

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

In the matter of:

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

TELEPHONIC

621 Capitol Mall, 10th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020

9:00 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Angela Dickison, Chair

Ben Belnap, Vice Chair

Ryan Coe, Panel Member

Staff Present

Christopher Dawson, Counsel

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II

Applicants

David Freedman

Manuel Gonzalez

Patricia Sinay

Caroline Farrell

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PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR DICKISON: I wanted to call the meeting of the Applicant Review Panel to order.

Is Mr. Coe on the line?

PANEL MEMBER COE: Yes, Ms. Dickison, I'm here.

CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. And I saw Mr. Belnap, so we have a quorum.

Just a few items before we start. For those in the room, please silence your cell phones. If you need to take a call, take it in the hall. The restrooms are out in the hall to the left. And in case of emergency, follow any instructions of the CSA staff.

I'd like to welcome Mr. Freedman, Mr. David Freedman, for his interview.

Good morning, Mr. Freedman.

MR. FREEDMAN: Good morning, Ms. Dickison.

CHAIR DICKISON: Right now I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Chris Dawson for the five standard questions.

MR. FREEDMAN: Thank you.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Freedman, I'm going to ask you five

1 standard questions that the Panel has requested
2 that each Applicant respond to. Are you ready,
3 sir?

4 MR. FREEDMAN: I am, sir. Thank you.

5 MR. DAWSON: First question: What skills
6 and attributes should all Commissioners possess?
7 What skills or competencies should the Commission
8 possess collectively? Of the skills, attributes
9 and competencies that each Commissioner should
10 possess, which do you possess? In summary, how
11 will you contribute to the success of the
12 Commission?

13 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, in terms of the
14 skills and competencies that the Commission should
15 possess collectively, I would say that the skills
16 possessed by those of us who worked on the Palm
17 Springs districting in 2018 and made it so
18 successful are equally applicable to the Commission
19 statewide. And those, mainly, would be the ability
20 to work together towards a common goal, analyze
21 data, respect diversity, listen to the community,
22 and be open to other views. Those are the core
23 values that we all practiced.

24 In addition, the Commissioners should be
25 able to work closely with staff, attorneys and

1 consultants, meet deadlines, very important here,
2 and manage complex projects, which, once again,
3 this is a very complex project.

4 In terms of the skills and competencies
5 that I personally possess, as reflected in my
6 supplemental application, the recommendation
7 letters, and public comments, I strongly believe
8 that I do have the skills and experience necessary
9 for service on the Commission. As reflected in
10 those materials, I'm very actively involved in
11 community projects, both governmental and
12 nonprofit, where we always work together as a group
13 to achieve our common goal.

14 I had a 30-year international legal
15 career, and then my community service in Palm
16 Springs for the past five years, and they have
17 focused on analyzing and explaining complex legal
18 rules and finding practical solutions that achieve
19 consensus, important here.

20 As a member of the Palm Springs
21 Sustainability Commission and Chair of the
22 Community Advisory Committee of Desert Community
23 Energy, which is our local community choice
24 aggregator that just launched today, I strongly
25 value the -- using comments of my colleagues on

1 these bodies and, of course, public comment for
2 those who appear before us as we work together on
3 achieving our policy goals for those bodies.

4 I've also worked very closely with staff,
5 consultants, and attorneys on those agencies,
6 drafting many ordinances that have been adopted by
7 Palm Springs City Council and large portions of DAP
8 (phonetic) reports that go to the City Council
9 where I work closely with staff.

10 In my legal career, I managed projects
11 involving dozens of countries at a time, at a time
12 when working on, always, on tight guidelines
13 assigned by our clients.

14 And in terms of how I'll contribute to the
15 success of the Commission, well, first of all, I'll
16 bring recent direct experience on the districting
17 process. In Palm Springs, for our City Council,
18 that included analyzing the raw census data using
19 the software tool that the City made available to
20 the public to draw maps. I participated actively
21 in the various community outreach sessions. And I
22 spoke at all of the public hearings the City
23 Council had, in accordance with the California
24 Voting Rights Act. They actually had more than was
25 required by the Act.

1 Second, while the Commission will have
2 legal counsel, such as yourself and outside counsel
3 as in 2010, my legal training and legal background
4 and training in constitutional law will help me
5 guide the other Commissioners on the legal
6 parameters of our work as set out in the U.S. and
7 California Constitutions, as well as the federal
8 Voting Rights Act.

9 Finally, as I just mentioned, I have
10 substantial experience in managing complex projects
11 on tight deadlines. I worked for Silicon Valley,
12 largely in banks, and they were very strict on
13 their deadlines. And I can also help with staff in
14 creating time and responsibility charts so we all
15 stay on track.

16 So all of my experience, both
17 professionally, and now in community service,
18 ramped me towards service on the Commission.

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

1 our own families.

2 What characteristics do you possess and
3 what characteristics should your fellow
4 Commissioners possess that will protect against
5 hyper-partisanship?

6 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, as a journalist,
7 which was my initial --

8 MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry, Mr. Freedman, can
9 I --

10 MR. FREEDMAN: Oh, sorry about that. Yes.

11 MR. DAWSON: There's a second part of the
12 question --

13 MR. FREEDMAN: Sorry about that. Yeah.

14 MR. DAWSON: -- several of these are
15 multipart.

16 MR. FREEDMAN: Sorry.

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

21 MR. FREEDMAN: Okay. Thank you. Sorry to
22 interrupt you.

23 MR. DAWSON: No problem.

24 MR. FREEDMAN: So as a journalist, which
25 was my university training and original profession,

1 I was trained at one of the best journalism schools
2 in the country to be impartial and fact based. And
3 as a lawyer, as you know, my ethical -- our ethical
4 duty is to represent our clients and set aside any
5 personal views that we may have on the matters.

6 And most recently I am a nonpartisan local
7 government appointee. I was appointed to the
8 Sustainability Commission nearly five years ago.
9 And my focus has always been there, service to my
10 community, independent of party affiliation and my
11 own personal views. And my supplemental
12 application has a couple of examples of where I set
13 aside my personal views on those matters. I've
14 voted for candidates in California and New York and
15 in France, where I'm a naturalized citizen, so I go
16 to vote there, where who I thought will serve --
17 would best serve the community, regardless of their
18 party.

19 So I've always been guided by strong
20 notions of integrity, fairness, and community
21 service. That's a theme that you'll see recurring
22 in nearly all of the recommendation letters and
23 public comments that were submitted on my behalf.
24 And I would expect the same of the other
25 Commissioners.

1 In terms of the second question, ensuring
2 that the work of the Commission is not seen as
3 polarized or hyper-partisan and to avoid
4 perceptions of bias, well, the Commissioners, we
5 represent people of the State of California, not
6 any political party or region, and that really
7 should be our guiding principle. The Voters FIRST
8 Act does set our core mission and that's to
9 identify communities of interest and draw district
10 boundaries that reflect those communities and not
11 incumbents and candidates or political parties.

12 And having done this in the Palm Springs
13 and Desert Water Agency districting procedures
14 quite recently, my focus always, well, on those
15 cases, was communities of interest, and those are
16 reflected here in Palm Springs by our neighborhood
17 organizations. So we have a strong notion of who
18 our communities are.

19 So I'll work with the other Commissioners,
20 staff and consultants, so that we stay within the
21 legal framework that I mentioned before. I'll
22 remain focused on communities of interest through
23 our data analysis and outreach, which is very
24 important, and check any partisan biases that we
25 have at the door.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

6 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, as you know, today is
7 census day, April 1. California has always been
8 challenged with hard-to-count communities. And
9 that is even more the case now with the suspension
10 of in-person outreach, which had been planned for
11 our area for a number of community-based
12 organizations that I've been working with and, I'm
13 sure, many other parts of California. While the
14 Commission, we have to use the data that's reported
15 by the U.S. Census Bureau, the greatest problem
16 that I think the Commission could encounter is that
17 we don't hear from underrepresented communities of
18 interest and they're just not included in the
19 determination of the district boundaries.

20 So my solution for that is the Commission
21 working with community organizations throughout the
22 state, must engage in a really very robust outreach
23 program to get and listen to community input at the
24 public hearings and through public comment so, at
25 the end of the process, Californians are confident

1 that their voices were heard and reflected in the
2 final district boundaries. And that's certainly
3 what was done in the 2010 process. I've read the
4 report of the Commissioners at that time. And we
5 need to do at least that, if not even more, given
6 the current challenge.

7 So that's also what we did in the Palm
8 Springs districting proceeding, which was very much
9 go out in the community. And the City did just a
10 fantastic job of holding community forums in
11 addition to the legally-required public hearings.
12 And that was successful because the lines that were
13 drawn based on community input resulted in the
14 election of the first member of the Hispanic
15 community elected to City Council in the City's 80-
16 year history.

17 So I know how this can be done. I was
18 involved in the process. And I think it can be
19 scaled statewide.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

21 Question four: If you are selected you
22 will be one of 14 members of the Commission which
23 is charged with working together to create maps of
24 the new districts.

25 Please describe a situation where you had

1 to work collaboratively with others on a project to
2 achieve a common goal?

3 MR. FREEDMAN: Well --

4 MR. DAWSON: Tell us --

5 MR. FREEDMAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

6 MR. DAWSON: There's --

7 MR. FREEDMAN: I keep (indiscernible).

8 MR. DAWSON: -- there's two subparts.

9 MR. FREEDMAN: Yeah.

10 MR. DAWSON: Tell us the goal of the
11 project, what your role in the group was, and how
12 the group worked through any conflicts that arose?
13 What lessons would you take from this group
14 experience to the Commission, if selected?

15 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, in -- we had a
16 bribery scandal involving a former mayor of the
17 City of Palm Springs who is currently under
18 indictment. So in 2016, the City Council, which
19 was elected in November 2015, created a new Ethics,
20 Transparency, and Governmental Reform Task Force of
21 roughly 45, or so, residents of Palm Springs to
22 research best practices in government and bring
23 forward proposals for consideration by council.

24 I was named by the council member in
25 charge of the Task Force to co-chair the

1 Transparency Committee, given my legal work which
2 included the First Amendment practice, as well as
3 my training as a journalist, that I've mentioned.
4 And the other members of the committee, we had a
5 total of six, one on our committee, and each of the
6 other committees had roughly the same.

7 But on my committee, we had a former
8 candidate for City Council, a bit of a gadfly, who
9 has won several times for Council, as well as a
10 member of a local group who strongly opposed the
11 City -- the City's vacation rental policies. And
12 they both had very committed and strong views on
13 various issues that I didn't personally share.

14 In fact, the council member who was in
15 charge of the process for the Task Force, who is
16 now our mayor, and back then Mayor Kors submitted a
17 public comment in my materials, he said that he had
18 named the City Council former candidate, candidate
19 to the Council, to my committee because he thought
20 that I would be best at keeping her on track, which
21 I did, through friendly persuasion.

22 And how we go through all of this, we had
23 about four-and-a-half months, roughly, to produce
24 our report, is we all set aside our personal views
25 and unrelated issues, and people did have them but

1 we set them aside. We really leaned heavily into
2 best practices from elsewhere in California. San
3 Francisco, in particular, has a very strong
4 ordinance and there's a lot of materials that
5 community organizations have published, First
6 Amendment Coalition, so we really did rely on those
7 materials. We worked collaboratively and we
8 listened to each through respectful in-person and
9 email discussions to achieve the common goal, which
10 was set by Council, and we knew what our mission
11 was.

12 So at the end, we produced a detailed
13 report with the 25-page Sunshine Ordinance. And
14 the City Council has adopted many of our
15 recommendations in its practices, and the City's
16 new Public Integrity Board.

17 So I consider that one of my sort of major
18 achievements here in Palm Springs where we really
19 did make lasting change and improve the City, a
20 challenge given the makeup of our committee, but we
21 worked through it and we, I think, did exactly what
22 the Council expected of us.

23 So what lessons? Be mindful of the common
24 goal, like I said, always as our focus. We had to
25 produce a report, that was clear, with policy

1 recommendations for Council. And open to differing
2 views. People came in with their perspectives.
3 One of the committee members also was -- had a
4 second home in Palm Springs but his main residence
5 was in the high desert, so, and he
6 had -- and he was on the school board there, so he
7 had his own views and there were very helpful. But
8 most important, we were patient with each other and
9 respectful.

10 And so that's how we got the job done,
11 even though we came in with strong views, with
12 different egos, but we had a goal and we achieved
13 our goal.

14 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

20 If you were selected as a Commissioner,
21 what skills and attributes will make you effective
22 at interacting with people from different
23 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?
24 What experiences have you had that will help you be
25 effective at understanding and appreciating people

1 and communities of different backgrounds and who
2 have a variety of perspectives?

3 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, first of all, I'm a
4 good listener. That's from my training as a
5 journalist. We ask questions but then we listen to
6 the answers that we got. And a corporate lawyer,
7 not a litigator, but a corporate lawyer doing deals
8 around the world, and that required listening to my
9 clients, as well as people sort of across the table
10 as we worked on our deals. And I am collaborative
11 by nature and that's why I didn't want to become a
12 litigator and that was a very conscious choice that
13 I made. And that's reflected in my community
14 service because we worked, you know, as a
15 collective group on these matters.

16 And even when I have leadership roles,
17 I've always ensured that the contributions, all the
18 members of the team are considered and valued. So
19 I've been a leader in many areas and in practice
20 groups when I was practicing, as I said, in my
21 community service, and so I've had those leadership
22 roles but I've always made sure that everyone is
23 heard and, as a member of the team, always, once
24 again, work collaboratively.

25 As far as the second part of your

1 question, effective in understanding and
2 appreciating people, well, I'm very comfortable in
3 a multicultural environment. I have lived in
4 different parts of the U.S. I grew up on the East
5 Coast. I went to school in the Chicago area. Then
6 my first job was the (indiscernible) Harold, and
7 here I am now in Southern California.

8 So in addition to being in different
9 regions of the United States, I lived in Paris for
10 15 years and became a French attorney and then
11 naturalized French citizen, so I went fully native.
12 I am fully bilingual in French. I started when I
13 was ten and continued throughout all of high
14 school, junior high school and high school. And I
15 have varying degrees of fluency in Spanish and
16 several other European languages, Spanish and
17 Italian in particular and notions of German and
18 Dutch and Portuguese, even a bit of Catalan here
19 and there if I'm going to Barcelona. And I've
20 traveled extensively throughout Europe.

21 As a partner in a law firm that has
22 offices in 46 countries, in every continent, Baker
23 McKenzie, I'm sure you've heard of it, and I work
24 closely with my colleagues in, really, all of those
25 offices, as well as countries where we didn't have

1 offices so we worked closely with local counsel.

2 I also spent many months in the Middle
3 East and North Africa, Tunisia, Qatar
4 (indiscernible) at the time, spent many time --
5 many months at a time there, and Kuwait, as well,
6 on client assignments. I ended up being the nice
7 Jewish boy who got sent to all of the Arab
8 countries and I thought that was great and I had a
9 wonderful time there.

10 And in all of that, what I discovered was
11 that being culturally sensitive to other legal
12 systems and backgrounds was even more important
13 than language skills to the success of my work, in
14 particular, working across the table from the
15 Qatari government on various projects. It really
16 was important to understand the culture of the
17 Persian Gulf. And I feel that we got that and
18 reflected it in our documents. And I think that we
19 were successful. And I was honored that they
20 actually asked me to come work for them after I was
21 finished. So I consider that, really, a compliment
22 that I sort of understood their culture.

23 And I was Chair for several years of the
24 Governance Committee of Organized Neighborhoods of
25 Palm Springs, which is a coalition of roughly 50

1 neighborhoods in our city that have distinct
2 geographic and demographic characteristics, and
3 that includes a number of economically
4 disadvantaged communities. I drafted bylaws that
5 ensure that each of our neighborhoods is treated
6 equally and has full representation on the
7 governing bodies of ONE Palm Springs.

8 And then, finally, as I mentioned,
9 (indiscernible) Sustainability Commission and the
10 DCE Community Advisory Committee, we had members of
11 those bodies, as well as members of the public, who
12 would appear before us and they have different
13 backgrounds.

14 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

15 At this point we will go to Panel
16 questions. Each Panel member will have 20 minutes
17 to ask his or her questions. We will start with
18 the Chair.

19 Ms. Dickison?

20 MR. FREEDMAN: Thank you.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning, Mr.
22 Freedman.

23 MR. FREEDMAN: Good morning.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So I wanted to
25 talk a little bit about your work with the

1 redistricting in the City of Palm Springs.

2 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: So from what I
4 understand, that occurred in 2016?

5 MR. FREEDMAN: No, 2018.

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Oh. Okay.

7 MR. FREEDMAN: As I'm sure you know, a
8 very large number of cities are being sued by a
9 firm based in Malibu, I believe their name is
10 Shenkman & Hughes, for violating the California
11 Voting Rights Act.

12 So in, I believe, March of 2018, the City
13 got what is, essentially, the standard demand
14 letter of redistrict. We had -- we were all --
15 just to step back for a second.

16 The City charter was a directly-elected
17 mayor and four at-large council members. The mayor
18 was not an executive member, presided over the
19 meetings, but served as a full member of City
20 Council. And our city manager has the executive
21 authority under our charter. But that was our
22 structure of a directly-elected citywide mayor and
23 four at-large council members.

24 So we -- I'm sorry?

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Nothing. Go ahead.

1 MR. FREEDMAN: Okay. So the City got the
2 demand letter from Shenkman & Hughes saying the
3 structure, the governing structure of City Council,
4 at the time, violated the California Voting Rights
5 Act. And they were going to sue if we didn't -- if
6 City Council didn't comply with the Voting Rights
7 Act. And our City Council immediately sprang into
8 action, saying we
9 believe -- we're not saying that we violated the
10 California Voting Rights Act, but we believe that
11 Palm Springs' values are reflected in the
12 California Voting Rights Act, so we are going to
13 immediately spring into action and do what's
14 necessary to make sure that our next City Council
15 elections are in -- are fully in districts.

16 So what the City did was -- so that -- and
17 they adopted, really within weeks of getting that
18 letter, a statement of principles. And I reflected
19 those in my supplemental application, I copied from
20 those. And they also created a California Voting
21 Rights Act Working Group consisting of various
22 representatives of the community.

23 And so the City went out, did a very large
24 number of public workshops, and did something that
25 I'm not sure other cities had done, at least to the

1 extent that we have, is literally open up, open
2 source, give to everyone who wanted it all of the
3 raw census data and a software program that's used,
4 probably the same, that's used by the demographers.
5 We worked with NDC, in our case, to say, here it
6 is. Draw your own map. These are the requirements
7 under the California Voting Rights Act and the
8 federal Voting Rights Act and the Commission. This
9 is how we define communities of interest. There
10 were workshops where we went in and you're all put
11 in front of laptop computers and the consultants
12 from NDC and the city clerk were there and say,
13 okay, this is how you do the software.

14 So the City went just completely above and
15 beyond any call of duty under the CVRA and said,
16 dear residents of Palm Springs, we really want to
17 hear from you.

18 So I and many others went and sort of drew
19 maps. I kind of called it Candy Crush for nerds.
20 I love maps. My mother said that I taught myself
21 to read maps. And I can get lost in Google Maps
22 all the time. And I'm a bit of a transit geek, so
23 I actually researched the Sacramento Transit sort
24 of network, assuming that I was going to go there.
25 So I love maps. So this was sort of pure heaven

1 for me.

2 And I worked and I drew various maps. We
3 were asked to do both a five-district map, assuming
4 that all members of the Council would be directly,
5 you know, in districts and elected by their
6 districts, as well as a potential that City Council
7 considered of continuing to have a citywide
8 directly-elected mayor and then four districts. So
9 we had to four -- two maps, one with four districts
10 and one with five. And, once again, make sure that
11 they all respected the, you know, boundaries that,
12 of course, the Commission has of being contiguous
13 and same amounts of population.

14 And, also, the whole basis of the lawsuit
15 was you violated the California Voting Rights Act
16 by allegedly suppressing voting, you know, the
17 minority voting. So it was clear that the City,
18 and this was also in the objectives Council fixed,
19 there really was a strong effort to create a
20 majority-minority district.

21 And so what I did was I drew maps that
22 reflected that citywide. I participated in all of
23 the public hearings, as I mentioned, nearly all of
24 the community outreach where people would, you
25 know, gather and look at the maps and talk to each

1 other, and it was a bit of an informal process, and
2 discuss with the Council members and our CVRA
3 Citizens Working Group.

4 And then I submitted a map. And then
5 there was a representative of the community in the
6 northern part of town who worked with the CVRA and
7 he submitted the map -- a map. And the net result,
8 his map created a majority-minority district
9 contiguous, interesting, because it's contiguous by
10 land but there's a bunch of sand in the middle.
11 You can't get from one part of the district to
12 another by car, except by driving through several
13 other districts, but it is contiguous by land.

14 And the very interesting feature that we
15 saw was, and I mentioned this in our
16 application -- my application, was that we had the
17 center of town, what we call section 14, which is
18 the core of our tribal origins of Palm Springs, the
19 City, in 1962, I believe, went and sort of razed
20 that whole area and the residents were all
21 dispersed to the edges of town.

22 And so what was determined through the
23 public comment was that even though this is the
24 most -- the public comment and public outreach --
25 this is the most geographically spread out district

1 in the City, it's nine miles from sort of one end
2 to the other, the people in that district, that's
3 what they wanted because it brought together the
4 people, many who are still alive, again in the
5 '60s, or their children certainly, who had been
6 together. And they remained together and connected
7 and so they wanted that as your district. And you
8 only get there if you are out in the community and
9 listening to the community.

10 And as I said, it was successful because
11 that became our majority-minority district by
12 citizen voting age population. We had the data and
13 that was one of the goals. And a Latina, young
14 Latina who grew up in Palm Springs, was elected as
15 our City Council member --

16 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

17 MR. FREEDMAN: -- in 2019.

18 Just quickly, and I know I've sort of
19 talked about process because that's important, my
20 role, so I drew maps. And the end result is that
21 the map drawn by the individual from the north part
22 of Palm Springs was combined with my map for the
23 south part of Palm Springs to become the final city
24 map. I was very sort of hopeful in what I thought
25 were the communities of interest in my part of town

1 and defended that in the public hearing. And for
2 that part of the City, that was the ultimate map
3 that was adopted.

4 And I did kind of the same thing, also,
5 with our water agency which began the process last
6 year.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So you were
8 participating as a member of the public then?

9 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Okay. Okay.

11 MR. FREEDMAN: As a member of the public.
12 But at the time, I was the Chair of the Governance
13 Committee of ONE Palm Springs and not officially,
14 but essentially, as the point person was -- my
15 focus on the maps was to make sure that our
16 neighborhood organizations, their boundaries, which
17 had been set by the City, were not -- they were not
18 divided up, except when strictly necessary. And so
19 that was one of my core focuses, of really
20 understanding our communities based on our
21 neighborhood organization boundaries and making
22 sure that the maps that I drew and the public input
23 that I provided reflected our -- the neighborhood
24 organization boundaries, but also the communities,
25 kind of the coalition of neighborhoods, that

1 informally had developed, and those reflected the
2 communities of interest that would form a Council
3 district.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: Did you identify any
5 communities of interest that weren't -- that you
6 weren't already aware of?

7 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes, in the sense that I
8 was not personally aware of it because I'm a
9 recent, well, 2015 full-time -- 2014 would be full-
10 time to Palm Springs, the first year I was working,
11 so I wasn't involved in the community.

12 There is a neighborhood that's called
13 Demuth Park but its older name was the Veterans
14 Tract. And it turns out that there's a very
15 substantial Filipino community in that area, and so
16 I was not aware of that. I know the neighborhood
17 but was not aware of that sort of part of its
18 history. And, once again, the community did
19 outreach because it went out to the community.
20 There's a community organization for the Filipino
21 community and there was very specific outreach to
22 that community to make sure that they were heard
23 and represented.

24 So I wasn't personally aware of it. But,
25 once again, credit to the City, that they went out

1 and identified a community that has not been vocal,
2 that we don't hear from these people if they're not
3 represented in any of the City's boards or
4 commissions. They're not making public comment but
5 they represent a large portion of that specific
6 neighborhood. And the City went out and did do
7 outreach to that.

8 So news to me but the City went out and
9 did that.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So you talked
11 about the outreach to the different communities.
12 What did you learn from this that would help with
13 the Commission's outreach in other regions of the
14 state and maybe identify those communities that
15 might not be participating?

16 MR. FREEDMAN: It was very much a bottom-
17 up as a -- as opposed to a top-down process,
18 perhaps a little more challenging to scale on a
19 statewide level, but here's what we did, the City
20 did, is identify all of the community-based
21 organizations and work with them.

22 And so the outreach was, okay, how do we,
23 you know, how do we get to all of the members of
24 the community where this -- you know, so the
25 communities of interest, particularly our

1 neighborhood organizations, but there are other
2 communities' organizations that are based, and so
3 the City worked very closely with them to identify,
4 you know, to help them rely on them to get their
5 input on who are your communities?

6 And so that was somewhat easier for barely
7 50,000 persons, the residents of the City. But
8 statewide, how do you do it is these organizations
9 exist statewide. And DCE, our committee choice
10 aggregator, we're working with one called Lift to
11 Rise. And I've also worked with another one based
12 on the east part of the Coachella Valley called
13 Alianza. And my friend, Baron Newkirk, who was the
14 one who actually suggested to me a year ago that I
15 apply for the Commission, he also submitted a
16 public comment, he's their Communications Director.
17 And so the goal is to go and find all of those
18 community organizations and work with them.

19 How do you even find the community
20 organizations? In addition to city councils, the
21 various associations of governments are very useful
22 here. We have, in our area, the Coachella Valley
23 Association of Governments. And I'm sure, because
24 they're statewide, they exist. And so they'll have
25 a very good idea of who those sort of community

1 organizers are and that's where you need to go.
2 And so the community outreach is getting out to
3 them, obviously, in various languages, Spanish and
4 other, you know, languages that are spoken
5 throughout the state, and make sure that we get the
6 people in and get their input.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

8 So in your discussion, you mentioned that
9 Palm Springs has a strong network of neighborhood
10 organizations.

11 MR. FREEDMAN: Um-hmm.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: So neighborhoods, cities,
13 counties, and communities of interest are all on
14 the same level as far as prioritization in the
15 regulations.

16 So given that, how would you determine on
17 drawing the lines if you have, maybe, neighborhoods
18 or cities, counties, or communities of interest
19 that are in conflict with one another?

20 MR. FREEDMAN: The -- well, I would
21 probably say there's a sort of natural -- what we
22 saw was that there were natural communities of
23 interest that formed somewhat independently of
24 artificial lines while we did -- and that was a
25 core part of reflecting our neighborhood

1 organizations that meet -- to meet to ensure not to
2 do that. What we found was that there are various
3 communities that can be identified so that you
4 have, you know, natural boundaries that could be
5 created, of course, with the mountains here in our
6 area, or the Salton Sea, that will help do that, so
7 that that will naturally create that.

8 So I would probably prioritize more the
9 communities. And it's, once again, based on input
10 from the people. As I said, this is -- this is a
11 bottom-up process, so you listen.

12 What -- who are the communities of interest that
13 you identify with? I identify with certain parts
14 of Riverside County more strongly than I identify
15 to other parts of Riverside County, maybe that's
16 because I don't sort of go over the mountain. But
17 that's the thing, the thing that you have to talk
18 about, talk to get in and get and get the input
19 from the people.

20 So I think the prioritization is largely
21 based on input from the people. Who are the
22 communities that you want to be allied with to form
23 a, you know, a district, district boundary, and the
24 four districts that the Commission has to set?

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

1 MS. PELLMAN: We have 4 minutes, 32
2 seconds remaining.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

4 So the way that the Commission is selected
5 is the first eight Commissioners are selected
6 randomly and then they will be selecting the next
7 six.

8 If you were one of the first eight, what
9 would you be looking for in those other six
10 Commissioners?

11 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, being a lawyer, my
12 first sort of reaction is to look at the statute.
13 And as you know, Government Code, it's, I think,
14 section 8252(g), and I looked at it last night,
15 does have some criteria, in particular about making
16 sure that the other Commissioners reflect the
17 diversity of the state of California, so you have
18 to start with the legal framework.

19 But beyond that it's making sure that all
20 communities, or as many communities as possible,
21 given that there are only 14 members of the
22 Commission, have a seat at the table. So I would
23 look at who is not among the first eight members
24 and really should be, both the legal text and sort
25 of the spirit and framework of why we are there?

1 And, also, are there -- so that -- look at that in
2 terms of making sure that all communities in all
3 sort of general areas are reflected on the
4 Commission.

5 But, also, there may be skill sets. And
6 so if there's folks who have a particular data
7 crunching sort of expertise or other sort of
8 election experience, such as myself in districting,
9 or others, so that we have all of the relevant
10 skill sets there.

11 Not everybody -- you know, we have this
12 sort of collective, the individual, but we have to
13 make sure that the collective competencies, as in
14 the first question, part of the standard questions,
15 are reflected.

16 So those would be my goals. We start with
17 the requirement of the statute. And then we look
18 at who isn't at the table in terms of communities
19 represented. And what skill sets do we need to
20 make sure that we have all of the collective skill
21 sets?

22 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

23 Can I get a time check?

24 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 2 minutes, 24
25 seconds remaining.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

2 So you mentioned that you've seen, in your
3 diversity essay, you've seen the importance of
4 representation when Palm Springs elected an all
5 LGBT City Council in 2017.

6 Could the Commission be successful if it
7 was comprised primarily of one group?

8 MR. FREEDMAN: No, I don't think so, and I
9 don't think that's what -- certainly, that's not
10 what the statute is there. It was feeling that I
11 was represented and that this was something that
12 had not been done elsewhere in the city, and so I
13 felt proud in that respect.

14 But I want to sort of reflect the way I
15 felt in -- last year after a Latina had been
16 elected. And it was -- and I didn't know that
17 because I submitted the application in September
18 and the election was, of course, in November, is
19 that her first -- are you still there? I just got
20 a note saying, "Sorry about that, the internet
21 connection is stable" -- she -- it was the
22 importance of making sure that other communities
23 were represented. So she, when she was sworn in,
24 her first words are in Spanish. And while I
25 understand Spanish very well, and so I followed

1 exactly what she was saying, I absolutely
2 understood the notion of feeling represented, that
3 you have a seat at the table, that someone from
4 your community is there.

5 And so I -- it's important for what that
6 meant in a politically-challenged period for the
7 LGBT community to have an all-LGBT City Council.
8 But Palm Springs has absolutely moved beyond that.
9 We've been there. We've done that. Our goal was
10 not -- that was not our goal and it was important
11 to have people from different backgrounds.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you. All
13 right.

14 So next up will be Mr. Coe.

15 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Actually, I
16 think it's Mr. Belnap.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Oh, Mr. Belnap.

18 MR. DAWSON: Yeah.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: I apologize.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

21 Good morning, Mr. Freedman. In your
22 application, you indicated that you researched and
23 developed a deep understanding of communities of
24 interest, how they're -- how these are defined.

25 In its simplest terms, what is a community

1 of interest and how can you confirm that one
2 exists?

3 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, there are various
4 statutes that are, you know, on the guidance of
5 community of interest, is that it's people because
6 of their historical or, you know, nature of how
7 they're working together are believed that they
8 have a -- share a common goal. And so that can be
9 -- you know, there are various definitions about,
10 you know, boundaries, you know, hard boundaries,
11 such as mountains or, you know, infrastructure
12 boundaries and things like that. But the community
13 of interest is essentially a group of people who,
14 together, feel that they should work together and
15 be reflected in a district.

16 And how do you determine that that exists?
17 That's how we got to our process and maps in Palm
18 Springs is we went out in the community and
19 listened and heard where the people were there.

20 So, as I said, we're going to have the
21 data to draw the maps. There are some, you know,
22 clearly some standards that will be applied. But
23 it's based largely on the -- well, it's going to be
24 based, in particular, on the confirmation from the
25 public input.

1 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So going away from the
2 simplest terms, what makes defining and finding a
3 community of interest complex in certain
4 circumstances?

5 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, you could have
6 different communities that -- you can have -- as I
7 said, it's -- where it gets to be complex is that -
8 - and is this is something, also, that we saw in
9 Palm Springs, is how do you -- if there were people
10 who were originally grouped together but are no
11 longer grouped together, there could be competing
12 communities in terms of -- and this is something,
13 because we're working on both federal and state
14 districts, there could be communities that may have
15 a common shared view or outlook for a federal issue
16 that might have different -- a different view on
17 state issues. So that's one of the complexities of
18 a statewide districting as both federal and state
19 districts that are involved.

20 And, obviously, the data themselves are
21 complex from the census data. Hopefully, they will
22 be good data. But you have to work with that to
23 see -- to sort of see what patterns are there. And
24 I and the others spent a lot of time, just at the
25 level of Palm Springs, drawing the maps to make

1 sure that we appropriately identified our
2 communities. And people had different views about
3 who the communities are. And those differing
4 views, eventually, were reconciled by City Council.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

6 So how well do you think the open-source
7 method of community engagement that you described
8 that Palm Springs used, would work for statewide
9 redistricting?

10 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I'm not sure whether
11 you're able to give the entire, you know, state,
12 you know, data to people. There may be groups that
13 are able to do that. Obviously, individuals, you
14 know, we were at our, I think, our limits just
15 doing it on the citywide. I had not had any
16 training on this issue and so I spent a lot of time
17 mastering the software.

18 I do think it's important. There very
19 well may be, you know, statewide interest groups
20 who are able to do that. So I do think that it's
21 important, if it's possible to make the software
22 available statewide, and then encourage maps to be
23 submitted by the public. I did not see that that
24 was done in the 2010 process but it was a core part
25 of our work here in Palm Springs.

1 So I do think that it would be useful to
2 make the data available and encourage people to
3 submit maps and, potentially, have some training
4 sessions online -- we're all becoming experts of
5 Zoom -- an online training session for people to
6 know how to do that, so that they can draw their
7 maps.

8 It's, once again, a way of getting
9 community input and it worked very well in Palm
10 Springs.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

12 In your application, you describe how you
13 have long been an active supporter of LGBTQ rights.

14 Does the Commission have a role in
15 protecting LBGTQ rights? If so, what is that role
16 and how would you help the Commission fulfill that
17 role?

18 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I would sort of say
19 is that the role of the Commission is to make sure
20 that all communities are represented and feel that
21 they have a seat at the table. There is no
22 information in data about sort of LGBT rights. I
23 think we all know where certain sort of, you know,
24 neighborhoods with a larger LGBT population may
25 exist. But none of those are, you know, large

1 enough to form, necessarily, a, you know, a
2 district boundary.

3 So the role, I think, is a more general
4 one, is to make sure that everyone feels that they
5 are treated fairly. And that's an important, sort
6 of, to be sort of -- you know, equality is a notion
7 that's important to the LGBT community but other,
8 really, all other sort of communities in that
9 respect, to feel that people are treated equal and
10 fairly and that their voices are heard.

11 There's a saying in the LGBT activist
12 communities, and I'm sure in other activists
13 communities, "Nothing about us without us."

14 So the way that the Commission protects
15 LGBT rights, as it protects rights of other
16 communities, is to make sure that we have their
17 input, that they are heard, that they feel that
18 they are reflected in the Commission, whether it's
19 an LGBT member or not but, in particular, that
20 their voices were heard.

21 And so that, I think, is the way the
22 Commission really protects all minority rights.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.

24 So please describe what Organized
25 Neighborhoods of Palm Springs, or sometimes in your

1 application you call it ONE-PS --

2 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: -- is and does and
4 what your work was in getting that nonprofit set
5 up?

6 MR. FREEDMAN: So it started, actually, in
7 several neighborhoods near the center in our town
8 in our -- what would otherwise be our tourism
9 district back in the late '90s because they were
10 getting a lot of noise from the hotels on the edge
11 of downtown, and so they started building a
12 coalition. And some of the other neighborhoods
13 also had sort of neighborhood groups.

14 That developed into eight neighborhoods.
15 And at that point the city decided to create a
16 framework, one of the city council members, so the
17 city passed an ordinance in 2005 that recognized
18 the structure. It's somewhat different than the
19 Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils which are part of
20 the government and part of the city charter. These
21 are residents. They are not in any way appointed
22 by the city. There are no city funds, other than a
23 little bit of help of the mailing. But there's a
24 legal framework that was created.

25 Sort of organically, these neighborhoods

1 would get together and form and then be recognized
2 by the city. When I became involved in 2015, we
3 were still working under bylaws from 2011 and the
4 original ordinance from 2005, when there were about
5 eight or ten neighborhood organizations, and that
6 did not work anymore. We were pushing 40 and, I
7 believe, there are now 48.

8 So the chairperson who was elected to
9 ONE-PS starting in 2015 created a Governance
10 Committee and I was one of the original members of
11 that. That chairperson now is Council Member
12 Middleton. And she was one of the ones who
13 submitted a recommendation letter.

14 So one of our roles, our first duty, was
15 to update the bylaws. And my corporate experience
16 was very much oriented towards bylaws, so I drafted
17 bylaws to make sure that, you know, all of the
18 neighborhoods were treated equally because there
19 were some challenges there, we had to incorporate
20 because we were raising funds, and get registered
21 with the IRS and the FTB and the Secretary of
22 State's office, so I did all of that work for it,
23 as well as the constituent neighborhood
24 organizations.

25 And then sort of the next, once we got our

1 internal house in order, the next process was to
2 work with city council and to streamline the
3 ordinance because it had a number of provisions
4 that simply hadn't gone into effect, and the group
5 had grown up, and so it was able to handle a number
6 of areas where the city was responsible. And we
7 took over in certain areas, working with the city,
8 those responsibilities.

9 So I drafted the ordinance, worked closely
10 with city council, and that was adopted by the city
11 council unanimously in January 2018.

12 So those were my major objectives. It was
13 very much nitty-gritty legal work and which was
14 something I was comfortable with but really got the
15 organization on the structural footing that was
16 necessary to accomplish it.

17 And what ONE-PS does, as I've said, is a
18 coalition of the 50 or so neighborhood
19 organizations. And it really serves as a sounding
20 board for the neighborhoods. City manager, at
21 least one of the city council members, fire chief,
22 police chief, and other members of the city staff
23 come and speak to the group, there's a meeting
24 every month, and share information and get input.
25 And ONE-PS develops recommendations for public

1 policy. And so that's one of its core functions,
2 is to get together, look at issues, such as a noise
3 ordinance that was supposed to be on a city council
4 agenda last week, obviously, deferred, that ONE-PS
5 has been very much involved with.

6 And that goes back to our original, how
7 the group was created.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

9 Ms. Dickison, I have no further questions.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.

11 Mr. Coe?

12 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 Good morning, Mr. Freedman. Can you hear
14 me okay?

15 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes, I can. Thank you,
16 sir.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: Great. Many of my
18 questions have been addressed already, either by
19 you or by my colleagues, but I do want to talk a
20 little bit more about communities of interest. It
21 has been talked about a lot here.

22 In some of your discussions this morning
23 and in your essays you referred -- you talked about
24 the Palm Springs model of identifying communities
25 of interest. And I think you mentioned earlier

1 that you thought it could be scaled to a statewide
2 perspective.

3 How would you scale this model you used
4 locally to a statewide perspective?

5 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, it's kind of the way
6 that I mentioned before, is that you need to rely
7 at a large degree on the input of the community and
8 that was important. But in -- and so the community
9 outreach is a large part of the scaling.

10 But it's also necessary, I think, to --
11 you know, you have to start with somewhere, is to
12 see where people want -- you know, where people
13 sort of naturally have developed and have
14 congregated. And I think one of the -- because
15 we're going to start with the maps, is to look at
16 the census data and take a hard look. That's where
17 you have to start is you have to start with the
18 census data. And that allowed us to make at least
19 a rough cut. The census data, at least that we
20 had, presumably the same, does look at income
21 levels. And there's, obviously, ACS data that went
22 along with that, income levels and housing stock
23 and things like that. So that's how I think we
24 need to look at that.

25 It will be a lot of work with the

1 consultants. I assume there will be a demographic
2 consultant that's retained, also, for the City to
3 help sort of start that process. And so that's --
4 the scaling is to look at the factors that we
5 looked at in Palm Springs in terms of the
6 communities. And, once again, relying on these
7 neighborhood organizations, or looking at that and
8 getting data from the various cities and counties,
9 I think, is a very, very good start and even before
10 you get to the input, I think that could be done.
11 You go to Los Angeles. Obviously, it has --
12 there's an entire city with neighborhood councils.
13 San Francisco, you know, has very sort of
14 delineated neighborhoods. I'm sure Sacramento,
15 which I don't know quite that well, does. And so
16 that's really the start.

17 Once again, it is bottom-up. It's a lot
18 more work at a statewide level. But I think that's
19 the framework that we used.

20 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your essay, you
21 mentioned a specific Native American tribe as a
22 community of interest in the local Palm Springs
23 area and that identifying this community
24 geographically is more difficult because of various
25 migration that has occurred that caused them to

1 spread out. You indicated that you would bring
2 this perspective to the Commission when identifying
3 this particular community of interest.

4 Do you think this perspective and
5 understanding can help you identify other
6 communities of interest across the state,
7 especially those that may be less obvious and
8 harder to identify?

9 MR. FREEDMAN: I think so. And that's, I
10 think, the question. Before it was about sort of
11 the challenges, where is that complex? I don't
12 know. Well, I know San Francisco, I know
13 historically that there have been many large
14 African-American communities, as an example, that
15 are no longer within, for various reasons, no
16 longer living within the city boundaries of San
17 Francisco but have dispersed to other areas and
18 parts of the Bay Area.

19 And that's the kind of research that, I
20 think, that should be done and I think can be done
21 with the aid of community-based organizations that
22 you have, you know, that exist throughout the
23 state.

24 So I think that's one of the challenges,
25 is to identify the not necessarily obvious

1 communities of interest. And that's, as I said,
2 that's what we did. These people, people who live
3 together within what we call Section 14, a one-mile
4 square -- one square mile area in the center of
5 town, were literally exiled to the edges of town.
6 And the research and the community input brought
7 those people together in a council district.

8 So that's the perspective that I have in
9 Palm Springs. The members of the tribe, of course,
10 are other areas of, you know, community of
11 interest. And, of course, this history of
12 California, as they're largely spread out. Some
13 are living in reservations and that's the case in
14 certain parts of our Coachella Valley. But others
15 are not in the reservation, so they live off the
16 reservation. Palm Springs is a challenge in
17 particular because of our checkerboard pattern of
18 the reservation.

19 So that's another area of community
20 interest that we really need to dig down and work
21 with BIA, particularly, for data on the Native
22 American communities throughout the state. And
23 that is a statewide issue.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

25 Some communities, and you may have

1 experienced this in your work with or your
2 participation in the local redistricting, some
3 communities are less engaged or shy away from
4 government participation for a variety of different
5 reasons.

6 How would you go about or how did the Palm
7 Springs effort go about reaching out to those
8 communities that may not be generally engaged, may
9 shy away from participation, and make them feel
10 comfortable to come forward and share their
11 perspective?

12 MR. FREEDMAN: Thank you. That was a core
13 part of the work that was done here. It was going
14 out in the community, in many cases door to door,
15 and I realize that may be a challenge statewide.
16 But, once again, you can work with community
17 organizations to get people to know about the
18 process, to hear about why it's so important to
19 them that they get their input, that's reflected,
20 so that they are then represented.

21 And so what we did in Palm Springs, we,
22 meaning the city and, in particular, the city
23 clerk, was to go out to these communities, hired a
24 consultant -- he's Mexican American, fully
25 bilingual in Spanish, he, meaning the city

1 clerk -- but he also hired a specific outreach
2 consultant on the city's budget to go out into the
3 community, do the door-to-door engagement, and work
4 with communities.

5 And our council member, who was elected
6 from that community, she was part of the Citizens
7 Voting Rights Act, California Voting Rights Act
8 Citizens Working Group. She was part of that door-
9 to-door and speaking Spanish, of course, to the
10 people. And she said, "You know, I've lived in
11 this city all of my life. This is the first time
12 that anybody has ever asked my opinion."

13 So scaling is an issue. I very much
14 recognize that. But you have to go out into the
15 community, the Filipino community organization I
16 said was a good example that the city also did, and
17 outreach to that community, which happened to be
18 geographically concentrated in this one
19 neighborhood, so that made it a little easier,
20 languages, obviously, Spanish, but other languages,
21 and getting people comfortable is working with them
22 by people who are also part of their community
23 coming to talk to them and say, I would really like
24 for you to participate and this is why it's
25 important to participate and this is how I can

1 help.

2 And I mentioned Alianza, particularly in
3 the east valley, and that's one of the areas that
4 they are very much involved in, of getting people
5 in the Salton Sea who have incredible challenges
6 right now in terms of the pollution that's
7 developed because of the end-of-the-water inflows,
8 of getting those people out. They're doing videos,
9 so their voice is in Spanish and English, and their
10 voices are heard.

11 So you work with those community
12 organizations and they're able to identify people
13 and make them comfortable to come and give that
14 input.

15 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

16 I want to go back to a topic you were
17 discussing with Ms. Dickison earlier and that was
18 the -- actually, I think you may have discussed it
19 with both other Panelists, but the mapping that was
20 provided to the public, the software, in order to
21 draw their own districts and provide that -- those
22 suggestions.

23 I want to get some clarification because
24 what I thought I heard was when that was made
25 available to the public, there were already

1 definitions of communities of interest. So if I or
2 somebody were to go log in, try to use the
3 software, there were already predetermined
4 communities of interest definitions on there.

5 MR. FREEDMAN: No.

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: Is that true or am I
7 misunderstanding that?

8 MR. FREEDMAN: That is not the case. The
9 city, when they -- when the city released the
10 software, the city clerk, working closely with the
11 city attorney and outside city counsel at the time,
12 developed, literally, a one-pager that gave those
13 guidelines.

14 So it was an open software, so you could
15 submit a map if you wanted to. You could submit a
16 map that was not contiguous and not balanced in
17 terms of population. So the software was not
18 preprogrammed. You did what you wanted to do with
19 the software and you could draw whatever map if you
20 want to do that, except in the case that as you
21 drew the software, because it was linked to the
22 underlying -- drew the map, it was linked to the
23 census data, so you actually saw, okay, you have to
24 take out this census flaw because you have too many
25 people in this district and not enough people in

1 the adjacent district.

2 So it was not in the sense that there was
3 anything preprogrammed, but you had all of the
4 census data to guide you. And you were able to
5 see, literally, census bloc by census bloc, okay,
6 what is the minority population? In this district,
7 what minorities, Hispanic American, Asian American,
8 African American, et cetera, non-Hispanic White?
9 And so you were able to do that on a real-time
10 basis.

11 So you drew the map by -- luckily I have
12 two screens, so I was able to sort of look at that
13 and see exactly, you know, who I was putting into
14 each district. Also, ages and housing stock, all
15 of that was there, so we had all of the underlying
16 data, and then you drew your map based on that.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

18 You mentioned that you lived in Paris for
19 15 years. You became a naturalized citizen of
20 France.

21 Do you think that your experience and your
22 perspective as becoming a naturalized citizen in
23 another country could be a helpful perspective on
24 this Commission?

25 MR. FREEDMAN: I think it's helpful

1 because -- both in terms of becoming a citizen, but
2 also working and traveling abroad as much as I did.
3 It's all about being open to different cultures and
4 different perspectives.

5 The way I explain to people who said,
6 well, what are you doing here, including in my
7 rather pointed interview when I went for my
8 naturalization, is -- and I'll give it to you in
9 English as opposed to French, of course it was in
10 French -- I was an American by birth and French by
11 choice. And so that meant that I very much
12 identified, that I understood French culture, that
13 I felt part of French culture, and I was able to
14 sort of deal with being part of another country and
15 another culture.

16 So that perspective of being open, I
17 think, is very important to the Commission. And as
18 I said, particularly my experience in the Persian
19 Gulf area was critical to being successful. And
20 coming in as, essentially, a Jewish New Yorker from
21 the East Coast but then, you know, living in New
22 York for my original work and school, and being
23 fully welcomed in a very different environment in
24 the Middle East.

25 So that's the perspective that I would

1 bring, is it's all -- it's about listening and
2 being respectful and understanding of other
3 cultures. And California is, you know, it is a
4 nation state. We have close to 40 million people
5 from everywhere around the world who speak all of
6 these languages. And so it is, in a way, a
7 somewhat smaller version of the world that I
8 experienced in my work and travel. And that's the
9 experience that I would bring to the Commission.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

11 With all of your different experiences,
12 what do you think is the most important knowledge,
13 skill or ability that you would bring to this
14 Commission?

15 MR. FREEDMAN: I am really good at solving
16 complex problems. Something that I thrive at, I'll
17 give you an example, there are a very large amount
18 from my practice, but our firm represented a U.S.
19 company that was going to take over a listed
20 company on NASDAQ that was doing to take over a
21 listed company on the Paris Stock Exchange and then
22 itself become listed on the Stock Exchange. Our
23 client had U.S. counsel and they had French
24 counsel, but what they didn't have was somebody who
25 was equally comfortable in both systems and could,

1 basically, solve the problems so that you could
2 make sure that you were respecting both U.S. law
3 and French law.

4 And so that's -- and so I was able to do
5 that. I -- they, you know, said this is what we
6 need to do, this is how we do it, this is how we
7 work with the regulators. It was a challenge. We
8 had set our closing date for September 12th, 2001.
9 On September 11th, 2001, at approximately 8:30
10 a.m., I got notice from the depositary in French
11 that the U.S. shares had hit the account that we
12 were ready to close the next day. Obviously,
13 events very shortly after that took over. That was
14 among the challenges that I had to do with
15 worldwide markets closed and, of course, the world
16 in shock from 9/11. But that was, you know, among
17 the problems that I had to solve. And so I'm very
18 good at that, at solving problems.

19 One of my core practice areas was doing
20 equity work, stock options, stock purchase plan
21 work for, really, every large silicon valley
22 company, from Apple on down. And I invented the
23 system to get those approved in France. And then
24 we were able to use what's called the EU Passport
25 to have the programs approved throughout the

1 European Union. That did not exist. I invented
2 it. I worked with the regulators. I created a
3 whole new system that nobody had ever heard of
4 before.

5 So that is probably the biggest skill that
6 I have that I bring to the Commission is the
7 ability to understand, solve complex problems, come
8 up with practical solutions, and do it all on tight
9 deadlines.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

11 If you were to be appointed to the
12 Commission, which aspects of the role do you think
13 that you would enjoy the most and, conversely,
14 which aspects of that role do you think might
15 perhaps struggle with a little bit?

16 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I think I outlined
17 what I like, is to sort of let me at the complex
18 problem. And so the big dataset and breaking it
19 down and saying, and using the Palm Springs
20 experience, okay, how do we scale that? How do we
21 get the public input? That's the part that I think
22 would appeal to be me the most is here's the
23 complex problem, how do we come up with a practical
24 solution? So that's what I -- would appeal to me
25 the most.

1 What would probably not -- you know, the
2 biggest challenge, and I have this in my work in
3 Palm Springs, is I love working with staff but I
4 understand that they have other priorities and so I
5 have frustrations. I want to staff to, you know,
6 get to it, please, sort of move, you know, move on.

7 And so probably the biggest challenge,
8 sort of the part that I won't like quite as much,
9 is, you know, working with the sort of any, you
10 know, bottlenecks and making -- you know, trying to
11 relieve those bottlenecks but sort of the process,
12 you know, the bureaucracy and the process sort of
13 to get things done.

14 So that's a part of my government service
15 where I get occasionally frustrated, where I've
16 done my bit, I've cranked out my document, and I'm
17 just waiting for staff to sort of get around to it.

18 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Mr.
19 Freedman.

20 Madam Chair, no further questions.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

22 Mr. Dawson, do you have any follow-up
23 questions?

24 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

25 Thank you once again for being here, Mr.

1 Freedman.

2 Let me pick on something that you were
3 discussing with Mr. Coe. Let me pretend that I'm a
4 Naturalization Officer for the California Republic.
5 Why California?

6 MR. FREEDMAN: Almost the same answer that
7 I gave in France in my interview. The question is:
8 Why France? And my answer was -- (speaking French)
9 -- I am a gastronomic refugee.

10 I have lived in the United States, various
11 parts, and I've lived in Europe. California, and
12 this is why I'm so happy to be here, I kind of wish
13 that I had moved here many years before, is the
14 closest thing that I've seen of a synthesis,
15 challenging as it can, between Europe and the
16 United States, and also the influence of the Asian
17 communities, is this feels like the world to me, a
18 consensus of the world where there is no dominant
19 sort of majority and it's welcoming. And Palm
20 Springs in particular, since so very few people in
21 Palm Springs are from Palm Springs, is part of that
22 sort of welcoming environment.

23 So I feel more at home here than I
24 literally have probably the rest of -- well, most
25 of my life. When I was living in Paris, even

1 though I was naturalized and a fully qualified
2 practicing French lawyer, I was always seen as an
3 American, and I know French law and history better
4 than most.

5 And when I moved back to New York, that
6 presented a number of challenges because I
7 continued to practice French law and that did not
8 fit in particularly well with the rest of my
9 colleagues who were practicing U.S. law and so that
10 presented some issues. So I was viewed as, you
11 know, kind of French.

12 So I was probably too American for the
13 French, at least a perception of, well, you're not
14 French. And then when I got back to New York it
15 was, well, you're not American.

16 California, I'm truly welcomed for all of
17 those qualities that I have. And I've responded by
18 becoming such an active part of the community.

19 So I first visited Palm Springs in 1995,
20 so a couple of weeks ago was my 25th anniversary,
21 and I just fell in love with this place and its
22 welcoming community. I had visited San Francisco
23 in 1984 and just was completely sort of, you know,
24 gaga about, you know, how wonderful and how
25 welcoming I thought California was in many respects

1 compared with the east coast.

2 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

3 In your response to standard question
4 three, you talked about one of the challenges to
5 the Commission, this Commission in particular, is
6 the census data and the possibility that it could
7 be affected by the COVID-19 situation.

8 There's always going to be an undercount
9 in census data. That's historically been true.
10 Who is likely to be -- who is most likely to be
11 undercounted in this upcoming census in your
12 opinion?

13 MR. FREEDMAN: We have at issue -- I mean,
14 I know, I know from our valley and I can
15 extrapolate throughout the rest of the state.

16 Particularly, right now, the farmworkers,
17 you know, may not be documented, which is another
18 issue. And, you know, going door to door right now
19 is even more of a challenge. So that is, I think,
20 the largest, at least, I think, the biggest risk is
21 that you have people who are out in the fields.
22 They don't have internet access, because that's
23 sort of where the census is. They don't have
24 mailing addresses, they deal with post office
25 boxes, and so that's a whole issue.

1 So there are all sorts of workarounds that
2 had been developed of door-to-door contact and, you
3 know, sort of having community meetings, and
4 laptops where people could come in and, you know,
5 fill in the census, you know, come into the
6 community center and work on the census together
7 with, you know, a language, you know, skilled, you
8 know, person to help them out there, and that's not
9 happening.

10 So I think there is a substantial risk of
11 undercount in that population. It was always going
12 to be. It was undercounted. It was -- and it was
13 going to be undercounted always. But I worry that
14 this is even a larger risk of undercount. We have
15 to go out and go into those communities and, of
16 course, deal with the data that's reported by the
17 Census Bureau, but make sure that everybody is
18 heard.

19 So I can extrapolate from our area, being
20 the east valley, that the same issues are going to
21 be applicable in Central Valley and the Salinas
22 Valley and, in particular, other sort of
23 agricultural areas of California.

24 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

25 Sort of staying on that same topic, you

1 mentioned how important it is to go out into the
2 community. The 2000 -- I think I remember you
3 saying that you read the reports --

4 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes.

5 MR. DAWSON: -- from the 2000 -- 2010
6 Commission. They noted that they felt like there
7 were folks who came to community meetings who
8 really weren't who they said they were, which is I
9 would call the Astro Turf problem.

10 What can the new Commission do to guard
11 against that problem?

12 MR. FREEDMAN: Well, it's a public
13 hearing, so you're going to always sort of hear
14 from those people. But you -- it's easy, and we
15 can do the same thing at city councils, that we
16 sort of know who those are. You can identify sort
17 of the Astro Turf because they all show up with
18 exactly the same talking points and letters and
19 things like that. And so that's -- you know, after
20 the second person, the second set of public
21 comment, you sort of understand where, you know,
22 where that's coming from.

23 So I think it is having a very -- how the
24 Commission protects itself is having a very
25 critical view of sort of understanding where people

1 are that -- you know, obviously, listen to them but
2 sort of dig in, do some research, and find out
3 where this (indiscernible).

4 To give you an example that you probably
5 have been following, but I also followed as my work
6 on the Sustainability Commission, I very actively
7 followed the procedure for SMUD to get
8 authorization from the Energy Commission for its
9 Solar Rooftops Program. And as you've probably
10 read in the Sac Bee, and I know the reporter who I
11 went to Northwestern with, Reporter Dale Kasler for
12 the Bee, who was often writing about that, you
13 could read the public comment and the Energy
14 Commission -- well, the community public comment
15 that was submitted to the Energy Commission, you
16 knew exactly who was from where and where they got
17 the talking points.

18 And so the Energy Commission, just as, I
19 think, the Citizens Redistricting Commission, was
20 able to take that and sort of weigh it and say,
21 okay, fine, this is -- you know, they got their
22 talking points from, you know, from SMUD or from,
23 you know, a different industry group, or from a
24 solar group, and this is where that came from.

25 So it takes a little bit of work but I

1 think that's the role of the Commission. And it's
2 something we see a little at the Palm Springs
3 Sustainability Commission but, in particular, at
4 city council and public hearing of everyone saying
5 exactly the same public comment, copied and pasted,
6 or saying exactly the same thing. You kind of
7 figure out, okay, this is a bit of an Astro Turf
8 group and you can, you know, unpack that.

9 MR. DAWSON: All right. Thank you.

10 We talked a little bit about your legal
11 career. One thing I wanted to know, I think many
12 lawyers ask other lawyers, why did you go to law
13 school?

14 MR. FREEDMAN: Not -- it was not my
15 original career path. I think being from the
16 Philadelphia area was one of the influences. The
17 other was growing up right in the middle of the
18 Quaker community. You've got colleges of
19 Haverford, Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore, and my parents
20 had a bookstore in Swarthmore, so that was very
21 much an orientation to our community service.

22 We take the Constitution as our
23 birthright. We gave it to the country. We gave it
24 to the world. I took a -- I had no intention of
25 being a lawyer. I took a constitutional law course

1 as part of a political science course at
2 Northwestern, as well as the required First
3 Amendment course, and it was the proverbial duck to
4 water. I was in absolute heaven. It was the
5 complex problems that I absolutely loved.

6 And so I went. I was a reporter for the
7 Miami Herald and my assignments were to cover two
8 cities in the western suburbs of Fort Lauderdale.
9 One of the city's, Plantation, had a mayor who Tony
10 Soprano of the Sopranos, had been mayor of a
11 bedroom suburb in Florida. That's him. We all
12 assumed John Lomelo, one of the board members, may
13 have probably had Mafia ties but no one certain.
14 So he was the mayor. City council were retired
15 Jewish accountants from Brooklyn and Queens, hated
16 each other. Council would pass an ordinance that
17 restricted the mayor's powers, or allegedly
18 restricted the mayor's powers, sent to the city
19 charter, the mayor would veto it, the council would
20 override the veto, and the next thing is I'll see
21 you in court.

22 So my municipal beat turned very quickly
23 into a legal beat. And I was in Broward County
24 Circuit Court and up at the Fourth District Court
25 of Appeals in West Palm Beach all the time. And

1 when I realized that I knew the answers probably
2 faster than the attorneys and the judge, I said,
3 you know, I think this law thing may be something
4 for me. I bought a book to study for the LSAT, I
5 didn't do, of course, I did very well and I was
6 admitted to nearly every law school that I applied
7 to.

8 So that's my sort of origin story of going
9 to law school. I did very, very well because it
10 was complex problems that I knew how to solve.

11 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Thank you. I have no
12 more further follow-ups.

13 Do any of the Panel members have any
14 follow-ups?

15 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

16 Mr. Coe?

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: I do not have any
18 follow-up questions.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Belnap?

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not either.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. No follow-up
22 questions, Mr. Dawson.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 Could I have a time check, Madam
25 Secretary?

1 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 11 minutes and
2 49 seconds remaining.

3 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

4 Mr. Freedman, thank you again for being
5 here. We'd like to offer you to use the remainder
6 of the time to make a closing statement to the
7 Panel if you wish.

8 MR. FREEDMAN: Thank you. I won't take
9 the full 11 minutes.

10 So I first want to thank you all for our
11 service to our state in this challenging period.

12 I consider myself privileged to have the
13 time and resources to give back to my community.
14 And I've been doing that locally since I retired
15 from my legal practice five years ago. And serving
16 on the Commission would be my way to thank the
17 State of California which, as I mentioned, has
18 welcomed me very warmly.

19 I've spent my entire 30-year legal career
20 and post-retirement community service analyzing and
21 explaining complex issues, that I talked about, and
22 finding practical solutions that achieve consensus
23 and all while meeting tight deadlines imposed by
24 the clients and the governments. And through my
25 work on the Palm Springs City Council and Desert

1 Water Agency District proceedings, I really did see
2 the importance of community outreach, as I've
3 talked about, transparency, and that's another area
4 where I worked with the city on and ensuring that
5 diverse communities of interest are represented by
6 their elected officials. And the (indiscernible)
7 was the success here in Palm Springs.

8 So, as stated in the supplemental
9 application, the recommendation letters, and public
10 comments that were submitted on my behalf, and our
11 discussion this morning, I do think I have the
12 skills that the Commission needs to draw the
13 impartial district boundaries in a transparent
14 manner that reflect the input of the people of the
15 State of California and reinforces public
16 confidence in the integrity of the districting
17 process, and that's all required by the Voters
18 First Act.

19 So I'd like to thank you for your work on
20 this important process for our democracy and your
21 support that has taken me through the initial
22 phases up to this phase of this election process.
23 I would be very honored to work and serve on the
24 Commission and represent the people in the state of
25 California.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Freedman.

3 Seeing that our next interview this
4 morning starts to 10:45. So we are going to go
5 into recess until 10:44 (indiscernible).

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24 10:44

25 CHAIR DICKISON: It's 10:44. I just want

1 to confirm that Mr. Coe is on the line?

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: I am on the line.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And I can see, Mr.
4 Belnap is in the room, so we have a quorum.

5 I would like to thank -- welcome Mr.
6 Gonzalez for his interview.

7 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you very much.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: It's time for Mr.
9 Gonzalez's interview.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: It's good to be here.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. We're going to
12 turn the meeting right over to Mr. Chris Dawson to
13 read you the five standard questions.

14 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 Mr. Gonzalez, I'm going to ask you five
17 standard questions that the Panel has requested
18 that each applicant respond to. Are you ready,
19 sir?

20 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes, I am.

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

1 possess, which do you possess? In summary, how
2 will you contribute to the success of the
3 Commission?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you for the question.

5 I believe the skill set that is needed to
6 be a Commission member is, one, one is to be
7 impartial. Another one is to embrace and
8 understand diversity. Another one would be
9 critical and analytical thinker. Somebody that's a
10 team player, that can collaborate and, also, be a
11 consensus builder with people that you may not
12 always agree with but you work with. And also be
13 detail oriented because a lot of this information
14 is going to be very detailed and will require the
15 analysis that is necessary.

16 Some of the attributes that I believe a
17 Commissioner should have is a passion for public
18 service. I also believe that integrity is very
19 high, somebody with high integrity. Honesty. The
20 ability to listen. Somebody who is fair and
21 objective. And somebody that treats people with
22 respect and dignity. I believe that, you know,
23 these are the skills and the attributes that are
24 needed by the Commissioners who are selected.

25 I believe that being a team player is

1 going to be very important because of the work at
2 hand. I believe, you know, the fact that people
3 come from different perspectives and different
4 political thinking, it's going to be very important
5 that we can work collaboratively, respectfully,
6 honestly, and listen to one another and be fair and
7 objective.

8 I believe I've covered most of the first
9 two questions.

10 I think what I bring to the Commission
11 that I can -- that I bring is a passion for public
12 service above all. I spent 38-and-a-half years
13 working in public service, so I'm very committed to
14 seeing, you know, a public service not only created
15 and accepted, but also believe in it very heavy-
16 hearted.

17 I also bring integrity. I bring a fair
18 and objective posture to this work. I believe that
19 it's going to be essential that that is necessary
20 and useful. I think that treating people with
21 respect and dignity, not only when, you know, when
22 the meetings start happening throughout California,
23 but also treat each other as Commissioners with
24 respect and dignity, you know, for our opinions and
25 how we present that.

1 I believe that my critical and analytical
2 thinking would be very important because I
3 spent -- the last 20 years of my public service
4 career was spent in executive management. And as
5 part of that, it required not only utilizing
6 this -- my critical thinking and analytical skills,
7 but also honing and sharpening those.

8 I also believe that I'm very impartial.
9 And I think the information that was presented by
10 many of my references attest to that, that I'm open
11 to listening to different points of view before
12 making a decision.

13 I'm thinking that that's how those --
14 that's what -- how I would respond to this
15 question.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

24 What characteristics do you possess and
25 what characteristics should your fellow

1 Commissioners possess that will protect against
2 hyper-partisanship? What will you do to ensure
3 that the work of the Commission is not seen as
4 polarized or hyper-partisan and avoid perceptions
5 of political bias and conflict?

6 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, I believe that, you
7 know, I think coming into the Commission, I think
8 people need to make sure -- at least present
9 themselves as being very impartial because I think
10 it's going to be necessary to analyze the
11 information that's presented in trying to come up
12 with the political subdivisions that would be
13 coming forth from the Commission.

14 I believe that integrity will be very
15 high. I think that you need to have integrity in
16 not only personal but, also, integrity in the
17 process that the Commission will encounter and be
18 responsible for.

19 I think the ability to listen is going to
20 be critical because, again, coming from this
21 particular Commission will come from very different
22 backgrounds, not only politically but just
23 backgrounds in general, because of our -- you know,
24 where we were born, where we were raised, where we
25 worked. All those contribute to who we become as

1 adults.

2 I also believe that being fair and
3 objective is going to be a very important
4 requirement as we go through the process of looking
5 at the data and datasets that are presented.

6 Being a team player and being
7 collaborative and building consensus is also going
8 to be a very important component.

9 And all of these are extremely important
10 in all of this. All of these will play a part in
11 our deliberations, in our meetings, whether they be
12 internal to the Commission or external with the
13 public in general. I think we need to present a
14 front of being above board and very transparent.
15 And I would -- again, high integrity and honesty
16 and, also, you know, treating people fairly and
17 objectively.

18 I believe, again, it's going to be
19 important to -- I spent 38-and-a-half years working
20 in small, medium, and large governmental entities
21 and working with political -- the two political
22 parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. In the
23 last 20, as I mentioned earlier, I worked as an
24 executive. So I had to really work within the
25 political spectrum, not only since 2010, but also

1 before that because there was, when I worked in
2 Arizona, there were some very polarized areas or
3 polarized entities that I worked with. So I had to
4 make sure that I was able to work within them and
5 still present programs and services to the public
6 that would -- that were best for them.

7 So I believe I bring a breadth of
8 experience that, in executive management, you deal
9 with very tough individuals from either side of the
10 political spectrum, so I think I'm doing that. I'm
11 also fair and objective. And I will make use of
12 all of my -- I believe I have a very diverse and
13 significant background that would benefit the
14 Commission.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

16

17 Question three: What is the greatest
18 problem the Commission could encounter and what
19 actions would you take to avoid or respond to this
20 problem?

21 MR. GONZALEZ: I used to -- I was --
22 before the virus issue came up, the one that I
23 thought of from the get-go was we have a 14-member
24 Commission which could, you know, lead to a 7-7
25 deadlock on coming forward with recommendations, so

1 I believe that that's one of the issues.

2 But given the current coronavirus issue
3 that we've got at hand, you know, it presents some
4 really interesting challenges, I believe.

5 One of the things that -- I'm cognizant of
6 the fact that Monterey County, which is where I
7 currently work, has asked the federal government
8 for an extension on the census data, which I
9 believe is the data that will be used by the
10 Commission to come up with the drawing up the
11 lines. So if the -- if there is a delay in the
12 information that's presented, what does it do to
13 the work of the Commission? When will it start?
14 When will it end? I know that there are some
15 deadlines that are mandated by the state to comply
16 with certain information on the drawing of these
17 lines. So that's one issue.

18 But the other issue, the first issue I
19 mentioned, was the one about having a 7-7 deadlock
20 because there are only 14 members -- a 14-member
21 Commission. So you've got -- I think that in order
22 to avoid that, again, I think I'd go back to some
23 of the issues I mentioned earlier. I think we need
24 to treat being -- coming in with an open mind and
25 work objectively so that we can all come together

1 and, hopefully, come forward with a consensus
2 recommendation, moving of the lines, the political
3 and congressional lines and others, to meet the
4 needs of the communities of California.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

6 Question four: If you are selected you
7 will be one of 14 members of the Commission which
8 is charged with working together to create maps of
9 the new districts.

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

17 MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, the -- in thinking
18 about this question, the situation that I would
19 present is I was -- when I worked in Monterey
20 County, one of our Board of Supervisors attended a
21 conference regarding working -- Governing for
22 Racial Equity was the topic of that conference. He
23 brought that back to me, to Monterey County, and he
24 wanted to implement it within the county structure.
25 So the county administrator assigned me to be the

1 lead for implementation of Governing for Racial
2 Equity for Monterey County.

3 Monterey County, for those of you that may
4 not know, is an entity that is about 5,200
5 employees. We have 28 appointed and elected
6 officials. So it was no easy task. And part of my
7 reason for that, they are from different political
8 spectrums of in the county.

9 So we -- I have to formulate not only a
10 plan but, also, a staff to -- myself and another
11 staff person to come up with a strategic plan to
12 implement Governing for Racial Equity.

13 So in discussions with my boss, the CAO,
14 and in meeting with some of the supervisors, one of
15 the ideas that we came up with was trying to make
16 sure that implementing Governing for Racial Equity
17 was coming from the top down.

18 In many organizations, such -- in
19 organizations, many times these types of programs
20 start from the bottom up but we wanted to start
21 from the top down, meaning that we had to get five
22 supervisors to buy into not only the concept of
23 doing that top-to-bottom concept, but also our
24 elected bodies, our elected, other elected
25 officials, which would be the sheriff, the public

1 defender -- well, the public defender is not --
2 it's an appointed position, but it's the sheriff,
3 the treasurer, and the assessor, oh, and the
4 district attorney are all elected officials,
5 so -- which do not fall under the auspices of the
6 county administrator.

7 So it took a lot of meetings, a lot of
8 persuasion to come up with -- to get engaged, not
9 only the -- all these entities, all these directors
10 and elected officials, but also some of the senior
11 managers of the county. So we started formulating
12 a task force that included some department heads
13 that were already very familiar with Governing for
14 Racial Equity. Some of them became our champions.

15 And then we identified not only middle
16 management but also some entry-level staff to be
17 part of this task force because one of the things
18 that we wanted to do was make sure that everybody
19 bought into it. So in order to that we needed to
20 make sure that we not only members from each of
21 those groups but also members that were interested
22 in participating in developing this very long-term
23 process that we were going to entertain and
24 (indiscernible).

25 So we set up a team. It took us

1 approximately two years to formulate the plan that
2 was adopted by the board. It required many
3 meetings, again, with not only elected and
4 appointed officials but also the unions. We also
5 met with different groups at the different
6 departments. We have 28 individual departments
7 within the County of Monterey, so it required a lot
8 of meetings, a lot of information that was
9 disseminated in order for everybody to be onboard
10 and to create one plan that everybody could live
11 with and be part of and move forward.

12 As I mentioned, the Board of Supervisors
13 adopted when we presented it because, again, it
14 entailed a very cross-representation of employees
15 from the lower levels to middle managers to
16 executives to elected officials.

17 So I think in going through this process,
18 one of the things that it taught me is that you
19 need to double check and re-double check
20 information on who was saying what. So it requires
21 a lot of collaboration, a lot of consensus
22 building, meeting with people more than sometimes
23 was necessary, but it was essential in order for
24 everybody to (indiscernible) present this item to
25 the Board of Supervisors. It was unanimously

1 approved with very little questions because we --
2 also the supervisors, individually, and made them
3 aware of all the detail that we involved with and
4 participated in, in order to get to a place of
5 presenting the plan to the board.

6 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

12 If you were selected as a Commissioner,
13 what -- I'm sorry, did I -- no, I'm sorry.

14 Let me restart.

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

20 If you are selected as a Commissioner,
21 what skills and attributes will make you effective
22 at interacting with people from different
23 backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?
24 What experiences have you had that will help you be
25 effective at understanding and appreciating people

1 and communities of different backgrounds and who
2 have a variety of perspectives?

3 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, yes, as I mentioned
4 earlier, I spent 38-and-a-half years working in
5 public -- in the public sector in public service.
6 I mean, those -- during those years of service, I
7 spent, you know, working in small communities. My
8 first community that I worked in was a mostly
9 Native American community in the Phoenix metro
10 area. I also worked for a very large entity, the
11 City of Phoenix. I worked for the City of Phoenix
12 for 16-and-a-half years. I also worked for a rural
13 county in Arizona, Pinal County, which is the
14 county between Phoenix and Tucson, which is very
15 rural and very different than the urban kind of
16 center of Phoenix. And I also worked here in
17 Monterey County.

18 In every one of those communities, there
19 were groups that I needed to deal with that were
20 very different than me, so I have to make sure that
21 I was able to not only work within those
22 communities but also understand the backgrounds,
23 understand the issues, understand where they're
24 coming from.

25 So I take great pride in being able to

1 work in a variety of communities in the past. And
2 all those skills that I've learned in working with
3 communities and small communities, or in very large
4 communities, such as Phoenix or Monterey County,
5 the bottom line, I'd say, is being able to treat
6 people with respect and dignity and, hopefully,
7 listen to their concerns. You have to be honest
8 with them. You have to be fair and openminded.
9 And you need to understand that you are there to
10 help.

11 So I would utilize many of those skills
12 that I've used, that I've used in my career of 38-
13 and-a-half years of working with government.

14 Additionally, I have a degree in social
15 work which taught me, you know, from the get-go,
16 there with my bachelor's from the get-go on how to
17 really listen to people, how to interact with the
18 them, how to treat them with that respect and
19 dignity, although that I learned from my parents
20 from when I was a child. That was very
21 instrumental in my development, as that my parents
22 instilled in me, they treated people with respect
23 and dignity.

24 So I believe that when I deal with
25 communities right now that I could not be

1 successful be successful in, here in Monterey
2 County, I spent the last five years working in
3 communities that are of color, very diverse
4 communities, such as Seaside and the Marina, which
5 are very diverse. I also work in communities that,
6 in south county, that are very rural. And then I
7 also work with communities that are very affluent,
8 such as Carmel, Carmel Valley and Monterey.

9 So I think that I've dealt not only with,
10 you know, communities that are very low income and
11 I've also dealt with communities that are very
12 affluent, very -- some communities that are very
13 diverse. So I bring all that experience to bear
14 with the Commission.

15 But I also worked as an executive. So as
16 a front-line staff member and as an executive, we
17 played different roles, and I learned how to play
18 the role as a front-line staff member and also as
19 an executive. So I bring all of that work and
20 experience and integrity and honesty and the
21 ability to be fair and openminded to the
22 Commission.

23 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

24 We will now go to Panel questions. Each
25 Panel member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her

1 questions. We'll start with the Chair.

2 Ms. Dickison?

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

4 Welcome, Mr. Gonzalez.

5 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you, Ms. Dickison.

6 Glad to be here.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Great. So I was looking
8 through your application. And can you describe or
9 give an example of a time when you had to set your
10 own interest aside in making a decision and kind of
11 explain what it was that you set aside?

12 MR. GONZALEZ: I believe I would have to
13 say the application of the HOPE VI Project within
14 the City of Phoenix. I was asked by my boss, one
15 of the Deputy City Managers, to apply for a grant
16 that was from the federal government. And in doing
17 some research I found out that the federal
18 government does not award grants to states that
19 have had grants approved and given to other
20 municipalities within the state. So when I found
21 this out, I reported this back to my boss. And at
22 the time he said, "Well, it doesn't matter. You
23 need to go ahead and submit an application."

24 So in doing my homework, as I mentioned, I
25 found out that it was going to be a very difficult

1 application, not only to put together but also to
2 move forward to the federal government, given that
3 the direction that I was given from the Department
4 of Housing and Urban Development in D.C.

5 So putting my -- what I had found out
6 aside and doing what I was asked I immediately put
7 together a team because timing was of the essence.
8 So I put together a team from the Housing
9 Department that I had. I also asked for some
10 federal -- some city monies to hire consultants
11 because many of these applications required up to a
12 half-a-million dollars in city or community funding
13 in order to apply. So I, as I mentioned, I got
14 together my team. I also hired a couple of
15 consultants who had experience applying for these
16 types of grants. We pursued the grant and we were
17 actually very successful and received a \$35 million
18 grant from the Housing and Urban Development to
19 redo public housing with the City of Phoenix.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

21 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, I don't have any
22 other specific examples. But I believe that, you
23 know, my experience as an Independent, having to
24 work in political environments in my whole career
25 has -- I've always put my personal ideas and

1 feelings aside in order to do what I was asked to
2 do. So in this, I'd say the same, so --

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

4 MR. GONZALEZ: Um-hmm.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: So I see that you worked
6 in housing, both in Monterey under the Housing
7 Authority for the county, and as the Housing
8 Director, and that was in the City of Phoenix.

9 So in your work in those areas, did you
10 work with maps or setting up neighborhoods or
11 planning of any kind?

12 MR. GONZALEZ: To some extent, I did, but
13 in many cases, those were already a given. The
14 housing was already in place, so there really
15 wasn't much experience working with new. But I
16 will give you some experiences that I've had
17 working with maps significantly.

18 In my work at the County here in Monterey
19 and in Pinal County, I oversaw the Elections
20 Departments in both of these communities. And in
21 doing that, I actually worked very closely with
22 maps because we had to make sure that, in order to
23 set up polling places, you had to make sure that
24 there was, you know, the number of voters within
25 those communities in order to create a precinct.

1 So I worked very diligently with both of the
2 election's directors from both entities in order to
3 create not only maps for the precincts, but also
4 maps for where the public could vote. So I was
5 very -- and I've worked with maps in those
6 capacities extensively.

7 I was also involved in 2010 in the
8 redistricting of the County of Pinal where we
9 looked at, again, the calculations, the minority
10 calculations, how they all fit in. I was also
11 involved, to some extent, in the 2000 redistricting
12 of Phoenix. So their maps were very well utilized
13 in order to create the districts. There's eight
14 districts within the City of Phoenix that had to be
15 redrawn in 2000. I was not there for the 2010 but
16 I was in Pinal County for the redrawing of -- we
17 went from three districts to five districts within
18 the County of Pinal. So I was -- we were -- I was
19 part of the team that looked at all the information
20 that was necessary in order to create the new
21 districts.

22 So that's my experience in working with
23 maps and, you know, in as much detail as we needed
24 to.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So thinking about

1 your experience working with the redistricting in
2 2010 when you went from, I think you said, three to
3 five districts; correct?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: That's correct. We
5 were --

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

7 MR. GONZALEZ: Because of the -- in
8 Arizona there was a big boom in population in this
9 county where I worked, in Pinal County. So we went
10 from a county from about, I believe, 166,000 in
11 2000 to a county of about almost 400,000. So it
12 necessitated to go to five districts versus three
13 because of the population growth.

14 The other thing that we had to be
15 cognizant of is that the population growth was not
16 in one area. It was in the northern part of the
17 county. So you need to make -- we'd have to make
18 sure that the distribution of the voters or the
19 population -- I'm sorry, I mean the population was
20 equal in each district. So it became very
21 important to look at all the census tracts in each
22 of those communities in order to come up with going
23 from three -- a three-member board to a five-member
24 board so that we made sure that there was equal
25 representation for the citizens for each of those

1 districts.

2 So the team, and I was --

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

4 MR. GONZALEZ: -- one of the Assistant
5 County Administrators -- Assistant County Manager
6 that worked well, closely with the two other
7 Assistant County Managers and the county manager to
8 work with the Board of Supervisors in order to come
9 up with five districts.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Did you take
11 public comments and that sort of thing when you
12 were doing that redistricting?

13 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes. We had meetings
14 throughout the -- not only in the communities that
15 were going to be affected but, also, in the
16 communities that were not going to be affected.
17 Because it was -- everybody was very interested in
18 making sure that they were represented, of course,
19 but also that they, you know, they
20 were -- you know, there was very -- many of the new
21 population that moved into the county was not of
22 the same political persuasion that was there
23 before, so it became very hotly debated and
24 contested, to some extent. In some of the
25 meetings. It got a little difficult because of,

1 again, some of the polarization that was starting
2 to begin.

3 So we had community meetings in different
4 parts of the county to make sure, again, that we
5 included as many people as possible before arriving
6 at the decision, yes.

7 The answer, the short answer is, yes, we
8 did, very many.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Alright. So based on
12 your experience in that redistricting, having --
13 creating more districts and taking public comment
14 and looking at their concerns, one of the things
15 that has been noted is California could lose a
16 congressional district after this next census.

17 How do you think that experience in 2010
18 will be helpful in dealing with actually losing a
19 district instead of increasing districts?

20 MR. GONZALEZ: I think that you need to be
21 very inclusive. And I think it may require
22 additional meetings because, again, this is not
23 something that your regular citizen understands or
24 is familiar with. So I think it will be -- it will
25 require a lot of hand holding, a lot of small

1 meetings with smaller groups, maybe, to make sure
2 that these issues are discussed, are presented.
3 And also, you know, some of the coming up with
4 other suggestions, maybe, or other plans that they
5 can buy into or understand? Because I think that a
6 lot of this is just understanding what it means to
7 them and explaining the process that we have to go
8 through, you know, hopefully, you know, resolve
9 some of their concerns.

10 But I understand that could be an issue
11 and we'll just have to make sure that, you know, we
12 spend the necessary time and effort in meeting with
13 these communities. And I think that the more that
14 we are able to relate to these communities and show
15 that, you know, we're earnestly listening to their
16 issues and we're treating them fairly and being
17 open about them and, also, you know, having the
18 integrity, that maintaining integrity throughout,
19 whether it be this group or any other group, I
20 think, tends to be something that is paramount to
21 our discussions with the public. So I believe that
22 -- I think that would be very helpful to, in our
23 discussions, to help, some of the experiences that
24 I've had in working with these populations.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

1 So the other thing is you have experience
2 working with census data. Given the COVID-19 and
3 this census going on, do you have concerns with the
4 census data in this upcoming redistricting?

5 MR. GONZALEZ: Very much so. I think that
6 a lot of the marginalized communities are very
7 hesitant right now, not only because of the COVID-
8 19, but also because of our political -- the
9 political powers in D.C. right now. I think they
10 have frightened many of the -- of our immigrant
11 population here in -- especially here in
12 California.

13 I believe, you know, the immigrant
14 population from whatever country they come from
15 right now is very concerned about reporting because
16 of the concern they have for deportations. So it's
17 a very legitimate and very concerning issue to me
18 and it should be to all of California because it is
19 -- you need to have -- make sure that these folks
20 are -- take the time to fill out the census
21 information and present it.

22 I'm also involved with the 2020 Census
23 here, with a group that's putting it all together
24 with the county, so I'm aware of all the efforts
25 that they are utilizing at this point, everything

1 that they have in their bandwidth to get the word
2 out. But it's still -- there's still a lot of
3 hesitation with our communities here in Monterey
4 County with them, you know, being willing to fill
5 out the census information.

6 I think the latest information I saw for
7 our county, it's about 32 percent as of today. So,
8 you know, it's not a third of the population. You
9 know, although we live in Monterey County, which
10 many people think is very wealthy, we have some of
11 the lowest income, you know, resident, you know,
12 residents of California that live in that
13 community.

14 So it's going to be imperative that these
15 folks are counted because that's the way the
16 federal funds are going to be distributed, you
17 know, for the next ten years. So it is a big
18 concern that I'm having. It's a concern that I, as
19 I mentioned earlier, I think, during one -
20 question, question three, where we talked about,
21 you know, what are the greatest problems of, you
22 know, being able to? Again, if the census data is
23 postponed until later, it's going to create, I
24 think, more hurdles for the Commission and the
25 State of California.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: Do you think there's
2 anything the Commission can do to account for,
3 maybe, some of that shortage?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: I believe it's going to --
5 wow, that's a good question. I think that, you
6 know, as Commissioners, I think that is -- you
7 know, I'm very involved in my community, so I think
8 that I could help get the word out to try and help
9 and alleviate some of those concerns by meeting
10 with some folks.

11 But I think it's going to be incumbent on
12 all of us to really come together and formulate
13 some strategies to try and alleviate these concerns
14 because it is a significant issue for California in
15 the way the funding comes from the federal
16 government. So it's going to be something that we
17 need to really sit down and discuss as a group and
18 come up with some strategies probably.

19 It's a new world right now, so I think
20 that we're going to be open to trying to figure out
21 which -- what's the best way for us to -- what's
22 the best course to take in order to ally some of
23 these concerns that some of us are experiencing.

24 MS. PELLMAN: We have 4 minutes, 39
25 seconds remaining.

1 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay. Thank you.

2 Ms. Dickison went away?

3 MR. DAWSON: Did we lose the Chair?

4 MS. PELLMAN: Should I stop the clock?

5 MR. DAWSON: I think we're getting her

6 back.

7 MS. PELLMAN: Okay.

8 MR. DAWSON: But, yes, stop the clock.

9 MS. PELLMAN: Okay.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: She's back.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. I'm back, as well.

12 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Please restart the

13 clock.

14 MS. PELLMAN: Okay.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Could I get a time

16 check please?

17 MS. PELLMAN: I'm so sorry. We have 3

18 minutes, 40 seconds on the clock.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Ms. Secretary.

20 So the first eight Commissioners will be

21 tasked with selecting the next six.

22 What would you be looking for in those
23 final six Commissioners, should you be selected as
24 one of the first eight?

25 MR. GONZALEZ: I think I'd have to look

1 at, you know, the makeup of the eight and then try
2 and determine what skill sets or what communities
3 or what political backgrounds people have so that
4 we can make sure that we can try, you know, and get
5 -- obtain a Commission that is very representative
6 of this -- of our state. So we would have to
7 assess, you know, what we had as part of the eight
8 and then determine, what are some of the skill sets
9 that are still necessary? What communities, as
10 well, need to be represented? And what political
11 parties, you know, need to be represented? So
12 that, again, we can make sure that we have a very
13 balanced, you know, balanced Commission.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you so much.

15 MR. GONZALEZ: You're welcome.

16 CHAIR DICKISON: All right. I have no
17 further questions at this moment, so I'm going to
18 pass my time on to Mr. Belnap.

19 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Good
21 morning, Mr. Gonzalez.

22 MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning, Mr. Belnap.

23 MR. GONZALEZ: So please describe Monterey
24 County's Governing for Racial Equity and your role
25 in establishing and carrying out this effort.

1 MR. GONZALEZ: I was the chair or I was
2 the lead person. I was assigned by our county
3 administrative officer to lead this effort and to
4 bring it to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.
5 So I had a staff person of one that worked with me
6 on creating a template that we could follow in
7 order to implement Governing for Racial Equity. We
8 attended several workshops before we started going
9 to work to understand what Governing for Racial
10 Equity was.

11 And in some of the discussions that we
12 had, up in -- we used to go to sessions up in
13 Oakland, we attended a conference in Washington,
14 and we attended a conference in Dallas, and one of
15 the things we noticed was that -- and part of the
16 reason that I'll come back to -- is that we noticed
17 that a lot of the entities being represented were
18 being represented by staff at lower levels. And I
19 noticed that I was one of the only Assistant County
20 Administrators that was in there, in these
21 conferences, which I found very interesting because
22 I felt that if this was going -- that I started
23 understanding Governing for Racial Equity. I felt
24 that it was -- it had to be a top-down endeavor in
25 order for it to work properly.

1 So when we came back from our conference
2 in Dallas, that's when we put together a strategic
3 plan that we needed to get our Board of Supervisors
4 to agree to move this effort forward. And it
5 wasn't perfect, so we spent time with each of the
6 Board of Supervisors discussing -- in presenting
7 and discussing what Governing for Racial Equity
8 was, how it could work, and how we could develop it
9 and implement it within the organization of 5,200
10 employees.

11 So from there, once we got the nod back
12 that it was something that they were interested in
13 pursuing, we set up a team. I set up a team, along
14 with my staff person, of some department heads,
15 some middle managers, and some entry-level staff
16 that we all knew, that each of us knew would be
17 willing to serve on our first task force that we
18 created.

19 So from there, we started meeting with, as
20 I mentioned earlier, we started meeting with some
21 of our elected officials, like the sheriff, the
22 district attorney, the treasurer, the tax
23 collector, you know, assessor, which are not under
24 the auspices of the county administrative offices.
25 They're entities within the political structure but

1 do not report to the Board of Supervisors, per se,
2 they report to the department. So we went spent
3 time meeting with them so that they could
4 understand what we were about to pursue.

5 We also asked them for some volunteers to
6 be on this committee because, again, we wanted to
7 get buy-in from the entire county, not just from
8 certain departments or certain entities but buy-in
9 from the entire county. So we identified, as I
10 mentioned, key staff members, key department heads
11 that we knew would be welcome to this type of
12 thinking, so we created a task force. And then we
13 started meeting as a task force. And then we
14 started having meetings throughout the county with
15 different departments, different sectors of the
16 population of our authorities. We also met with
17 some of the members to ally some of their concerns
18 and answer any questions. So we started crafting a
19 plan.

20 We also attended meetings in Oakland with
21 cohorts from the Bay Area, which is, really, Santa
22 Clara, San Francisco, all the counties in and
23 around the Bay Area that were all represented.
24 Again, I was the only Assistant County
25 Administrator that was taking time from my schedule

1 to attend these things because, again, we were
2 committed to making this one up from the top and
3 making sure that everybody agreed to it.

4 So from that, we came back and continued
5 to meet with staff for the next two years. We
6 spoke about two years, meeting with different,
7 again, different departments, different department
8 heads. We also had some community meetings because
9 there were some, as we had our meeting with the
10 Board of Supervisors, which had to be a public
11 meeting, some members of the public started getting
12 interested in this topic. So they started asking
13 when we were going to meet with the community?

14 So once we developed the plan, we started
15 meeting with community groups down in south county,
16 which included King City, Soledad, Gonzales and
17 Greenfield. And then we went out in other cities
18 and communities out on the peninsula, Carmel, you
19 know, Carmel Valley, you know, from Seaside,
20 Marina. We never met with the City of Salinas at
21 first because they were also involved -- they had
22 their own cohort. They had this cohort. That's
23 what they called him in the Governing for Racial
24 Equity documents.

25 And then we also met with north county

1 which is a very -- it's not represented by an
2 entity, it's just a county, a big county, mainly
3 north of Salinas. So we spent a lot of -- about
4 two years working with those communities and
5 identifying concerns they might have as to why --
6 what this would do to providing services, which,
7 again, this was another mechanism for our
8 government to work collaboratively and
9 cooperatively with our communities in trying to
10 identify issues and problems, and then addressing
11 them with services and programs.

12 So my role was to be -- I chaired all the
13 meetings. I directed staff, my staff, to work with
14 communities. And then I made the presentation to
15 the Board of Supervisors, which they approved and
16 (indiscernible).

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So what were the goals
18 and purposes of this committee?

19 MR. GONZALEZ: The committee was to,
20 again, get buy-in from the whole county. It was
21 very simple. We wanted to make sure that when this
22 plan was presented, that concluded was supported by
23 the rank and file from the top to the bottom of our
24 organization, so that was the plan. Because the
25 bottom line, this -- the way we -- the county can

1 do business, this changed the way we were going to
2 do business. We were going to treat people with --
3 again, taking time to meet with them, making it a
4 more collegial government, making it a more
5 receptive government to its citizens in responding
6 to their needs and their services and the services
7 and code. So that was the goal, to improve our
8 government.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Improve the government
10 in what ways? I'm still not quite understanding.

11 MR. GONZALEZ: In providing service -- in
12 providing services where they are needed and
13 providing services that they were requesting, so
14 that we can be more efficient and effective, given
15 the reduction in resources. This would become a
16 way of doing -- a way of better governing and
17 providing better government to our residents of
18 Monterey County.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And I'm trying to
20 connect the purpose of providing better services to
21 the name of Governing for Racial Equity. Help me
22 understand the connection between these two things.

23 MR. GONZALEZ: Governing for Racial Equity
24 is a theory that was -- we came across it from the
25 California Endowment. The California Endowment, I

1 don't know how much you know about them, but they
2 have sponsored about ten different communities
3 throughout the state of California where they're
4 trying to increase the participation of its
5 citizenry in their governments. And one of the
6 topics that they saw fit to take from them, they
7 help the communities that they serve, so this is
8 one of them, that's how we became aware of it.
9 They presented it as a mechanism for citizen
10 participation, for citizens to have more
11 involvement in the way the government provides
12 services.

13 So it's kind of a simplistic point of view
14 but it's, basically, becoming a government more of
15 the people, so to speak. So it would create
16 mechanisms and programs and processes where
17 citizens of these communities would have a voice or
18 a bigger voice in their government, so, basically,
19 to elevate, especially. A lot of the communities
20 that the California Endowment supports in its
21 efforts are communities that have always been
22 marginalized because they're a lot of immigrant
23 population. So it was a thought that by educating,
24 not only the public but also the government
25 officials, which is what we did, in educating and

1 informing our governmental entity on how to better
2 serve communities?

3 That's really the bottom line is to make
4 sure that a lot of the marginalized communities in
5 our county had a better voice, had better access to
6 government, and had identified -- and, also, we
7 identified people that communities could come to
8 and request information or request a meeting or --
9 because many times, you know, we are a fairly large
10 county, and many times they had very little
11 communication with elected officials. So what we
12 did is created mechanisms and processes so that
13 they had access to better government.

14 And then, again, in order to be a more
15 responsive government, this, again, is a new way of
16 thinking that came across to our county.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

18 I hope that answered your question.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yes. And were the
20 meetings of this committee public meetings?

21 MR. GONZALEZ: Some of them were. Some of
22 the -- as I mentioned earlier, because we had to
23 meet with our elected bodies, we had to have public
24 meetings that were recorded and noticed. So we
25 have some community groups that are very interested

1 in the government, so they became aware of it, so
2 they started participating in some of those open
3 sessions. Then they went to their respective
4 supervisors to make sure that we were spending time
5 meeting with community groups, so we did. We ended
6 up having community meetings down in south county,
7 as I mentioned earlier, and in the communities of
8 King City, Greenfield, Soledad and Gonzales.

9 We also invited them -- as I mentioned
10 earlier, there were these meetings that were held,
11 not only in Oakland, but also in other parts of the
12 country. So we, working with the California
13 Endowment, were able to sponsor some city managers
14 and some elected bodies -- elected members of city
15 councils from many of these communities to attend
16 these Governing for Racial Equity conference events
17 across the country in order for them to be more
18 educated, to become more aware of what this new
19 thinking was in delivering services to communities.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.

21 So what did you learn from chairing this
22 committee that you would take forward to your time
23 as a Commissioner if you were selected?

24 MR. GONZALEZ: I think it taught me that
25 patience, for one. I think that we need to be

1 patient because these, again, the processes that
2 were very labor intensive, required a lot of hand
3 holding to some extent, a lot of small meetings
4 because these were -- in some cases, some of these
5 folks were not very anxious for change. So it
6 became our mantra to basically educate them as much
7 as possible, answer any and all questions, take the
8 necessary steps in meeting with them.

9 We think that, you know, that's part of
10 the reason we spent two years because we moved it
11 very strategically throughout the organization. We
12 didn't want to -- you know, for some people, it
13 might be too fast. For other people, we thought it
14 was - two years, it was ample time for us to spend
15 the necessary time, not only with elected officials
16 but also with, you know, the rank and file, you
17 know? Because many times, they were the ones that
18 were going to be responsible for implementing some
19 of these programs and services in the way they were
20 delivered.

21 So we were very cognizant of spending the
22 necessary time, all the members of the employees,
23 as well as the community, to make sure that they
24 understood what we were trying to accomplish in
25 what we were going to be doing.

1 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So can you provide an
2 example of the kind of change that did occur as a
3 result of the committee's work or that you
4 identified that needed to occur?

5 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, the one that came up
6 right away was community engagement. A lot of
7 communities -- a lot of governments do not --
8 really, do not have a community engagement office.
9 As part of this Governing for Racial Equity, I
10 actually changed the name of my office to the
11 Office of Community Engagement and Strategic
12 Analysis because, in many cases, governments do not
13 have an office that knows how to deal with a crisis
14 situation.

15 One of the examples I can give you is
16 during the time when we were looking at developing
17 this Governing for Racial Equity, we had several
18 shootings here in Salinas that became very
19 polarized between the police and some communities.
20 And my staff member and I got very involved,
21 especially my staff person because she comes from
22 that community, we got very involved in trying to
23 work through -- there was a lot of unrest, there
24 was a lot of negativity towards the police
25 department. And so we worked on trying to work

1 through the issues and identify, not only the
2 solution, but also identify people that were
3 willing to work with these communities in order to
4 really tone down the situation.

5 So that, again, my office is basically
6 geared towards providing -- you know, meeting with
7 people, again, in small groups. A lot of times, in
8 our community of Monterey, it is sad to see that a
9 lot of people are not represented in government.
10 And my -- this Office of Community Engagement
11 really identified a huge need, not only for the
12 day-to-day situations but also for something, as I
13 discussed with you, the issue that happened in
14 Salinas.

15 So we were able to move fast, move
16 swiftly. And because of being an Assistant County
17 Administrator, I had access to all the elected
18 officials in Monterey County.

19 I also knew all the city managers and knew
20 a lot of the police chiefs because I also worked on
21 -- one of the other items that I worked on as part
22 of my office was that I was involved where I was
23 the head. My office directed the Gang Violence
24 Prevention Programs. So with that work, I had
25 already met all the police chiefs, invited chiefs

1 throughout the county, so it made it very easy for
2 me to really work quickly with many of the issues
3 that were presented from communities and identify
4 resources that we could bring. Because the county
5 being, you know, a huge entity, I had more
6 resources to help communities in dealing with
7 certain situations.

8 So that was the biggest thing, the
9 Community Engagement, the office that was created
10 to address a lot of these.

11 Again, you know, the supervisors would
12 call and say, hey, can you go meet with this group
13 and find out what, you know, some of the issues are
14 with either the sheriff's office or
15 (indiscernible)? So we could go out there and be
16 the liaisons and encounter this. That's the
17 biggest item that came up in (indiscernible).

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

19 Madam Secretary, can I get a time check?

20 MS. PELLMAN: You have three minutes
21 remaining.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

23 So you served for a number of years as a
24 County Administrator and Housing Director.

25 Can you provide an example or two -- or

1 just one example of the types of analysis you
2 performed, particularly analysis that would be
3 applicable to the work of the Commission?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: I think that the one
5 that -- well, I mean, the magnitude of the
6 Commission is very different but the elements are
7 the same because you have to look at the data. You
8 have to look at -- one of the tasks that I had was
9 to dissolve our Community and Economic Development
10 Department. And in doing that, because of the
11 dwindling resources back in 2016-2017, where I left
12 the county, so we had to look at the data. We had
13 to look at, you know, what's the involvement of
14 this office? What does it do? So we had to look
15 at, you know, the breadth of the services provided
16 by this office. Also, you know, we had to look at
17 what the resources that we had been given to this
18 office.

19 So we had to do a quick analysis because
20 part of the problem we had was we had to come up
21 with a recommendation. It came up in February,
22 right before the budget discussions were developed
23 with the county, so we had about a month of, you
24 know, time to figure out what, you know, what
25 measures to take in order to facilitate this?

1 Because the direction from the board was to
2 dissolve this office and figure out what -- how to
3 dismantle it, not only how to dismantle it but,
4 also, where do the services that are needed, where
5 do they go? So we had to figure out.

6 We had a job development component that
7 needed to be analyzed to find out how many, you
8 know, how many staff members were there, how many
9 staff members were needed. And then, you know, we
10 had to figure out what department to put them
11 (indiscernible), so that's something that I had to
12 deal with in my (indiscernible). So it was a
13 political, a very political process, because part
14 of the work that was done by this office was
15 working with a film and movie -- film and tourist
16 areas, so they were very concerned in --

17 MS. PELLMAN: Thirty seconds remaining.

18 MR. GONZALEZ: -- they were very concerned
19 in losing a person that they could call in case
20 issues came up. So it was a very quick and --
21 quick analysis that was done and presented to the
22 board for their consent.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.

24 Madam Chair, no further questions.

25 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.

1 MR. DAWSON: I wonder, did we lose the
2 Chair again?

3 MS. PELLMAN: I'll stop the clock.

4 MR. DAWSON: Well, I think that in this
5 case, well, we do have Mr. Coe, though, so I think
6 at this point we can go to Mr. Coe's questions.

7 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay. Thank you,
8 Counsel.

9 Good morning, Mr. Gonzalez.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning, Mr. Coe. How
11 are you doing?

12 PANEL MEMBER COE: I'm okay. How are you,
13 sir?

14 MR. GONZALEZ: I'm fine. Thank you very
15 much.

16 PANEL MEMBER COE: Great. A lot of my
17 questions, prepared questions, have been addressed
18 already. But I wanted to talk to you about, in
19 your application, you indicate that you currently
20 sit on the Rancho Cielo Board of Directors; is that
21 right?

22 MR. GONZALEZ: That's correct.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: And as you describe, it
24 Rancho Cielo is a nonprofit agency that provides
25 training to youth between the ages of 18 and 24 to

1 help obtain their GED or various certifications.

2 Why did you choose to get involved in this
3 particular organization?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: I asked to be involved in
5 this because it provided services to youth that, in
6 many cases, did not have any other opportunities to
7 better themselves. I had served, actually, on the
8 Rancho Cielo Board back when I first started
9 working for Monterey County, back in 2013, but I
10 had to resign because the person that created --
11 the founder of Rancho Cielo is Judge John Philips.
12 When he decided to run for public office, I decided
13 that I needed to be off the Rancho Cielo Board
14 because many of my functions that I had at the
15 county had funding that was associated with Rancho
16 Cielo. So I thought that it would create a
17 conflict for Judge Philips, who eventually ran for
18 supervisor and won, and leading and trying to be on
19 the board, so I left the board back then.

20 But once I left the county, I decided to
21 ask to be -- to go back on the Rancho Cielo Board
22 because it provides such a great community service
23 to the youth of this community which many are then,
24 again, many of them are voters. Many of them come
25 from marginalized communities. Many of them come

1 from single-parent households, so they have very
2 little guidance and direction. And the youth of
3 the community and the youth -- the youth is our
4 future, so I thought that I wanted to serve on this
5 board because of the services it provided, the way
6 it provided them. They treated kids very well.
7 They treat them with respect and dignity. They
8 made them feel like they were wanted. They made
9 them feel like they could accomplish things. So
10 when I saw all that, I decided to be part of it
11 because of what it represents and what it doesn't.

12 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

13 In your application and in many of your
14 responses today, given some examples of work and
15 your interacting with diverse groups of people, and
16 a lot of your examples have been primarily based in
17 Monterey County where you're from. And I'm curious
18 about -- to hear about some of these interactions
19 that you've had, maybe outside that region, in
20 different regions of California, and what you maybe
21 have learned about the preferences and the concerns
22 of people in different regions that would make you
23 an effective representative for them on this
24 Commission.

25 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, as an Assistant

1 County Administrator, I attended conferences with
2 other assistant county administrators and county
3 administrators from the state of California.

4 So -- and in those conferences, I was exposed to
5 the issues that pertain to certain, you know,
6 different parts of California, since it is such a
7 large state, you know?

8 So I was exposed to many of the different
9 issues that, you know, L.A., for example, has very
10 different issues than Monterey County because
11 (indiscernible) populations. San Diego, you know,
12 again, is very different. So each community has
13 different issues, different needs, so we were able
14 to identify, you know, some of those and discuss
15 them as a group. So I was exposed to issues
16 through that.

17 Additionally, in my role as an Assistant
18 County Administrator, I oversaw the Social Services
19 Department. I oversaw the Health Department. I
20 oversaw -- I worked with the Probation Department.
21 So in each of these departments, all of them have
22 groups or organizations that they attend. And
23 ongoing, we met with the department heads that I
24 supervise and we discussed the issues that each of
25 these communities, because they affected the way

1 our community dealt with things. So ongoing, I was
2 exposed to issues throughout the state of
3 California because of the services that we provide.
4 So once again, I just did work here, but it was
5 exposure and discussions.

6 And then the other thing I did was I acted
7 as the H.R. Director for Monterey County for a
8 year-and-a-half. And as an H.R. Director, I
9 attended, also, conferences and meetings of the
10 H.R. directors throughout the state of California.
11 And we're very similar, to some extent, but the
12 only thing that really is different is some, you
13 know, some counties are more urban, some counties
14 are more, you know, more rural, and they present
15 different issues.

16 So I was exposed to all of that, you know,
17 throughout my five-year tenure with Monterey
18 County, so I feel very, very informed and very well
19 versed in all the issues throughout the state of
20 California.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

22 I want to talk a little bit, similarly, to
23 the last question, but about identifying
24 communities of interest specifically. And you have
25 spoken to some of your efforts locally,

1 particularly with the redistricting that you did.
2 I believe that that was in a county in Arizona; is
3 that right?

4 MR. GONZALEZ: That's correct.

5 PANEL MEMBER COE: Those efforts, I'm sure
6 a lot of the techniques and the things that you
7 went through to identify communities of interest
8 could be applied to the state but I'm curious as to
9 how? The state is, obviously, much bigger in terms
10 of literal geographic size and number of people.
11 And there may be additional communities in that
12 state that maybe don't exist in some local areas.

13 How would you go about kind of scaling up
14 your approach to identifying communities of
15 interest to fit a statewide constituency that you'd
16 be representing on this Commission?

17 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, I think you need to
18 assess. You know, look at the communities, look at
19 the data. Look at, you know, the -- not only the
20 political makeup but, also, the ethnic, you know,
21 makeup of those communities, look at, you know,
22 what the economy is like. We tend to -- you need
23 to look at all of these indicators that are already
24 there, that we just need to look at them and figure
25 out, what's the best way to deal with these

1 communities?

2 Because they all have -- you know, there's
3 a lot of information out there but it's more of
4 like identifying the information that you need to
5 look at, analyzing that information, identifying
6 key people, key groups in those communities because
7 most of -- many of the communities have leaderships
8 that are already established. So it's identifying
9 those folks that, you know, can be analyzed or can
10 help you work within those communities.

11 So it would require, you know, some
12 background, some research, some analysis in trying
13 to figure out what's -- how to best deal and work
14 with communities. Because California is a very
15 different community, a different state than
16 Arizona. It's completely bigger and more diverse.
17 And in some communities, there's diversity within
18 the diversity. So I think that identifying, what's
19 the best approach? What you use in one community
20 may not be useful in another community. So you
21 need to always retool and figure out, what's the
22 best way to work with communities and how to best
23 sit down with them and make sure that they -- that
24 you can relate and make sure that you can get all
25 the information that you need in order to

1 (indiscernible).

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: And how can this
3 Commission avoid unintentionally overlooking some
4 communities of interest that may be smaller, not as
5 obvious, or harder to locate?

6 MR. GONZALEZ: I think that, you know, if
7 I'm selected to be on the committee [sic], I will
8 make sure that -- make sure that we turn over as
9 many, you know, stones, to put it in that term, to
10 look at everything we can. Because I think it's
11 imperative that, in order for us to come up with
12 recommendations and for us to have integrity, we
13 need to make sure that we ensure that we talk to as
14 many groups as we need to and we include -- be
15 inclusive of as many of our population in
16 California as possible.

17 It's going to -- it's not an easy task
18 given the current situation, you know, but,
19 hopefully, this will get resolved. But I think
20 that it's going to be imperative that, you know, we
21 meet -- we try and meet with as many people as
22 possible and touch as many bases as we can so that
23 we can ensure that, when we make the
24 recommendation, everybody at least has had an
25 opportunity to voice their opinion and concern with

1 our process.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

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

8 MR. GONZALEZ: I don't think I'd struggle
9 with any of it. I mean, personally, I think I can
10 go pretty much into any community and work, you
11 know, because, again, I have worked in communities
12 of -- you know, very low-income communities to very
13 wealthy communities, very Democratic communities to
14 very Republican communities. So I feel that I have
15 the necessary tools to work with communities, you
16 know, of very different opinions.

17 I mean, the only -- the one thing I can do
18 about them -- I've only been here, you know, seven
19 years but, you know, I'm committed to the process.
20 I'm committed to being a member of this Commission
21 to make sure that it represents the entire state of
22 California.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Mr.
24 Gonzalez.

25 Do we have the Chair back? It looks like

1 we do.

2 Madam Chair, I have no further questions.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

4 Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.

5 Mr. Dawson, do you have any follow-up
6 questions?

7 MR. DAWSON: Yes, I have a few. Thank
8 you, Madam Chair.

9 Welcome, once again, Mr. Gonzalez.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

11 MR. DAWSON: I think I saw in your first
12 essay that you were born in Nogales and then you
13 immigrated to the states with your folks?

14 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes. I was born in
15 Nogales, Mexico, which has a city in Arizona, also
16 named Nogales. So my dad used to work in the U.S.
17 He'd been working in the U.S. since like 1946. But
18 during -- in the late '50s, there was a push for
19 more stringent immigration. He used to go back and
20 forth to Mexico daily. But during the late '50s
21 there was, I guess, a pressure to limit people. So
22 that's when he decided to immigrate to the U.S., so
23 that's -- I was four -- three years old when we
24 moved into Nogales, Arizona.

25 MR. DAWSON: So you largely grew up in

1 Arizona then?

2 MR. GONZALEZ: Yes, I did.

3 MR. DAWSON: So what brought you to
4 California?

5 MR. GONZALEZ: I was recruited for -- to
6 apply for the Assistant County Administrator job in
7 Monterey.

8 MR. DAWSON: Oh, I see.

9 Do you think that your familiarity with
10 demographic data in your daily work will give you
11 an advantage, a particular perspective that you can
12 bring to bear on the Commission if you're selected?

13 MR. GONZALEZ: Absolutely. Absolutely. I
14 think that it's not only am I able to read it but I
15 can understand it, I can translate it, and I can
16 present it, so, yes, absolutely.

17 MR. DAWSON: So as you may have seen from
18 the applicants' pool, the coastal counties tend to
19 be -- have more representation than the inland
20 counties.

21 Can a Commissioner from Monterey County
22 successfully appreciate the concerns of inland
23 Californians?

24 MR. GONZALEZ: I believe I can because of
25 my work experience. I think that working in

1 Monterey County, we have a very broad gamut of
2 population. We have the very, you know, the
3 iron -- they call it the Lettuce Curtain which is,
4 you know, on the east side of Monterey, you've got
5 the Lettuce Curtain, basically, you know, where all
6 the agricultural is, which is where grapes and, you
7 know, lettuce, and it's called the salad capital of
8 the world because of all the vegetables. But then
9 on the other side we have, you know, the high-end
10 resorts, we have hotels, we have all these golf
11 courses and that.

12 I think having worked here for five years,
13 it gave me a very good understanding of the
14 differences that exist. I can understand Fresno,
15 because having worked in (indiscernible) and then
16 having worked in Arizona, the county I worked for
17 in Arizona was very similar to Fresno. It had
18 agriculture. It had different areas like that. It
19 did not have a university but it was a very rural
20 city, county that, you know, it was an hour-and-a-
21 half -- the county seat was an hour-and-a-half away
22 from Phoenix. And it was where the state prison
23 was, a very small city.

24 So I can definitely relate to that. I can
25 definitely relate to working with the Native

1 American populations. I worked with Native
2 American populations in Arizona, not only in
3 Phoenix but also in Pinal County, so, absolutely, I
4 can relate to, you know, the issues that come with
5 being in the more arid environment, such as
6 Riverside, the southern part of the state. And,
7 again, I can understand the issues in the inland
8 area of Fresno and that because of the issues with
9 that, you know, growing agriculture.

10 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

11 So it seems from your application, from
12 your resume, that you have primarily worked in what
13 I would consider to be political environments but
14 you, yourself, are not particularly partisan. Is
15 that a fair way of characterizing your experience?

16 MR. GONZALEZ: That's accurate. That's
17 very accurate. I registered as in Independent in,
18 I believe, 1983. I would have registered as an
19 Independent the first time but I registered to vote
20 in my county of Santa Cruz County, Arizona. And at
21 the time I went to register I was a 19-year-old
22 person that didn't know -- I was aware of
23 government but not to the degree I am now. And the
24 registrar at the time said -- I asked her, I wanted
25 to register as an Independent, and she said, "You

1 can only register as a Republican or a Democrat in
2 this county." So at the time I thought -- well, I
3 didn't think too much of it. I just wanted to
4 register because I wanted to vote. That was my
5 main reason for being naturalized, because I wanted
6 to vote. So I registered as a Democrat.

7 But soon after that I registered as an
8 Independent. And it's -- I find it to be very, you
9 know, important to me as a person because in the
10 type of work I did I always wanted to make sure
11 that I was objective and was viewed as honest, you
12 know, I was impartial. So it's
13 been -- and I still -- my wife is involved
14 politically but I tell her that I'm going to remain
15 an Independent and objective because that's the way
16 I feel. I need to listen to everything and listen
17 to all sides and then see how I decide to be.

18 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Thank you.

19 Along the same line of thinking, in your
20 essay number two on impartiality, you described
21 impartiality to be,

22 "To be impartial means to consider all data and
23 information provided by stakeholders, such as
24 community and political groups and governmental
25 entities, before making a decision without

1 interjecting my personal preferences, biases,
2 interests, or views."

3 So thinking about if you were selected to
4 be on the Commission, what is a potential personal
5 preference or bias that you would need to set aside
6 in order to do your work properly?

7 MR. GONZALEZ: Well, I'm not sure if I --
8 I mean, I'm more committed to the work, you know,
9 than going on one side or the other. That's always
10 been my passion. And that's why I've been in
11 government for 38-and-a-half years because, to me,
12 it's about doing the right thing. It's about
13 making sure that we provide the best services to
14 the communities that need it.

15 So that's always been my goal, regardless
16 of my political or personal ideologies. So I
17 really don't believe, you know, that I have biases
18 that will impact me in this work, that's if, you
19 know, if I am selected because, again, I'm
20 committed to the process. I'm committed to be who
21 I am, which is a very independent, free-thinking
22 person that, you know, utilizes information and
23 intellectually would use it, and then determines
24 what's best for me, what I can live with.

25 MR. DAWSON: All right. Thank you. I

1 have no further follow-up questions.

2 Do any of the Panel members have any
3 additional follow-ups?

4 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not.

5 Mr. Belnap?

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

8 PANEL MEMBER COE: I have no follow-ups
9 questions.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: No further questions.

11 MR. DAWSON: Madam Secretary, could I have
12 a time check please?

13 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 11 minutes, 8
14 seconds remaining.

15 MR. DAWSON: Great. Thank you.

16 Mr. Gonzalez, at this point, I would like
17 to offer you the opportunity to make a closing
18 statement to the panel if you wish?

19 MR. GONZALEZ: I would just like to tell
20 you that it's been an honor to even be considered
21 for this opportunity to get to this point. I
22 believe that, you know, the work that's ahead of
23 this Commission is very instrumental to the future
24 of California, so I am very honored to even, you
25 know, again, be at this point.

1 I also want to thank each one of you and,
2 you know, the staff that have been working through
3 this process. It's a tough process to go with --
4 to go through. And then you add on this virus
5 issue that has complicated life for everybody. So
6 I honestly want to thank you for staying the course
7 and figuring out how best to facilitate a process
8 that is very important to the future of the state.

9 And I honestly feel that I have a skill
10 set that would be very helpful. And my personality
11 and my intellect and my ability to work with people
12 (indiscernible), I don't want to belabor it, but I,
13 really, I truly believe that I have a set of
14 skills, a skill set that would be very beneficial
15 and, you know, to the Commission, and I'm hoping I
16 get selected. It would be an honor to serve the
17 State of California in this capacity, so I look
18 forward to hearing.

19 And, again, I thank you very much for your
20 diligence and your persistence in making sure this
21 is a fair and equitable process.

22 And I did listen in on some of your
23 earlier discussions, so I know who you are because
24 I've listened in on some of the meetings. And I do
25 appreciate your commitment to seeing this through.

1 So I look forward to hearing from you if
2 my name is (indiscernible). I know it still, you
3 know, it still has to go to the state legislature
4 and that, so it's still not -- there's still a lot
5 to go and you still have, probably, a lot of
6 interviews.

7 So, again, thank you for what you're doing
8 for the State of California and the citizens of the
9 state.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you so much, Mr.
11 Gonzalez.

12 So our next interview begins at 1:15, so
13 we are going to recess this meeting until 1:14.

14 (Thereupon the Panel recessed at 12:07 p.m.)

15 (Whereupon the Panel reconvened at 1:14 p.m.)

16 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon, I want to
17 call the meeting of the Applicant Review Panel back
18 to order. Mr. Coe, are you on the line?

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: I'm here, Ms. Dickison.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you.

21 And Mr. Belnap are you in the room?

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yes, I am.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

24 I'd like to welcome Ms. Patricia Sinay. Welcome.

25 And then I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Chris

1 Dawson to read you the five standard questions.

2 MS. SINAY: Thank you.

3 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 Ms. Sinay, I'm going to ask you five
5 standard questions that the panel has requested
6 that each applicant respond to. Are you ready,
7 ma'am?

8 MS. SINAY: Yes.

9 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills
10 and attributes should all Commissioners possess?
11 What skills or competencies should the Commission
12 possess collectively? Of the skills, attributes
13 and competencies that each Commissioner should
14 possess, which do you possess? In summary, how
15 will you contribute to the success of the
16 Commission?

17 MS. SINAY: Thank you. I'm humbled and
18 honored to continue to be active in this process
19 and have the opportunity to answer your questions.

20 Before we move to what skills and
21 attributes should Commissioners possess I would
22 take a step back and ask what is it that we want to
23 accomplish? What is our end goal? And for me it's
24 we want to build on the positive work of the first
25 Commission, and increase civic trust and

1 participation, create a process that all who want
2 to be part of, be it organizations, groups,
3 individuals, do engage and are able to engage and
4 leave the engagement feeling that they were heard.

5 A final product. We want a final product,
6 obviously maps, that are very reflective of
7 California's diversity. And long term we really
8 want to increase civic trust, civic participation,
9 civic engagement and strengthen our democracy.

10 So with those lofty goals in mind I would
11 say that we would want collectively, meaning we
12 don't each individually have to have these --
13 possess these skills. But collectively we want to
14 make sure that we have individuals who are people-
15 centered, who know how to engage the community,
16 know how to bring out information from the
17 community, as well as data-driven.

18 We all need to understand how to read data
19 as well as how to be respectful and engage
20 individuals. But we need to have a mix of those
21 people who find that to be their strength.
22 We need to have an understanding of California, her
23 diverse regions, communities and people. We want
24 to make sure we reflect California and that
25 everybody either sees themselves or hears

1 themselves in one of us.

2 All Commissioners need individual skills
3 as well, but we all need to be really visionary and
4 optimistic. We need to have a passion for
5 democracy and the civic process and what can come
6 out of this very engaging process.

7 We need to know how to promote equity or
8 want to promote equity. It's more than just
9 fairness. We need to understand the barriers that
10 have kept others from certain communities of
11 interest from engaging. And really intentionally
12 look at how do we overcome those barriers?
13 We need to be prepared. If staff will take time to
14 give us information we need to have read it and
15 understand it, have our questions ready. When we
16 engage with community, understand the community and
17 be prepared in that way as well.

18 And in that same venue I think we need to
19 be respectful and have empathy for staff, for
20 Legislature, for the community who's going to be
21 speaking with us, with our other Commissioners.
22 And continually trust the process, believe in the
23 wisdom of crowds. We're going to be asking a lot
24 of people to share their perspective. And we need
25 to be open to the idea that we don't know

1 everything. And that the community knows their
2 local piece and work with and facilitate those to
3 bring all of the pieces together along with data.
4 And so that wisdom of crowd will make for a better
5 end product.

6 And I think you asked about me personally
7 and what would I bring to the success. I have 30
8 years of experience strengthening civil society as
9 a volunteer, a funder, a nonprofit employee, a
10 consultant, a college instructor, a parent and an
11 elected official. These experiences have really
12 allowed me to learn, appreciate, and work with many
13 diverse individuals at organizations and
14 communities throughout California.

15 And personally, I was born in Mexico to a
16 Peruvian mother and an Argentine father. We moved
17 to the United States when I was four. And I've
18 been engaged, worked in Northern California, Los
19 Angeles, San Diego. I've lived and worked in those
20 areas as well as been on fact-finding missions to
21 Central Valley, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial
22 County and Redland.

23 I approach all my work really creatively.
24 I try to think outside the box. For instance, I
25 keep going back and forth as I prepared for this

1 interview thinking today is Census Day. How do we
2 use the infrastructure that was created to take the
3 Census? There's regional directors in each area of
4 California. Those regional directors have
5 partnered with community organizations who have
6 hired individual leaders and outreach workers. So
7 what can we learn from the coronavirus hitting the
8 Census, right in the middle of the Census and what
9 are the opportunities? So I keep playing around
10 with that idea.

11 And one of my strengths is really
12 collecting data that allows me to put a face on the
13 numbers. It's easy to look at numbers and
14 statistics and maps and forget that what's there
15 underneath all that are actual individuals. When I
16 first joined the school board staff kept sharing
17 data about how well our school district did. But I
18 asked, "Can we segregate out the data? Can we look
19 at the low-income students, the English language
20 learners, the special-needs students and see how
21 their numbers compare?" Now they were still doing
22 better than the county and the state, but they were
23 lagging behind our other students. And so that
24 allowed us to focus, to create new programming that
25 could really focus on those students.

1 I'm honest and authentic to a fault. I'm
2 constantly -- Conflict of interest is a big deal
3 for me, and so I will always let you know what my
4 bias is and try to engage others and have others
5 put their bias forward or think through what their
6 bias may be.

7 Finally, I'm a generalist. I haven't
8 specialized in one area of one issue. I've gotten
9 to work in health as well as environment as well as
10 with arts organizations and philanthropy. And all
11 of that allows me to have a broad understanding of
12 the bigger picture. And I've also been privileged
13 to work with people from the business sector,
14 elected officials as well as new immigrants and
15 unsheltered individuals and students. So I feel
16 that all this, being a generalist I've learned how
17 to ask questions to get the answers. And also
18 sometimes to trust my gut when I'm not sure where
19 I'm getting the right answer.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

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

3 What characteristics do you possess -- and
4 what characteristics should your fellow
5 Commissioners possess -- that will protect against
6 hyper-partisanship?

7 What will you do to ensure that the work
8 of the Commission is not seen as polarized or
9 hyper-partisan and avoid perceptions of political
10 bias and conflict?

11 MS. SINAY: Yeah, that's a critical
12 question for this process with the work that we'll
13 be doing as well as in these times.

14 I think first we'll need to acknowledge
15 that partisanship is a bias and that we need to
16 approach getting -- protecting against it just like
17 we would any other bias. What I have learned is
18 you first need uncover what the bias is and then
19 acknowledge the bias and then each of us keep each
20 other in check.

21 The characteristics that I possess that
22 could help with some of that is besides
23 professionally, I facilitate all the time diverse
24 groups. And through that process I usually will
25 speak with folks individually and try to uncover

1 what are the elephants in the room, what are they
2 thinking. What I've learned from that process is
3 that people will engage better when it's time to do
4 the group facilitation, because they feel like
5 someone has heard them already.

6 But I really and truly believe that people
7 are well-intentioned. Though my work and views may
8 align more with one political party, my marriage to
9 a conservative Republican for the last 15 years has
10 strengthened my ability to work across party lines.
11 I've had to learn that we don't stop at the
12 disagreements. I ask questions, he asks me
13 questions, we dig a little deeper. Sometimes we
14 get defensive, because we think the questions are
15 trying to uncover something. But when we remember
16 we generally care and are curious we're able to
17 keep moving forward.

18 We don't have to agree. We just, for the
19 sake of our relationship and our family, we just
20 need to agree to disagree and really respect each
21 other as humans. And that's the same thing we
22 would need to do as Commissioners is come up with a
23 way where we just respect each other even though we
24 may disagree.

25 I aspire to be a bridge builder and

1 constantly look at how people are thinking about
2 things and why they might, what lenses they're
3 using, what experience they may have had to get
4 them there. I can remember driving home one day
5 and thinking about the gun control issue and how
6 big it was and unruly it was. I couldn't figure
7 out why people didn't see things the same way I did
8 until I realized they didn't see things the same
9 way I did. I viewed a gun pointed at me and as a
10 threat, while others viewed it as a tool that they
11 could use to protect themselves and their families.
12 And with that understanding I was able to have
13 better conversations with others.

14 When I was teaching at UC San Diego I used
15 that example often with my students. And it did
16 play an "aha" moment for everybody. And then we
17 tried to use that same type of approach with other
18 social issues that have really split our country or
19 our communities.

20 I also was able to bring in conversations
21 of ethics and use the University of Santa Clara's
22 model of different ethical theories. And that
23 helped with the students as well as myself. And
24 I've had to remind myself often that two people may
25 not agree on something, but they both may be right

1 depending on which ethical framework they're using.
2 And that applies also to our political beliefs. So
3 part of not being partisan is really acknowledging
4 when we may be falling into that trap, trying to
5 look at it from different angles and really looking
6 to find that common ground.

7 One of the things I appreciate about
8 myself is my diverse background. And that allows
9 me to connect with almost everybody in just
10 different ways. If I walk into a room and I tend
11 to not look like everybody else in the room I may
12 start the conversation by introducing myself as Pa-
13 tree-cia (phonetic), you know, say my name with a
14 Spanish accent. And that will open up the intrigue
15 of who am I and why am I saying my name that way?
16 And connect with people in that way.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

18 Question three: What is the greatest
19 problem the Commission could encounter?
20 And what actions would you take to avoid or respond
21 to this problem?

22 MS. SINAY: Yes, I think that one would be
23 actually easy for me to think through and that was
24 civic distrust. It goes with your prior question
25 about the polarization that exists right now.

1 People are not participating, not just in the
2 electoral process, but maybe in community building
3 or just they're not engaging politically. And
4 that's because they don't believe in our public
5 institutions. I believe that all Californians need
6 to be engaged civically, so that our state can
7 reach its full potential economically, politically,
8 socially. And being civically engaged includes,
9 but is not limited to giving your time, money,
10 talents, being involved in community discussions,
11 participating in like the census, voting, paying
12 your taxes and then so much more.

13 And unfortunately, because some people
14 don't trust their politicians or their elected
15 officials, I often hear from my students as well as
16 others that they don't vote. Why should they vote?
17 And if people aren't voting their voices aren't
18 being heard. And so to me this process will need
19 to work together, the Commissioners and staff, to
20 come to understand what are the legal boundaries we
21 have in engaging with the community and come up
22 with creative ways that do allow people to --
23 communities of interest as well as all communities
24 -- to voice their opinions.

25 And because one size won't fit all we

1 can't go into every community expecting our
2 engagement to look exactly the same. Meeting with
3 a group in Bakersfield is very different than
4 meeting with a group in West L.A.

5 And we all will constantly need to be
6 aware of the power dynamics and the counter-kind of
7 the power dynamics of here we come from Sacramento.
8 We'll need to understand how does this community
9 like to engage. How do they dress when they go to
10 church and others? Can we model that, so that we
11 don't look like outsiders, but we fit into their
12 culture? There may be where do they like to meet?
13 What is comfortable? What is common for them? Who
14 are the leaders that need to kind of be the ones
15 who introduce us into the community? Who do they
16 trust? And just build on some of that.

17 So the civic distrust can be one of our
18 barriers, but I think we can definitely overcome
19 it.

20 MS. PELLMAN: We have 13 minutes, 22
21 seconds remaining.

22 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

9 MS. SINAY: Yeah, that as a facilitator of
10 collaborations, this is an area that I kind of
11 thrive in, is bringing in different perspectives.
12 And as I said earlier cookie-cutter approaches
13 don't work in working with communities or working
14 with groups.

15 Most recently I've been working with the
16 Orange County Community Foundation on their
17 Veterans Initiative in Orange County. And we have
18 helped launch the Tierney Veterans Service Center.
19 And that started with their goal is to make sure
20 there's a front door for all veterans in Orange
21 County and that that front door will help them
22 connect to the services that will help them thrive
23 as civilians.

24 And the work started, this whole vision of
25 creating this began with me just meeting one-on-one

1 with a lot of our grantees, (phonetic) mainly the
2 managers and the people on the front lines, the
3 case workers, the ones who answer the phones, the
4 outreach workers. And they were all saying that
5 they could tell from talking to veterans, and the
6 veterans were telling me this as well, that they
7 were tired of telling their story over and over
8 again, and giving their information.

9 And so different groups kept asking the
10 same question of how can we do this better? And
11 finally I shared with them my experience working in
12 San Diego as part of Blue Star Families. That in
13 San Diego they had started a project called Courage
14 to Call, which brought different groups together.
15 There was one phone number, one peer navigator, but
16 it was all different groups working together. And
17 so we started to envision what that would look
18 like.

19 Two summers ago the front-lines folks met
20 every week and created the framework. We took it
21 to the funder. The funder got very excited about
22 this idea and said, "Yes. We will fund some
23 facilitation. And you have to help with the cost
24 of collaborating and piloting this project."
25 Then we took it to the executives. So the

1 executives, they had heard about this, but it was
2 easier to go to them with the backing of the
3 funder. And that's where a lot of the lessons
4 learned happened.

5 But before I go into the lessons learned I
6 really want to share how exciting it was that
7 within six months they did come up with a process.
8 They did share one number, 2-1-1, which was hard
9 for the group because that was part of their
10 identity was their phone number. And also it hard
11 for them to let go of the individuals may not come
12 to them first. The veterans may not come to them
13 first, but trust that if they were the right fit
14 they would get the veteran.

15 So we were doing collective outreach, which made it
16 more efficient. Because all the front-lines people
17 were saying they spent 60 percent of their time on
18 outreach versus spending time with the vets, the
19 actual veterans.

20 And I would say the most exciting part was
21 that one of the funders, one of the funder
22 partners, decided to help raise money to expand the
23 Tierney Center and build out this empty warehouse,
24 so that we could have more service providers be
25 present to serve the veterans. So we're just in

1 the midst of all that.

2 The lessons learned was you need to create
3 a vision, a common vision. Everyone needs to kind
4 of see themselves in that vision, see their role,
5 build on the strengths of all the partners, decide
6 how you're going to make decisions, how you're
7 going to -- are decisions going to be consensus
8 model or are they going to be majority, simple
9 majority?

10 You need to understand how do we go back on
11 decisions, because we may have learned some
12 additional information. So how do we move and how
13 do we say we're okay? We've learned something and
14 now we want to revisit it.

15 Everybody's got to leave their hats at the
16 door or their egos at the door; however you want to
17 say it. And one of the easiest ways to do that is
18 continually going back to what is the vision? What
19 is our goals? What is each of our jobs in this?
20 Who else do we need at the table? It's a process,
21 it's tough. But the more you start building trust
22 and respecting each other you can hold each other
23 accountable as well as help each other more.

24 Right now it's difficult times for
25 nonprofits. And so the core organizations are

1 still working closely together and have actually
2 been able to serve veterans better than before.

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

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

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

16 MS. SINAY: My forte is working with
17 diverse communities. I definitely get my energy
18 from engaging and learning from communities and
19 individuals who are not like, do not look like me
20 or don't have my same experiences.

21 I also, as I said because of my background
22 I tend to be a connector. I have the privilege of
23 kind of navigating between lots of different
24 communities be it the donor, wealthy communities
25 and funding communities, as well as the academic

1 communities and grassroots leaders. And so I'm
2 constantly navigating and connecting people in ways
3 that they might not have thought of.

4 My lived experience is really what kind of
5 motivates me and what I fall back on. I don't
6 always have the answers, but I try. I know where
7 to kind of look for or who to ask for answers.
8 And I'm okay being wrong. I'm okay making
9 mistakes. I think a lot of times when we're trying
10 to navigate relationships with diverse communities
11 we are afraid of making, insulting someone or
12 looking dumb or bad. I've learned that humor and
13 being able to laugh at yourself and just kind of be
14 authentic and ask questions when you need to ask
15 questions helps move people forward.

16 When I first got to San Diego it was to
17 work with the San Diego Foundation. And all the
18 projects that I worked with them was kind of, they
19 were new communities for the foundation. This was
20 22 years ago. And I managed the San Diego Lesbian
21 and Gay Funding Partnership, the Southern
22 California Citizenship Fund which its purpose was
23 to help vulnerable illegal immigrants in the five
24 counties in Southern California to become U.S.
25 citizens. The Intergroup Relations Project, which

1 was bringing new neighbors and new immigrants and
2 their established neighbors together to problem-
3 solve. And also we worked with the neighborhood
4 groups.

5 And I had to come up with how do I engage
6 with these communities? They don't know who I am.
7 I don't know who they are. They don't know who the
8 San Diego Foundation is. And I started by first
9 going to the large nonprofits that served that area
10 and spoke with their leadership and their outreach
11 workers. And then kept asking for them to connect
12 me with two to five other people.

13 And then they found where are people
14 meeting? Are there meetings that happen for
15 instance in El Cajon they have the El Cajon
16 Education Collaborative. And so I attended that
17 collaborative meeting, asked ahead of time if we
18 could be part of the agenda and just added two or
19 three questions. And in most cases I didn't
20 facilitate, I didn't ask the questions. I allowed
21 the facilitator who they already trust and knew to
22 ask the questions.

23 And slowly as we moved from one community
24 to the other, be it an African community or a Hmong
25 community people kept seeing me and the trust grew.

1 And as we funded programs and we were still
2 engaged, things continued. But that's kind of been
3 my experience, one of my experiences here in San
4 Diego, when I first got here on how I engaged with
5 diverse communities.

6 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. We will now go to
7 panel questions. Each panel member will have 20
8 minutes to ask his or her questions.

9 And we'll start with the Chair, Ms.
10 Dickison.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. You answered
12 some my questions, but let's see. So in your first
13 essay you talked about your experiences in
14 registering to vote and volunteering at a campaign.
15 And then you said you created similar opportunities
16 for your students to be engaged in elections and
17 communities, problem solving.

18 MS. SINAY: Uh-huh.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: What are some of the
20 things that you did in order to provide those
21 opportunities to your students?

22 MS. SINAY: On off-election years, off-
23 election presidential years which is most of the
24 time, the students got to choose a problem, a
25 community problem, that they were passionate about.

1 It could be cancer, finding a cure to cancer, or
2 educational equity or it could be any topic.

3 And then I would have them actually flip
4 it so it wasn't a problem, but a vision and really
5 think through what would be different if that
6 problem was solved. So their paper wasn't about
7 solving cancer and how all three sectors should all
8 work towards solving cancer, but it was about a
9 vision of a world without cancer. And what would
10 the independent nonprofit, philanthropic sector,
11 and faith-based, the private sector, business
12 sector and government have to do? What are their
13 strengths? How would they have to engage together
14 to solve that? And so that allowed them to
15 actually think through the positives of all the
16 different sectors.

17 I also would bring in speakers that were
18 doing public service in the community, everyone
19 from the president of San Diego State, San Diego
20 State at the time, to former students who were now
21 environmental activists. And they had that
22 opportunity to ask questions and create a one-on-
23 one relationship with them.

24 During election years I would always make
25 sure to invite the League of Women Voters to kind

1 of walk through all the propositions in their
2 nonpartisan way, so that the students would know
3 where to get information when they left college.

4 And then on presidential election years
5 because that was kind of where a lot of the energy
6 was, and these were usually students who it was
7 their first time they were getting to vote, I would
8 encourage them to get involved in electoral
9 process. To volunteer at least 10 hours either to
10 a campaign, it didn't matter whose campaign and if
11 it would be at the presidential level or the local
12 level. But to get involved in a campaign and a
13 voter registration drive, at a poll booth or in
14 counting ballots, the night those ballots came in
15 work at the Office of the Registrar. And that just
16 kind of sparked that energy and that kind of
17 excitement about the whole electoral system.

18 Many times part of the minor, or the
19 Public Service Minor was to do an internship. And
20 I would work with them to identify what
21 organizations might work best for them and what
22 they might learn.

23 One of the things about my experience was
24 that I had just become a U.S. citizen and
25 registered to vote within the hour. And that year

1 was also a presidential year. So it was just a
2 very civically-minded year for me, it was a lot of
3 changes in that way. But I can still remember just
4 the buzz and the excitement of being part of the
5 process.

6 But the final thing I do as I would bring
7 in candidates or people who had run, especially
8 people who had run and won by less than 100 votes
9 or lost by less than 100 votes, so that they could
10 hear their story and really understand that locally
11 all votes matter.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

13 In your other relevant information, and
14 you've talked also in your responses about all of
15 the different groups you have worked with,
16 dreamers, youth immigrants, refugees, English
17 learners, veterans, military families and LGBTQ
18 community, what's drawn you to do this type of
19 work?

20 MS. SINAY: What a great question. I
21 think it's really my passion for everyone to be
22 involved and engaged. And my curiosity on just
23 understanding the places I live. And thriving in
24 diversity. Maybe that's why I love to travel as
25 well. Just the want to explore new things. But

1 also, not just in a tourist sense, but also to be
2 an ambassador and bring people in and connect.

3 I'd also say that I believe that it is
4 possible to build opportunities, so that all can be
5 successful. And I want to be able to always hear
6 someone's story and see what can we do to
7 differently, so everyone can meet their potential
8 at success.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. You did talk
10 about that you went to San Diego to work with
11 the -- to implement a program to help naturalize
12 illegal immigrants in Southern California. You
13 talked about in your essay response that San Diego
14 is more conservative politically and that you
15 weren't sure that all your interactions would be --
16 you know, that they would agree with your
17 interactions. What did you learn about the San
18 Diego community or your community once you got in
19 and started doing that work?

20 MS. SINAY: I definitely learned to listen
21 and not to judge. And to ask questions using words
22 that -- mainly using a new vocabulary. I really
23 think it was the best thing I've done
24 professionally, even personally, was to engage in
25 communities that I couldn't assume that they agreed

1 with the work I was doing or it was easy in a lot
2 of the places I lived in to assume that everybody
3 agreed with me.

4 But I appreciate that I had moved to San
5 Diego and I've stayed here for 22 years, so I've
6 thrived in San Diego. Just opening up and it's not
7 that I hadn't been around others who thought
8 conservative. You know, I grew up in that
9 environment and living in DC the joke was always
10 that I had more friends that thought differently
11 than me.

12 But the main thing I've learned was to
13 listen, to not assume, but if I did assume and I
14 made a mistake, to laugh. And to really find that
15 common ground. What is it that people want for the
16 public good? The region has changed so much since
17 then. But I remember just having some great laughs
18 during those first few years. I had some cries
19 too. I won't deny it. But I had some great laughs
20 with people just saying, "Wait, I'm not getting
21 you," and they weren't getting me.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: So one of the things the
23 Commission is going to need to do and you've talked
24 about it, is reach out to the different groups and
25 identify different communities of interest. Based

1 on your experiences, what skills and knowledge will
2 you bring that's going to benefit the Commission in
3 identifying those communities of interest and maybe
4 those that aren't as easy to find?

5 MS. SINAY: Yeah, I think first thing is I
6 would be able to lean on my network. I have been
7 part of HOPE, Hispanas Organized for Political
8 Equity. And every year they choose 25 Latinos from
9 throughout California for a leadership program. So
10 I would be able to have the Commission -- with the
11 Commission obviously there's certain rules about
12 how you can do certain things. But the network can
13 help identify -- most of the people in that network
14 are all either community leaders, elected leaders
15 and would be able to give some information about
16 who those communities are.

17 The other thing I've learned is this isn't
18 always possible, but when you drive, and you drive
19 on roads instead of on freeways and look around
20 things will pop up that make you understand. Like
21 there is a community, a different -- this is more
22 of a Korean community or this is more Central
23 American versus Latino, just looking at the
24 storefronts and things like that.

25 Again you can always start by asking the

1 local elected officials as well as the local
2 community foundations, the nonprofits, usually the
3 nonprofits that are service providers, the
4 community clinics will know the different
5 communities that are there. Because all
6 communities of interest, all individuals need to go
7 to the supermarket, they need health care, they
8 need schools. So going to school districts is
9 another good way. Some communities of interest
10 obviously are harder to identify, be either their
11 sexual orientation or their political perspective.
12 But there are ways to just keep digging deeper and
13 never feeling satisfied that you have already
14 uncovered every community there is.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. So one of the
16 things that the last Commission noted was that
17 during some of their public meetings they felt like
18 there were certain individuals or groups that
19 showed up and would state that they were
20 representing certain communities and that maybe
21 they weren't and they actually had an agenda. What
22 do you think, do you think your experiences will
23 give you a little bit different perspective and
24 maybe an ability to identify those individuals?

25 MS. SINAY: Yeah. I think as I said

1 earlier I tend to trust people. But at the same
2 time I have learned to trust my gut. And if I get
3 that feel I would -- I think we need to ask
4 questions in different ways.

5 Another thought, because I had heard about
6 that and I said well how do you -- I think that you
7 all are doing a great job on transparency and
8 sharing information and letting people be able to
9 watch the interviews and watch you all think
10 through the process. But we may want to think
11 through how do you do a feedback loop to when you
12 meet with a community? If you've heard -- that way
13 you could ask people, "Did we hear you correctly?"
14 But also by putting it out there in a simple way in
15 a feedback loop others can step up and say, "Wait.
16 we don't know who that was." Or, "That's not what
17 we think." And so it's being kind of a vehicle,
18 not just to be transparent but also to collect
19 information.

20 In order to understand if someone really reflects
21 the community or not you can't just have one person
22 be that representative of that community. You need
23 to go a little deeper. And so just one interaction
24 with one person or two people from a community of
25 interest isn't going to give you the information

1 that you need. To be authentic you need to kind of
2 have further conversations and find other ways,
3 because I know we can't go back traveling to every
4 community over and over again but finding other
5 ways to gather that information.

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

7 MS. PELLMAN: We have 5 minutes, 54
8 seconds remaining.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

10 Have you had to use census data and
11 mapping in any of the work that you've done?

12 MS. SINAY: Yes. I believe it's great to
13 start with the data in looking at the numbers.
14 When I helped facilitate and started the City
15 Heights Partnership for Children the whole idea was
16 to come up with social indicators in City Heights,
17 which is one of the neighborhoods in San Diego with
18 the most diversity of immigrants, refugees, lowest-
19 income community. The school districts there's
20 just a lot of different languages that are spoken
21 there. And we wanted to figure out what were
22 indicators of success from a child being zero all
23 the way through what they decide to do
24 professionally.

25 And to be able to do that we needed to

1 collect the census data as well as data from
2 the -- educational data from the California
3 Department of Education, health data. And it
4 wasn't always easy, because sometimes census tracts
5 do not match with your neighborhood, neighborhood
6 outline. And so that's one of the reasons I know
7 how important a lot of this work is, is being able
8 to understand how to use that data.

9 I also have used voter registration data.
10 And when I ran my campaign I needed to use a lot of
11 that voter data.

12 I believe in, again, in using data but
13 digging a little deeper. Data is only as good as
14 the questions you're asking it to solve. And
15 sometimes you need to be clearer on your questions
16 and make sure you're asking the right questions.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Thank you.

18 Secretary, can I get a time check?

19 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 3 minutes, 30
20 seconds remaining.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

22 Okay, if you were selected as one of the
23 first eight Commissioners which are selected
24 randomly what would you be looking for in selecting
25 the next six?

1 MS. SINAY: Yeah I've thought about that a
2 lot, just because from the beginning when you hear
3 how this process works it's like wow, okay. If I
4 was lucky to be one of the first eight it's kind of
5 a chicken-and-egg scenario, but I think I would
6 start with creating a matrix that really reflects
7 all the info, what would make the ideal Commission?
8 What skill sets, what geographic mix, what
9 political mix, what gender mix, what
10 characteristics, all those things that you all have
11 been looking at up until this point. And just
12 create just a matrix and then put that matrix
13 aside.

14 And then review all the candidates, all
15 the applicants that are still available, that are
16 still in the process. And read them each with a
17 clear, just open mind. And using maybe some of the
18 tools that you have all used as well, in each of
19 the eight Commissioners kind of review that, figure
20 out where they're at.

21 And then go back to the matrix and as a
22 group work to kind of identify who are the top
23 candidates of those that are still around? And
24 then go back to the matrix, fill in the matrix with
25 all the information of all the already existing

1 candidates, the already existing Commissioners and
2 look to see what's missing? What do we need to
3 make sure that we create the best Commission
4 possible? What skill sets, what diversity, what do
5 we need to create our own wisdom of crowds?

6 And then go back to the individuals. And
7 the reason that process, I thought through that
8 process, is you don't want to just pick someone
9 because they fit the box of this person is from Los
10 Angeles, this Asian woman, and over 60 with a PhD,
11 which would be ideal if those were all the boxes
12 you needed. But you want to be able to look at all
13 the applicants and see what their strengths are.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you so much.
15 At this time I do not have any further questions.
16 So I'm going to pass it to Mr. Belnap.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. Good
18 afternoon, Mrs. Sinay. In your application you
19 talk about your time as a lecturer at UC San Diego
20 and that you taught students in the Public Service
21 Minor. What classes did you teach in that minor?

22 MS. SINAY: Well, I taught the
23 Introduction to Public Service. It was a minor
24 within one of the colleges at UCSD, UCSD has six
25 colleges. And I also taught some other classes but

1 the main one I taught for that, for my 13 years
2 there, was the Intro to Public Service.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: In that class did you
4 touch on impartiality and the principles associated
5 with impartiality?

6 MS. SINAY: Yeah. And a lot of it was
7 along with the whole concept of being biased as
8 well, but to deal with how do you stay impartial
9 what you need to do. And I also shared a lot of my
10 own experience as a facilitator as well as a school
11 board member how I would have this kind of
12 struggle. You know, I think impartiality, you have
13 to be aware it and you have to be intentional and
14 so I would share that.

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So what is something
16 that you would tell the students regarding
17 impartiality and how they can maintain
18 impartiality?

19 MS. SINAY: First you need to identify
20 what your biases are. Be very clear on what your
21 assumptions might be. It depends, it's hard to
22 talk in an ambiguous. But for instance when I was
23 on the school board, but I was running to be
24 reelected I was the only incumbent running and the
25 parents were -- there was a lot of tension with the

1 parents and we had to change some principals
2 around.

3 And you see this often when someone is
4 running for office people say either you vote this
5 way or we're not going to vote for you. We're
6 going to make sure to get you out of office. And
7 one of the things I would always share with my
8 students as well as newly-elected individuals is
9 when you're in any type of group-dynamic governing
10 situation, you need to be able to stay focused on
11 the task at hand. If you're an elected official
12 when you're meeting as a group you're there to
13 govern. You're not there to win votes or to worry
14 about that aspect of it.

15 And so with impartiality, part of it I
16 will always share what my biases are or what I am
17 thinking. But always staying, looking at what is
18 the purpose of what we're trying to do. And
19 obviously I'm talking about in a group dynamic.
20 But what is the purpose? What is the vision? And
21 what is the best way to get there? Not necessarily
22 what is it that I would like to see or what do I
23 think is the best way to get there, but really
24 going back to the database, going back to what
25 we're learning. And if I don't agree with someone

1 really working through how are they seeing it
2 different. Can I learn from what they're seeing?

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.
4 Can you tell us about a time where you discovered
5 that you had a bias or a preconceived notion, even
6 it wasn't -- rise to the level of a bias -- that
7 you had to set aside to come to a decision?

8 MS. SINAY: There's a lot of them running
9 through my head right now, but one of my favorites
10 is I was facilitating an arts organization and
11 helping them think through what are the values of
12 your organization? And they kept coming back to --
13 and I said, "Your values will be your concepts and
14 that's how you make decisions." And then they kept
15 going back to "Hip." And I'm like, "Hip?" They're
16 like, "Yeah. we want to be the in-place, the in-
17 organization." And I was like, "Well that's not a
18 value."

19 But I pressed them a little more to try to
20 figure out what they meant by that. And by the end
21 they were really good at telling me that really
22 "hip" was one of their values. Every event they
23 did they wanted it to be cutting-edge. Even their
24 office space was cutting-edge and their
25 communications. I mean it's a silly one, but it is

1 an example of I was, as facilitator had to stay
2 kind of neutral, but at the same time I wanted to
3 make sure that the process came up with something
4 legitimate.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.
6 Do you feel like you have any other biases that
7 you've uncovered?

8 MS. SINAY: Oh, yeah I have a bias towards
9 the underdog, in whatever that group may be. It
10 could be the political minority that their voice
11 isn't being heard or gender. I will always try, I
12 will always go in that direction. I know when
13 reviewing proposals or reviewing scholarship
14 applications my bias usually is for the underserved
15 or the vulnerable communities.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.
17 So I'd like you to tell us more about the
18 San Francisco Foundation. Why you devoted your
19 time to work for this foundation and what you
20 learned from this experience.

21 MS. SINAY: So the San Francisco
22 Foundation, I was living up in the Bay Area at the
23 time and it was a fellowship. It was a great
24 opportunity to actually go into the field of
25 philanthropy. When you work nonprofits the idea of

1 giving away the money sounds so great, because
2 you're always looking for money. And the
3 opportunity presented itself, I submitted my
4 application and was hired. And it was a tough
5 decision, because at the same time that I was
6 offered the fellowship my boyfriend at the time got
7 promoted and had to move to San Diego. But the
8 opportunity was so great to work with the
9 foundation.

10 And my fellowship was short there, because
11 as I was looking at what opportunities there would
12 be in San Diego -- it was supposed to be a one-year
13 to two-year commitment -- what opportunities there
14 were in San Diego. There weren't as many
15 opportunities in that philanthropic or binational
16 civil engagement area at the time. Now there's a
17 lot of great things happening here. And so I
18 received an offer from San Diego Foundation, so I
19 moved down here within 10 months of starting with
20 the San Francisco Foundation.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.

22 You indicate that you do work as a
23 facilitator. Tell me about the training that was
24 involved to get to the point where you could be a
25 professional facilitator.

1 MS. SINAY: Part of it was my work at the
2 same San Diego Foundation. Our grant-making and a
3 lot of our programs were done by volunteers. So
4 you would have a committee of volunteers who made
5 the decisions. And I had to learn to keep my mouth
6 quiet. I had to learn to listen better and bring
7 out the different perspectives. And so I started
8 kind of facilitating meetings. And I noticed that
9 I could get people to speak and gather information
10 in ways that were unique. And so then I did go
11 through different trainings.

12 And when I started my own consulting
13 business I kept being hired to facilitate. What's
14 the difference between an amateur athlete and a
15 professional athlete? Usually it's you get paid,
16 so I got paid. But I'm constantly looking for
17 different models and ways to facilitate, because I
18 don't think one tool works for everybody. And so I
19 usually will bring in either a TOPS model or
20 appreciative inquiry, (phonetic) just different
21 things that work.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So in a realm of
23 facilitation I'd like to hear about a success
24 story, something that you experienced that you
25 would consider to be successful. And also maybe a

1 failure in that realm.

2 MS. SINAY: Yeah, so a success story would
3 be something like the veterans' story that I told
4 earlier. I've been really excited to have the
5 opportunity to work with different organizations in
6 that way including the City Heights Partnership for
7 Children. But more around sometimes just working
8 with parents. I worked with the First 5 and I had
9 to collect information from parents to figure out
10 how First 5 could invest better in parent
11 education. And those convenings, those
12 facilitations were usually parents and grandparents
13 were watching their grandchildren and it could be
14 in multiple languages. And if it was in Spanish
15 and English, I'm okay because I can switch really
16 easily between the two languages. But we would
17 have them sometimes up to five different languages.

18 And one of the things I learned was to
19 look at the individual who was speaking, the parent
20 who was speaking and not the interpreter because
21 sometimes someone would go on for a long time and
22 then the interpreter would say three words. I'm
23 like, "I don't think that was right." And I'd give
24 this look to the interpreter and the parent would
25 laugh and say, "Yeah." And so I'm like, "Okay get

1 me more information." And so that was kind of a
2 success.

3 My favorite story in that regard was we
4 met with Muslim African women. And we were asking
5 them -- I was like oh this is going to be
6 difficult, because the women, we didn't know if
7 they were literate or not. And we didn't know how
8 comfortable they were going to be feeling and
9 telling us their stories. And so I started with,
10 "Think about a time that you were proud of being a
11 parent." And then I had them draw it. "You can
12 draw it or you can write it, but just think about
13 it."

14 And then I had to come to the point of
15 asking them to share. And I was like okay, let's
16 see if this even worked. And I started picking
17 someone to share what they came up with. And every
18 hand went up. And they were just so excited. And
19 I realized at that moment that starting on the
20 positive or coming in and saying, "Okay, what are
21 your problems with your kids?" It was starting
22 with the positives.

23 Times I have failed. The one that jumps out is it
24 was at 6:30. Everyone had to commute there and it
25 took everyone forever to get there. I don't

1 remember if we had food or we didn't have food.
2 And I kind of just rushed the process versus
3 letting the process take time. And I just walked
4 away thinking this one did not come out right at
5 all. And I was able to fail forward. I called the
6 Executive Director the next day and he and I worked
7 together and thought through okay, how do we do
8 this better? And we both agreed that it was a
9 failure. And from there working with the Executive
10 Director I was able to create a new process that
11 now I use often with other organizations to just
12 kind of help them follow along, kind of a strategic
13 planning process.

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you.

15 Madam Chair I have no further questions.

16 MR. DAWSON: Did we lose our Chair?

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Oh, I'm sorry. You did
18 lose me for a second. I am back.

19 Thank you, Mr. Belnap.

20 Mr. Coe?

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

22 Good afternoon Ms. Sinay. Thank you for
23 taking the time to speak with us this afternoon.

24 MS. SINAY: Of course.

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your first essay you

1 describe how your family immigrated to the United
2 States from Mexico. And you talked about that a
3 little briefly before in this interview. I know
4 you were only four years old, but I'm wondering
5 what you remember of that experience. And maybe
6 how your status as an immigrant affected the person
7 you became today.

8 MS. SINAY: Yeah. I mean it obviously
9 affects who I am today. I was four. I can't
10 remember that. I can remember leaving Mexico. My
11 dad had bought me a special gift and he was trying
12 to explain. That's like my last memory of leaving
13 Mexico. My first memory of being in the United
14 States was being with my aunt and uncle in Texas
15 and jumping on their bed. I don't remember much
16 about the drive in between. We actually did drive
17 from Mexico City to Philadelphia. I don't know how
18 my parents did it in a small little car with two
19 kids.

20 But I think my -- I can remember certain
21 things about my education. Usually people didn't
22 assume that I was an immigrant, because I was
23 White. I didn't go to kindergarten so, I mean, I
24 didn't go to preschool to learn English, so I did
25 learn English in the playground and watching TV.

1 And according to my mom I did fine when I got into
2 kindergarten -- I know that I did have -- they
3 would pull me aside to do English Learner classes.
4 And I always kind of didn't like them, because I
5 would be watching the other kids do the fun things.
6 It was usually during art and other periods.

7 But one of my biggest memories as a child
8 was I was excelling in reading. And I was in one
9 of the higher reading groups in first grade. And
10 my mom came to volunteer and my mom had a thick
11 accent and the teachers were kind of, trying --
12 didn't know what to do. It wasn't what they
13 expected. And she didn't follow directions very
14 well. And I don't think she understood the
15 directions. And we were only supposed to read
16 three pages and we ended up reading the whole book.
17 And the next day I was put into the remedial
18 reading class. And I remember just looking and
19 going I've already read this. Why am I reading
20 this again?

21 And so there were some examples like that
22 throughout my life. And mainly just now being an
23 adult I'm able to look back and say, "Oh, that's
24 what was -- it was because I was an immigrant or my
25 mama's accent." Then I was able to figure it out.

1 But I also do have privilege. I mean I'm
2 a white Latina and I've been called on it
3 throughout my life. On the one side when I went
4 from high school to college my peers in high school
5 told me, "You only got into UCLA, because you're a
6 minority." And then when I was at UCLA and wanted
7 to engage with other groups that were minority that
8 were Latinos they'd be like, "Ugh, you're white."

9 And so its made me really have to think
10 through what are my privileges and how can I use
11 that privilege for the greater good? And so I
12 understand I have the privilege of education, being
13 multicultural as well as bilingual. Latinos of my
14 generation, most of them were told not to learn
15 Spanish. And so that also is a privilege that I am
16 fully bilingual.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you for that. Do
18 you think that having a perspective of an immigrant
19 could help the Commission in some way?

20 MS. SINAY: Oh definitely. It helps.
21 Everyone's immigrant experience is different, but
22 we all kind of have stories that we can share. One
23 of my really close friends, her family immigrated
24 from Vietnam the same year as my family. They were
25 refugees. And some things, we ended up bonding

1 because we did come to this country at the same
2 time. And some of the things our parents will say,
3 not necessarily because of the year or the time,
4 but because they were from the outside, considered
5 outsiders.

6 One of the ways I bond with immigrant
7 youth a lot of times is I'll ask them, "So does
8 your mom let you spend the night at anyone's
9 house?" And they'll be like, "Oh no." And I'm
10 like, "Yeah. My mom used to always say, 'Why do
11 you sleep in a stranger's house when you have a
12 perfectly good bed here?'" And that, just the fact
13 that we've had that common experience allows us to
14 have other conversations.

15 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. This has
16 been touched on briefly, but in the activity
17 section of your application you list many volunteer
18 efforts you've been a part of, including three
19 organizations for which you are a founding member.
20 I'm wondering if you can just briefly give us a
21 little bit of information about what these
22 organizations were and why you chose to be a
23 founding member of them.

24 MS. SINAY: Yeah, so all three
25 organizations are giving circles, which means

1 individuals come together and they pool their money
2 together and then give it out to the community
3 collectively. And in all three cases, they were --
4 two of them were Latino giving circles. So there's
5 kind of this stereotype that Latinos are -- need
6 money, need, are always in the need, not as a
7 strong as an asset. And so starting opportunities
8 where we could bring together Latinas and Latinos
9 to really think through, to really show that we had
10 assets and we had wealth and that we could do
11 philanthropy was important to me.

12 And both of them were in San Diego. And
13 they used kind of different models. There's just
14 different models in giving circles, some are give
15 what you can and bring in a lot of people. And
16 others are smaller circles with a minimum amount to
17 give.

18 And there was also Women's Give, which was
19 kind of a different -- we've got a lot of giving
20 circles in San Diego. Women's Give was a larger
21 giving circle in that they used in a creative way
22 of looking at women by ages. And so what you gave
23 depended on how old you were or where you were in
24 your life trajectory.

25 They were all important to me because I

1 feel that we can all be philanthropists, we can
2 give. And sometimes we need to dig a little deeper
3 and think through our values. You can buy a
4 hamburger or you can give that same money to a food
5 bank. You know, just being able to have those
6 conversations in all communities.

7 I always joked around when I was a funder
8 and I was funding organizations I'd say, "Yeah.
9 You come to me and you say that you're going to
10 create individuals. You're going to help
11 individuals be strong and self-sufficient. But
12 then you keep coming to me for funding. Have you
13 gone back to those individuals who are now strong
14 and self-sufficient and ask them to kind of pay it
15 forward?" And so I'm a true believer that everyone
16 has the capacity to be a philanthropist in some way
17 or be engaged in a community.

18 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

19 I want to go back to something that you've
20 mentioned a couple of times this afternoon. And
21 that's the need to be aware of or uncover what
22 biases are present. And I think most of the
23 conversation has been centered around within
24 yourself or within the individual understanding
25 their own biases. And my question is kind of two

1 parts.

2 One is how do you -- because you have
3 given us some examples about how you have
4 identified within yourself some biases, so what
5 strategies do you use to understand that?
6 And the second part of the question is not
7 everybody is as in tune with that skill. And if
8 you're working on a team, like this Commission will
9 be 13 other people and some of them aren't quite as
10 in tune with that skill, what you can do to help
11 make folks more aware of that, so that it doesn't
12 influence maybe unknowingly decisions that the team
13 is making.

14 MS. SINAY: Great question. I think it's
15 about figuring out how to ask the right -- usually
16 you can figure out someone else's bias pretty
17 quickly. And you can't just say, "Hey, you're
18 biased against women or this or that," because the
19 person will get really defensive. But what I
20 usually do is I lead with myself and share what
21 biases I have and how I've uncovered them. That's
22 one way.

23 The other way is to ask questions. As you
24 were reading this what struck you? Or one of my
25 favorite ways of doing it is saying, "Those moments

1 that you feel uncomfortable, that you want to blurt
2 out something or you just feel angry or you feel
3 very uncomfortable write them down, because that's
4 going to be your learning opportunity. And that's
5 where you can go a little deeper."

6 A lot of times people will say something,
7 because they assume everybody else agrees with them
8 or their bias. And just saying, "Tell me a little
9 bit more, I'm not quite understanding you." It's
10 important, as we said it's important to uncover the
11 bias, be it political or other. And once we've
12 uncovered it we need to hold each other accountable
13 and say, "I've noticed that you didn't think five
14 people who spoke were being authentic and all five
15 people are women." I'm just being blunt, but it's
16 being observant about other people's decisions.
17 And figuring out how to ask questions versus saying
18 it point blank.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

20 I want to touch briefly -- I think the
21 other panelists have asked about this in some
22 capacity, but you've had a lot of experience
23 working with or representing or working on behalf
24 of diverse groups of people. And I'm curious what
25 it is that you have learned from your experiences

1 working with those people that you think would make
2 you a particularly effective representative for the
3 diverse populations of California on this
4 Commission?

5 MS. SINAY: Well each of them. All the
6 people that I've had the privilege of working with,
7 the diverse people, do have their unique stories.
8 There are some threads that run through them. But
9 they have all taught me how to listen better and
10 ask better questions. And even figure out exactly
11 -- you know, as I was saying earlier certain things
12 like if we all walk in to do a community group
13 dressed in suits we're not going to get the same
14 input from the community, especially some
15 communities of interest, than if we were to go
16 business casual.

17 And so it's thinking - it's being able to
18 ask certain questions. Some communities, their
19 concept of time is very different than the American
20 concept of time where you show up on time. And so
21 I've learned that when people say, "Call me in the
22 afternoon," to ask, "What time is it, the
23 afternoon, for you?" to just get that clarity. And
24 that goes along with if you're offering food or how
25 you ask questions, when do you speak, what's polite

1 and not polite.

2 And also what people's fears are. I think
3 that's been one of the things that I've been able
4 to help build bridges is to be able to say, "Look
5 things are a little different," for other groups.
6 That question, the way we're thinking about it,
7 isn't going to get us the information we want for
8 these reasons." And so it may be changing the way
9 we look at things.

10 But it's just kind of become part of who I
11 am. And so it's hard to answer your question
12 succinctly.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: I understand. Thank
14 you.

15 I want to go back to something I thought I
16 heard you say in response to one of the standard
17 questions. It was in regards to the -- we've been
18 talking a lot in our interviews about the current
19 situation with COVID-19 and how that could affect
20 the work of the Commission along with that
21 conversation that's been centered on effect on the
22 Census. Could it have some effect on the Census?
23 But most of the potential results of the COVID-19
24 pandemic affecting the work of the Commission has
25 been kind of cast in a negative light. You used

1 the term "opportunities" that could come with this,
2 which is painting it more in a positive manner.
3 And I'm curious if you can expand a little more on
4 that? What type of opportunities do you see that
5 could potentially come out of this situation that
6 is mostly negative?

7 MS. SINAY: Yeah, so as I said at the very
8 beginning I'm an optimist. And I do try to look at
9 opportunities. One of the opportunities that
10 surprised me that I've learned, because I've been
11 spending a lot of time listening -- there's all
12 sorts of webinars and stuff to try to help
13 nonprofits right now. And I know that nonprofits
14 who need those don't have an hour to sit and listen
15 to them, so I've been listening to them and
16 synthesizing the main points and getting them out
17 to the community.

18 And one of the things that they said was,
19 "Make sure that you're making calls right now to
20 your donors." And actually appeals that are phone
21 appeals are higher than ever, because people are
22 home and are hungry to talk to people. And so when
23 you think about the Census I've talked to a few
24 people and say, "Hey, how are you changing your
25 strategies?" And helped them brainstorm on their

1 strategies.

2 And they were like, "Well we're going to
3 start making calls." I'm like, "Well let me tell
4 you what I've heard about fundraising. Let's keep
5 in mind that people are home and they are hungry to
6 do something." So they're hungry to talk to you on
7 the phone as well as probably do the Census. So it
8 is a hard time because we know that face-to-face,
9 knocking on doors is the best way. But this, I
10 believe in the generative power of community in the
11 humans, and we constantly are always thinking of
12 solutions and moving forward in our civic
13 participation or civic engagement.

14 And I think the Commission has this
15 opportunity of the redistricting efforts to build
16 on the Census. So obviously we use the data of the
17 Census, but also the efforts to collect that
18 information. And we could use what the original
19 plans were, which were good plans to collect
20 information. But also learn what came out of
21 having to recreate their outreach plans on the fly,
22 really with barely any time.

23 MS. PELLMAN: We have 2 minutes 50 seconds
24 remaining.

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

1 One further question for you Ms. Sinay.
2 If you were to be appointed to this Commission,
3 which aspects of that role do you think that you
4 would enjoy the most? And which aspects conversely
5 do you think you might perhaps struggle with a
6 little bit?

7 MS. SINAY: I would absolutely thrive in
8 connecting with diverse communities throughout
9 California and hearing their stories and getting
10 their input. I would enjoy looking at the data and
11 trying to connect that to this, what we've learned
12 in speaking to people.

13 And did you also say what will I not like?

14 PANEL MEMBER COE: Yeah, which aspects of
15 the role do you think you might struggle with a
16 little bit?

17 MS. SINAY: I would struggle a little bit
18 with, I don't know if you use the Brown Act or
19 which legal parameters are used. To me sometimes
20 meetings tend to be -- and often -- not as
21 authentic when you have to follow the Brown Act or
22 others. People don't understand why you can't
23 respond or you can't engage in different ways. But
24 I think what I learned with the school board was to
25 ask the question, "Are we doing this because this

1 is how we've always done it? Or do we legally have
2 to do it this way?" And that would actually spark
3 conversations about how can we do things
4 differently.

5 The other piece would be people. Not
6 everyone is going to be happy with the final
7 decision. And that's always kind of hard when
8 people are critiquing the hard work that you do as
9 a group. But on the flip side I would say that we
10 should expect it. If we've done our job well,
11 we've been able to connect with new, you know, more
12 communities of interest and get more perspectives
13 and things will change, minds will change. And
14 that is uncomfortable for people because it might
15 change their -- politically or culturally -- and
16 that part is hard. And so if we weren't critiqued
17 then we know we didn't do our job correctly. And
18 so we should be expecting that.

19 And I think the final thing that I
20 might --

21 MS. PELLMAN: 30 seconds remaining.

22 MS. SINAY: Okay. I know that it is a 10-
23 year term. But most of the work is in the front
24 end. And I think I would want to be engaged all 10
25 years. I think there's opportunities for the

1 Commission to help local redistricting efforts and
2 how do we share our expertise at other levels.

3 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you very much,
4 Ms. Sinay.

5 Madam Chair, no further questions.

6 MR. DAWSON: Do we have the Chair?

7 MS. SINAY: You're on mute.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Oh, there we go. You
9 lost me for just a second. Mr. Dawson, do you have
10 any questions?

11 MR. DAWSON: Just one or two. Thank you
12 Madam Chair.

13 MS. PELLMAN: Mr. Dawson, we have 9
14 minutes 30 seconds remaining.

15 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

16 Ms. Sinay, I really appreciate you
17 mentioning the Public Meeting Act. It's actually
18 the Bagley-Keene Act. But if you are familiar with
19 the Brown Act you're familiar with Bagley-Keene.

20 So one of the things that you had said in
21 response to standard question one was you wanted to
22 back it up and say, "Well first of all let's ask
23 ourselves what do we want to accomplish?"
24 Obviously we need to draw maps or the Commission
25 needs to draw maps. That's what's required in the

1 constitution. But then you also said, "Also to
2 increase civic engagement." And so my question is
3 what is the CRC's role in increasing civic
4 engagement and how should it go about that?

5 MS. SINAY: Well just through the whole
6 process of getting community input is going to be
7 increasing that civic trust. And the more people
8 are involved, kind of like how I said trying to put
9 that excitement of civic participation in my
10 students, I think it's the same as we move forward
11 and engage people in the process and we hear them
12 and we look back.

13 If we do our job right then we should be
14 creating districts that are going to be more
15 representative. And therefore, more people will
16 want to be involved and will feel the opportunity
17 and the possibility to be involved in different
18 ways.

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.
20 You mentioned in your application when you worked
21 at the SF Foundation you helped develop a mapping
22 tool. Can you tell me about that?

23 MS. SINAY: Yes. This was 23 years ago
24 when a lot of the mapping tools that non-mappers
25 could use first started coming out and so it was

1 the GIS system. And what we did was we took Census
2 data and tried to be figuring out exactly where
3 needs were, different data to find out where their
4 needs were. And then using GIS, we put in all this
5 information from our grantees.

6 And so in our naiveté we thought we would pull it
7 up and we would see -- we could see if our funding
8 is going exactly where it needs to and stuff. But
9 what we hadn't quite thought through was a lot of
10 organizations' address isn't necessarily where
11 they're serving the community. And so that process
12 didn't work as well as we had hoped, but it got us
13 thinking through, "Okay we can't just map the
14 physical address, but we need to understand where
15 the grant is." They might be based in San
16 Francisco, but they're actually funding Oakland.
17 They're actually doing their work in Oakland. And
18 so we had to keep coming up with ways to play
19 around with the data.

20 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.
21 That's all I have. Do the panel members have any
22 additional follow-ups? Madam Chair?

23 MS. SINAY: You're on mute.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not have any follow-
25 up questions.

1 Mr. Belnap, do you have any?

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: No follow-up questions.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: And no follow-up

6 questions, Mr. Dawson?

7 MR. DAWSON: Madam Secretary, what's the
8 time?

9 MS. PELLMAN: You've got 5 minutes and 50
10 seconds remaining.

11 MR. DAWSON: All right. Thank you.

12 Ms. Sinay I'd like to offer you the
13 opportunity to make a closing statement to the
14 panel with the time remaining if you wish.

15 MS. SINAY: Sure. I did write a few
16 things down, because I saw you give others. I want
17 to thank you for your good work. You all have
18 worked really, really hard and have really been
19 patient and respectful. People have asked me about
20 the process and have said, "Well, how can someone
21 go through this if they've got to have the high
22 education" -- they are making a lot of assumptions
23 on a bias.

24 And I always tell the story of one of the
25 interactions. I've seen it a couple of times where

1 you've been looking at who to move forward. And it
2 was like okay, we can move this person forward, but
3 I think we have a lot of PhDs, so let's put them in
4 the "maybe." But this person is a mail delivery.
5 And he's got experience on the ground and really
6 understanding the importance of maps and
7 understanding the community and how you have to do
8 that together.

9 And I've heard you a few times say, "All
10 right what would happen if we have too many lawyers
11 or people of a legal background?" And I think that
12 that open process has really helped people
13 understand how committed the three of you and your
14 team have been to making this work. So I thank you
15 for that.

16 The first Citizen Redistricting Commission
17 did an exemplary job. And now we need to look at
18 2020 and using a lot of what they learned. I
19 firmly believe that our community problems and
20 social inequities can be resolved by building on
21 the access of private, public and independent
22 sectors. I believe in the ingenuity of people.
23 And that the Commission through its members will
24 intersect all three sectors and will be able to
25 create a free and fair redistricting process.

1 The results of our political districts
2 being drawn to be more reflective of California's
3 geographic, political, economic and ethnic
4 diversity will be stronger candidates, better
5 policies and a more equitable access to
6 opportunities for all -- really a stronger
7 democracy. Being part of that process for a
8 positive community change that strengthens our
9 democracy is why I'm pursuing this opportunity to
10 be a Commissioner.

11 I'm the right Commissioner at this time
12 because of my vast personal and professional
13 experience, my understanding of the Commission's
14 past successes and my vision for California. In
15 short, this opportunity for me is an opportunity to
16 really thrive. I'd be working with and for all
17 Californians.

18 Thank you again for giving this
19 opportunity to share a little bit more about myself
20 and as well for creating such an amazing process.
21 Thanks.

22 MS. PELLMAN: Ms. Sinay, this is Shauna.

23 MS. SINAY: Hi.

24 MS. PELLMAN: Hi. Could you stay on the
25 line for a few minutes just in case our court

1 reporter has any questions about stuff? Thank you.

2 MR. DAWSON: Did we lose the Chair?

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: We lost her.

4 MR. DAWSON: Are you the Vice Chair?

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah, I am. So as the
6 Vice Chair I'm going to take this meeting into
7 recess. And we're coming back here at 2:59 for a
8 3:00 o'clock interview.

9 (Thereupon the Panel recessed at 2:42 p.m.)

10 (Whereupon the Panel reconvened at 2:59 p.m.)

11 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon, I want to
12 call the Applicant Review Panel meeting back to
13 order. I want to confirm Mr. Coe is on the line.

14 PANEL MEMBER COE: I am, indeed, Madam
15 Chair.

16 CHAIR DICKISON: And Mr. Belnap is in the
17 room?

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yes, I'm here.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

20 I'd like to welcome Ms. Caroline Farrell. Did I
21 say that correctly?

22 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Welcome for your
24 interview. And we're going to jump right in to the
25 five standard questions, so I'm going to turn the

1 meeting over to Mr. Chris Dawson to read you those.

2 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 Ms. Farrell, I'm going to read you five
4 standard questions that the panel has requested
5 each applicant respond to. Are you ready?

6 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

7 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills
8 and attributes should all Commissioners possess?
9 What skills or competencies should the Commission
10 possess collectively? Of the skills, attributes
11 and competencies that each Commissioner should
12 possess, which do you possess? In summary, how
13 will you contribute to the success of the
14 Commission?

15 MS. FARRELL: Thank you. In terms of the
16 skills and competencies of the Commission as a
17 whole I think commitment to the fairness of the
18 process I think is really important. I also think
19 the ability to process a lot of facts and weigh
20 them in, like, good analytical thinking, I think is
21 also really important, because you're going to be
22 collecting a lot of information and getting
23 different viewpoints whether it be from communities
24 themselves or from the Census and from voter
25 information. So I think being able to synthesize

1 all of this in terms of good analytical processing
2 is important.

3 And then I also think the ability to
4 listen and the ability to not just listen just to
5 hear but listen for meaning and listen to try and
6 find common ground. I think that's also something
7 that's really important. What people are saying
8 but also like why they're saying it and how you can
9 sort of understand on a deeper, deeper level.

10 In terms of which attributes I possess, I
11 would like to think I possess many of them.
12 Commitment to the process definitely in terms of
13 fair district lines and making sure that they make
14 sense according to the Census data as well as
15 according to communities' understandings of
16 themselves, because at the end of the day that's
17 how the fairness of the Commission is going to be
18 judged. And so I think that's important to be able
19 to hold to that throughout the process.
20 I think being able to process a lot of information.
21 And I have a lot of experience with analytical
22 thinking. My career in terms of being an attorney
23 requires a lot of analytical analysis of applying
24 facts and law together.

25 And then also in terms of listening I

1 think a lot of my work has been working with low-
2 income communities and communities of color who are
3 often not necessarily or often called disadvantaged
4 communities or underrepresented communities in
5 certain circumstances. And being able to listen to
6 them and to be able to translate their experiences
7 into policy or into advocacy has been something
8 that's been really important. So being able to
9 listen not just for what they're saying, but also
10 in a deeper level. And being able to advocate and
11 have government respond to those needs in maybe new
12 ways. And so that requires a certain amount of
13 listening as well and listening for deeper meaning.

14 And so I would like to think that in terms
15 of what I can contribute is my experience in those
16 areas of applying law to facts, being able to
17 translate complicated legal concepts into everyday
18 language that people can understand and also vice
19 versa, being able to translate peoples' experience
20 into more complicated policy decisions. I think
21 being able to go back and forth both ways is really
22 important.

23 And then also my commitment to the
24 process. I feel really strongly that in order for
25 representative democracy to work we really do need

1 to have political districts and being able to have
2 a political voice that reflects their lived
3 experience in their communities.

4 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

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

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

20 MS. FARRELL: Yes, so I think that part of
21 my desire to apply for the Redistricting Commission
22 was in part because of the very polarized nature of
23 our political system. And I think it's really
24 important to be transparent about one's own
25 political beliefs, but at the same time not be

1 ideological about them. To really be open to the
2 fact that there are people with different positions
3 and different experiences and different ideas about
4 how governments should work, how society should
5 work. And it's really important that there be
6 space for all of those viewpoints.

7 And I think in terms of some of the
8 characteristics that I possesses is I am open and I
9 am understanding of different political views.
10 That doesn't necessarily mean that I change my
11 political views, but it does shift how I might
12 engage with somebody, it may shift how I listen to
13 them, it may shift how I try and find common ground
14 so that we are focused on where we have common
15 interests and not so much where we differ.

16 And one of the things that I have been
17 proud of in my career is that even though I may
18 have opposing counsel, or I may be on opposite
19 sides of the issue from someone, I still have their
20 respect and I still respect them. And we can still
21 have a positive working relationship with each
22 other. And I think that ability to make things not
23 personal but focus on where we might have interests
24 is something that I think is beneficial for all of
25 the redistricting Commissioners. But I think

1 that's something that I have experience with and
2 shown in my career.

3 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

8 MS. FARRELL: As I was thinking about this
9 question I think the biggest question or the
10 biggest problem would be a lack of confidence in
11 the work of the Commission itself. And the lack of
12 fairness or perception of the lack of fairness in
13 the process. I think things that I would do would
14 be to make sure that there is a clear record of the
15 proceedings. That there is transparency in the
16 proceedings. So that if there is an issue of
17 somebody is making a recommendation, being upfront
18 and clear about the motivation and the reasoning
19 behind that recommendation. And making sure that
20 that's borne out in the facts before the
21 Commission. And that it complies to the legal
22 standards that the Commission is being held to. I
23 think it has to be a clear and transparent record
24 of how the Commission goes about making its
25 decisions.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

8 Tell us the goal of the project, what your
9 role in the group was, and how the group worked
10 through any conflicts that arose.
11 What lessons would you take from this group
12 experience to the Commission if selected?

13 MS. FARRELL: There were a few examples
14 that came to mind. I think there have been a
15 couple of recent ones and we've worked with some
16 community groups in Kern County to advocate for
17 improvements, infrastructure improvements whether
18 it be for road or for flooding or in some cases for
19 park improvements. And we've had to work
20 collaboratively with the community groups, which
21 are predominantly low-income communities of color
22 as well as with County Board of Supervisors. And a
23 lot of it has been around relationship building.
24 And there the community members involved, the
25 supervisors involved, my own staff who have been

1 more directly involved, all have a variety of
2 different interests, they have different
3 backgrounds, they have different political
4 philosophies. And it was really around finding
5 ways to bring the parties together around a common
6 goal.

7 And my job in that, my role specifically
8 was to work with staff for the organization I work
9 with, the Center on Race, Poverty & The Environment
10 and kind of advising them on how to move this
11 process along. And making sure that we were being
12 responsive to the community and that we were also
13 being responsive to the county in terms of any
14 requests for information or any relationship
15 building that needed to be done.

16 And I think at first there was a little
17 bit of not resistance but some tentativeness around
18 working together. But we worked through it in
19 persistence over time. And I think showing up and
20 working through differences was a really important
21 lesson. I think also not shutting down in the face
22 of maybe opposition was another important lesson
23 that came out of that process.

24 Similarly, we were part of another process with the
25 Public Utilities Commission where we were hoping to

1 get communities in southern Tulare County connected
2 to the natural gas grid or have an alternative
3 renewable energy source, because currently they're
4 on propane. And at the time the process was really
5 about working with the community to find out like
6 which fuel source they wanted. Did they want
7 natural gas? Did they want renewable energy? And
8 there wasn't consensus. There wasn't consensus
9 within the agency and there wasn't consensus within
10 the community about which fuel source they might
11 want to pursue.

12 And one of the roles that we played and
13 that I sort of helped staff kind of navigate is
14 this idea that we needed to make sure the process
15 was open for the community to decide which fuel
16 source they wanted to pursue. That it wasn't up to
17 us as advocates and it wasn't up to the Commission
18 to predetermine that, but it was really up to the
19 community to sort of figure that out. And that our
20 role was around providing information and just
21 being open to the community discussion.

22 And the lesson from that was again things
23 take time. You don't always get the consensus at
24 the moment. But the idea is how are we making sure
25 the process allows for the community to have the

1 time, to get more information, to have more
2 discussions, to make more of a thoughtful decision.
3 And so our role was really around how do we make
4 sure that time exists in the process.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

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

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

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

19 MS. FARRELL: Well, in terms of skills and
20 attributes I think again as I have said, being able
21 to listen and to listen for meaning. I also think
22 a bit of humility is also important in terms of an
23 attribute, understanding that you have your own
24 perspective and your own (indiscernible) and your
25 own ideas. But also being open and understanding

1 of other people's experiences.

2 And my career has been largely based on
3 working with people that are very different from
4 myself. Much of my work has been around
5 relationship building and community building with
6 low-income communities and communities of color,
7 often predominantly farmworker communities. And a
8 lot of that has been around relationship building
9 and trust building.

10 And the things that I've done in order to
11 cultivate those relationships successfully have
12 been to be present, listen, to be engaged, to be
13 responsive. And also to not assume that I have all
14 the answers but that we can co-create answers
15 together to address the issues that they may have.
16 And so that requires a certain amount of humility
17 and respect of other people's experiences.

18 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. At this point we
19 will go to panel questions. Each panel member will
20 have 20 minutes to pose his or her questions.

21 And we will start with the Chair, Ms.
22 Dickinson.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

24 Good afternoon, Mrs. Farrell. So I see
25 here you have been with the Center on Race, Poverty

1 & The Environment since '99. Is that since you've
2 graduated from law school?

3 MS. FARRELL: Yes, that's correct.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. Can you tell me a
5 little bit about this organization and what it
6 does?

7 MS. FARRELL: Sure. So the Center on
8 Race, Poverty & The Environment is a 30-year-old
9 environmental justice organization. And our
10 mission is to achieve environmental justice and
11 healthy sustainable communities through collective
12 action and the law.

13 And we have a variety of strategies that
14 we use in our work. One is around community
15 organizing and leadership development. One is
16 around legal representation. One is around policy
17 advocacy. And another is around coalition
18 building, so we do a lot of coalition work
19 throughout the state and throughout the San Joaquin
20 Valley where I'm based.

21 And we have three major campaign areas.
22 So one is around climate justice, looking at the
23 state climate policy. And we also, within that, do
24 work around oil and gas development in the San
25 Joaquin Valley. The second area is around toxic-

1 free communities where we look at pesticides as
2 well as hazardous waste disposal and clean-up. And
3 then the third area is around forgotten voices,
4 which is our kind of land-use infrastructure work.
5 And in all three of those areas we're working with
6 low-income communities and communities of color.
7 And our goal is to reduce exposure to environmental
8 harm as well as to build the capacity of community
9 members to advocate for themselves around issues.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And then you also
11 just taught at Occidental College.

12 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

13 CHAIR DICKISON: Are you going to be doing
14 that going forward? I see you have an end date.

15 MS. FARRELL: I was on contract for one
16 semester last fall.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

18 MS. FARRELL: Unclear if that will
19 continue.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: So I see in your
21 application that you serve on the boards of three
22 different organizations. And that most of that
23 work, volunteer work is targeted to improving
24 public goods and creating opportunity for
25 participation in the public process. What drew you

1 to that kind of work?

2 MS. FARRELL: Well I think very early on I
3 was really interested in public policy. That was
4 one of the reasons why I wanted to go to law
5 school. And my thought around it was that public
6 policy works when there are different voices within
7 the community represented in the decision-making
8 process.

9 And so what I found as I went to law
10 school and I was doing my internships was that
11 because of power, because of money, because of
12 resources, because of time not everybody was
13 represented within political decision-making
14 processes or policy processes. And so when I left
15 law school I really thought about how do we help?
16 How can I help people who are most kind of
17 marginalized in the decision-making processes
18 actually participate? And participate in an
19 informed and meaningful way. And that's what drew
20 me to the work that I do.

21 But it also has drawn me to other areas.
22 So with Act for Women and Girls, which is a group
23 in Visalia, they're very committed to helping young
24 women of color in Tulare County build the skills
25 and leadership capacities to engage in public

1 process. But also to find political or
2 professional opportunities for themselves, whether
3 they want to focus on their education, whether they
4 want to focus on social justice, whether they want
5 to focus on teaching. All of it is sort of around
6 building their leadership capacity to advance in
7 whatever way they want. And that really drew me to
8 that organization as well as to the work in general
9 of making sure people have the opportunity to
10 participate in civic engagement processes in the
11 way they want, but also to kind of carve their
12 path.

13 Similarly with Communities for a Better
14 Environment, that's an environmental justice
15 organization. And they're based in the Bay as well
16 as in Huntington Park in Los Angeles and Wilmington
17 as well. And they're really focused on building
18 leadership within youth as well as communities of
19 color within those regions of the state. And
20 making sure that they are engaged in public
21 processes, that they are informed, that they have
22 training, that they have resources to engage. And
23 that's been really meaningful to me just to be able
24 to support them even though they are in different
25 regions of the state.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: So with them being in
2 different regions of the state have you done work
3 in different regions of the state?

4 MS. FARRELL: Not directly, no. I haven't
5 actually worked on projects directly in other parts
6 of the state.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. You also said that
8 you offer trainings to community members. What
9 type of training do you provide? And so what
10 community members are you referring?

11 MS. FARRELL: Sure. So we work with a
12 variety of different community groups in the San
13 Joaquin Valley. So a few examples are Committee
14 for a Better Arvin, Committee for a Better Shafter,
15 Delano Guardians, Committee for Progress in Lamont.
16 And so these different community groups primarily
17 made up of low-income communities of color.

18 And the trainings kind of run the gamut.
19 So we've done trainings on the Brown Act and Public
20 Records Act so that people have a sense of like
21 what the open-meeting laws are and what their
22 rights are to access information. We have done
23 trainings on the California Environmental Quality
24 Act. We have done trainings on air quality and
25 pesticides, which gives substantive information

1 about the quality of the air, what are the -- in
2 specifically in the Valley -- what are the
3 geological and geographic factors that contribute
4 to air quality issues in the Valley as well as
5 different sources of pollution; that is different
6 strategies for reducing pollution.

7 And then we also break down different laws
8 that might be impact to communities. So when
9 California was looking at its Climate Policy, part
10 of it was giving community trainings on what the
11 Scoping Plan for the California Air Resources Board
12 was looking at. What are the different parts of
13 it? What are the different strategies?

14 Right now we're doing a lot of community trainings
15 on the County General Plan. They're going through
16 an update process and so we're looking at what is
17 the General Plan? What kind of policies are in the
18 General Plan and how can communities engage? So a
19 lot of it is like information-sharing.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: Oh, okay. Okay. So
21 you've done quite a bit of work with various types
22 of communities. What have you learned in doing
23 that work that will help you in reaching out to
24 communities throughout the state?

25 MS. FARRELL: Well I think a lot of it is,

1 as I have said before, like listening to what
2 communities are interested in. Part of how we
3 decide what our trainings are going to be on is we
4 survey communities about what they are interested
5 in.

6 I think the other piece is not coming in
7 with too many assumptions about how a community
8 will feel about an issue or not feel about an
9 issue. And really just be open to the feedback
10 that you're receiving without too many preconceived
11 notions.

12 And I think the other is also just being
13 really clear with people and transparent about
14 providing different sides of an issue. But if we
15 have an organizational preference for a particular
16 solution or a particular viewpoint I think it's
17 also being really clear about what that is. And
18 not trying to shy away from our own viewpoints, but
19 also being able to say that doesn't have any impact
20 on what the community decides to do. It's got to
21 be up to them how they make the decision. And so I
22 think it's also being willing to step back and let
23 communities decide for themselves and not try and
24 impose decisions upon them.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. And I think you

1 had talked about that a little bit in your essay on
2 impartiality. You talked about making sure that
3 you're careful not to impose your views on
4 community members. And that be aware of your own
5 position. Can you provide an example of a
6 community that made the decision that you weren't
7 exactly -- it wasn't in line with your point of
8 view? And kind of tell us what your point of view
9 was in that as well.

10 MS. FARRELL: Sure. So I think the one
11 example is in this public utilities process that I
12 had talked about where we were looking at fuel
13 sources in the communities of Lamont -- or I'm
14 sorry, the communities of Arvin -- I'm sorry,
15 Allensworth, Alpaugh and Ducor were the three
16 communities that we were working in, low-income
17 farmworker communities.

18 And as part of the public utility process
19 there was an opportunity to look at potentially
20 natural gas connections or renewable energy
21 projects. And we sort of presented these options
22 to community members. And initially a lot of
23 community members were interested in natural gas.
24 Now as an environmental justice organization that's
25 then looking at the impacts of natural gas versus

1 renewable energy, as an organization we were very
2 much focused on, we were hoping the communities
3 would choose renewable energy. But they were much
4 more interested in looking at what were the
5 possibilities around natural gas.

6 And so we had to kind of take a step back
7 and say, "Look this isn't about what we want, this
8 is about what the communities want. And they have
9 been wanting to be connected to the grid, the
10 natural gas grid for 30 years. And so we need to
11 sort of make sure that the process is open from the
12 exploration of this possibility. It's not our
13 choice, but it's not our choice to make." And so
14 that's what we did. We sort of pivoted to being
15 more focused on making sure the community had as
16 much information as they needed to explore the
17 natural gas option.

18 And at the end of the day the communities
19 after weighing everything and having information
20 and having that openness made their selection. And
21 all three of them I think went towards, eventually
22 decided on natural gas -- or I'm sorry, decided on
23 renewable energy. But that was only after it
24 became clear that that was how the kind of
25 feasibility studies were breaking down as opposed

1 to any one particular interest saying, "Oh you've
2 got to go towards renewable energy." But it was we
3 stepped back and just let the communities make the
4 decision.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you.

6 MS. PELLMAN: You have 5 minutes, 34
7 seconds remaining.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

9 So just in the recent days there's been
10 some public comments that came in. And I just
11 wanted to give you the opportunity if you wanted
12 to, to respond to those.

13 MS. FARRELL: Sure. Yeah. I think the
14 public comments have -- well one, I wasn't entirely
15 surprised there may be public comment. You know,
16 the work that I do in this very partisan time that
17 we live in, some people just don't agree with it.
18 And I completely understand that. And I've been
19 upfront about my own political views.

20 At the same time I feel like what my job
21 is in terms of advocating for particular issues,
22 it's not really -- I don't see that as being part
23 of the redistricting process. The redistricting
24 process looks at drawing political lines over ten,
25 for ten years. And it transcends particular

1 issues. And I think throughout my career I've been
2 able to show that I can have my own viewpoint, but
3 I can also be open to other viewpoints. And I take
4 those the viewpoints seriously. And I find areas
5 of common interest.

6 I live in -- no, I have these political
7 viewpoints and I live in a very sort of generally
8 conservative area of California. And find ways to
9 work with people because it's necessary in order to
10 achieve the things that we want to do. And so I've
11 found ways to set aside my own personal views in
12 order to achieve sort of a common goal. And I feel
13 like that's true with redistricting. And people
14 may disagree with me on a particular issue. But I
15 think we all have an interest in free and fair
16 elections. And my goal would be to work with the
17 other Commissioners to achieve that. And I think
18 I'm capable of doing it.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: So the first eight
20 Commissioners are selected randomly. And then they
21 are tasked with selecting the remaining six
22 Commissioners to round out the Commission. If you
23 were selected as one of the first eight what would
24 you look for in those other six Commissioners?

25 MS. FARRELL: Well I think part of it

1 would be looking at who is within the eight. Are
2 there any particular gaps in terms of geography?
3 Are there any particular gaps in terms of like race
4 or ethnicity, gender? If there are any gaps in
5 terms of just like viewpoints? Recognizing that
6 different people from different backgrounds and
7 different experiences and different ideas that are
8 representative of the state as a whole can be
9 really necessary, I think, for the success of the
10 Commission. So part of it would be seeing where
11 the gaps might be from the eight initial. And then
12 looking at those things like demographics and
13 geography and sort of a viewpoint.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Okay, I don't
15 have any further questions at this point.

16 Mr. Belnap?

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good afternoon Ms.
18 Farrell. I want to connect a few dots. In your
19 application I've got a few questions, just mostly
20 about dates and where you're at, at certain times.
21 So at Bates College you graduated with a Political
22 Science Bachelor's in 1994. It looks like two
23 years later you went started your J.D. from Golden
24 Gate and got that in 1999. So that two-year gap
25 between the bachelor's and starting your law

1 program, what were you doing then?

2 MS. FARRELL: Yeah. So I worked. So the
3 summer right after I graduated from Bates College I
4 went to the Monterey Institute of International
5 Studies for a summer program in Japanese. So it
6 was this intensive program. And that was my first
7 experience in California. And so living in the
8 Monterey area of course you can't help but fall in
9 love with California.

10 But I wasn't able to find a job right
11 after that to stay. So I moved back to the Boston
12 area and lived with my parents and worked at Worlds
13 Learning. And that was a nonprofit that was based
14 in Vermont, but we arranged international elder
15 hostel programs. So people 55 and over had the
16 opportunity to do like homestays in addition to
17 international learning programs. And so I did that
18 for about nine months.

19 And then I worked as an English teacher in
20 Japan for a language school called NOVA. And
21 during this time between while I was working in
22 Boston and then also getting -- I was also looking
23 at opportunities to teach in Japan -- I was also
24 looking at law school and whether or not that was
25 the right fit. And so I had applied to law

1 schools, many of them in California based on my
2 experience in Monterey. And I decided to defer for
3 a year while I went to Japan. And then at the end
4 of my contract in Japan, came back and went to
5 Golden Gate in '96. I started in '96 and then
6 graduated in '99.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.
8 Now I'm curious. Do you speak Japanese?

9 MS. FARRELL: Not anymore. At the time I
10 could hold a basic conversation and get around on
11 the trains.

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. I'm also
13 curious about the Center on Race, Poverty & The
14 Environment. You've described its mission and I
15 understand that. But is it located in Bakersfield?

16 MS. FARRELL: Yeah. We have an office in
17 Emeryville and we have an office in Delano,
18 California.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

20 MS. FARRELL: So those are our two
21 offices.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: But you're located in
23 Bakersfield?

24 MS. FARRELL: I live in Bakersfield. Yes.

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And you're the

1 Executive Director, so do you commute or how does
2 that work?

3 MS. FARRELL: Yeah, I commute to Delano.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Oh, Okay.

5 MS. FARRELL: Which is about 30 miles
6 north.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. I'm still
8 curious about the Center. You obviously are going
9 to have expenses. You indicated in the application
10 it's a 12-staff operation. Where does the center
11 get its funding?

12 MS. FARRELL: We get funding from various
13 foundations and individual donors. Our foundation
14 funding partners are like the California Endowment,
15 the Sierra Health Foundation, the 11th Hour Project
16 -- let me
17 see -- the California Wellness Foundation. So some
18 of the sort of California health foundations
19 support us as well as small donors. And we
20 document this on our 990s that we file with the IRS
21 every year. So we don't have any sort of large
22 funders, we have like many different foundations
23 that fund us.

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Now does the
25 Center engage in lawsuits, and do any of its

1 revenue come from lawsuits?

2 MS. FARRELL: Occasionally when we win
3 they come from lawsuits, but we do file lawsuits.
4 We have had like a couple of recent California
5 Environmental Quality Act lawsuit successes. We
6 often co-counsel with other organizations, so we
7 only collect part of the attorneys' fees depending
8 on our contribution to the case.

9 And I would say that litigation was a
10 bigger part of our organization probably about five
11 or ten years ago. I would say in the recent past
12 we've filed maybe one or two cases. I think right
13 now we have two active cases and we just resolved
14 one. And that's probably the most litigation we've
15 had in about five years.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. And
17 when you do engage in litigation does it involve
18 governmental entities like cities, counties,
19 special districts? Are they the ones that you're
20 bringing lawsuits against?

21 MS. FARRELL: Usually yes. Usually
22 they're under like the California Environmental
23 Quality Act, so it may be a county or a city. And
24 then sometimes it is like a Clean Air Act lawsuit,
25 which may be against either the California Air

1 Resources Board or the San Joaquin Valley Unified
2 Air Pollution Control District. So they tend to be
3 against government entities.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And you've been
5 with the center for now, is it a 20 years?

6 MS. FARRELL: Uh-huh, yes.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah, 20 years. So
8 you're the Executive Director now. But when you
9 came into the organization were you a lawyer or how
10 did you come into the organization? And how did
11 you grow to become the Executive Director?

12 MS. FARRELL: So when I started I was a
13 staff attorney. And I think I might have been
14 called the Directing Attorney of the Delano office.
15 But I was the only attorney, so I was directing
16 myself. So they considered me a staff attorney.
17 And I was in that role for about eight years. And
18 then we began to do a little -- we had a strategic
19 plan and we began to do a little restructuring.
20 And I became the Assistant Director. And the
21 Founder of the organization was Luke Cole. And he
22 had started the organization in 1989, based in the
23 Bay Area. And in 1998 is when he opened the Delano
24 office. And then about a year later I started
25 there after I had finished law school and the bar.

1 And over the course of time we sort of built out
2 the program in Delano and had more community
3 organizers on staff. And it was less around
4 litigation and more around community organizing and
5 community building. And we had developed like a
6 few different programs and campaigns. And so at
7 the time it sort of seemed like the organizational
8 structure was such that it was time to have an
9 assistant director. And based on my experience and
10 my familiarity with the programs and my helping to
11 actually develop them I took that role as Assistant
12 Director.

13 And then about four or five months later
14 Luke went on sabbatical and the sabbatical was for
15 four months. And to kind of keep all the systems
16 running, I was sort of the Acting Executive
17 Director for those four months. And unfortunately
18 while he was on sabbatical he died in a car crash
19 and so that created -- you know, he wasn't coming
20 back. And so then I worked with the Board to
21 figure out a process for how are we going to
22 permanently have an Executive Director. And so
23 after going through that process I was hired as the
24 Executive Director.

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. That

1 fills in some dots for me.

2 In your time as a staff attorney and also
3 maybe as Executive Director have you personally
4 participated in lawsuits against any local
5 government entities, cities, counties?

6 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Which ones?

8 MS. FARRELL: So early on I think some of
9 my first cases were against the counties of Kern,
10 the counties of Tulare, the County of Kings. I've
11 been involved in a few lawsuits against Kern County
12 since then. I was involved in some legal
13 challenges with the California Air Resources Board.
14 And I think I may have been on pleadings for a
15 number of cases against Kern and Tulare County
16 recently. But I haven't been as actively involved
17 in the case, but I've been on the pleadings of
18 them.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So I've
20 personally never been involved in a lawsuit, but
21 I'm guessing that it can get rather contentious.
22 Maybe it doesn't have to. But do you feel like
23 there is any ill will still within you or within
24 any of these counties or government entities that
25 you participated with? And any ill will that we

1 should be aware of?

2 MS. FARRELL: With the counties themselves
3 I don't think so. I mean, to be honest one of the
4 things that I try and do like when I'm doing
5 lawsuits generally is I don't try and play games or
6 be unreasonable. I really just allow the case to
7 kind of speak for itself. And so I've never been,
8 I hope I've never been like disrespectful towards
9 any of my co-counsel or any of the parties that
10 have been involved. And in fact I think in Kern
11 County I've always had a good relationship with the
12 county counsels and the county Planning Director.
13 We've been able to work collaboratively on things
14 and I think we have a mutual respect for each
15 other.

16 One of the interesting things was early on
17 when I was suing the county early in my career the
18 County Counsel, a Bernie Barman for Kern County,
19 had always said, "Oh you're the polite one or
20 you're the -- " And then I saw him recently, like
21 a couple of or maybe a year, year-and-a-half ago at
22 a fundraiser in Kern County. And he came right
23 over and he remembered me and we had a good
24 conversation.

25 And I think one of the things I've always

1 found interesting is that some of my opposing
2 counsel have invited me to be on panels that get
3 organized by the State Bar where they try and have
4 people from opposing sides of a case or opposing
5 sides of an issue actually speak to an audience of
6 lawyers as part of a continuing education program.
7 And I've always found it really funny that they
8 contact me to ask me to be on these panels. And I
9 think part of it is a testament to the fact that I
10 don't play games. I'm not trying to be
11 unreasonable. I'm not trying to score points, that
12 I am trying to be fair even within this kind of
13 contentious process where we're on opposing sides
14 of an issue.

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you for that
16 response.

17 So you have focused your career on
18 environmental justice and you've talked about that
19 today. How has this endeavor increased your
20 understanding and appreciation for California's
21 diversity?

22 MS. FARRELL: Well I think it's put me in
23 contact with a lot of different parts of
24 California. I grew up outside of Boston in this
25 sort of suburban and metropolitan area. And when I

1 moved to California I lived in Monterey and I lived
2 in the Bay Area. And since I started at the center
3 I've moved down to the San Joaquin Valley.

4 And so I've been able to experience much
5 of California that I think a lot of Californians
6 haven't really gotten to experience in terms of
7 living in urban areas as well as rural areas and
8 having an appreciation for the people in both parts
9 of California. And also understanding like the
10 different issues and the different experiences that
11 come along with being in such different places.
12 And I get to work with low-income communities and
13 communities of color, I also get to work with like
14 agricultural interests, I get to work with people
15 of Fresno and in the northern part of the Valley as
16 well as the southern part of the Valley, and even
17 within the Valley there is great diversity. So
18 I've been able to I think live in and work in and
19 see a lot of the different parts of California and
20 the different interests that are involved.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

22 I have no further questions.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

24 Mr. Coe?

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: Good afternoon, Ms.

1 Farrell. Thank you for taking the time to speak
2 with us this afternoon.

3 MS. FARRELL: Thank you.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your first essay you
5 describe volunteering on voter registration drives,
6 monitoring polls and driving people to polling
7 places if they lived too far away to get there and
8 they didn't have transportation. What is it that
9 motivates you to seek out these types of volunteer
10 efforts?

11 MS. FARRELL: Well, I think it's I've
12 always been interested in sort of democracy. When
13 I was a kid I read a lot of history. And part of
14 what I was interested in, in going to law school
15 was learning more about sort of how laws kind of
16 reflect the values of society and laws and
17 elections kind of go hand-in-hand in terms of
18 people being able to participate in the process.
19 And I just always felt like it was -- and I will
20 say the other thing I did a lot of, part of my
21 history reading was doing a lot of reading around
22 the Civil Rights Act and sort of voter engagement
23 and how important voting was to achieving civil
24 rights. And this idea that it was really important
25 that people have access to voting and to have

1 access to the political process in order to improve
2 their lives. And so that's really what got me
3 interested in just making it possible for people to
4 get there. And just cast their ballot and to do it
5 in a way that was open and free from sort of
6 indecision or restriction that followed the law. I
7 felt like that's the only way we can have
8 confidence in the system is if we have confidence
9 in the electoral process.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. I
11 want to apologize if I'm coming through choppy.
12 I'm not sure if I am. Our Internet source has gone
13 down. I'm using a backup hotspot right now, which
14 isn't quite as good, so hopefully you can hear me
15 okay.

16 I wanted to also touch on, as my
17 colleagues have, your role with the center on
18 Center on Race, Poverty & The Environment. They
19 asked several of my questions regarding that. But
20 my question is do you think that your experiences
21 with the organization could be an asset to the
22 Commission in its work?

23 MS. FARRELL: I think so. I think working
24 at the center has given me -- a lot of the tools
25 that we use for community engagement I think could

1 be effective and applicable on the Commission just
2 in terms of listening, in terms of understanding,
3 communities and understanding like meeting
4 communities where they are. Like not necessarily
5 trying to prejudge, but really being open to
6 meeting communities where they are and learning
7 from communities. I think those are all things
8 that I have experience with and that working at the
9 center has helped me develop.

10 I think the other thing I mean, as I was saying a
11 lot of our work in with the center is working with
12 people who don't agree with us and working on
13 issues that are sometimes contentious. And knowing
14 how to deal with that and knowing how to
15 depersonalize those things.

16 And to really be open I think is also very
17 important because people will likely be engaging
18 with the Commission with their own varying degrees
19 of interest. And being able to kind of set aside
20 personal interest is something that I have a lot of
21 experience with in terms of just being able to
22 navigate the different systems and different
23 processes within the Valley. You know, and having
24 experience dealing with potential disagreements and
25 finding ways through that. I think those are all

1 experiences that I've had with the center.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: So I'd like to ask that
3 same question, but kind of flip it on its head. Do
4 you think that your experiences, your role with the
5 center could somehow be a detriment to the work of
6 the Commission?

7 MS. FARRELL: Well I think just in terms
8 of some of the public comments that have been
9 received in terms of people potentially not viewing
10 the Commission as being unbiased because I have a
11 particular -- I'm on record as having a particular
12 point of view or particular advocacy around
13 different issues -- I think that certainly be seen
14 as being a detriment to the Commission in terms of
15 confidence.

16 At the same time I also feel like that's
17 more of a reflection of the polarized nature of
18 just our political landscape rather than my
19 particular qualifications or the Commission in
20 general. I mean, I think that's something that
21 runs the risk. Even if people are not open about
22 their political perspectives I think some ways a
23 lack of transparency around your political leanings
24 could also be (Indiscernible.)

25 So I think the biggest challenge in terms

1 of the center is that I do have a public record of
2 certain viewpoints on different contentions
3 environmental and civil rights issues that are
4 flashpoints at the moment.

5 PANEL MEMBER COE: So in some of your
6 discussions this afternoon and also in your essays
7 you talk about experiences having worked with
8 diverse groups of people and getting to hear
9 perspectives of different groups and what matters
10 to them. What is it that you think you've learned
11 the most from these interactions that would make
12 you an effective representative for the diverse
13 people in the state of California on this
14 Commission?

15 MS. FARRELL: I think that there's -- I
16 mean one of the key lessons has been that there is
17 just a lot of wisdom in communities. You may think
18 you know because you've gone to school or because
19 you've read or studied a particular issue or a
20 particular area. But there's a lot of wisdom
21 within the communities themselves that I think it's
22 important to value and to give weight to. Because
23 I think often we tend not to, and I think that's a
24 mistake. So I think that's been one of the biggest
25 lessons that I have learned.

1 And then the other, I think, is that
2 sometimes consensus takes time. You may enter into
3 a discussion where you think the resolution will be
4 easy or -- and it's not. Or you may adjourn to a
5 discussion that seems really divisive. And you
6 think there's no possible way that you're going to
7 come to an agreement. But then over time just kind
8 of showing up and being willing to engage in the
9 difficulty of working together, I think over time
10 you can find a way forward and solution. And so I
11 think giving it the time and not prematurely
12 shutting down I think is also really important.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. I want to
14 touch on the concept "the communities of interest"
15 for a moment. I believe that Ms. Dickison asked
16 you some questions regarding those earlier. And
17 about the different skills or abilities you have
18 that may help in identifying communities throughout
19 the state.

20 My question is in regards to the fact that
21 some communities are less obvious, harder to
22 locate, less engaged. And how do you think the
23 Commission can go about inadvertently overlooking
24 some communities that may be less obvious and
25 harder to locate?

1 MS. FARRELL: How to overcome?

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: How to avoid
3 inadvertently overlooking harder to locate
4 communities of interest.

5 MS. FARRELL: I think I think part of it
6 is sort of connecting to resources on the ground,
7 different networks of people on the ground; whether
8 that be churches or civic organizations or
9 organizations that work with this sort of
10 disenfranchised or hard-to-reach communities.
11 Because often the hard-to-reach communities are
12 hard to reach because they don't necessarily belong
13 to a particular network. And so part of is working
14 with trusted messengers to get, to engage and do
15 outreach. So I think having an understanding of
16 trusted messengers and also knowing, connecting to
17 maybe unlikely organizations that may have a deeper
18 connection in the community in order to do sort of
19 outreach and engagement. And to make sure they're
20 not overlooked. So I think it's sometimes looking
21 at the unusual suspects.

22 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. you
23 (Indiscernible.) some of those same communities
24 that would be hard to locate are hard to locate
25 because it wasn't engaged, because they aren't

1 necessarily comfortable engaging with government or
2 with groups like this for a variety of reasons.
3 But since perspective is such an important -- the
4 perspective of the people of the state is so
5 important to the job of the Commission, how would
6 you go about reaching out to those particular
7 groups that are less engaged, maybe don't feel
8 comfortable to actually feel comfortable enough to
9 come forward and share their perspectives so that
10 the Commission can have as much input as possible
11 when drawing these lines?

12 MS. FARRELL: Mm-hmm, yeah. So in terms
13 of these trusted messengers I think part of it is
14 engaging with them to make sure that they're
15 comfortable with the process. And making sure that
16 they understand what it is and what's being asked
17 of the communities, what their format and setup and
18 logistics are.

19 I would also say like what kind of
20 supports are going to be available for people to
21 give feedback. And are there different
22 opportunities to do so? Is it all in-person? Are
23 there other ways of engaging that maybe don't
24 require people to come forward? Or that do require
25 people to come forward?

1 And then I think it's sort of giving those
2 trusted messengers the information that they need
3 to then help do the outreach. I think it isn't so
4 much the Commission necessarily doing the outreach,
5 because as you said there is already potentially
6 some barrier to trust or barrier to engage. But if
7 you're talking about networks or resources or
8 institutions within the community that have some
9 already preexisting relationship and you're working
10 with them and through them I think you're much more
11 apt to get people to engage because they trust the
12 people that are inviting them. And you've also
13 given those people resources and information to be
14 able to bring people along.

15 MS. PELLMAN: We have 6 minutes, 36
16 seconds remaining.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you Madam
18 Secretary.

19 I just have one further question. Ms.
20 Farrell if you were to be appointed to the
21 Commission which aspects of that role do you think
22 that you would enjoy the most? And conversely,
23 which aspects of the role do you think you might
24 struggle with a little bit?

25 MS. FARRELL: Well, I mean one of the

1 things I think I might enjoy is I like maps. I
2 really do. I think working with maps; it would be
3 just fun on its own. But I think the opportunity
4 to engage with other regions of the state, being
5 able from communities and being able to figure out
6 how to translate those -- community wisdom and
7 engagement with the Census data and the voting data
8 that we have and how we integrate it together. I
9 think that kind of synthesis would be something
10 that I really enjoy.

11 I think the things that I would struggle
12 with are just making sure that I have adequate time
13 and space to fully engage in the process. I think
14 kind of wrestling with the amount of information
15 and having the time to like adequately process that
16 information so that I can meaningfully contribute,
17 I think that would be something that I would be
18 working on just to make sure I have the
19 spaciousness in my schedule to do that.

20 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

21 No further questions at this time Madam
22 Secretary, or Madam Chair.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

24 Mr. Dawson, do you have any follow-up
25 questions?

1 MR. DAWSON: Yes, I do. Thank you, Madam
2 Chair. I just have a couple of follow-up
3 questions.

4 MS. FARRELL, when you were describing the
5 work of the center I think that you identified
6 three main areas: climate justice, toxic-free
7 communities, and forgotten voices. Did I
8 understand that correctly?

9 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

10 MR. DAWSON: And "forgotten voices" is
11 land use?

12 MS. FARRELL: Land use and infrastructure.
13 So things like working on the Kern County General
14 Plan or working on the siting of a particular
15 project or things like getting investments for
16 parks or roads or water systems.

17 MR. DAWSON: So as part of that work you'd
18 be joining in at Planning Commission meetings, that
19 sort of thing, advocating for the groups that you
20 represent?

21 MS. FARRELL: Yes, Planning Commission or
22 Board of Supervisors or City Council meetings.
23 Sometimes it's working with County staff in terms
24 of helping to put together a grant proposal that
25 would go to the State for funding. Sometimes it

1 would be around the Kern County Budget, advocating
2 around investments.

3 MR. DAWSON: So these community groups
4 that the Center represents, do you seek them out or
5 do they seek you out?

6 MS. FARRELL: There's been sort of a mix.
7 So what will typically happen is oftentimes
8 communities may contact us because they're dealing
9 with a particular issue. And then as part of
10 working on that issue decide that the best way to
11 move forward is to create a community group to
12 actually help keep the community engaged on a long-
13 term basis and to also be able to seek their own
14 resources.

15 Sometimes we will hear about a particular
16 issue or that comes up and it may affect a
17 particular community that we have had a preexisting
18 relationship with. And so we'll go to them and
19 say, "Have you heard about this? Is this something
20 you're interested in?" And then sometimes they say
21 yes, sometimes they say no. And if they say yes
22 then we work with them on that issue.

23 But often the decision to become a
24 community group is because the different community
25 residents have identified more than one issue they

1 want to work on together. And have decided that
2 the best structure for them to do that is through a
3 community-based organization.

4 MR. DAWSON: I see. I noticed that in
5 your application you said that you do training on
6 the Brown Act and the California Public Records
7 Act. Is that from the perspective as a plaintiff
8 trying to enforce these acts?

9 MS. FARRELL: It's not so much with the
10 idea of bringing a lawsuit, but it's more of
11 letting the community know what their rights are in
12 terms of public engagement. Like what meetings?
13 What does it mean when a decision-making body has a
14 closed meeting? What does it mean when it's open,
15 under what circumstances?

16 And also, for purposes of advocacy you
17 don't want people to run afoul of the Brown Act by
18 meeting with -- having serial meetings or things
19 like that. So you want people to know like what
20 are some of the restrictions. It's also what are
21 their rights. I don't think we've ever brought a
22 lawsuit under the Brown Act that I recall. But
23 it's more been just an informational like, "This is
24 the law. This is how you need to comply with it as
25 well as what are your rights under it."

1 MR. DAWSON: So it's like, don't be upset
2 that Assembly Member, or I'm sorry, Commissioner
3 Smith doesn't want to meet with you and two of his
4 fellow panel members, because they might be
5 committing a Brown Act violation.

6 MS. FARRELL: Yeah.

7 MR. DAWSON: All right. Will you be
8 pleased to know that the Commission operates under
9 Bagley-Keene, and if you know Brown you know
10 Bagley-Keene.

11 MS. FARRELL: Yeah.

12 MR. DAWSON: In your response to standard
13 question three you talked about one of the
14 potential problems that the Commission could face
15 is a lack of confidence. But your solution would
16 be to make sure that there is a clear record and
17 transparency. So I took that to mean that, and I'd
18 like you to expand on this if I've got it wrong,
19 that the process itself can inspire confidence in a
20 governmental proceeding. Did I understand that
21 correctly?

22 MS. FARRELL: I think the process itself
23 certainly can. I didn't mean to give the
24 impression that the Commissioners themselves didn't
25 have an obligation to also have a -- to make sure

1 that the process went well. But I think part of it
2 is how you conduct yourself during the
3 deliberations and how you conduct yourself during
4 the meetings in making sure that your viewpoints
5 are adequately at service of the process. And that
6 that should be captured by the record and it should
7 be captured by the decision making process. And
8 that should be very clear so that you -- and so
9 it's very clear, like what you did or did not do as
10 a Commissioner as part of the process.

11 MR. DAWSON: I see.

12 MS. FARRELL: So that was what I was
13 referring to. I don't know if that was -- if I
14 answered your question?

15 MR. DAWSON: No, you did. Thank you.
16 You said you like maps. Do you have any experience
17 using mapping software in your work?

18 MS. FARRELL: Not in using it. But in
19 looking at maps, like CalEnviroScreen or Census
20 maps or things like that.

21 MR. DAWSON: I see. How did you come to
22 be an Adjunct at Occidental?

23 MS. FARRELL: There was a professor that
24 was on sabbatical, going on sabbatical, and so they
25 were looking for somebody to fill the Environmental

1 Law and Policy class at Occidental. And they
2 reached out to me to see if I would be interested.
3 And I was for just the one-semester contract to
4 fill in for a professor on sabbatical.

5 MR. DAWSON: And you were teaching CEQA,
6 the Clean Air Act and that sort of thing?

7 MS. FARRELL: Yes. A little bit of CEQA
8 and Clean Air Act. A lot of kind of just the
9 general aspects of like how, what factors go into
10 creating environmental policy. We talked about the
11 National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water
12 Act, the Clean Air Act, and then just sort of
13 environmental justice policies.

14 MR. DAWSON: This was an undergrad level
15 class?

16 MS. FARRELL: Yes.

17 MR. DAWSON: Let's see. I think that
18 might be all of my follow-ups. That's all I have
19 Madam Chair.

20 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you Mr. Dawson.
21 I do have one follow-up question. When you were
22 responding to Mr. Coe's last question about one of
23 the items you may struggle with, if I heard you
24 right, you talked about the time that it could
25 take. So given the current issue with the COVID-19

1 and the Census data -- who knows what's going to
2 happen with that right now -- and tightening of
3 deadlines and whatnot how would you balance your
4 current commitments with professionally and
5 volunteer commitments with those of the
6 Commission's if you were selected?

7 MS. FARRELL: Well I think in terms of
8 thinking ahead and what might be possible, I think
9 the work of the Commission would be kind of the
10 organizing center of how I would prioritize. So
11 the work of the Commission would of course come
12 first I think, just simply because of the
13 importance and the kind of statutory obligations of
14 the work. And then finding ways to fit other
15 things around it, recognizing that some of those
16 volunteer opportunities may have to take a kind of
17 temporary hiatus in order to make sure that the
18 work gets done, and so having conversations with
19 the various groups about that.

20 And then in terms of my own professional
21 obligations working with my team to make sure that
22 there are adequate provisions in place so that
23 people can take over different pieces of what I'm
24 responsible for so that I can prioritize the work
25 of the Commission. Because I think yeah there's

1 some very real reasons why things might get sort of
2 consolidated. And depending on what happens with
3 COVID-19 and social distancing and the Census
4 itself.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

6 Mr. Belnap, did you have any follow-up
7 questions?

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: No, I don't.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: I have no follow-up
11 questions.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. No more
13 follow-up questions.

14 MR. DAWSON: Madam Secretary, how much
15 time do we have left?

16 MS. PELLMAN: Let's see, we have 13
17 minutes and 35 seconds remaining.

18 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

19 Seeing that there are no further follow-up
20 questions, Ms. Farrell, I'd like to offer you the
21 opportunity to make a closing statement to the
22 panel if you wish.

23 MS. FARRELL: Yes. I would just thank you
24 for your time. And I know all of the effort that
25 you've put in to getting to this point and beyond.

1 And I really do appreciate that and the
2 thoughtfulness of the questions today.

3 I would just say that I think that there
4 are a lot of things that I've learned over the
5 years. And a lot of skills and attributes that I
6 think could be of service to the Commission. And I
7 recognize that people may not always agree with my
8 viewpoints on a particular issue, but I think we
9 can all agree that a fair process and a commitment
10 to making sure that all views in California are
11 reflected on the Commission and in service of
12 creating the maps and the district lines going
13 forward, are really important.

14 And I just am thankful for being part of this
15 process and getting as far as I have had the
16 opportunity to talk to you. So thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Thank you for
19 meeting with us today.

20 So our next meeting, our next interview is
21 tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock. So we are going
22 to recess until tomorrow morning at 8:59.

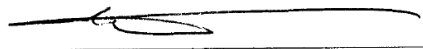
23 (Thereupon the Panel recessed at 4:18 p.m.)
24
25

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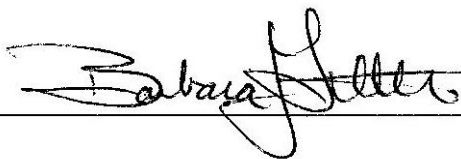
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