question is, not everybody is as in tune with
20 that as you appear to be. So, if you were working with
21 your colleagues on the Commission, and some people may not
22 be as aware of this, how would you address this with
23 colleagues that may not be aware of things like inherent
24 bias and its effect on active listening?

25 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I think that just by discussing

1 it openly, and discussing it in such a way that you're not
2 making somebody feel like you're the teacher, that you're
3 saying, "Well, you know, maybe this person, because of, you
4 know, this particular culture, is not able to express it in
5 a way that we can all understand it," and make sure that
6 it's in the "we" and not "you," you know, not saying to
7 another Commission member that "You just don't understand
8 the culture" -- you know, that's the sure way to turn them
9 off -- but to make it inclusive and try to bring it up in a
10 way that people will be receptive to the possibility that
11 maybe, you know, our listening is a bit biased.

12 CHAIR COE: Thank you. In your essay on
13 impartiality, you point to your experience working as a
14 teacher and working as a diplomat as demonstrations of your
15 ability to be impartial. How do these experiences
16 demonstrate this?

17 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I think that -- let's see. How
18 do they demonstrate my being impartial? Just the very fact
19 that I had to work with people with various backgrounds,
20 and a lot of times, like I said, that they were on the
21 complete opposite side of the spectrum, and you still had
22 to win their respect and their confidence, and, most of
23 all, keep them communicating with the other people that
24 they might not necessarily agree with, and I've done this
25 with committees, with staff meetings, in various contexts.

1 For example, when I was working in the Central
2 African Republic, I formed the first organization of
3 colleagues from each embassy, after convincing the State
4 Department that even countries with which we had no or
5 limited diplomatic relationships needed to be included, you
6 know, such as Cuba at the time, and Qadhafi's Libya.

7 A year later, it turned out to be a godsend during
8 a violent attempted coup. Diplomats that previously did
9 not communicate with each other now knew each other
10 personally, exchanged home phone numbers, and shared
11 information about killings and violence throughout the
12 cities that probably saved lives.

13 You know, I've actively networked with other
14 nationalities and organizations, and missionaries and
15 private citizens, and, you know, I'm comfortable with
16 dealing with all segments of society, and I believe that
17 this is applicable to the Commission's efforts.

18 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

19 A time check, Madame Secretary, please.

20 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have eight minutes, 25
21 seconds remaining.

22 CHAIR COE: Okay. Great.

23 Ms. Francis, if you were to be appointed to the
24 Commission, which aspects of that role do you think that
25 you would enjoy the most, and, conversely, which aspects of

1 that role do you think you might perhaps struggle with a
2 little bit?

3 MS. FRANCIS: Well, what I would enjoy the most
4 would be meeting people and going to these communities of
5 interest, and especially one area that I have read a lot
6 about, but have not had interaction with, is the various
7 Native American communities. You know, that would be
8 wonderful, just to be able to do that.

9 As far as the ones that I would not be happy with,
10 it's if we got bogged down in minutia, you know, in arguing
11 about smaller, petty things. That would be a real turnoff
12 to me.

13 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

14 I don't have any further questions at this time.
15 So, Ms. Dickison, I'll turn the time over to you.

16 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

17 Good afternoon, Ms. Francis.

18 MS. FRANCIS: Good afternoon.

19 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you've answered some of my
20 questions, but you talked about, in your essay and in your
21 responses to the standard questions, your converting a
22 tense situation during your tenure at Van Nuys High School.

23 MS. FRANCIS: Yes.

24 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Can you share with us how you
25 were able to convert that situation?

1 MS. FRANCIS: Well, for one thing, you know,
2 sometimes I use humor, but I said to the students -- I
3 said, "Look. I don't have a ball in this game, you know.
4 I'm the only black person here in this room. You guys are
5 Latino and white, and I don't understand why you're not
6 talking to each other, and why you're not sitting with each
7 other, and why you don't interact with each other."

8 You know, at first, it was met with silence, and
9 then the kids started talking, saying, "Well, we didn't
10 mean anything bad by it," you know. And then, more and
11 more, they started exchanging information, and so, you
12 know, when we had our Christmas party, we sort of laughed
13 because, you know, the Latino kids came in with their
14 Spanish music, and the others came in with rock, you know,
15 and I said, "Well, I'm going to make all of you mad,
16 because we're going to listen to Christmas music at a
17 Christmas party," you know.

18 So I would lighten it up, and open up the
19 communication so that they would talk to each other, and
20 they would interact, and it turned out to be really
21 successful, because there were some friendships formed that
22 otherwise, I think, would not have happened.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So, thinking about how you
24 were able to defuse that, what did you learn that will
25 assist you with the work with the Commission from that

1 incident, and from the response you got?

2 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I think that, a lot of times,
3 people want to communicate, but there are all kinds of
4 things that keep them from feeling free to do so, and I
5 mentioned -- you know, I might get in trouble for this, but
6 I mentioned political correctness. I think that the
7 intention is good. We don't want to hurt people's
8 feelings. But, because of that, people are reticent to say
9 certain things or ask certain things or discuss certain
10 things.

11 I used to joke about, every time I would come back
12 from a foreign -- you know, come back on home leave, I'd
13 have to ask other people what I can call myself. You know,
14 am I "Afro-American," or "black," or "African-American?,"
15 because, you know -- and even though I'd get things
16 from -- contributed to various causes for Native Americans,
17 a lot of times they'd come saying, "This is the Indian
18 reservation," and, you know, I'd say, "Is that a 'no-no,'
19 and can you not say this?"

20 People tend to -- because of that fear of not
21 wanting to hurt somebody's feelings, we don't talk. You
22 know, we back up from asking the kind of things or
23 discussing the kind of things that should be discussed, and
24 that's where I'm coming from, is to open up the lines of
25 communication, and, if it's appropriate, to be able to

1 lighten the mood by joking. Fine.

2 If there's another way to approach it, I think, you
3 know, asking a question that would be acceptable, and
4 getting a conversation started, do it that way, but the
5 most important thing, I think, is to get people to talk to
6 each other, and not at each other.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Do you think that's a skill
8 that you could use in reaching out to those communities
9 throughout the state?

10 MS. FRANCIS: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think
11 that it's worked in so many different situations that I do
12 believe it's a skill that could be applicable.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: So you talked about travel to
14 multiple countries, and getting to know their cultures.
15 How much travel have you done throughout California?

16 MS. FRANCIS: Most of my travel throughout
17 California -- I mean, I've been to various places, but not
18 in a work situation. I mean, I've skied at Mammoth and
19 Tahoe, and I've camped in Yosemite, and when I've had
20 guests from other countries, I love to show them, and I've
21 gone up and down the coast several times, and Monterey and
22 Big Sur, and I used to spend summers with some friends in
23 the Bay Area. I went to school for a year in San Diego.
24 That I feel like I know, and it was quite different from
25 L.A. at the time.

1 Mainly I think that, since it is a microcosm of
2 some of the things I've experienced in other parts of the
3 country and throughout the world, I feel like that's not an
4 issue. You know, I will learn as need be, you know, the
5 various areas, and I think that probably all the
6 Commissioners will have places that they're not familiar
7 with, and constituencies, you know, that have different
8 issues.

9 The farming communities, you know, might be
10 concerned with water issues, and with various issues in
11 terms of growing crops or animals, you know, that are not
12 applicable to Los Angeles or to San Diego or San Francisco,
13 but those we'll all be learning.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Great. So, based on just
15 your knowledge of, you know, different ethnicities or
16 different cultures, what do you think are some of the
17 things that can influence a person's preference when
18 they're looking for representation?

19 MS. FRANCIS: Well, there are so many. They might
20 have issues of transportation, you know, if there's
21 suitable transportation in and out of their communities.
22 Do they have issues of -- like, recently in the news, one
23 of the oil companies had a big fire, and they were
24 concerned with the pollution of the air in one of the
25 communities.

1 They might be -- you know, if they're adjacent to
2 certain -- there are hospitals, now that we have the
3 COVID-19. You know, there's a myriad of issues that affect
4 people according to where they live and what the -- what
5 the surrounding impacts are. So we would really have to
6 study those communities, and find out, what are the issues
7 that will affect them?

8 You know, if they're school age, if it's a
9 university area, it might be the cost of housing. Like I
10 said, in the Bay Area, they're starting to have this
11 micro-housing, which, for me, is a mind-blower, to think of
12 what the density will be if you have a large building with
13 microunits, and what some of the issues might be there.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

15 MS. FRANCIS: And I think the other thing I want to
16 add, or reemphasize, is that we can't just look at today's
17 data. We have to look at trends, and what we
18 think -- because it's important, if this is going to be a
19 Commission that impacts the next 10 years. So we have to
20 try to understand the trends that are going to impact the
21 folks voting.

22 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So the first eight
23 Commissioners will be selected randomly from those that we
24 submit, and then those eight will be tasked with selecting
25 the next six. If you were one of the first eight, what

1 would you be looking for in those final six?

2 MS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, like, impartiality is
3 very important, cultural sensitivity, analytical acumen,
4 the availability and willingness to prioritize this work.
5 You know, are you involved in a full-time job elsewhere
6 that's going to interfere with your ability to travel
7 throughout? Those would be the main things that I think I
8 would look for.

9 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. You mentioned cultural
10 sensitivity. Could you tell us what you mean by that?

11 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I mean, are you aware -- for
12 example, when we talk about the Dreamers, the kids that
13 were brought here very young, and have grown up totally in
14 the American culture, and some people are saying, "Well,
15 send them back where they came from," for me, that's very
16 unrealistic, seeing how you grow up and where you go to
17 school influences everything about you, and influences your
18 attitudes. Are you a person that believes in
19 individuality?

20 If you go back to -- say you're from a Middle
21 Eastern country, and you've decided to dye your hair green,
22 you know, or have a nose ring or whatever, that is fine
23 with your friends and your thing, and you try to go back to
24 a culture you don't even know, it makes no sense. I mean,
25 you'll be miserable, and you probably won't be able to

1 function.

2 I think that's part of cultural sensitivity, to
3 understand that it's not just the nationality you are on a
4 passport, or, you know, on a piece of paper, but the
5 society in which you've been formed, and that is, you
6 know -- and, also, like I said, there are differences
7 between the generations, and that's another part of
8 cultural sensitivity, to understand that sometimes it does
9 cause conflicts when your children have been brought up
10 with a different attitude and different set of values than
11 the parents came over with. The fact that people immigrate
12 here does not mean that they give up their identity, their
13 national identity, from which they came.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

15 Right now I don't have any further questions, Mr.
16 Coe.

17 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Ms. Dickison.

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

19 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap.

20 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Ms. Francis, thank you for
21 being with us. Going through your application, I was
22 trying to sort out a few dates and degrees. So you
23 received a JD and an MBA. I can see from your application
24 that your MBA was from UCLA, and it was 1982. Who is the
25 law degree from?

1 MS. FRANCIS: The law degree was from the
2 University of West Los Angeles. When I went to law school,
3 my whole family thought I was crazy. I was the single
4 parent of two young boys. I was working full-time, and
5 UCLA only had full-time day law school.

6 So I went to night school at -- it's a
7 California-accredited law school, but certainly not one of
8 the major law schools, and the very fact that I was on such
9 a tight schedule -- I got up at 4:00 o'clock every day, and
10 did, you know, my reading and whatever, and got the kids to
11 preschool, and then went and taught high school the whole
12 day, and stayed an extra two hours afterwards to grade
13 papers, and came home, and two to three nights a week, I
14 had classes.

15 So I didn't have time to procrastinate, and I think
16 that that -- although it was a ridiculous schedule, it
17 helped me to pass the Bar on the first time, because I just
18 didn't have time to procrastinate. So, yes, after I
19 finished law school, I started practicing, but I also went
20 full-time, daytime, to the MBA program.

21 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So what kind of law did you
22 practice?

23 MS. FRANCIS: Family law, and I did not like it.

24 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: When did you realize you
25 didn't like it?

1 MS. FRANCIS: Well, actually, just to be truthful,
2 by my last year of law school, I had decided that I
3 probably wasn't going to practice, you know, or practice a
4 long time, but I wanted to complete the process, and I
5 wanted to pass the Bar, you know, but, you know, I knew I
6 didn't want to do criminal law. You know, I didn't want to
7 do corporate law.

8 So family law seemed to be the logical thing for
9 me, and I found out that, you know, in California, since
10 it's pretty easy to get a divorce, the clients I had were,
11 you know, just real -- I mean, I thought I would be driven
12 to drink if I continued in family law.

13 Some of the cases were really difficult. You know,
14 they were pulling the kids apart because of their hatred
15 for each other, and, you know, one trying to get
16 everything, and I just found it really stressful. So I
17 took the State Department exam while I was in business
18 school and practicing, and hoping that that would come
19 through, and when it did, it turned out to be the thing
20 that combined all of my strengths, and that's why I stayed
21 there for 24 years.

22 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yes. So, as a U.S. diplomat,
23 were you ever involved in observing or assisting with
24 elections?

25 MS. FRANCIS: Yes.

1 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Tell us about that.

2 MS. FRANCIS: Yes. Okay. One time was in Togo,
3 and there was a substantial -- not a lot of violence, but
4 there was violence, and there were times when the police
5 actually went and burned the voting boxes on the tarmac of
6 the airport.

7 It really gave me an appreciation for our system,
8 even as flawed as it may be, just watching the whole
9 process, and knowing in advance that the person who was in
10 power was going to be elected by 99.9 percent once they
11 gave the results, which he was, you know. His father had
12 served for 40 years or something like that, and he's the
13 next -- I mean, he's still in power, and that was in Togo.

14 Fortunately, in Ghana, it was a different case.
15 There they actually had -- Ghana and Senegal actually had
16 real elections, where there were changes in administration,
17 and it was done, you know, pretty standard. So that was
18 good to see.

19 So yes, we had to be involved in the elections when
20 they occurred, to observe, to actually go to where they
21 were voting and observe to what extent they seemed to be
22 fair elections, and that was interesting.

23 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. What
24 languages do you speak fluently?

25 MS. FRANCIS: French and Spanish, and now I'm

1 teaching myself -- I'm conversational in Portuguese, but
2 now I'm studying it every day, and getting pretty good, and
3 soon I'll be able to say that I'm fluent in Portuguese.

4 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank you. I
5 don't have any further questions.

6 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson.

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

8 Ms. Francis, I wanted to ask you about -- again
9 sort of following up on your career as a foreign service
10 office, I take it that you were mostly involved in
11 administrative work. Is that how you would describe it?

12 MS. FRANCIS: Well, all foreign service officers
13 start by doing at least two terms of consular work. So, in
14 Mexico and France, I was a consular officer, which means
15 that you do immigrant and non-immigrant visas, and also
16 American services.

17 Part of American services means visiting prisons,
18 helping Americans in distress, doing passports or whatever
19 paperwork is necessary, and of course, with immigrant and
20 non-immigrant visas, you're doing the interviews, and doing
21 all the necessary things to determine whether somebody is
22 eligible.

23 MR. DAWSON: I see. So, as a professional foreign
24 service officer, you served under both Republican and
25 Democratic administrations. Is that correct?

1 MS. FRANCIS: Yes, absolutely.

2 MR. DAWSON: And I noticed you mentioned the Hatch
3 Act. Can you describe that for the Panel?

4 MS. FRANCIS: Well, that is prohibiting federal
5 employees from openly participating in any partisan
6 politics, and that means, you know, like, the example I
7 gave is, you know, having banners or, you know, since we
8 were in diplomatic -- we had diplomatic vehicles -- I mean,
9 we had our own vehicles and diplomatic plates, license
10 plates. You couldn't go around, you know, with a banner
11 for one candidate or another.

12 MR. DAWSON: I see. So that even though that you,
13 as an individual voter, might be registered as a Democrat
14 or a Republican, given your sort of nonpartisan, neutral
15 work, you weren't allowed to espouse a particular partisan
16 position?

17 MS. FRANCIS: No, not publicly. And one of my
18 duties, especially in Paris, where we have a substantial
19 number of Americans living there, is I had to go and
20 register voters, and make sure that they got all the voting
21 materials, regardless of what party they were in.

22 MR. DAWSON: Do you think that this experience
23 would be useful to you with your work on the Commission if
24 you were selected?

25 MS. FRANCIS: Yes. I think the experience of

1 knowing how to be nonpartisan, and not bring your own
2 politics into making decisions for the entire state or for
3 the entire, you know, community, yes, I think it should be
4 relevant.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. You had mentioned in one
6 of your responses to the standard questions that part of
7 the challenge in interpreting the census data was going to
8 be how to account for folks who typically get missed, like
9 the homeless persons or maybe undocumented persons. Can
10 you expand on that a bit for us?

11 MS. FRANCIS: Well, I think, you know, when I
12 filled out my census, I was thinking while filling it out,
13 "My goodness." You know, you're giving the whole -- the
14 name, the birthdate of everybody in the household, and
15 recently, because -- you know, I think a lot of people that
16 are undocumented now have lost a lot of faith in the fact
17 that, you know, there won't be home raids and things,
18 especially recently. ICE has done some raids.

19 So to fill out that kind of information, honestly
20 and openly, will be a challenge for a good segment of our
21 population, understandably so. You know, we've witnessed
22 some things that make them wary of believing whatever the
23 census people say, that, you know, "No, this won't be used
24 against you." So I think it will be very difficult to get
25 a real accurate census.

1 MR. DAWSON: Along those lines, does the COVID-19
2 situation give you any concern about the accuracy or
3 efficacy of the census?

4 MS. FRANCIS: Absolutely. I mean, we've added
5 another layer of difficulty, and, you know, who is going
6 to -- especially for the census workers that -- my niece is
7 a census worker, and she's gone from house to house, which
8 previously was not a problem for her.

9 She's bilingual, she's biracial, you know, and
10 she'd go in areas even in Compton and Watts and everything,
11 but now people probably won't even open up their doors to
12 somebody they don't know. You know, they're not supposed
13 to interact. Yes, it's going to add another level of
14 difficulty.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I think that maybe all of
16 my other questions have been answered.

17 Madame Secretary, can we have a time check, please?

18 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 22 minutes, 45 seconds
19 remaining.

20 MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry. Could you say that again?

21 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. Twenty-two minutes, 45
22 seconds -- actually, now 22 minutes, 35 seconds.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

24 Mr. Chair, if there are any follow-ups from the
25 Panel?

1 CHAIR COE: Ms. Dickison, do you have any follow-up
2 questions?

3 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

4 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap?

5 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not.

6 CHAIR COE: I don't have any follow-up questions,
7 Counsel.

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

9 Ms. Francis, at this point, I would like to offer
10 you the opportunity to make a closing statement to the
11 Panel, if you wish.

12 MS. FRANCIS: Okay. Well, first, you know, thanks
13 to all of you, the Panel, for extremely challenging work
14 that each of you have had to do, especially under the
15 present conditions, the challenge of meeting a statutory
16 deadline while still having to adapt to the conditions
17 caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

18 I'm sure that many of the other Applicants have had
19 the advantage of working throughout California, an
20 experience I lack. However, I do believe that the various
21 areas of expertise throughout my life's work parallels much
22 of what I would have experienced had I worked throughout
23 California.

24 On the technical side, I've worked with numerous
25 spreadsheets, budget forecasts, future needs committees,

1 and various forms and levels of negotiations.

2 One unique influence that I think I have is my
3 perspective. While living abroad, I've gotten to know
4 various Americans who, for work or personal reasons, have
5 become immigrants in foreign countries. Now, in general,
6 they're not experiencing serious financial woes. They do
7 exhibit the same tendencies that immigrants here are often
8 criticized for.

9 They often learn the language poorly, despite years
10 of living in the host country. They tend to primarily
11 socialize with other Americans and patronize
12 English-speaking establishments, and/or those that sell
13 American products. Seldom do they adopt the host
14 countries' attitudes, customs, or preferences. These are
15 human tendencies, and I would hope that -- the question was
16 asked of me about cultural sensitivity. I think this is
17 one thing that I would point out to other Commissioners if
18 I were selected.

19 If I am selected, I'll contribute 100 percent to
20 the success of the Commission's work. I'm retired. I do
21 have the time, even though, while I've been retired, I've
22 been volunteering for many different areas of helping
23 people, being in high school career days, and giving
24 speeches, et cetera.

25 So, whether or not I'm selected, I commend the

1 Panel on their effort, and thank you for this opportunity
2 to get this far. That's about it.

3 MR. DAWSON: Thank you very much for taking the
4 time to speak with us today, Ms. Francis.

5 Our next interview is scheduled to begin at
6 3:00 o'clock, so we will be in recess, and we'll reconvene
7 at 2:59.

8 (A recess was held from 2:31 p.m. to 3:12 p.m.)

9 CHAIR COE: Okay. I'd like to bring this meeting
10 back to order.

11 Ms. Dickison, are you on the line?

12 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I am on the line.

13 CHAIR COE: Great.

14 I'd like to welcome Ana Polacek for her interview
15 this afternoon.

16 Ms. Polacek, can you hear us okay?

17 MS. POLACEK: I can hear you, yes.

18 CHAIR COE: Great. I'd like to turn the time over
19 to Mr. Dawson to read the five standard questions.

20 MR. DAWSON: Good afternoon. I'm going to read you
21 five standard questions that the Panel has asked each
22 Applicant to respond to. Are you ready?

23 MS. POLACEK: Yes, I am.

24 MR. DAWSON: Question one: What skills and
25 attributes should all Commissioners possess? What skills

1 or competencies should the Commission possess collectively?
2 Of the skills, attributes, and competencies that each
3 Commissioner should possess, which do you possess? In
4 summary, how will you contribute to the success of the
5 Commission?

6 MS. POLACEK: Okay. So, to address the overall
7 skills, I do believe that, one, long-term project
8 management is very important, and then fundamental skills
9 in math, data analysis, geography, as well as being able to
10 document all your information and how we came to a
11 consensus.

12 Those are some just very fundamental things, as
13 well as, you know, how do we communicate with each other?
14 I think being professional, as well as being open to
15 different ideas and flexible are some just fundamentals,
16 and then, you know, we're going to come across times where
17 we will have conflict or disagree.

18 How can we recognize that problem, work through
19 some creative problem solutions, and actually take action
20 on those, and come to some agreement? And I think, you
21 know, we all have to be able to compromise and be flexible.

22 Would you like me to talk about how I have
23 experience in those?

24 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Yes, please.

25 MS. POLACEK: My husband and I built a home. We

1 started about 20 years ago, and it took us nine years to
2 build that home, and just, I think, having project
3 management skills just to build that home, design it, go
4 through all the permitting processes, was very important.

5 Then, obviously, we had a lot of problems along the
6 way, and we came up with solutions to keep moving, and to
7 finish our project and to get it done. We had to
8 communicate with a lot of people to do that, and we had to
9 be effective and assertive, and yet, you know, respectable,
10 you know, to everybody. So I think those are, you know,
11 some of the skills that I have.

12 As a teacher, you know, we have to do nine months'
13 worth of planning to go through curriculum, and within
14 those nine months, we have to come up with units that might
15 take a month or a few weeks, and then, within that, you
16 have to do daily planning, and set down daily goals, and
17 what are we going to get done for that day when we meet,
18 and just be effective.

19 As a Committee, I think, you know, the most
20 important thing would be to have somebody who has great
21 project management skills and leadership, because we need
22 to be able to see this big picture and keep our eye on the
23 ball whenever we have some issues.

24 Does that help address the questions?

25 MR. DAWSON: It does. And I'm sorry.

1 Madame Secretary, can you stop the clock.

2 Maybe we really should take down the muffin. I get
3 very distracting, personally.

4 MS. POLACEK: Okay. Could you just hold on? I'm
5 going to get my daughter, because she's familiar with her
6 computer.

7 THE REPORTER: Would you like me to go on a break,
8 Counsel?

9 MR. DAWSON: Let's go to break.

10 (A recess was held from 3:17 p.m. to 3:18 p.m.)

11 MR. DAWSON: Madame Secretary, restart the clock,
12 please.

13 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, starting the clock. Thank you.

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

20 What characteristics do you possess, and what
21 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
22 that will protect against hyperpartisanship? What will you
23 do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as
24 polarized or hyperpartisan, and avoid perceptions of
25 political bias and conflict?

1 MS. POLACEK: Yes, I do see hyperpolitical views
2 all over the media, as well as social media. You know, I
3 live in a house where my husband is Republican, and I'm an
4 independent, and we have a lot of conversations, and we've
5 been happily married for 22 years, because we don't attack
6 each other.

7 You know, I want to learn what his viewpoints are,
8 and I think he appreciates where I'm coming from, and when
9 we go into this as a group, you know, I just wouldn't see
10 people as Republican, Democrat, even though you have to
11 make a group like that, or neither of those parties. I
12 would just come in and say, you know, "We need to get this
13 job done," and it just really shouldn't go into that
14 direction of speaking. We should be professional.

15 My background, beyond just our own household, you
16 know, I teach social studies. So, when I go into the
17 classroom to teach a lesson, there are going to be
18 conversations all the time, but I go in and I try to be as
19 neutral as possible. I don't want my students to know what
20 my political views are, and I have to do that. What is it
21 that I even present? That would show what kind of politics
22 I have, and, you know, how I lead the conversation.

23 So I really try to be conscious about being
24 neutral, again, sticking to what are the issues at hand,
25 what are important to making sure that all Californians

1 have a voice in our elections? That would be sustained.
2 That's the objective of this. Yes. I would just -- I
3 think that addresses that.

4 I think one last thing is, I would just say that, I
5 hope while you guys are forming this Committee, you are
6 looking for people who -- you know, you're going to have
7 Republicans, you're going to have Democrats, but I'm hoping
8 that you're finding people who are flexible and can see
9 different perspectives, and are not extreme in their
10 viewpoints, because maybe we won't be able to come to an
11 agreement if somebody is, you know, very far to the left or
12 far to the right. Yes.

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. POLACEK: I think one of the biggest problems
18 would be if we have lack of leadership and lack of
19 long-term project management and process. I mean, we need
20 to be able to say, "Okay. These are where we want to be at
21 different points along the line," just as you are trying to
22 interview us and you have deadlines.

23 We need to have deadlines. We need to have people,
24 you know, sticking to those deadlines, and we need a leader
25 to pull this all together to make sure that happens. So I

1 think that is the biggest issue, if we don't have, you
2 know, somebody who's really guiding the long-term project.

3 MR. DAWSON: Question four: If you are selected,
4 you will be one of 14 members of the Commission, which is
5 charged with working together to create maps of the new
6 districts. Please describe a situation where you had to
7 work collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a
8 common goal. Tell us the group (sic) of the project, what
9 your role in the group was, and how the group worked
10 through any conflicts that arose. What lessons would you
11 take from this group experience to the Commission, if
12 selected?

13 MS. POLACEK: Okay. I think, in my application, I
14 mentioned that some of the things I do -- like I said, as a
15 teacher, we do projects, and long-term curriculum, as well
16 as I worked in an auction committee, so making sure that
17 auction ran well. I worked as a database person, as well
18 as soliciting.

19 The largest and most complex and longest project I
20 worked on was the building of our family home. It did take
21 almost nine years. My husband and I had no idea, you know,
22 what the timeline would be, but we never thought it would
23 be nine years.

24 First and foremost, we worked as partners. We came
25 along a lot of problems, but we had so many problems that

1 we worked together to get those done. But we had to
2 collaborate with architects, designers, the county,
3 obviously, the general contractor, civil engineers, all the
4 subcontractors, whether it would be electricians and
5 plumbers, and ultimately we had to deal also with the
6 Coastal Commission, and we were successful.

7 We were able to build our house, and we've been
8 living in it for 12 years, and enjoying it, but I would
9 love to tell you about four major problems along the way.
10 There were many problems, but let's just start with when we
11 went to buy the property.

12 As we were doing our research, we found out that
13 the property did not have legal boundaries. So that was
14 the problem, so we came to an agreement with the landowners
15 that if we were able to legalize the property, we would
16 purchase it, so just being creative, because we wanted the
17 property. So we worked with that landowner to come to an
18 agreement, and we bought the property.

19 Then we spent probably a year and a half designing.
20 We were lucky enough to be able to design our own home. So
21 we spent about a year and a half, and we realized at the
22 end that the architect that we had chosen was not a
23 certified architect. He was a designer. So we actually
24 had to end our contract.

25 Again, that's a very hard, you know, problem to do,

1 to actually end a contract, and both parties come out
2 feeling okay with it. And then, after we ended the
3 contract, we actually had to find another architectural
4 firm who would finish the project, and many architects
5 refused, because they didn't want to have, you know,
6 something that was 90 percent done.

7 Then, I think the biggest -- one of the biggest
8 issues is that, you know, we were very naïve. We just
9 thought, "We want to build this great home," and we got a
10 lot of pushback from environmental groups. It passed
11 through the county, but then, ultimately, it took two years
12 working with the Coastal Commission to come to an
13 agreement. You know, we went and met with -- you know, so
14 how do you do that?

15 We went and met with every commissioner that would
16 meet with us. We accommodated to some of the things that
17 they felt they wanted from us. We redid reports. But we
18 persevered, you know, and we were successful.

19 Then, of course, you have the building phase, and
20 we had many problems, as most builders probably have. One
21 of them was the window factory ended up moving and shutting
22 down for three months. So what do you do? I mean, we
23 needed to keep moving. It had taken so long already just
24 to get permits. So we ended up boarding up the
25 entire -- all the windows, so that we could continue doing

1 electricity and plumbing, and moving forward.

2 So, again, we just had so many of these big hurdles
3 to overcome, but we thought creatively, and we worked, you
4 know, with all these various people to make it work, you
5 know, and I think, you know, it's the same thing as what we
6 would have with this Commission.

7 You know, we have a job to get done. We're going
8 to have hurdles. We're going to have to work with
9 different people, but let's, you know, think creatively
10 about how -- and be accommodating -- to get it done, so
11 that all people get a fair chance to, you know, be heard
12 in, you know, California elections.

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 skills
19 and attributes will make you effective at interacting with
20 people from different backgrounds and who have a variety of
21 perspectives?

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

1 MS. POLACEK: Okay. I'm going to say first I think
2 I'm a very friendly person, just my personality. I try to
3 appreciate people as individuals, even though we are
4 talking about demographic groups, and we talked about
5 Republicans and political groups. I do believe I look at
6 people as individuals first.

7 Then I also think that my background -- I was born
8 into a multicultural home. My dad came from India. My
9 mother was of Northern European descent, born and raised in
10 the United States, and, just having that upbringing, I just
11 have an understanding of different culture and different
12 religions.

13 I have lived in Spain, and in Japan for a couple
14 years, just understanding that culture makes up a huge part
15 of people's lives. It's the fabric of their lives, and
16 everyone is different. Also, one of my passions is
17 traveling, and I've been able to travel the world and see
18 how people live, and appreciate different cultures and
19 people.

20 Again, teaching. I have taught both in public and
21 private schools, where you have a variety of demographic
22 groups, socioeconomic, you know, low demographics, wealthy
23 groups, different cultures.

24 Then I would also say, finally, that, you know, I
25 have lived in urban areas like Tokyo and Barcelona. I have

1 lived in suburban areas like Mountain View and Fremont, in
2 the Bay Area, and I've seen them change. I've seen the
3 growing changes going from, you know, farmland to high
4 tech, and my husband works in the high tech industry.

5 Currently we live in rural, agricultural San Mateo
6 County, where it's a different demographic, where, you
7 know, people are on edge, you know, in farming and in
8 fishing, and bringing in tourism to keep the economy going.
9 So I do appreciate all these different environments, and I
10 think I could bring various perspectives, you know, to the
11 Commission.

12 One last thing is, one of the credentials I have is
13 in something called CLAD. It's called "Cultural Language
14 Acquisition." And so, when you're teaching students who
15 are coming from a different culture, it's trying to be able
16 to communicate with different people in different ways, and
17 I think I try really hard to communicate so that people
18 understand, whether it's a lesson or that we can just
19 understand each other as people. So I think I could bring
20 a lot to the Commission in that way.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

22 At this point, we will go to Panel questions. Each
23 of the Panel members will have 20 minutes to ask his or her
24 questions, and we'll start with the Chair, Mr. Coe.

25 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

1 Good afternoon, Ms. Polacek. Thank you for taking
2 the time to speak with us today. Your application
3 describes many volunteer activities, ranging from beach
4 cleanups to feeding the elderly, the poor, and helping
5 English-language learners improve their communication
6 skills. What motivates you to get involved in these types
7 of charities?

8 MS. POLACEK: You know, I was just thinking about
9 that today when I was thinking about, you know, if you guys
10 asked me what are some of the things I like to do in my
11 free time, and that is just one of the things I really
12 enjoy, just giving back to our community, and I know that,
13 in my past, I needed help, and it just brings me pleasure
14 to see, whether it's the beach being cleaned, because
15 that's where I live, or I know that there are people who
16 need help. And because I've been working part-time, I've
17 had the time to do that. So that's really one reason.

18 CHAIR COE: All right. I see in the activity
19 section also that you made a commitment, I think you
20 describe, in your early 40s, to complete a black belt in
21 martial arts by the age of 50. Why did you set that goal
22 for yourself?

23 MS. POLACEK: Well, you know, it's kind of one of
24 those funny things. You know, when you're young, you just
25 kind of have those bucket lists, and that was one of my

1 bucket lists, and it just happened that my children had
2 started doing martial arts, and they both got their black
3 belts, you know, and it took me longer, but I was like, you
4 know, "I'm just going to get it done, and do it." And I'm
5 really proud of myself, and I'm very close now to being a
6 second-degree black belt. So I've continued because I just
7 love the exercise.

8 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you.

9 MS. POLACEK: And I will say it took a long time,
10 perseverance.

11 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you. In your essay on
12 impartiality, you discuss your role as a teacher and
13 marriage as how you had to be impartial, and in your role
14 as a teacher, that you try to pass on the idea of
15 impartiality to young people. Can you give us a specific
16 example, not necessarily from either of those two
17 experiences, but any example, where you had to make a
18 difficult impartial decision that involved setting aside
19 your self-interest?

20 MS. POLACEK: You know, I really can't think of
21 that. Like I said, I just try to be very conscious of,
22 like I said, what I present in a classroom, but even on
23 social media. I mean, there are so many things out there
24 that trigger emotions, and you just have to stop and just
25 say, "No. Don't respond," even if you have your own

1 personal feeling, because, you know, is it helpful? Most
2 of the time, it's not helpful. It's just kind of digging
3 back at each other.

4 So, you know, I take in information from what
5 people put out there on social media, but I really try not
6 to, you know, respond in any kind of slanderous way. I
7 mean, I might say something that has more about data or
8 information that's more of a clarification, but I try
9 really hard not to be demeaning to people, even if I don't
10 agree.

11 CHAIR COE: In your essays and in some of the
12 answers you've provided already this afternoon, you discuss
13 having met many people of different backgrounds, traveled
14 across the world, that you've lived in, I think you said,
15 Spain and Japan, and I'm wondering what you have learned
16 from the diverse groups of people that you have
17 encountered, and what you've learned about their
18 perspectives and their concerns that would make you an
19 effective representative for them on this Commission.

20 MS. POLACEK: I would just say, when you go into a
21 culture and you actually live in a culture, not just be a
22 tourist, you just realize that people live differently, the
23 way they get their food. You know, for example, in Spain,
24 I mean, they close down in the middle of the day, or, in
25 Japan, just shopping, you have to shop little by little,

1 and things are very expensive.

2 So it's just the daily life, understanding that
3 people live differently. So, for example, people who live
4 in an urban city, they live differently than somebody who
5 lives in a suburb or lives in an urban area, and all of
6 these different microcosms of living, they need to be
7 appreciated, and those people have to have a voice.

8 So, like I said, you know, we have a lot of small
9 farmers in our area. Do they have a voice? The tech
10 industry, even though many high tech companies do well,
11 there are a lot of companies that fail. I mean, how do we
12 support all kinds of businesses, so that people can thrive
13 and we can have jobs for people? So I just would say that
14 it's important to really see that, you know, people live
15 differently, and I think that was my point in just regards
16 to traveling.

17 CHAIR COE: You mentioned all of those different
18 groups that you were talking about needing to have a voice.
19 How can the Commission ensure that people have a voice?

20 MS. POLACEK: Yes. Well, I did notice that
21 when -- there is a criteria that is set in the California
22 Constitution, you know. One of it is by population, and
23 the other one of them is also by community. So I think it
24 is really important to, you know, reach out to people. I
25 think that's the whole idea of soliciting to these

1 different communities to get their input when we do public
2 hearings.

3 We can't just go into a community and say, "Okay.
4 Come," but you really, really have to work hard to get
5 people to come and to submit comment. I think that's just
6 really important, and so I think, you know, for example, so
7 making sure that each of those different communities can be
8 heard, and soliciting for their information.

9 CHAIR COE: So, sticking with the topic of
10 communities, one of the Commission's most important tasks
11 is going to be identifying communities of interest
12 throughout the state, and so there's a couple of questions
13 I want to ask about that, is, some of those communities are
14 easy to find. There are others that are harder to identify
15 and locate, for one reason or another.

16 How would you have the Commission go about trying
17 to locate communities of interest, particularly with the
18 effort of not overlooking some communities that may be
19 less obvious or harder to locate?

20 MS. POLACEK: Yes. Actually, I thought about that
21 today. You know, you do have city councils that know their
22 population pretty well, but, even within other areas, like
23 where I live -- I live in a pretty rural area -- we have
24 a -- it's called the Pescadero Community Advisory
25 Committee. So they're just an advisory committee, but they

1 are for a local town and a local area, and just north of
2 us, in Half Moon Bay, they also have kind of a mid-coast
3 community advisory, and I think reaching out to these
4 different advisory committees in smaller areas, as well as
5 city councils, to really understand what their needs are.

6 So, for example, I spent a lot of time in Half Moon
7 Bay, and I know that, for them, tourism is a really
8 important aspect of their economy, but, also, locals may
9 have their own personal needs, so maybe reaching out to
10 these city councils and advisory committees to get input on
11 what people of their community would like to address.

12 CHAIR COE: So, a moment ago, you mentioned needing
13 to really work hard to get people to come to the outreach
14 meetings or to provide input to the Commission. There are
15 some communities that are less engaged, and may feel
16 uncomfortable in reaching out or speaking in an environment
17 such as the Commission's meetings. For one reason or
18 another, they may not feel comfortable participating in
19 efforts like this.

20 How would you go about making those communities
21 feel comfortable, feel safe, and willing to provide their
22 perspectives to help inform the Commission in its work?

23 MS. POLACEK: Again, I would really directly reach
24 out to these smaller committees to have them canvass for
25 ideas. I realize there are a lot of people who are

1 disengaged, as well as they just, I don't know, maybe have
2 some reason they don't want to come forward, but I think
3 having these smaller committees can -- at least, they could
4 go out and get information, and I think that is important,
5 to really engage them to go out and do that outreach. Does
6 that kind of answer your question?

7 CHAIR COE: Yes, it does. Thank you. I want to
8 switch gears a little bit to your analytical skills essay,
9 and in that essay, you say that you have strong skills in
10 researching, reading, and analyzing documents and data
11 using a variety of software applications that are always
12 changing. What kind of data have you worked with?

13 MS. POLACEK: Well, I would just say, as a social
14 studies teacher, you know, we read a variety of documents,
15 as well as textbooks, and just looking at graphs and maps,
16 and trying to understand, you know, populations at
17 different times, you know, where in U.S. history, you know,
18 the movement of immigration, the movement of industry, and
19 just looking at graphs. Those are just kind of fundamental
20 skills that we have in social studies.

21 Obviously, in math, in teaching math, we teach
22 graphing. We teach basic math, which is percentages and
23 proportion, and just being able to understand a graph, and
24 how to make graphs. That's one component, and I would say,
25 in general, my own just reading, reading a newspaper or

1 reading up on information that I want to find out about. I
2 do that on a personal level.

3 CHAIR COE: Have you worked with any raw data,
4 large data sets like the census information, in any of
5 these capacities?

6 MS. POLACEK: I have not. The only other
7 experience that I had was, I did work for an auction
8 committee, where I was the person in charge of their
9 database. So it was more about sorting, I would say,
10 products that we were getting, how expensive things were,
11 smaller products, things like that. I wouldn't call it,
12 exactly, data analysis, though.

13 CHAIR COE: And you mentioned using a variety of
14 software applications. Which software applications have
15 you used in your work with data?

16 MS. POLACEK: I guess I was talking specifically
17 about not so much towards data applications as in just
18 computer applications in general. So, you know, working in
19 a school, we constantly have new gradebook programs, or
20 ways -- you know, Google Classroom, for example, or even as
21 we're using Zoom now. I mean, just in the last few weeks
22 is the first time I've had the opportunity to use it, but I
23 have done in the past.

24 There are people who just are like, "It's just too
25 much. I don't even want to use that platform," when I

1 honestly believe, you know, you just need to embrace it,
2 and there are so many great tools out there now, and I have
3 found and asked colleagues who really don't want to engage
4 and use these platforms, and I just feel like, you know,
5 I'm willing to learn whatever new ones that I need to
6 learn.

7 CHAIR COE: So, if you were to be appointed to the
8 Commission, which aspects of that role do you think that
9 you would enjoy the most, and, conversely, which aspects of
10 that role do you think might perhaps struggle with a little
11 bit?

12 MS. POLACEK: Well, I would love to work with
13 project management, just kind of laying out, you know, what
14 the project is, what are the steps we need to take, and
15 then maybe helping, you know, everyone figure out what role
16 that they're in, and what best would suit them. And, I
17 mean, I could also solicit, you know, like we talked about
18 earlier, into those smaller communities, going out and
19 trying to do outreach to these different city councils or
20 smaller community zones.

21 CHAIR COE: And which aspects of the role do you
22 think you might struggle with a little bit?

23 MS. POLACEK: You know, I don't know what all the
24 roles are, exactly, but I think maybe, you know -- I just
25 don't know what all the roles are, exactly.

1 CHAIR COE: Okay. Thank you. I don't have any
2 other further questions.

3 Ms. Dickison, the time is yours.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

5 Welcome, Ms. Polacek. Did I say it correctly?

6 MS. POLACEK: Polacek.

7 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Polacek. Okay. So, in
8 looking at your application, it appears that you were a
9 stay-at-home parent from 2001 to 2006. Is that accurate?

10 MS. POLACEK: That is correct, yes.

11 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

12 MS. POLACEK: During that time was when we were
13 building our home.

14 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Do you think being a
15 stay-at-home parent gave you a different perspective to the
16 Commission?

17 MS. POLACEK: You know, I think every family is
18 different in regards to whether both parents need to work,
19 or if one parent just wants to stay home because they want
20 that special relationship with their children. I think it
21 gave me the opportunity, for example, to help build our
22 home.

23 You know, my husband was working full-time, and I
24 had a major role in, you know, managing the permitting, the
25 building permits, as well as being on site while the house

1 was being built, and having two little kids, you know,
2 dragging them along with me.

3 So yes, I think, I mean, it gave me an opportunity
4 to do other things, because, you know, a stay-at-home mom,
5 or a parent in general, they're a multitasker. You know,
6 so, even though I was doing what you would say a
7 traditional parent would be doing, which is, you know,
8 doing food and laundry and keeping the house up, I also had
9 that sideline of building our family home going as well.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I also see that you're a
11 hobby farmer, right?

12 MS. POLACEK: That's correct, yes.

13 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. How did you get
14 started in that?

15 MS. POLACEK: Well, when we decided to build our
16 home, we had this kind of magical dream, and that was build
17 a small, little modern home, you know, a little bit out in
18 the country but not too far out, because, you know, my
19 husband still worked in Silicon Valley, and we thought it
20 would be just great to be able to have an orchard and a
21 small -- you know, I would say a small garden farm, not
22 that we were going to go and be going to markets and
23 selling our produce, but, you know, more to give it to
24 family and friends, and just the lifestyle we wanted to
25 live, and it has been a great lifestyle. There's just

1 nothing like being able to, you know, make your own, you
2 know, blackberry pie from your own ingredients, or, you
3 know, eat your own artichokes. It feels good.

4 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Is that where you have
5 a perspective on the agriculture?

6 MS. POLACEK: I would say, well, yes, in the sense
7 that you realize, "Wow. It is very hard to be an organic
8 farmer." I mean, you have pests, and wind, and mold, and
9 not enough water, and, you know, just as a personal
10 experience, yes, but I also see, because I live in this
11 area, and many of the people around us are small farmers
12 who are growing for maybe farmers' markets, that they
13 struggle. They really struggle to grow things, as well as
14 to make a profit.

15 So, you know, I appreciate that, and I actually
16 appreciate large farms, too, because they're feeding
17 America. People can put down, you know, these large farms
18 for using pesticides, which we do have around us, also, but
19 they are producing, and they're producing a lot of food for
20 people.

21 So I appreciate farmers in general, but I also see
22 the other side. We live in a very rural environment, with
23 the coast and marshes, and water is precious. So you have
24 to say, "Well, it has to be a balance between keeping our
25 rivers going, you know, and our lakes, but as well as

1 feeding people." So yes, it's brought a huge perspective
2 in that sense.

3 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. With the different
4 perspectives that you have, what groups of people would you
5 be able to reach in the various communities throughout
6 California?

7 MS. POLACEK: Well, one, I'm an intermediate
8 Spanish speaker. I've taught English as a second language,
9 so I could reach out to people in the Hispanic community.
10 As I said, just teaching, I've also worked with, you know,
11 people from the Polynesian group, just a variety of people,
12 different people of different socioeconomic backgrounds,
13 and I just feel like I'm open to be able to speak and
14 communicate, and understand what their needs are, and I
15 want to hear what their needs are, not that I know what
16 they need, but "What are your needs?," you know, and just
17 being open to that. Yes.

18 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, in your diversity
19 essay, you started out by saying you try not to see people
20 regarding their economic status, race, gender, age,
21 religion, et cetera, and treat them with respect, and you
22 talk about often the group needs and opinions are
23 different.

24 Thinking about that, in what way could their needs
25 and opinions differ, and how could that influence their

1 preference for representation?

2 MS. POLACEK: Yes. I think you hit the nail on the
3 head. I think, if we find groups that are living in an
4 area that is similar, and yet they have different ideas and
5 want their representation, you know, how do we draw the
6 line so that everyone is heard, and their ideas are heard,
7 and they're not split up?

8 I think we're going to have to, one, go through the
9 criteria, the very clear criteria from the California
10 Constitution, but then, I think, as a Commission, we also
11 need to be able to come to a consensus of, you know, maybe,
12 what takes preference. We have to come to some agreement
13 if something is conflicting, and I don't have all the
14 answers, but I do think that we could sit down as a
15 committee, as a Commission, and try and find some answers
16 so that people can have their voices heard. Does that
17 answer your question?

18 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: It does. It does. So
19 something else you talked about was being conscious of
20 possibly unrepresented stakeholders that should be part of
21 the process. How could the Commission identify those that
22 are missing from the room?

23 MS. POLACEK: Yes. I just spoke with one of the
24 other persons who answered it -- or asked a similar
25 question -- and I talked about going to kind of some of the

1 local advisory committees or the city councils, more than
2 the county, because, even in my own county, I mean, we have
3 such different groups of people. It really has to go to
4 the smaller groups.

5 One of the things when I was actually writing my
6 application that I was thinking about is that one time,
7 when I was driving through California -- I believe it was
8 California, in Northern California -- there was an area
9 where it looked like maybe Native Americans were living,
10 and it was incredibly impoverished. So I was thinking,
11 "Wow. You know, what's going on with this group? Are
12 their voices being heard?"

13 So, I mean, I think it's just really important that
14 we really look at all different parts of California, and
15 different areas where there may -- where voices
16 aren't -- you know, like the person before had mentioned
17 that they're not going to speak up for themselves.
18 Somebody has to maybe go to them and say, "Hey. What is
19 your opinion? What are your needs? You know, are you
20 getting your needs addressed?" So I think it's really
21 about really doing some deep outreach to these small
22 communities.

23 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Given your
24 various backgrounds, what do you think your role on the
25 Commission should be?

1 MS. POLACEK: I would say, one, I would like to
2 help with long-term project management, making sure that we
3 are moving along, as well as I do feel like I could be a
4 moderate voice. You know, I am a -- I vote as an
5 independent. I don't go down party lines. I really want
6 to look at issues, not, you know, partisanship.

7 I think I can make sure to -- I can't change other
8 people's behavior, but I can redirect conversation so that
9 we stay, you know, with the goal in mind, "What is the
10 goal? You know, fair elections, fair representation for
11 all people," so just redirecting it back to something that
12 might be getting into a political conversation, which I
13 just don't see why there should be that in the first place,
14 because we all want everyone to well here in California.

15 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. All right. So
16 the way it's set up, the first eight Commissioners are
17 selected randomly, and then they are tasked with selecting
18 the next six. What would you be looking for in those final
19 six if you were one of the first eight Commissioners?

20 MS. POLACEK: I would be looking for the skills,
21 the main skills, that all Commissioners need, first thing,
22 and that would be, you know, project management, your basic
23 math, data analysis, geographic skills, being able to
24 document your findings and your decision making, making
25 sure someone is a communicator, someone who can communicate

1 respectfully and professionally, someone who has a positive
2 attitude and really wants to get the job done, and someone
3 who's flexible and able to compromise.

4 Then, of course, I mean, you have to then -- once
5 you have these skills, I think you have to make sure you
6 have the five Democrats, five Republicans, and the four
7 non, but that would be secondary. I mean, obviously, you
8 have to make a decision by that, but that would not be the
9 first thing I would be looking at.

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. What would you
11 ultimately like to see the Commission accomplish?

12 MS. POLACEK: You know, I think it's actually sad
13 to see the history of the Commission, not this Commission,
14 but, rather, that the legislature was not able to put
15 politics aside so that people would have, you know, their
16 voices heard, and so I would really like to see that the
17 Commission just keeps in mind the goal, and that is to be
18 inclusive, and to get as many people's voices heard as
19 possible through representation, and that means drawing
20 lines, you know, that are inclusive of various groups and
21 communities.

22 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you so much.

23 Mr. Coe, I don't have any further questions at this
24 point.

25 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Ms. Dickison.

1 Mr. Belnap.

2 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Thank you, Ms. Polacek. Good
3 afternoon.

4 MS. POLACEK: Hi.

5 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: So thank you for continuing
6 to work through the technical difficulties we had earlier,
7 and for your continued interest in serving on the
8 Commission.

9 Going last here, one by one, all my prepared
10 questions have been taken and answered by you. One follow-
11 up question. Something I didn't quite understand is the
12 auction committee that you referred to that you've done
13 work for. What organization was the auction committee for?

14 MS. POLACEK: It was just for the school that my
15 children went to. Like many schools, they have an auction,
16 and what they do is, they have a party. That's one
17 element, and that's not the element that I really worked
18 on.

19 The element I worked on was solicitations, and what
20 that means is going out to the community to get gift
21 certificates, or a family would donate a vacation home, and
22 then inputting all of the information into a database, and
23 then we would, from there, like, make up kind of auction
24 paperwork that goes with that, and we'd also have an online
25 auction. So does that answer your question?

1 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: Yes, I understand now. So,
2 reading your application, and also hearing you today, you
3 seem like a very driven, goal-oriented individual. Where
4 do you think that comes from?

5 MS. POLACEK: You know, I think just my personality
6 is -- I don't actually know. I have to say, you know, I
7 have a degree in psychology and a degree in sociology, and
8 I'm a social studies teacher. I've always just had an
9 interest in people, and I just have an interest in
10 government, and government working for the people.

11 I really don't know where that came from. Maybe
12 it's just an inherent quality, but I definitely am
13 intrigued by people, yes, and culture, and, like I said,
14 one of my passions is traveling and seeing the world, and
15 enjoying all the different nuances of people.

16 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: All right. Thank you. I
17 know my time has been short, but I don't have any further
18 questions.

19 CHAIR COE: Okay. Mr. Dawson.

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

21 Ms. Polacek, I'm sorry. I'm going to have to
22 follow up on a couple things, so forgive me if I jump
23 around a little bit. In your response to a question from
24 Mr. Coe, and I think also from Ms. Dickison, you mentioned
25 that you saw yourself as enjoying the role of project

1 management. Do you have any professional experience in
2 project management?

3 MS. POLACEK: I don't have any professional
4 experience, only in that, as a teacher, you know, I have to
5 lay out nine months' worth of curriculum, and I have to
6 make sure that I make it through that curriculum so that,
7 the next year, the next teacher knows what they need to
8 teach, and they don't have to do any of my work.

9 Of course, there's all types of things that get in
10 the way, including what's happening right now, right,
11 stopping school, and even that, or not being in a physical
12 school. So that is my professional project management,
13 and, like I said, I would say the other big one was just
14 building our home.

15 I would also just like to add one thing
16 about -- one of the biggest things I learned from the
17 building of our home was that I think I'm usually a person
18 who's friendly and gets along with people, but I did learn
19 that I don't like conflict.

20 But I had to assert myself many times during that
21 project, and "assert" doesn't necessarily mean being mean
22 or nasty, but it does mean dealing with the problem. So,
23 you know, if something wasn't going right, I had to go and
24 say, "Hey. Why isn't this getting done? Here's the
25 problem. What's happening? Why isn't it getting done?"

1 So I would say that was one of the biggest
2 takeaways for me, that, you know, even though you need to
3 communicate respectfully, you also have to, you know, keep
4 your project moving, and make sure that you are putting
5 your buyer first, because something else is going to get in
6 the way, but, you know, you have to keep your project
7 moving.

8 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I see that you grew up in
9 the Bay Area, but you lived abroad as an adult. Do you
10 think that gives you a particular perspective that might be
11 informative to your work on the Commission, if selected?

12 MS. POLACEK: Well, one, I love California. I
13 appreciate it. We have an incredible landscape, diverse
14 landscape geographically, but also diversity in our
15 population, as well as our lifestyles. I mean, you have
16 the whole eastern half, which is very agricultural, or you
17 have, you know, Yosemite and Lake Tahoe, and then you have
18 the Bay Area, Los Angeles, San Diego, all types of areas
19 that are actually quite different. So I just would say I
20 really appreciate the diversity within California.

21 Then, living abroad, I do realize that, again, you
22 just have to appreciate each culture that you go to, and
23 try to, you know, represent the best of the United States,
24 as well as, you know, see what we can offer them, and see
25 what they can offer us.

1 So it was not always easy living abroad. I mean,
2 people talk about "What is culture shock?" Culture shock
3 is like "Wow. This is different. I don't do this,
4 normally." But you realize, "Okay. They do it
5 differently," and you learn to adapt. So, like I said, I
6 think it just opens your eyes when you go into a place,
7 especially when it's very different, and you can
8 appreciate, you know, the diversity of each location.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So, along those lines, it
10 seems from your application, if I'm following it correctly,
11 that you went to Spain after graduating from UCSB?

12 MS. POLACEK: That's correct, yes.

13 MR. DAWSON: And did you go there to teach English?
14 Was that the main reason you went to Spain?

15 MS. POLACEK: Yes. Yes, I did. Yes.

16 MR. DAWSON: Did you speak Spanish before you
17 arrived in Barcelona?

18 MS. POLACEK: I had beginning, moderate
19 Spanish-speaking skill, yes.

20 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

21 MS. POLACEK: I would say, in Barcelona, they don't
22 really speak Spanish. They speak a language called -- it's
23 called Catalan. So I didn't get a chance to really learn
24 how to speak Spanish until I moved to a more inland city of
25 Zaragoza, where they speak traditional Spanish.

1 MR. DAWSON: So, after your experience teaching
2 English in Spain, is that what brought you back to get your
3 credential?

4 MS. POLACEK: Absolutely. I just realized -- you
5 know, I really enjoyed my time there. It's a beautiful
6 country, such great people and great food, and just fun
7 culture, especially when you're in your 20s, but it wasn't
8 home. It was not home, and I'm like, "I could be teaching
9 English to people who are immigrants coming into our
10 country, or migrant workers who really need to be able to
11 assimilate, you know, into our culture." So, yes, that's
12 why. I just also found I really love teaching.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. In your response to, I
14 think it was, essay two, which is, let's see, about
15 impartiality, you wrote:

16 "I would add that sometimes there are
17 stakeholders that are not represented in
18 initial discussions, and that their
19 perspectives and interests are not
20 known."

21 Who are these stakeholders that you think are
22 likely not to be represented in the Commission's process?

23 MS. POLACEK: Well, as I think I mentioned earlier,
24 when I was traveling and I saw this location that I thought
25 was maybe Native American, or where Native Americans were

1 living, I just thought, "Wow. Why is this -- what's going
2 on here?," you know, and I thought, "Maybe that's a group
3 that they're not -- maybe they just don't know how, or the
4 leadership in that community is just not reaching out
5 enough," but I thought, you know, "Maybe that's a group
6 that needs to be reached out to," not for them to reach us,
7 but that we need to go to, because, clearly, they need some
8 resources.

9 That's just what went through my head, and so I was
10 thinking, "Okay. If I was on this Commission, are there
11 other groups like that?" I don't know, but I think it's
12 worth, you know, maybe scouring California and looking at
13 "What are some groups that really need some help?"

14 MR. DAWSON: And how would you do that?

15 MS. POLACEK: I don't have a full plan in place.
16 That's for sure. But my initial thought, as what I was
17 thinking about today, was going to some of the smaller
18 advisory committees.

19 You know, you could go to the county first, and ask
20 the county to say -- ask them, "What are some of the
21 smaller advisory committees that you have in your county,
22 or what are" -- you know, just going to the city councils
23 in that county, to be able to reach out, and to ask them to
24 reach out to their communities for information.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I see that you are

1 registered as "No party preference."

2 MS. POLACEK: That's true.

3 MR. DAWSON: As you know, the Commission will be
4 comprised of five Democrats, five Republicans, and four
5 unaligned. Do you think there's a particular role that the
6 unaligned Commissioners will play?

7 MS. POLACEK: Well, first I would say I understand
8 why you're taking the largest party and the second-largest
9 party, so that it looks like everybody is having a voice,
10 and it's not imbalanced politically, but I would also hope
11 that your Panel who are interviewing people are looking for
12 people who are flexible, that are not going to be, you
13 know, extreme in either party, because we do have to -- we
14 have one year, right, to finish this and get things done,
15 and I think it would be not beneficial to have one person,
16 or any people, that really couldn't agree with the majority
17 of the Commission.

18 The people who are in the non-larger-party group,
19 I'm hoping that, well, one, maybe they'll bring different
20 perspectives. Maybe they can see many perspectives -- I
21 think I am one of those kind of people -- and maybe be a
22 more moderate person. I think that's the role, is to
23 maybe, you know, be able to moderate both sides.

24 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I have no further
25 questions.

1 Madame Secretary, could we have a time check,
2 please.

3 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 30 minutes and 30
4 seconds remaining.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

6 Are there any follow-ups from any of the Panel
7 members?

8 CHAIR COE: Ms. Dickison, do you have any follow-up
9 questions?

10 VICE CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

11 CHAIR COE: Mr. Belnap?

12 PANEL MEMBER BELNAP: I do not.

13 CHAIR COE: I have no follow-up questions, Counsel.

14 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

15 Ms. Polacek, once again, thank you for working with
16 us through the technical issues. At this point, I would
17 like to offer you the opportunity to give a closing
18 statement to the Panel, if you wish.

19 MS. POLACEK: Okay. Yes. You know, actually, the
20 first time that I saw that this was open for an application
21 was on social media in my local area. I don't know if it
22 was on the Nextdoor app, or just through my local, you
23 know, social media, one of the groups, but I just was
24 like -- I just jumped on it, because I'm like, "Wow. I
25 have some time now." My kids are becoming very

1 independent. They don't need me as much, and I have an
2 interest.

3 I have an interest in people. I think I'm a fair
4 person. I think I can do long-term project managing, as
5 well as actually get something done. I think I can
6 communicate well with people, just on an interpersonal
7 level, as well as, as we talked about, reaching out to
8 other groups, whether it be socioeconomically, culturally,
9 politically, or in a different geographic landscape, as
10 well as, you know, just understanding even the economics of
11 what people need in different areas.

12 I think I have the education and the skills to do
13 the job, whether it be math or geography or data analysis.
14 I feel like I'm a positive person, and a person who wants
15 to get things done.

16 Anyway, I just have a lot of interest in it, and if
17 I'm the right person, I'm the right person. If I'm not,
18 I'm not, and it's been a great opportunity just to be able
19 to interview with you, and I really appreciate it, and I
20 also do appreciate the open transparency of the entire
21 process, and what will go forward and through the
22 Commission in the future. So thank you.

23 CHAIR COE: Thank you, Ms. Polacek, for taking the
24 time to interview with us today.

25 As this is our last interview today, and due to the

1 state holiday tomorrow, we will be in recess until -- the
2 next interview is at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1st. So
3 we'll be in recess until 8:59 on Wednesday, April 1st.

4 (Thereupon, the Applicant Review Panel meeting was
5 recessed at 4:16 p.m.)

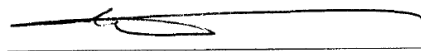
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REPORTER' S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 29th day of April, 2020.



PETER PETTY
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Notary Public

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MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367