

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

In the matter of:

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

621 Capitol Mall, 10th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2020

8:59 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCESMembers Present

Ben Belnap, Chair

Ryan Coe, Vice Chair (Present via Zoom)

Angela Dickison, Panel Member (Present via Zoom)

Staff Present

Christopher Dawson, Panel Counsel

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II (Present via Zoom)

APPLICANTS: (Present via Zoom)

Pedro Toledo

Dorothy Hines

Jeff Comerchero

Anthony Leadholm

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8:59 a.m.

1
2 CHAIR BELNAP: It being 8:59 I'm going to call
3 this meeting out of recess.

4 Ms. Dickison, can you hear us?

5 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Yes, I can.

6 CHAIR BELNAP: Mr. Coe?

7 VICE CHAIR COE: I can hear you fine, Mr. Belnap.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: Madam Secretary?

9 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, I can hear you, thanks.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: Court reporter?

11 He tested okay. All right thank you.

12 And the ASL? Yeah.

13 I want to remind everyone in the room to -- and I
14 guess those that are conferencing in to silence all cell
15 phones and other devices. In case of an emergency, follow
16 CSA staffs' directions. And restrooms are in the hallway.

17 I want to welcome Mr. Pedro Toledo to this
18 interview. Can you hear us, Mr. Toledo?

19 MR. TOLEDO: Yes, I can hear you.

20 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. We're going to start with
21 the standard questions. I'll turn the time over to Mr.
22 Dawson.

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

24 Mr. Toledo, I'm going to ask you five standard
25 questions that the Panel has requested each applicant

1 address. Are you ready, sir?

2 MR. TOLEDO: I'm ready.

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

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

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

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

11 MR. TOLEDO: So, the ideal Commissioner possess
12 the legally required skills and attributes which of course
13 are and include relevant analytical skills, ability to be
14 impartial, and an appreciation for California's diverse
15 demographics and geography.

16 Additionally, the ideal Commissioner would also
17 possess integrity, which is critical for developing and
18 keeping trust, which is a trait that I possess and has
19 helped me to succeed in positions of trust.

20 Commissioners must have empathy to different
21 points of view and people from diverse communities. My
22 work with under-served communities throughout Northern
23 California and beyond has helped me to gain a deep respect
24 and appreciation for people with different backgrounds, and
25 with diverse lived experiences.

1 Commissioners must also have the ability to
2 effectively navigate conflict and be able to work
3 effectively in team settings. In my role as Chief
4 Administrative Officer for one of the largest nonprofit
5 organizations in my region, I've learned when to lead, when
6 to follow, and I work well with colleagues, staff,
7 consultants, community leaders, community members,
8 government leaders.

9 The ability to set aside one's beliefs, one's
10 agenda to protect the integrity of the Commission or the
11 work of the Commission is also critical.

12 Analytical skills, both qualitative and
13 quantitative are important. And I have expertise in taking
14 complex concepts and simplifying them for others. I'm
15 comfortable with interpreting legal and regulatory rules,
16 and concepts. I'm detail oriented, cautious, and utilize
17 data to make decisions.

18 I'm also committed to excellence and have the
19 ability to prioritize performing the work with excellence,
20 and getting work done in accordance with high standards,
21 and diligence, accuracy, and high quality.

22 I have good communication skills and the ability
23 to present at hearings, which I've done throughout my
24 career. Also, additionally, transparency,
25 conscientiousness, thoughtfulness, sincerity, those are all

1 skills and attributes that I possess.

2 Furthermore, I believe that the ideal
3 Commissioner will have to dedicate the time and prioritize
4 the work of the Commission among other -- many other
5 competing responsibilities, such as personal, family, work,
6 and community responsibilities.

7 Over the last two years I've had--I've been
8 challenged with unexpected family, work, and community
9 responsibility, yet I've demonstrated an ability to
10 overcome these challenges and be able to overcome goals
11 expected of me.

12 While working full time as Chief Administrative
13 Officer for my organization, and overseeing the Community
14 Health Centers in Southern Sonoma County, I also enrolled
15 in the master's in healthcare administration.

16 And during this time a close relative developed a
17 terminal illness and I also helped lead the organization
18 through two wildfires, and now a public health emergency.
19 Even in these challenging times and with competing
20 pressures, I've been able to complete the work expected of
21 me in all areas of my life. And to accomplish this I've
22 had to plan very carefully, to organize my work, manage my
23 busy schedule, prioritize, and be able to balance -- to be
24 able to balance my personal, my family, school and
25 community commitments.

1 I have learned to delegate more and to focus on
2 what's important. People expect me to lead, communicate,
3 to be on time, to show up and to participate. And being
4 present and in the moment when in class, or when with
5 colleagues, or family, or at community meetings that's
6 really important, being able to be in the moment.

7 Also, I've learned to take time for myself when I
8 need it, which has helped me to successfully navigate and
9 balance loads of responsibility.

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

16 What characteristics do you possess, and what
17 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
18 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

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

22 MR. TOLEDO: My work with leading community
23 health clinics in a rural geographical service area
24 requires me to work with and serve people from diverse
25 backgrounds, including diverse political backgrounds.

1 While political polarization as permeated many aspects of
2 our lives, it's important to continue to work towards
3 common solutions and that's what I try to do in my work.

4 I'm not affiliated with a specific political
5 party and the reason for that is I genuinely believe all
6 political perspectives have something to offer. And
7 perhaps this has to do with my training in cultural
8 anthropology, which helps me to appreciate and respect
9 other people's unique experiences, their perspectives and
10 their backgrounds.

11 To protect against hyperpartisanship I believe
12 Commissioners must seek to understand and to listen to
13 diverse perspectives of their fellow Commissioners and of
14 the public, and others. This will show respect for diverse
15 perspectives, they'll trust, develop a commitment to want
16 to hear and listen from diverse voices.

17 And I think Commissioners should have genuine
18 curiosity and a desire to genuinely engage with others in
19 an authentic manner, which I believe builds trust and
20 demonstrates that they're opening to understanding and
21 learning from different people and different perspectives.

22 Additionally, Commissioners must behave
23 professionally among themselves, with staff, with the
24 public, in all aspects of their life. They should avoid
25 being perceived as rude and communicate -- and be able to

1 communicate effectively with each other and in public.
2 Disagreements occur and when they do, Commissioners should
3 strive to disagree in a respectful and professional manner.

4 I possess all of these characteristics. And the
5 specific plans that I would have to protect against claims
6 of hyperpartisanship on the Commission would be to engage
7 and leverage trusted community organizations, and community
8 leaders from diverse communities, and with diverse
9 perspectives from across California to be able to build
10 trust with hard-to-reach populations.

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

15 MR. TOLEDO: I believe the biggest or the
16 greatest problem for the Commission would be perhaps a
17 successful challenge to redrawing of the lines. The
18 independent Redistricting Commission was established by
19 citizens of California through the proposition process
20 which is, of course, a direct form -- a form of direct
21 democracy. And the voters took the redistricting process
22 away from politicians to prevent situations where elected
23 officials chose their voters, rather than having the voters
24 choose their representatives.

25 And the citizens of California, I believe, expect

1 their votes to matter in choosing their representatives,
2 and they want people who are responsible, representatives
3 who are responsible and accountable to the needs of their
4 communities. The Commission is thus charged with ensuring
5 the principle of one person one vote.

6 And for the courts to overturn redistricting, the
7 Commission's maps would result in a loss of trust in our
8 electoral process, citizens feeling that their voice and
9 votes don't matter, and resulting probably in disengagement
10 that would hurt our democracy.

11 Additionally, any redrawing of the line that's
12 done at the courts may not involve -- may result in the
13 perception that those lines are drawn in a partisan and not
14 an independent process.

15 Regardless, I think in order to avoid legal
16 challenge and in order to ensure that the work of the
17 Commission is accepted by the public and by the -- by
18 everyone, we must follow the laws that govern
19 redistricting, and follow the principle of one person, one
20 vote. We must genuinely and meaningfully engage
21 communities and listen to the voices of Californians when
22 identifying communities of interest.

23 This will ensure further engagement in our
24 democracy and uplifting of communities, instead of
25 disengagement.

1 In all decisions Commissioners, I believe, had to
2 seek adequate legal counsel, and evaluate risks, and ensure
3 that their decisions are supported by appropriate
4 documentation and appropriate opinion. And to support such
5 occurrence, I would work tirelessly to ensure that the
6 Commission follows the principle of one person, one vote,
7 that it works to ensure that there's adequate documentation
8 and support for decisions, and ensure that our democracy is
9 protected.

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

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

19 What lessons would you take from this group
20 experience to the Commission if selected?

21 MR. TOLEDO: Well, after the Affordable Care Act
22 was passed, various years ago, I served as the Chair of the
23 Board for Sonoma County's children -- well, Community
24 Health Initiative, which was comprised of community
25 leaders, government leaders, as well as healthcare and

1 social service organizations representatives from across
2 Sonoma County, which is a large and diverse county.

3 And the goal of the group was to develop and
4 implement a strategy to outreach to and enroll all eligible
5 uninsured people in health coverage, and connect those
6 individuals -- if they didn't have a source of trusted
7 care, to connect them with a source of trusted care.

8 And my primary role as Chair was that of helping
9 to facilitate consensus building and resolving conflict
10 when it arose. And how we worked through conflict to
11 achieve consensus on developing the strategy was that we
12 developed a common understanding of the problem and then a
13 shared vision for change. And we did this by gathering and
14 analyzing data, all of the data that was available to us,
15 whether it was from the Census, whether it was our public
16 health department, from the eligibility department. And we
17 used that data to inform our understanding of the problem.

18 And we developed a good understanding of where
19 the uninsured were located, which helped us to develop a
20 shared vision.

21 Conflicts arose when crafting strategies to
22 actually address the problem, to actually go out and as we
23 tailored our strategies for outreach and enrollment. But
24 consistent and open communication helped us to work through
25 the conflict and to build trust with the different members

1 on the committee that ultimately made the decision.

2 And of course we held many meetings. We heard,
3 listened to each other's perspective, learned from the
4 experts in the community, the community members, from --
5 you know, we received guidance from all over. And reviewed
6 all that data, discussed, disagreed, and had those
7 difficult conversations.

8 But ultimately, we were all patient with one
9 another and respectful with one another and all had the
10 shared vision of getting all of these people enrolled into
11 coverage and improving their health status as our end --
12 that was our goal. And so, in doing that we all trusted
13 one another.

14 And I think what also helped us was that we
15 developed a data-driven and objective decision making
16 process, where we used the data as -- all of our decisions
17 were based on data and were data driven. And by focusing
18 and analyzing the data, we were able to more easily work
19 through some of the conflicts and achieve consensus.

20 In terms of lessons that I'd take from the group
21 experience, I think it's important to take the time to
22 listen to everyone's perspectives. Everyone comes from
23 different experience, different knowledge, different and
24 sometimes incomplete information. But together our
25 knowledge -- you know, together we're able to build a

1 shared understanding once we understand and we listen to
2 people's perspectives to come up with a shared
3 understanding. And that, of course, creates trust.

4 And it's important to create a safe space for
5 people and colleagues to express their perspectives, their
6 ideas, and their concerns.

7 Second, I think a data-driven, objective decision
8 making process helps to diffuse conflicts occasionally, and
9 also in making sound decisions.

10 And lastly, I would just add that it's critical
11 to have consistent and open communication, and be
12 respectful with one another, since we all process
13 information and data differently, and are looking at it
14 from different perspectives and such.

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

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

24 What experiences have you had that will help you
25 be effective at understanding and appreciating people and

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

3 MR. TOLEDO: Well, working with community health
4 centers over the last 20 years I've had the opportunity to
5 meet with and learn from people from different backgrounds,
6 ethnicities, agendas, perspectives, life experiences.
7 Because every community health center is really focused on
8 their particular community. So, when you learn about one
9 community health center, you're really learning about that
10 one community health center. Every health center is
11 responding to the unique needs of their population, of
12 their service areas, of their community.

13 And my genuine curiosity about people from
14 different backgrounds I think has helped me to be effective
15 at engaging and developing relationships with diverse
16 people and diverse perspectives. And in my travels across
17 the state and also in my work to help expand health
18 coverage for under-served individuals, and also to expand
19 the access to health care individuals I've had the
20 opportunity to work with and learn from other community
21 leaders, from--with individuals, with consumers, business
22 leaders, government leaders and I've been able to
23 communicate effectively with them, and develop trust with
24 individuals that I've worked with.

25 And also, just in those travels I've made lots of

1 friends. I have family who live all over California.
2 Colleagues from community health centers all over the
3 state. And I've had the opportunity to learn about what's
4 important to them and their community, their hopes, their
5 desires, their dreams and those of the people they serve,
6 as well as the things that they want to improve, change or
7 -- and I think this experience allows me to appreciate and
8 understand the people of different backgrounds and with
9 different perspectives, and positions me to do the work of
10 the Commission.

11 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. At this point we'll go
12 to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes
13 to ask his or her questions. We will start with the Chair,
14 Mr. Belnap.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. Thank you,
16 Mr. Toledo for being with us this morning.

17 MR. TOLEDO: Thank you.

18 CHAIR BELNAP: Five years after obtaining a
19 bachelor's and master's degree from Stanford you obtained a
20 law degree from Cornell. Why did you go to law school?

21 MR. TOLEDO: That's a great question. I went to
22 law school because, you know, coming from an immigrant
23 family the choices that were given to me were to become a
24 doctor -- so, I had three paths that I can take. One was
25 to become a doctor, which I don't like blood so that wasn't

1 going to work for me. The other was law, a lawyer, or a
2 teacher.

3 And so, those were the career paths that my
4 parents knew that they felt were appropriate for their male
5 child. And so, of those three options, law just seemed
6 like the most appropriate one for me. And I thoroughly
7 enjoyed it. It was a great experience, an opportunity to
8 learn the law. And it was an exercise in just learning the
9 rules, and the law, which has helped me throughout my
10 career.

11 (Whereupon the court reporter interrupts the
12 proceeding to announce a technical difficult, and
13 asks the speaker to recapitulate the last 20
14 seconds of his response.)

15 MR. TOLEDO: I forgot where I left off, sorry.

16 CHAIR BELNAP: So, Mr. Toledo, you were answering
17 why law school?

18 MR. TOLEDO: Yeah, so I went to law school
19 because I had three options in my community, and with my
20 family, and those were to either become a doctor, a lawyer,
21 or a teacher. Those were the options that my family, in my
22 particular experience, you know, that were open to me.

23 And so, of those three I chose the legal
24 profession and went to law school, and had a great
25 experience and learned a lot that -- and have -- you know,

1 and ultimately decided to move into the healthcare space,
2 but still use many of the concepts, administrative law
3 concepts in my daily work. Especially in overseeing
4 compliance work at the health center.

5 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. So, I take it
6 that you do not consider yourself to be a lawyer, that's
7 not your profession?

8 MR. TOLEDO: I consider myself to be an
9 administrative -- a healthcare administrator.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, you indicated in your
11 application that while on the Board of California
12 Children's Health Initiatives you were able to set aside
13 your personal views to make fair and equitable decisions.

14 Please describe what that organization is and
15 give us an example of a time when you had to set aside your
16 personal views to make a decision?

17 MR. TOLEDO: Sure. So, that organization
18 represents the community health initiatives across the
19 State of California and different communities have
20 Children's Health Initiatives, community health
21 initiatives, and those initiatives are focused on enrolling
22 people into health coverage.

23 So, for example, Sacramento has community health
24 initiatives, Sonoma County does, Napa does. And actually,
25 communities throughout the state do. And at the state

1 level for the California Community Health Initiative,
2 they're striving to ensure that we all have the resources,
3 and they advocate for and with the regional association.

4 In terms of being on that board, of course, you
5 know, coming from Sonoma County and coming from a rural
6 area, and representing that area one has an agenda. But
7 when you're on the board, and in my case I was on the
8 executive board, you have to put the interests of the whole
9 organization, the California Community Health Initiative
10 before those of your own individual interests. And that
11 means putting aside your agenda and doing what's right for
12 the organization, an organization that you're on the board
13 for.

14 And an example would be in, you know, determining
15 how resources were used. You know, being able to -- you
16 know, there's some formulas that may have helped rural
17 areas a little bit more, or urban areas, but really looking
18 at the data and putting, you know, our -- my self-interests
19 aside and ensuring that the resources were used to enroll
20 the maximum number of uninsured individuals as opposed to
21 other formulas that may have helped my area more. Right.
22 Because ultimately we were -- our goal was to enroll as
23 many people as possible into coverage.

24 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. Throughout
25 your career you've worked to ensure that medically under-

1 served communities have access to healthcare. I'd like you
2 to describe an example of your efforts and how they've
3 increased your understanding and appreciation of
4 California's diverse population.

5 MR. TOLEDO: Yeah. So, in doing -- every health
6 center has to do -- every community health clinic,
7 federally-qualified health center has to do a needs
8 assessment. And that's a requirement of a community health
9 center. And as part of that needs assessment you're
10 looking at the needs of the community. You're looking at
11 the demographics of your community, the health disparities,
12 the -- but also, because 51 percent of your board minimum
13 has to be patients, these organizations are led by the
14 patients, the consumers themselves, and are responsive to
15 the needs of the community. That's what ensures that.

16 So, working with the leadership of these
17 organizations has brought me very close to the patients, of
18 which I used to be a patient of a community health center.
19 I grew up in -- growing up, a community health center
20 served as my medical home, and the place where I got
21 healthcare. And I've served on boards of community health
22 centers. I've been elected onto boards of community health
23 centers by patients.

24 But the biggest community health center in
25 Northern California, right after undergraduate, and my

1 undergraduate education, and that's actually what propelled
2 me to move me from law to community health centers. That
3 experience on the board for Clinica La Raza in Oakland, and
4 being able to -- and having been elected by the patients, a
5 very democratic process, to represent the consumer needs.
6 I, myself was a consumer. And to represent those needs on
7 the board.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. I'd like to read
9 a portion of your application --

10 MR. TOLEDO: Sure.

11 CHAIR BELNAP: -- a few sentences, and then ask
12 you to provide an example. This is in your analytical
13 section of your application. You said: Much of my work in
14 healthcare involves analysis of complex data. Often this
15 work requires me to conduct regression analysis and other
16 statistical tools to improve health outcomes and access to
17 care in a cost-effective manner.

18 I'll stop there. Can you walk us through an
19 example of complex analysis that you've performed?

20 MR. TOLEDO: Yeah, there's various. There's--oh I
21 think healthcare is very data driven. It has to be.
22 Especially, I mean our organization, which serves about --
23 we provide about 200,000 visits a year, about a \$60 million
24 budget at this point. You're working to leverage your
25 resources. And so, we have all sorts of -- we're data

1 rich. We have electronic medical records that capture all
2 sorts of information.

3 So, what we've been working towards is the triple
4 A concept in healthcare, and that's reducing costs,
5 improving the patient experience, and also improving health
6 outcomes, ultimately. So, one of the areas where we've
7 been focusing is on diabetes. And so, we're able to look,
8 we're able to pull all of the data for all of our diabetic
9 patients and then, using our statistical analysis we're
10 able to actually, at this point, identify individuals who
11 are at risk for certain conditions.

12 And so, when you look through the data, you
13 analyze that data, you're able to come up with -- in our
14 case we're able to come up with -- well, one example would
15 be, well, we were able to go through the list using our
16 analyses and identify the individuals who are at risk of
17 having a heart attack or a stroke in the next -- over the
18 next five years or so.

19 And so, what we do is we -- when you identify
20 those individuals who, through your algorithms are able --
21 you've identified that potentially have a health event,
22 then you're able to target interventions for that person.
23 And we have evidence-based interventions for that group
24 that we can -- that we would, of course, recall them in,
25 bring them in, provide appropriate treatment. And that's

1 how we're able to reduce health disparity by ensuring that
2 that's done across all of our patients, not just those who
3 have insurance, but all of our patients.

4 CHAIR BELNAP: And in this work how much have you
5 used maps or prepared maps for others to use?

6 MR. TOLEDO: The usage of maps we do for hot-
7 spotting. So, for example, and that's a terminology we
8 use, identifying clusters. So, we map our patients, where
9 do they live. And then, we also overlap condition and
10 patients who are -- who have sugar levels that are too
11 high, that are potentially -- potentially dangerous. And
12 being able to see if there's clusters of patients. Or, not
13 just that, but also Hep C, or HIV, or other types of issues
14 so that we can identify if there's something in the
15 geographical environment that's helped -- that's causing
16 some of this or that's contributing to these issues, or if
17 we can design interventions that are more effective.

18 Additionally, the use of--I use maps for health
19 professional shortages, so enabled to -- in order to try to
20 leverage federal funding for loaner payment programs for
21 our physicians, our nurse practitioners, and other
22 healthcare providers. So, we're able to map the
23 disparities in physician shortages in our community, in
24 rural communities, and able to use that data to secure
25 additional funding for loaner payment assistance for our

1 physicians and other providers.

2 And also, for developing needs assessments. Our
3 needs assessment is -- and the creation of our service
4 area, which we adjust every three years, is created through
5 mapping software. We use UDS Mapper, which is a GIS
6 software that actually I do, where we take all of our
7 patients, figure out where they're coming from, plot it
8 into the map, and then identify our appropriate service
9 area, where we're going to target our interventions.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

11 MR. TOLEDO: For further purposes, yeah.

12 CHAIR BELNAP: Got it. Thank you. I have no
13 further questions. I'm going to turn the time over to Mr.
14 Coe.

15 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
16 morning, Mr. Toledo. Thank you for having the time to
17 speak with us today.

18 MR. TOLEDO: Good morning.

19 VICE CHAIR COE: So, you are the Chief
20 Administrative Officer of Petaluma Healthcare,
21 Incorporated, is that right?

22 MR. TOLEDO: That's correct.

23 VICE CHAIR COE: So, in your application you also
24 discuss, I think this is another organization, called
25 community health centers, which has a patient-led board of

1 directors that you referred to earlier.

2 Help me understand how your organization,
3 Petaluma Healthcare, is related to community health
4 centers?

5 MR. TOLEDO: Well, community health centers is
6 just a generic term for community health clinics. So, we
7 are a community health center.

8 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay. But community health
9 centers has a board of directors, so it's some organization
10 that oversees various local community health centers, like
11 Petaluma?

12 MR. TOLEDO: Community health centers have -- all
13 community health centers have patient-led boards.

14 VICE CHAIR COE: I see, so community health
15 centers isn't a separate organization, it is just a generic
16 term for centers like Petaluma Healthcare, or Health
17 Center, and your health center has a patient-led board of
18 directors?

19 MR. TOLEDO: That's right.

20 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, understood. With a
21 patient-led board of directors like you have in place at
22 your organization, which as you write, "Ensures that
23 executives like you are overseen by the people who receive
24 medical and dental services at their facilities." In
25 short, you report directly to the people that you

1 represent.

2 Do you think that your experience working from
3 this perspective will make you an especially effective
4 Commissioner?

5 MR. TOLEDO: I think so. And I think it's, you
6 know, getting -- having people whose vested interests is --
7 who are from the community, who know their community, who
8 -- community health centers actually started during the war
9 on poverty in the civil rights movement. And the concept,
10 unlike other healthcare organizations, where you might have
11 significant medical expertise driving the decisions,
12 medical leaders being on the board, physicians and such on
13 the boards of community health centers, on the boards of
14 healthcare organizations, we're actually restricted. Only
15 10 percent of our board can be -- individuals on the board
16 can derive their income from healthcare. And that's
17 because Congress at the time believed in the importance of
18 having community members determine their healthcare needs,
19 and not the healthcare community.

20 That it was actually the healthcare, the patients
21 that knew best about the interventions that they might
22 need, about their issues, about their unique circumstances.
23 And that's continued until today. Community health centers
24 are still led by patients as opposed to being led by
25 physicians and other medical organizations.

1 That doesn't mean that we don't use evidence-
2 based treatments. We do, we're required to do so. But in
3 terms of when it comes to where we open up sites, the
4 services that we provide, our hours of operation, the needs
5 of the community, those things come from our patients. And
6 our patients tell us, tell management. And, of course, we
7 provide them with the data, and the needs assessment, and
8 others, but they provide us with the qualitative, their
9 lived experience and other information that helps us to
10 collaboratively make decisions for the community.

11 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. I want to discussion
12 information in your essay on impartiality, which I think
13 Mr. Belnap touched on earlier. You discussed your time on
14 the Board for California Children's Health Initiative.

15 And, well, I think along a similar sense that Mr.
16 Belnap quoted earlier, where you say that while on the
17 board you made efforts to hear diverse voices from across
18 the state in order to make fair and equitable decisions.

19 My question is in what form did you gather this
20 input and hear these voices? Was it public meetings, was
21 it emails, or surveys, or other some type of communication?
22 How were you gathering this information?

23 MR. TOLEDO: So, we had monthly meetings, as well
24 as subcommittees, and executive committee meetings. And
25 oftentimes I think the tension, especially in healthcare

1 and other arenas is oftentimes real -- there's oftentimes
2 there's tension between rural and urban communities, a
3 perceived tension because of resource allocation. And so,
4 those are the things that we had to be very careful with,
5 that I was very careful with and worked very hard to ensure
6 that I put my agendas, my issues aside for the betterment
7 of the entire organization's position and that's for -- an
8 that's the California Children's Health Initiative, and
9 they're now called the California Community Health
10 Initiative because they're beyond children.

11 But making sure that they were positioning the
12 organization for further funding, for further opportunities
13 that may come down through the federal government process.
14 And so, just ensuring that we did was best for the
15 organization and whether that was in our subcommittee
16 meetings, or our executive meetings, or our regularly
17 monthly meetings with the membership, those were things
18 that we all strove to do. We all strove to do what was
19 best for the population of California.

20 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. In your essays and
21 in some of the discussion you've had this morning you
22 talked about working with or working for, or on behalf of
23 various diverse people in your local region. So, from your
24 interactions with the people that you've met and
25 represented, what have you learned about their needs, and

1 desires, and preferences that would make you an effective
2 representative for them on this Commission?

3 MR. TOLEDO: Well, I think what I've learned is
4 everyone is unique. Everyone has diverse perspectives and
5 it's important to understand where people are coming from,
6 to be respectful, and the importance of gaining trust from
7 individuals.

8 And you do that by meaningfully trying to
9 understand where they're coming from by taking the time,
10 and having genuine curiosity about what their issues, what
11 they care about which may not necessarily be the things
12 that I care about, but it's what they care about. And
13 having genuine curiosity about that and understand that
14 folks are coming with their specific lived experiences,
15 their perspectives, their--and come to these conclusions
16 because of their lived experience, and appreciating that,
17 and respecting that, and understanding that, you know,
18 there's diversity within all communities. And people are
19 not monolithic, right, they're very diverse and they have
20 unique perspectives.

21 And it's really trying to understand what those
22 are. And in my case it's been -- I've been interested in
23 trying to widen the circle of opportunity for everybody,
24 and trying to see how we reach commonalities, focusing on
25 the things that we share in common. And those are the

1 things that -- by focusing on those things, focusing on the
2 things that we share in common helps to be able to further
3 discussions and build common trust, and move conversations
4 forward.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. A similar question,
6 but in regards to people in different areas of the state.
7 So, areas outside your local region, Petaluma, Sonoma
8 County, what experiences have you had outside your local
9 region working with people in different regions. Let's say
10 in different areas of the state that may have different
11 regional-based concerns and perspectives, what have you
12 learned about those folks that would make you an effective
13 representative for them on this Commission?

14 MR. TOLEDO: Sure. And so, I've been working
15 with community health centers. I've traveled all over the
16 state. And even, as I mentioned earlier, even in my
17 personal travel. But, you know, just, well, I consider
18 Sonoma County to be somewhat rural. You know, I've
19 traveled and worked with, very closely with the community
20 health centers in Humboldt, and Lemoore, and Shasta County
21 where it's a lot more rural than we are.

22 And I've learned that while we're -- that we have
23 some similarities, there's also -- and there's common
24 issues that we all advocate for. But they also have very
25 unique issues to which -- that are impacting the health of

1 their population and they care about things -- they might
2 be similar, but they care about very specific things to
3 their community. And they have different levels of need,
4 whether it's something as simple as maybe not having
5 specialists, and having -- and not having enough hospital
6 beds, or not having sufficient access to specialty
7 services. Just the challenges of living in rural areas and
8 being able to get and access healthcare. And so, in
9 different regions it's very different. And just the lived
10 experience is very different.

11 But also, you know, having come from a -- you
12 know, my father was a farmworker and I have had the
13 opportunity to travel across the Central Valley, as well,
14 and looking at -- and the issues in the Central Valley are
15 very different than they are in Humboldt, or Sonoma or, you
16 know, a more rural area, a more urban area like Oakland, or
17 San Francisco, or Los Angeles.

18 And so, but the people's perspectives, what they
19 care about, the opportunities that they want for their
20 kids, the engagement in their local government, and
21 wanting to be - wanting to have a voice, that's something
22 that I think all communities want. And they want to be
23 heard, they want to be respected, and they want to be --
24 and, ultimately, they want accountability from their
25 representatives and they want for the betterment of their

1 community, and the betterment of the health status of their
2 community.

3 CHAIR BELNAP: And with the theme of communities,
4 I wanted to discuss communities of interest briefly. So,
5 on top of the Census information, some of the most
6 important information that the Commission is going to have
7 to consider is identifying and understanding different
8 communities throughout the state. And some of those
9 communities are easier to find, they're more obvious,
10 they're more engaged. Some are harder to locate.

11 And earlier you mentioned needing to reach out to
12 trusted community organizations to try and find communities
13 that might be harder to locate. I'm wondering if you can
14 expand about that a little bit more, talk about maybe some
15 strategies that you could see the Commission employing to
16 identify communities of interest, with a special interest
17 on inadvertently overlooking some of these hard to identify
18 communities.

19 MR. TOLEDO: I think that trusted community
20 organizations have access to individuals. So, when we were
21 working to enroll people into health insurance, and that
22 was, if I remember correctly it was over 20,000 people in
23 Sonoma County that were uninsured, and we were converting
24 to trying to get enrolled into health coverage.

25 We turned to trusted organizations. For people

1 who are homeless, there are the homeless organizations, the
2 advocacy groups, the shelters, or the faith-based
3 organizations who provided some of these social services
4 for them. And worked through them and with them to be able
5 to access some of the harder to reach populations. Or, you
6 know, for farmworkers and/or individuals who -- without
7 status, we worked through other organizations. Some of the
8 immigration organizations, but also farmworker
9 organizations, et cetera. And also, faith-based
10 organizations.

11 In terms of hard to reach populations for, you
12 know, whether it's homeless individuals, people with
13 limited English proficiency, or immigrant populations,
14 different ethnic groups or others, I think there are
15 trusted individuals and/or organizations that can help --
16 that can help with gaining access to the community and
17 gaining trust with that community so that they can -- so
18 that, essentially, we can provide services or a voice for
19 them, or give them an opportunity to share their voice,
20 rather.

21 VICE CHAIR COE: So, similar line -- or a similar
22 topic, the same topic, some communities and you may have
23 experienced this in your work, they're less engaged and
24 they don't necessarily feel comfortable coming forward to
25 provide or to speak opinions, or to engage government

1 entities for a variety of reasons. But since input of
2 communities, as many communities as can possibly found and
3 engaged, since input from these communities is so important
4 to the work of the Commission how do you think you could go
5 about making some of these communities that are concerned,
6 or are not comfortable engaging, how would you go about
7 making them feel comfortable in order to provide their
8 perspectives to better inform the Commission?

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

11 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you.

12 MR. TOLEDO: For, you know, in working with the
13 Covered California and I served on the marketing committee.
14 I can't remember the exact title for the commission -- the
15 committee for the Covered California group. But one of the
16 strategies we taught was to really meet people where they
17 live, work and play. So, using the trusted organizations,
18 but also going to the populations themselves. Learning
19 enough to be able to know where they were, and what they
20 were -- you know, the types of places where we can find
21 them. So, going to them, rather than them coming to us.

22 And so, that was what we needed to do to
23 effectively outreach to them and to bring them in. And,
24 ultimately, through our research we identified that it
25 would take about seven touches to be able to get them to

1 actually participate with us and initiate the process of
2 looking at health insurance options, and potentially
3 enrolling.

4 And so, that's the strategy we used both locally
5 and at the state level was to go to the people where they
6 were and try to develop a relationship with them, whether
7 through the organizations and using, leveraging community-
8 based organizations, like community health centers, faith-
9 based organizations or others, or directly. And in some
10 cases both.

11 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you. Mr. Chair, I
12 don't believe I have any -- enough time to ask another
13 question, so I'll go ahead and yield my time for
14 questioning.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. The time is
16 now yours, Ms. Dickison.

17 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Good morning
18 Mr. Toledo, can you hear me okay?

19 MR. TOLEDO: Yes, I can. thank you.

20 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, you've
21 answered a lot of my questions and I may ask something
22 you've already answered because of a few connectivity
23 issues I've had. So, please excuse me if I do.

24 So, in your essay on impartiality, you
25 acknowledged that not everyone's going to be happy about

1 the lines once they're drawn, but the people need to have
2 assurance the districts were drawn fairly with appropriate
3 criteria, were thoughtfully and legally evaluated.

4 What can the Commission do to give people this
5 type of assurance that the lines were drawn fairly, even if
6 they're not happy with them?

7 MR. TOLEDO: I think the most important thing
8 that the Commission can do is get as many voices and
9 perspectives about the lines, and meaningfully evaluate
10 those perspectives, that information, that data, and take
11 it seriously. Take the voices of the citizens of
12 California, who created the Commission, seriously. Use
13 that and be able to explain in a transparent manner why
14 decisions were made the way that they were made. And I
15 think that goes a long way to address some of those issues.

16 I think oftentimes people want to be heard and
17 when they're not heard that's when there's distrust, and
18 the perception of not being heard. And so, hearing people
19 and being able to address the issues, and taking that into
20 consideration, even if it doesn't always change the end
21 results may help to diffuse the perception of lack of
22 impartiality, you know, at least the concept that these
23 lines were drawn in an impartial manner, an objective
24 manner. That the data was taken, it was reviewed, and it
25 was analyzed.

1 MR. TOLEDO: Hello?

2 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay, I disappeared for a
3 minute, I do believe.

4 MR. TOLEDO: I saw a little gap. Did you get my
5 answer, though?

6 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I did. I did. You were
7 just wrapping up when I paused for a moment.

8 You also talk about visiting under-represented
9 populations from urban and rural settings. What did you
10 learn about the needs of people and how those can differ
11 based on geography?

12 MR. TOLEDO: I mean I've been -- I've traveled
13 not just throughout California, but also, you know, the
14 world, and I've been fortunate and very lucky to be able to
15 travel.

16 And I mean, I think there's this perception that
17 for some reason if you're poor you may not, or if you are
18 diverse, or if you live differently than maybe, you know --
19 if you don't value certain things that mainstream America
20 does that there's something wrong or unusual.

21 And I think what I've learned is that, you know,
22 people want very similar things. They want good education
23 for their kids. They want the opportunity to be able to
24 excel, to do well, good education, safe places to live.
25 They want access to, you know, good paying jobs and,

1 ultimately, the ability to live and contribute to society.
2 I generally believe that whether it's, you know, farmworker
3 communities in the Central Valley or, you know, community--
4 immigrant communities in Los Angeles, or any communities
5 across the state that there is shared commonality and
6 shared values that we all want.

7 And also, very unique experiences because of
8 where we live and the opportunities that are actually there
9 in the geographical areas where we might live. And, you
10 know, just where do you live determines -- I mean the
11 research shows that where you live determines your health
12 status, too. Right, the schooling, the employment
13 opportunity, the -- I'm sorry, did I lose you?

14 Did I lose --

15 CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison, are you there?

16 MS. PELLMAN: Shall I stop the clock?

17 CHAIR BELNAP: Yes, let's stop the clock
18 momentarily.

19 MS. PELLMAN: Okay, I've done that.

20 (Pause)

21 CHAIR BELNAP: So, Mr. Toledo, we apologize. As
22 you probably heard from Madam Secretary, we've stopped the
23 clock.

24 MR. TOLEDO: No worries.

25 CHAIR BELNAP: So, we'll just pick up when we get

1 Ms. Dickison back on the line.

2 MR. TOLEDO: No problem.

3 Mr. DAWSON: There she is, we have her back.

4 MS. PELLMAN: Okay, I'll start the clock. We
5 have 14 minutes and 14 seconds remaining for Ms. Dickison's
6 time.

7 CHAIR BELNAP: So, Ms. Dickison, can you let us
8 know what your question was and what part of the answer you
9 had heard, so Mr. Toledo knows where to pick up?

10 MS. PELLMAN: It looks like we've lost her again.
11 I have not restarted the clock yet.

12 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

13 (Pause)

14 CHAIR BELNAP: SO Mr. Toledo, while we get Ms.
15 Dickison back on the line, we're going to have Mr. Dawson
16 ask his follow-up questions. That way, we're making the
17 most use of our time.

18 MR. TOLEDO: Okay.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: I'm going to turn the time over to
20 Mr. Dawson.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, yes,
22 I'll be happy to yield back my time to Ms. Dickison when we
23 get her back.

24 I wanted to follow up on one of your responses to
25 essay four, on your analytical skills. You mentioned that

1 you had experience testifying at legislative hearings for
2 healthcare initiatives.

3 MR. TOLEDO: Uh-hum.

4 MR. DAWSON: Were these committee hearings on
5 bills?

6 MR. TOLEDO: There have been committee -- there
7 were committee hearings, yes, on bills, whether it's for
8 community health centers or some of the initiatives that
9 we've undertaken over the past couple of years.

10 MR. DAWSON: And you came to testify at the
11 request of the bill author, is that how that worked?

12 MR. TOLEDO: Generally, the bill author.
13 Occasionally, through public testimony as well.

14 MR. DAWSON: I see, thank you.

15 MR. TOLEDO: Both here in California, but also in
16 D.C.

17 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Hello. Hi, this is Mrs.
18 Dickison.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: So, Ms. Dickison, we can hear you.
20 What we've done is we've had Mr. Dawson go ahead and start
21 his questions. We'll have him finish and then he'll yield
22 the time back to you.

23 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay, that sounds
24 perfect.

25 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

1 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Toledo, in your response to
2 standard question four, you talked about using a data-
3 driven process. What makes a process data driven and how
4 would that be applicable to the Redistricting Commission?

5 MR. TOLEDO: Sure. So, for using data, what I
6 believe what I'm -- and I can't remember the exact wording
7 in that section. But in terms of making data-driven
8 decisions, it's using the data that's available, taking
9 that, analyzing it and using it -- that the decision making
10 process is informed by the data, but also the decisions are
11 made using that data.

12 So, for example, in the case of the Commission I
13 would say that the one person, one vote criteria, whether
14 that be information from the Census, but also the electoral
15 data provides information that is useful for determining --
16 that provides useful data points that can contribute
17 towards the development of maps and the development of
18 measures that help inform the Commission to be able to
19 objectively make decisions, and inform the decisions of the
20 Commission.

21 MR. DAWSON: So, that sounds to me like it
22 assumes a certain level of sophistication from the
23 Commissioners, would you say?

24 MR. TOLEDO: Well, I do think that there is some
25 comfort with data and I think there's -- whether it's

1 analysis of the data, it does assume a level of comfort
2 with analysis or being able to interpret, or at least being
3 able to use data in a decision making process. Or, at
4 least being able to be able to understand what the data
5 means, and how it's being used, and how it's going to
6 inform the decision making process.

7 And I think that's all work that needs to be --
8 there has to be the shared understanding by the Commission
9 on how the data is going to be used. And once there's that
10 shared understanding and then -- then, of course, yes, the
11 Commissioners have to have a comfort with data.

12 MR. DAWSON: But it's possible, then, that also
13 it would require the Commission being able to -- or needing
14 to rely on demographers, geographers, statisticians,
15 lawyers?

16 MR. TOLEDO: Well, yes, and you need experts.
17 Experts to contribute the data and --

18 MR. DAWSON: And would you -- are we hearing --

19 MR. TOLEDO: Taps.

20 MR. DAWSON: Mr. Toledo, are you hearing me?

21 MR. TOLEDO: I am hearing you.

22 MR. DAWSON: Oh, okay, great. Let me just, I
23 just have one more. So, as the CAO of a healthcare center,
24 you're obviously dealing directly with the COVID-19
25 situation.

1 MR. TOLEDO: Yes.

2 MR. DAWSON: What concerns do you have about
3 COVID-19 affecting the redistricting process?

4 MR. TOLEDO: Sure, I have many concerns. We're
5 actually in the process of opening up an alternative care
6 site for Sonoma County, planning for the surge. And my
7 organization will be leading that effort for Sonoma County,
8 in partnership with the county government.

9 And in terms of how it may affect the -- I mean
10 we anticipate -- we don't know how long this infectious
11 disease will be out in the community. We know it likely
12 will be with us for quite some time. And maybe through the
13 -- well, quite some time it will be with us. And so, it
14 potentially will impact our ability to meet in person with
15 social distancing requirements. It could potentially
16 result in more people being sick and maybe not being as
17 willing to participate in public forums, such as these.
18 And also, it may potentially delay even the Census. Who
19 knows at this point? Hopefully, not.

20 And so, but we're all having to figure out
21 different ways to communicate with one another, whether
22 it's this type of Zoom conference -- I mean, our
23 millennials on staff are doing Zoom parties and with -- you
24 know, in some cases like up to a hundred different people
25 all over the world. So, we're having to figure out how to

1 communicate differently.

2 And it's not just the millennials. I think, you
3 know, a lot of our other staff are learning how to use
4 these forms that they might have been hesitant to use in
5 the past.

6 In our organization, 95 percent of the healthcare
7 that's delivered is being done over the telephone, and a
8 computer, and video technology that was unheard of just a
9 couple weeks ago. And we've transitioned very quickly to
10 this new environment.

11 And I think the Commission may need to -- of
12 course, within the parameters of the law, look to other
13 types of ways of interacting with the public and
14 potentially even themselves for the purpose of public
15 health and safety.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I have no further
17 questions, if we would like to go back to Ms. Dickison.

18 CHAIR BELNAP: So, Ms. Dickison, if you would,
19 restate the question you were on and also if you could
20 remind Mr. Toledo what part you had heard up to that point,
21 so we can get restarted.

22 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Perfect.

23 MS. PELLMAN: May I make a time check, too?

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Yes.

25 MS. PELLMAN: We have 22 minutes remaining of the

1 90 and 14 minutes of those are Ms. Dickison's.

2 CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

3 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Thank you,
4 Mr. Toledo.

5 So, the question was what you learned about, you
6 know, in your travels as you're working with groups in
7 different areas? What you learned about different needs of
8 communities based on geography?

9 And the last thing that I heard is we're talking
10 about how even where you live determines your health
11 situation.

12 MR. TOLEDO: Yes. And so, I mean evidence shows
13 that where -- the zip code where you live, the place where
14 you live has an impact on your health status. And that's
15 because of the types of services that are available to you,
16 the schools that are available, the access to food, and
17 other -- nutritious food, I should say. Access to
18 healthcare and other services, you know, or lack thereof.

19 And those things have a bigger impact on one's
20 health than even genetics. And so, in terms of addressing
21 some of these health disparities and ensuring that people
22 have -- you know, are able to meaningfully engage with
23 government, being able to meaningfully engage in the
24 community and the democratic process, whether it's the
25 local process, or the statewide process, or the federal

1 process. You know, it's those are -- there might be every
2 local community has the things that those communities are
3 working on, whether it's, you know, development of --
4 business development in lower, under-served communities or,
5 in our case, you know, affordable housing. Because the
6 housing prices, and I think this is happening across the
7 State of California, are just -- it's so unaffordable for
8 people to live in our community that there's just not the
9 workforce to be able to do the work.

10 And so, these are all issues that businesses are
11 looking at, small businesses, big, larger businesses, but
12 also community members and we're all facing some of these
13 issues. And we're seeing it in terms of a rise in
14 homelessness, et cetera, et cetera. And each community
15 will be dealing with their specific issues whether it's
16 safety issues, crime, lack of access to a quality
17 education, or whatever it may be.

18 And every community will have their unique issues
19 that they're struggling with and that they need their
20 elected officials to be responsive to, and accountable for,
21 for addressing.

22 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, you answered
23 the rest of my question around communities of interest, and
24 outreach, and those types of things.

25 So, the first eight Commissioners are selected

1 randomly.

2 MR. TOLEDO: Uh-hum.

3 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: And then, they are tasked
4 with selecting the final six. What would you be looking
5 for if you were one of the first eight?

6 MR. TOLEDO: Well, I think certainly
7 impartiality. But also, I think when you're one of the
8 first eight you're also looking for the gaps. What's not
9 -- what are the expertise, whether it's legal, or
10 analytical, or data, or demographics, or what are the gaps
11 in terms of what's not on the -- who's not on the
12 Commission that should be on the Commission, and will give
13 the Commission more credibility and among the electorate,
14 and the citizens of California. So, those are the things
15 that I would be looking at if I were one of the randomly
16 chosen first eight.

17 And ensuring that there's -- that there's the --
18 you know, that the requirement, that the promise of the --
19 that's in the Redistricting Commission's guidance is met
20 and that we have a Commission that is made up of people
21 that reflect the State of California, that have these
22 analytical knowledge, that's impartial, and respects, and
23 reach diversity for all of the State of California.

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Okay, you
25 answered my next question already. Then with that, as

1 well, I don't have any further questions right now. Thank
2 you.

3 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thanks Ms. Dickison.
4 So, Mr. Dawson has already asked his questions. Mr. Coe,
5 do you have any follow-up questions?

6 VICE CHAIR COE: I do not have any follow-up
7 questions, Mr. Chair.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. I will ask one follow-up
9 question and then I'll give Ms. Dickison a chance to ask a
10 follow-up question, if she'd like.

11 So, Mr. Toledo, you've testified at the request
12 of bill authors. Has this been recent, this experience?

13 MR. TOLEDO: It's been a couple of years because
14 when I was serving as the -- I used to be the Director of
15 Community and Government Relations for Redwood Community
16 Health Coalition. And so, in that context I used to do a
17 lot more of that. So, I would say the last time I did it
18 was probably around four or five years ago.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And do you still have any
20 regular contact with particular legislators that you have
21 testified for their bills?

22 MR. TOLEDO: Yes. Yes, I do.

23 CHAIR BELNAP: You still have contact with them?

24 MR. TOLEDO: Yes.

25 CHAIR BELNAP: May I ask which ones?

1 MR. TOLEDO: With Congressman Huffman,
2 Congressman Thompson, both of the House. A little with
3 Jared Huffman, used to be on the State Assembly. And Jim
4 Woods, Mike McGuire.

5 CHAIR BELNAP: So, if you were selected to be a
6 Commissioner, how do you anticipate that your communication
7 would be modified or continued with legislators?

8 MR. TOLEDO: I mean my communication with
9 legislators are that of a constituent, right. So, we're
10 all constituents of our legislators. In terms of
11 modification, it would be that there would -- I would never
12 want any perception of lack of impartiality, so discussions
13 about the -- maybe it's -- I just don't -- certainly, there
14 wouldn't be discussions about the Redistricting Commission
15 and the work of the Redistricting Commission, other than
16 through public comment. So, it has to be something public.
17 It wouldn't be something individual and one-off.

18 And I think -- and at this point I'm not doing
19 very much advocacy work. That's done through our regional
20 association, Redwood Community Health Coalition, and our
21 California State Association.

22 Occasionally, I still keep in contact with them,
23 especially when there's bills of interest to us. But those
24 are things that I've always done and I wouldn't do anything
25 out of the ordinary.

1 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

2 MR. TOLEDO: It would be very targeted to
3 community health centers and very targeted to the issues
4 that we've advocated for in some cases year after year.

5 CHAIR BELNAP: Understood, thank you.

6 Ms. Dickison, did you have any follow-up
7 questions?

8 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I do not.

9 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. I want to assure Mr. Toledo
10 that Ms. Dickison will have access to the whole interview,
11 the whole tape, so she'll be able to see any parts that
12 she's missed, as well as we all have an assistant that's
13 also watching these proceedings the whole way through and
14 who we collaborate with individually. So, in no way will
15 the technical difficulties that we experienced right now
16 affect your interview results at all.

17 We're going to go into recess now.

18 MR. DAWSON: Oh, I'm sorry.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: Yes.

20 MR. DAWSON: May I have a time check with the --
21 from the Secretary?

22 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have 12 minutes remaining
23 of the 90 minutes.

24 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. Actually, at this
25 point, with the 12 minutes remaining, we'd like to offer

1 Mr. Toledo the opportunity to make a closing statement, if
2 he wishes.

3 MR. TOLEDO: Sure. I would just say that, you
4 know, I am the child of a farmworker, a man that left his
5 village in Mexico to come work in the agricultural fields
6 of California as a bracero, in the 1950s. And he was a man
7 that picked himself up by his bootstraps, like many
8 immigrants, and a man that worked hard to ensure that his
9 family, his kids would have a better -- would have better
10 opportunities than he.

11 And one of the things that my father instilled in
12 me was the values of democratic participation. I mean he
13 came from -- he became a U.S. Citizen, and very proudly
14 never missed an election, always participated, always
15 wanted to learn about the people running for office, and
16 the issues that were being voted upon.

17 And he inspired a commitment to those values of
18 democratic participation in me, and of service to the
19 community, and loyalty to our system of democracy.

20 And my parents sacrificed, and our family's
21 poverty motivated me to pursue higher education. And I've
22 dedicated my career to improving the health status of
23 under-served communities, and trying to improve
24 opportunities to others.

25 And health clinics have been the main function by

1 which I've tried to improve access, improve opportunities
2 for others. And one of the reasons for that is the
3 community health centers have treated my family with
4 dignity and respect.

5 You know, I mentioned that La Clinica de La Raza
6 in Oakland was the place where my family and I received
7 medical care when I was growing up. And that was care that
8 we, without them, wouldn't have been able to afford. I
9 mean they opened up their doors; they treated us with
10 respect, and members of the community.

11 And after graduating from college I had the
12 opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for La
13 Clinica. And what made that experience particularly
14 special and meaningful to me is that it was the patients of
15 La Clinica, at a town hall meeting that elected me onto the
16 board to serve as their representative. And that from --
17 and that really fueled my passion. It was the beginning of
18 my passion for ensuring access to healthcare services for
19 under-served communities.

20 But also, to ensuring that people have a voice in
21 improving their health and their health outcomes.

22 I'd like to serve on the committee because it
23 would allow me to provide -- it would provide me with an
24 unparalleled opportunity to give back to the people of
25 California and this is a state that's given so much to my

1 family and myself.

2 And when I -- I do generally believe that when
3 people are acknowledged they feel more tied to their
4 community. When people are included and engaged, they
5 participate more. And when people are empowered, they
6 accomplish great things.

7 I've demonstrated my ability to maintain
8 impartiality and have the ability to analyze large amounts
9 of quantitative and qualitative data, and have a deep
10 appreciation for California's diversity.

11 And I think what makes me an ideal candidate for
12 the Commission is that I genuinely believe that everyone
13 deserves a voice and that everyone should have the
14 opportunity to participate.

15 My family needed someone to hear them when they
16 did and it changed the trajectory of my life. And everyone
17 in California deserves that. Thank you.

18 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

19 We're going to go into recess now and be back at
20 10:44 a.m. Thank you.

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

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

23 CHAIR BELNAP: I will call this meeting back out
24 of recess. I'm going to check with Mr. Coe. Are you on
25 the line? I'm going to pause that for a moment.

1 Ms. Dickison, are you on the line?

2 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I am on the line. Can
3 you hear me okay?

4 CHAIR BELNAP: Yes. Mr. Coe?

5 VICE CHAIR COE: I'm here.

6 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, excellent.

7 I want to welcome Dorothy Hines to her interview.
8 Ms. Hines, can you hear us okay?

9 MS. HINES: Yes, I can. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Then, we're going to
11 start with the standard five questions and I'll turn the
12 time over to Mr. Dawson.

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

14 Ms. Hines, I'm going to ask you five standard
15 questions that the Panel has requested each applicant
16 respond to. Are you ready, ma'am?

17 MS. HINES: Yes, I am. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

1 MS. HINES: Well, the application process itself
2 focuses on our ability to be impartial and to appreciate
3 California's diversity in relevant skills. We should
4 collectively and individually possess each one of these
5 competencies.

6 And I believe that the transparency of the
7 process is really helping to do that.

8 Specific attributes I possess include what I've
9 just mentioned. Plus, Commissioners should possess
10 attributes of being wholly engaged in the process, be
11 cooperative with each other, organized, productive,
12 thoughtful, and accountable, collaborative, and kind.

13 My contribution to the success of the Commission
14 is to utilize the wealth of what I've learned and practiced
15 over the years in a variety of team settings and project
16 settings.

17 Skills that I can bring are abilities to
18 facilitate common understanding of the issues, be able to
19 distill the issues, demonstrate active listening, respect
20 for each other's' and consensus decision making.

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

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

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

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

8 MS. HINES: Well, the characteristics that we
9 should each possess as Commissioners to protect against
10 this hyperpartisanship is an ability to be able to
11 recognize and value each other's story. The background
12 influences that we've had informs who we are and gives us
13 the values that we hold. This is important because this is
14 part of who we are.

15 We need to demonstrate kindness in how we speak
16 to each other. And when we recognize that someone is
17 speaking from a value system that they hold, we need to
18 take time to ensure that each person is heard, but we may
19 need to have some kind of signals in play to have the
20 person possibly back down on some of the comments that they
21 are holding through that seem to be out of line in terms of
22 the goals of the team. And that can be done in a very
23 respectful and gentle way.

24 I've worked with different teams that were able
25 to employ agreements that we honor each other and say,

1 okay, we might be getting off track. We need to get back
2 on track.

3 And what I would do to ensure the work of the
4 Commission is not seen as being biased in any way is to
5 develop a number of agreements amongst all Commissioners
6 that would include items such as committing to adhere to
7 the team messages that are important to be conveyed and
8 agreed upon by the whole group.

9 I see a lot of group work, a lot of consensus
10 decision making in doing this, and I find that agreement is
11 to act as a body of one. And again, I mentioned the
12 consensus decision making is so vitally important.

13 We need to develop a work plan and generally
14 employ effective project management techniques and that
15 helps us to basically adhere to what the task is before us.

16 Further, I would strive to develop a code of
17 conduct that would include how to deal with each
18 stakeholder and to deal with them as a cohesive, apolitical
19 team. And we would refrain from offering personal advice
20 to each other, particularly in public. And then, each one
21 of us would need to understand and embrace the fact that
22 our individual behaviors, particularly at public meetings,
23 does reflect on the entire Commission, and to basically be
24 in check on our behaviors.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question three. What is

1 the greatest problem the Commission could encounter, and
2 what actions would you take to avoid or respond to this
3 problem?

4 MS. HINES: When I thought about this and
5 traveled through two or three greatest problems from the
6 complete breakdown of the committee to public outcry with
7 the results, that type of thing. But what I basically
8 wound up centering on is that the greatest problem would be
9 not being able to comprehend the hard-to-count groups and
10 actually getting the lines drawn improperly.

11 And actions that I would take to respond to this
12 particular problem is to really bring in data, to study
13 previous information, and be able to analyze the highest
14 profile under count risks by known populations, such as
15 Native Americans, renters, low visibility householders, and
16 those types of the profiles.

17 This would necessitate looking at how those areas
18 might have been previously under counted in the past
19 Census, and look at modeling methods based on the
20 historical data and known patterns. I believe that pulling
21 in some form of external reputable sources to grasp the
22 potential magnitude of the issue would be an important
23 thing to do.

24 I believe that there's information out there that
25 would help in trying to bring everything to the table to

1 see how we could be able to overcome these under-counted
2 populations. And that would be done in various ways
3 through the public meetings, and so on.

4 So, I do believe that is the greatest problem
5 that we can face. And I believe with our current
6 environment the home Census process I believe is at risk
7 with people kind of flying under the radar, particularly
8 with the whole pandemic situation that we have going on.

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

15 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
16 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
17 conflicts that arose.

18 What lessons would you take from this group
19 experience to the Commission if selected?

20 MS. HINES: The project that I noted in my
21 application and the biggest project that I've worked on was
22 in my professional life. It was an \$85 million project for
23 the year 2000, for the semiconductor product sector for
24 Motorola. The semiconductor products is essentially a
25 chemical business, as well as, you know, the whole

1 electrical -- putting leads on chips, and this type of
2 thing.

3 In that process there's a lot of date stamping
4 that goes on. And so, the critical nature of ensuring that
5 we can move from a two-digit to a four-digit code was
6 vitally important to the whole manufacturing process. So,
7 it was a very critical project.

8 The goal of the project was to ensure that the
9 whole supply chain through customer delivery was not
10 interrupted. And so, this involved an extensive review of
11 all of the manufacturing systems, the customer systems,
12 supply chain, and this type of thing.

13 The project, I was in charge of the project for
14 our particular sector. We had 2,500 team members and that
15 spanned the Americas, Europe, and Asia. And as I said, the
16 goal was to ensure that we did not have an interruption in
17 our business.

18 The way that we handled any potential conflicts
19 that came up was through very, very precise project
20 management. We were very proactive in our communication,
21 very consistent in our communication. We had regular
22 conference calls that allowed all areas of the world to be
23 in one call, which meant that here in the United States we
24 were the folks chosen to talk at midnight.

25 So, in addition to that we took the time to

1 travel to each one of the countries involved and sit down
2 with the people. And we did risk assessment, we, as I
3 said, did tons of communication. And our ability to
4 essentially grasp hands across the world on an even playing
5 field was key to the success because each segment needed to
6 make sure that they held up their end of what needed to be
7 held up.

8 And through that process I learned the different
9 cultures in these different areas. I learned the
10 difference in how we even hand each other business cards
11 and, you know, nuances of behavior.

12 Our work ethic was such that each team member
13 really committed to achieve the higher good for worldwide
14 success. And with that, we all understood that personal
15 biases and so on needed to be set aside.

16 And so, what we derived from that was just this
17 high commitment to achieve a key goal and everybody bought
18 in to what needed to be achieved.

19 So, the lessons that I take from this, that whole
20 group experience, a very rich experiences which required
21 very extensive travel in accomplishing it is good planning.
22 The cohesiveness of a team. I cannot stress how important
23 that is at the beginning to do the work right, to get a
24 team fully functional and then have that team building in
25 the follow up.

1 Being able to anticipate problem areas and having
2 all voices come to the table and saying, well, we need to
3 think about this, we need to think about that helped us
4 with surfacing problems before they -- before they even
5 surfaced. So, we had lots and lots of active listening.

6 So, those were the basic lessons that I would
7 bring forward into -- and have brought forward, actually,
8 into everything that I've, you know, done before and since.

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

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

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

22 MS. HINES: Well, the background that I have
23 stems from my formative years growing up in a multi-ethnic
24 environment. We lived in New Mexico my growing up years.
25 My father was road construction and so we moved as

1 basically a community, together. We all lived in trailer
2 houses. And we associated, basically entered into small
3 communities in New Mexico to go to school. We learned how
4 sometimes unkind people can be when we were those trailer
5 trash people, you know, coming to town. But then, being
6 able to work our way through that and to gain the ultimate
7 respect of folks at our school and so on was a very
8 formative lesson for me to continue to give voice, even
9 though we are -- when people attempt to ignore us or look
10 down on us. And so, that was very formative.

11 When we traveled with each other, we did have
12 folks from different races, colors, and we developed just a
13 keen mutual respect for each other because we're like a
14 caravan, you know, going down the street.

15 Going forward from there and going into the
16 corporate world after college, I traveled, like I have
17 previously described in the project that I was on at
18 Motorola, to countries like Malaysia, and Japan, and
19 Taiwan, and China, and France, Italy, Scotland, and that
20 informed me on how different people live in different parts
21 of the world.

22 The other interesting aspect, I believe
23 interesting, is my seminary experience in looking at
24 research papers on people on the margins, and bringing
25 people from the margins into the circle. Did research on

1 that with -- I focused primarily on women, women who are
2 left behind, silenced, women who are silenced, and that
3 type of thing. So, that has enriched my understanding and
4 appreciation of various perspectives, as well. So, that
5 about sums that up.

6 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. At this point we'll go
7 to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes
8 to ask his or her questions. And we will start with the
9 Chair, Mr. Belnap.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: Good morning, Ms. Hines. In your
11 application you indicated that you worked for over 32 years
12 at Motorola, and for some portion of that time you were a
13 program director. And you referred to that role in your
14 impartiality essay.

15 How did you have to exercise impartiality in the
16 role of program director at Motorola?

17 MS. HINES: Well, the title itself imparts some
18 of that notion because as the program director, if you
19 start bellowing out your own biases, or your own way to do
20 something, I would suggest that's not much of a director.

21 Using that word, director, reminds me of a
22 director in a symphony. It's important to help the people
23 get tuned up and to ensure that each one of the instruments
24 are playing. And I think that might be a little bit
25 esoteric kind of analogy, but it's much of that. And

1 making sure that the performance comes from the orchestra.

2 And so, a director is to set aside the directions
3 that they think. I think there's some gentle guiding that
4 can take place, but that's just like in the direction of
5 lowering the tone, or coming out with a crescendo and that
6 type of thing. So, hopefully, that's not too esoteric.

7 Another way that I was able to do that is I found
8 myself, when I wasn't actually in the program director
9 role, yet, and I was essentially, you know, a team member,
10 a member in the community, in the room at meetings, at
11 project team meetings that type of thing, it seemed like I
12 wound up being the individual that was able to facilitate
13 the discussion. And as a facilitator, one knows that they
14 need to ensure that that person sitting in the back of the
15 room that is a little shy to say something, that they're
16 able to give voice. And I think all of those types of
17 behaviors, you're setting aside from trying to, you know,
18 just drive your own agenda, and you're giving that
19 impartial open picture to the room for people to be able to
20 work together and move forward. If that makes sense.

21 CHAIR BELNAP: It does, thank you. In your
22 application you indicated that you studied voting behavior
23 of Californians to see how impartial and fair redistricting
24 lines may impact behaviors.

25 When did you engage in this analysis and what

1 were your conclusions?

2 MS. HINES: Well, in that -- I need to tone that
3 down just a little bit. What I was doing was looking at
4 essentially the Californians here in this region that I'm
5 in. We've had our board of supervisors and some of the
6 local elections. We're taking a look at how people, if
7 they feel that there's an election that is -- really
8 affects, like affects me, you know, on a daily basis, as
9 just a person on the street, I've found that the -- going
10 to the polls when you have a higher sensitive issue at
11 hand, or attempting to select a particular candidate, and
12 doing cross-over voting, going to the polls, looking at the
13 percentages of voting.

14 One example, in our community here we had some
15 key elections and we're looking -- I looked at the voting
16 previously, the turn out, and saw that there was like a
17 spike of -- a huge percentage turn out. So, it was a
18 little bit more confined. It wasn't like the whole State
19 of California type of thing.

20 But I did do -- wanted to just -- I was just
21 interested in that. And I did that as I was -- as I've
22 worked five different elections as an inspector. And so,
23 being an inspector at the polls, we have the Adopt-A-Poll
24 here in our community. And that just caused me to be
25 interested in seeing how people -- you know, just look at

1 the patterns of how they voted over that period of time.

2 CHAIR BELNAP: And, yeah, I was going to ask you
3 about your time as a precinct inspector. But first, I
4 wanted to ask as you're observing these patterns did
5 anything surprising come out to you, or anything that was
6 confirmed in your mind, any general principle that you
7 could share with us?

8 MS. HINES: Well, I mean the basic, general
9 principle is if I believe my vote counts, I will vote. If
10 somehow it's going to just not mean anything or essentially
11 a decision is already made because there's just an
12 overwhelming attitude on a different side, it's just, you
13 know, really? Why bother. And I know that seems a little
14 pedestrian, but that's essentially the bottom line.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: And from your life experiences,
16 from your just observational skills how do people come to
17 the conclusion that their vote counts?

18 MS. HINES: Well, one of the ways that I've
19 observed that people did come to that conclusion is that
20 people talk to them, for one thing, about getting involved.
21 And I've found -- I never really observed, because I never
22 really did it before, is getting involved and seeing, you
23 know, campaigns how they work.

24 But when people reach out to their neighbors and
25 just talk about what's at risk, and talk about how we can

1 be influencers that interest expressed in that individual
2 goes a long way.

3 Did I answer your question?

4 CHAIR BELNAP: Yes, absolutely. As you're
5 visualizing the Commission and being on that Commission,
6 some part of it's going to be reaching out to communities
7 and finding out communities of interest, simultaneous to
8 those forums I think the Commission would be trying to help
9 people feel like their vote counts.

10 If you were a Commissioner and you're in one of
11 those meetings, what would you say to the people in
12 attendance that would help them realize why they matter and
13 how their vote counts?

14 MS. HINES: Well, one of the things that I would
15 say is first of all we're here because it matters, and it's
16 important that we're taking our time together. And to lay
17 out the ways that it can matter to them, the ways that it
18 can matter to their family to support for their children,
19 that type of thing. To be informative and to say that your
20 voice is important to hear. And to be able to collectively
21 -- it's difficult to look, you know, people the eye, in
22 their eyes directly when you're in a room full of people,
23 but essentially do that. Saying that it's a privilege and
24 just really talk to the institutions that sustain this
25 nation and how they are sustained because we show up. And

1 every single person, every single person counts.

2 And maybe that sounds like a little preachy in a
3 way, but then it's also it would be very heartfelt. That
4 people say, okay, now I hear. It does count, it really
5 does count. So, that would be the way to do it.

6 CHAIR BELNAP: Excellent. Thank you. So, I want
7 to shift gears and talk about your time at Motorola. I'd
8 like to hear more about some of the complex analysis and
9 decision making that you were involved in at your time in
10 Motorola?

11 MS. HINES: Well, when I first went into
12 Motorola, my degree was -- my bachelor's was in business
13 administration, with an emphasis in accounting. And some
14 people would look at, you know, doing accounting and coming
15 up with financial strategies for a global company could be
16 maybe that back room, ho hum thing.

17 But what we had to deal with was of a kind of a
18 technical nature from the stand point of being able to
19 collect the information worldwide, from all these different
20 countries, be able to put it all together, take a look at
21 what the whole financial picture looks like, be able to do
22 forecasting, and be able to do trend analysis, be able to
23 put together a five-year plan, and be able to do that so
24 that all of the communities, the manufacturing and, you
25 know, all of the different segments of the company are

1 accounted for.

2 And attempting to do that when you have separate
3 systems that don't like to talk to each other, that type of
4 thing, and trying to bridge gaps between, you know, like
5 finance, and technology, and marketing, and purchasing and
6 things like that it's a matter of mapping out the whole
7 business systems, and being able to develop and acquire new
8 systems that would fit the different organizations, but be
9 able to talk to each other.

10 And so, we embarked upon some pretty massive
11 global systems to install, and it was a matter of doing all
12 the testing. And when you're doing it in a manufacturing
13 business, you know, it's making sure that the manufacturing
14 people figuratively and, you know, literally can talk to
15 each other through the systems.

16 So, it was developing that, and moving, and
17 trying to bring the company together as a global company,
18 and be able to produce a consolidated result. So, those
19 were the types of things that we did.

20 CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. Madam Secretary, can I
21 get a time check?

22 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have eight minutes, 15
23 seconds remaining.

24 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Ms. Hines, I'm interested
25 in your master's in theology that you received from the

1 Fuller Theological Seminary. It indicates here it took
2 about three years. So, tell me about your courses of study
3 and what you gained from that discipline, that degree that
4 you obtained?

5 MS. HINES: Well, the course of study I started
6 in 2007, graduated in 2010. And a master of theology with
7 Biblical studies means that I studied Hebrew and Greek, and
8 as well as Old Testament classes, New Testament classes,
9 did communication classes. The different religions, world
10 religions.

11 And so, I was able to first of all parsing Hebrew
12 was a fascinating experience to be able to do that, and
13 look at the scripture in the original text was fascinating.

14 So, just an absolute wealth of learning how
15 people devoted their lives to really bringing the text
16 forward that we have what we have today.

17 I did a lot of emphasis on women in the Bible,
18 unnamed women. In the silencing of women, I looked at the
19 scripture like in the original Greek, in the New Testament,
20 and saw how biases have been put into translations, and
21 different theologians have instilled their personal view as
22 to how the scripture should be read.

23 I saw a really opening up of what -- how to
24 really look at a topic and see the depth of it, and to see
25 that there's -- it's both/and situation, as opposed to an

1 either/or. And what we see, like in the hyperpartisanship,
2 those types of things, we see this dualistic approach to
3 life. It's either this or it's that, and you're in, you're
4 out.

5 And one of the richness, rich, wonderful things
6 that I learned from this it's not necessarily so. It's a
7 both/and situation. Let's look at the totality of this.
8 Let's look at what the intent was. You know, let's look at
9 what is happening -- one of the phrases that still stays in
10 my mind today, ten years later, is we need to understand
11 what's going on then and there in order to understand what
12 is going on here and now.

13 And so, I think that's something rather than just
14 zip into something and read into something, it's important
15 to read from something.

16 And I think that can apply to human beings, as to
17 me trying to read something into you, and credit you with
18 something that's important to have it come from you. I
19 don't know if that's -- that is not a direct translation
20 there, but it was that type of thing. Just an opening up
21 of the mind.

22 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. I
23 appreciate it. I don't have any further questions, so I'm
24 going to turn the time over to Mr. Coe for his questions.

25 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good

1 morning, Ms. Hines. Thank you for taking the time to speak
2 with us today.

3 In your application you indicate that you're
4 involved in a number of volunteer activities with various
5 organizations. In your essay on activities, I believe, you
6 describe the people served by the organizations that you
7 volunteer with are the homeless population and children who
8 face adversity, financially or otherwise, among others.

9 What is it that motivates you to seek out these
10 particular missions or these particular types of
11 organizations to volunteer for?

12 MS. HINES: Well, the thing that I may have
13 touched upon in some of my comments so far is living the
14 way that we lived growing up, and understanding that I have
15 to have my own voice or nobody's going to, you know, really
16 give it to me. I need to find it. And so, when I see
17 people that they may not have or know how to use their
18 voice to be able to reach out and say, yes, you do have a
19 voice, and you are important to reach out to. And you are
20 a human being. You're part of this shared humanity that we
21 experience.

22 And so, so I'd like to try to help people, you
23 know, stand on their own ground and to be able to,
24 essentially, stand tall, with respect for themselves.

25 And so, reaching out in whatever way I can

1 through donations and bringing awareness to people for them
2 to reach out as well is just a small thing that I can do to
3 try to help with that voice.

4 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. And how do you think
5 that this motivating factor or this reason for you getting
6 involved, how do you think that that could be a benefit to
7 the Commission if you were to be a member of that
8 Commission?

9 MS. HINES: Well, I mean one of the things that
10 comes to my mind, as we touched upon just a few minutes
11 ago, is in public forums being able to find the people,
12 like the communities of interest, and different people who
13 tend to fly under the radar. You know, try to go under the
14 radar and see how we might be able to find those
15 populations and have empathy to say that you could, and
16 here's why you count. And if you allow yourself to be
17 counted and if you allow yourself to speak up, there would
18 be benefits that come back to you.

19 It's not like a quid pro quo thing, but it's just
20 having them be able to have what's -- they may not have --
21 I mean having -- let them have a forum that they may not
22 have had before. And I can see bringing that into some of
23 the public meetings.

24 VICE CHAIR COE: And with these communities that
25 you allude to that they either don't know that they have a

1 forum or they are aware, but they're uncomfortable engaging
2 for one reason or another, as some groups are, what could
3 the Commission do to have these particular groups feel more
4 comfortable providing their perspective?

5 MS. HINES: Well, what the Commission can do is
6 essentially sit down and listen. And I think that
7 listening is very, very valuable. I think finding them and
8 sitting down -- I think finding them, there would need to
9 be help from different community leaders and all, and
10 bringing together the forum, but a lot of time listening.
11 And that's what I've learned when we were doing projects
12 around the world is being able to hear the people from, you
13 know, South Korea give their inputs. It would be a similar
14 sort of thing, listening. Listening is vitally important.

15 And I think the presence of the Commission in
16 various forums can do that.

17 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. In regards to
18 impartiality, I'm wondering if you could give us a specific
19 example of a time where you had to make a difficult
20 impartial decision that perhaps involved setting aside your
21 preference or self-interest?

22 MS. HINES: I have to really admit that I do have
23 opinions, but I am able to hold myself in check. So, I
24 haven't had massively, you know, difficult times. Early on
25 in my career, I was the first female accountant to enter

1 Motorola. And as I entered Motorola, the clerical people
2 didn't have any idea what to do with me, nor did the male
3 professionals. There were no male clerical people and no
4 female professionals. And so, I had to hold myself in
5 check a bit to attempt to reach out to both groups.
6 Instead of, you know, standing in the middle of the floor
7 and saying, you know, what's going on here type of thing.
8 And be able to reach out. Like with the clerical people,
9 one of the things that I vowed early on to do is attempt to
10 bring them along more into the professional area.

11 But I had to step back and not offer my opinions
12 on how I thought they should be doing things or what they
13 could be doing differently, but hear from their experiences
14 on what they're dealing with and really take that to heart
15 before I -- as opposed to rushing in with knowing what I
16 felt needed to be done. I guess that would be an example
17 of kind of holding back a direction that I thought we
18 should go and allow that direction to evolve.

19 So, having patience with that is one of the
20 things that I needed to learn early on. And then, instead
21 of calling out the kind of bigot behavior that I saw at
22 that time with the male professionals, I had to essentially
23 get in and earn respect. And there was a tendency that I
24 had that I wanted to just, you know, kind of stand them
25 against the wall and say, you know, come on. But that

1 would not be a way to become an equal professional with
2 them.

3 I don't know if that is getting to your point or
4 not.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: It is and it's kind of leading
6 to another question. What it sounds like is it's -- well,
7 let me back up. One of the difficulties with impartiality
8 is being able to recognize and understand your own inherent
9 biases. And it sounds like you had to go through some type
10 of exercises to recognize those, as you decided how you
11 were going to move forward with the decisions you made.

12 How does an individual go about identifying their
13 internal inherent biases?

14 MS. HINES: That is -- I think that's a very
15 challenging question and I'm not sure how many volumes have
16 been written on that, but probably quite a few.

17 One of the things that is so difficult about it
18 is we have these implicit biases that we don't even
19 recognize. And when it's so -- it's implicit, it's you
20 just don't know you have it.

21 And I think that there's an issue with that. I
22 think sometimes it just takes someone else to say, you
23 know, hey that language you used was maybe a little --
24 shows some kind of a slanderous bias towards this
25 particular group or whatever, you may want to think about

1 that.

2 So, I think one of the ways to go about it is to
3 have people that you hold yourself accountable to, that
4 they help you discover that. Because one of the things
5 that I've attempted to do is bring that into awareness for
6 people.

7 And what we've done here in our community is we
8 celebrate the International Women's Day, March the 8th.
9 We've done that for four years, now. And we bring in a
10 panel of people and we bring in a panel of people that--
11 from all backgrounds. We've brought in a Native American
12 to be on the panel. We've brought in people from Black
13 Lives Matter and from the Latino community.

14 And we ask them questions about, you know, equity
15 and that type of thing. And then, we ask all of them to
16 give us an action item, you know, and to help us understand
17 each other better, and help us to expose biases that we may
18 have, and what biases do they have. And so, we have an
19 open -- it's a rich experience. We have a wonderful
20 brunch, and people come together, and there are about 150
21 people, and so we have that kind of conversation.

22 So, I think it takes accountability,
23 conversation, self-reflection, and open-mindedness that I
24 don't know it all. I'm not the end all, be all. And I
25 definitely carry with me my -- how I grew up, my own

1 personal story which could have all, you know, different
2 things built into it that need to be looked at and
3 improved.

4 VICE CHAIR COE: So, with that experience that
5 you had with gathering a panel of folks and increasing
6 awareness of potential internal biases that people may be
7 unaware of, do you think that experience could help you on
8 the Commission if it became a problem amongst the group of
9 Commissioners that there may be some work that needed to be
10 done on that? Do you think that you could help -- help
11 that along within that framework of that team?

12 MS. HINES: I do. As I'm very aware of it. I
13 have a radar screen that, you know, pings every once in a
14 while. And I -- I have a history of knowing how to gently
15 approach that and talk to people. And I think that's
16 important, too. When you enter or engage with, you know --
17 I was talking with a friend the other day and the way she
18 put it is that, you know, I talked her down off the roof
19 kind of thing. But it's -- there's an ability to -- it
20 needs to be developed I think in people, to be able to do
21 that with others.

22 I don't mean to be talking around the point.
23 Hopefully, I'm responding directly to your question.

24 VICE CHAIR COE: You are thank you. I wanted to
25 go to a passage that you wrote in your other relevant

1 material essay in that you said you asked a group of
2 cohorts why would a selection committee choose a 75-year-
3 old Caucasian female to serve on the Redistricting
4 Commission? And that their answer was "because you are
5 that particular person."

6 You go on to say that one of your strengths your
7 cohorts pointed out to you was "wisdom and sound judgment
8 acquired and sharpened for years."

9 Can you expand a little bit on that? What do you
10 think that they were referring to?

11 MS. HINES: Well, the -- what I believe that they
12 were referring to are my life experiences that I've had
13 from growing up, kind of moving around like a gypsy,
14 bringing that into my own personal story, going into a
15 field at that time that women were vacant. And being kind
16 of a trendsetter in that particular regard. Being able to
17 step forward and then go from there into the corporate
18 world and I've already, you know, talked about that a
19 little bit of reaching across the globe with different
20 cultures.

21 So, I think that each one of these experiences
22 they layer on top of each other. And as they layer on top
23 what comes together is a setting in of some sense that
24 you've got some wisdom, you know. And that just comes with
25 multiple experiences and just kind of a vastness, a depth

1 of different -- well, I don't want to repeat the word
2 experience -- of different life events.

3 Going through my husband dying. He had early
4 onset Alzheimer's. And just, you know, going through that
5 particular process with him was another enriching
6 experience, and I think that brings an empathetic approach
7 to people.

8 And it's a little bit of a -- the analogy that
9 comes to mind my is a little bit of a velvet and steel sort
10 of thing. You know, hold true to values, but then do it
11 with the expression of love in your heart and a smile on
12 your face sort of thing. And I think that that can be
13 translated into just the experience that I've had over
14 decades, it adds up to being called wisdom.

15 MS. PELLMAN: We have four minutes, 14 seconds
16 remaining.

17 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. Ms. Hines, if you
18 were to be appointed to the Commission what do you see as a
19 role that you would serve as part of that team?

20 MS. HINES: Well, me--the roles that I tend to
21 find myself in is one of organizational dynamics. I tend
22 to evolve into a leadership role to build together, you
23 know, the consensus, decision making. One of the things
24 that we've done here, we have a strategy team. We have a
25 particular air issue that we're dealing with in our

1 particular community, and we have a strategy team that
2 we've come together and I facilitated with coming up with
3 what our mission, our purpose, our goals, that type of
4 thing are. And then, how we are to behave together in
5 community with each other and how we are to behave as we
6 may approach external organizations.

7 And so, I tend to do the -- putting together the
8 kind of a framework of how we can be a cohesive group, how
9 we can make our decisions together, and voices heard, all
10 those kinds of things that we've talked about so far.

11 So, I tend to gravitate toward that. But then, I
12 also can be a team player. So, I would see my role more of
13 a guiding force in making sure all the pieces stay
14 together.

15 VICE CHAIR COE: Which aspects of the role of a
16 Commissioner do you think that you might struggle with a
17 little bit?

18 MS. HINES: I think that the aspects that I could
19 struggle with, I'm not familiar with the GIS, so that would
20 be a learning curve to dig into the actual usage of that.
21 So, I don't know what I don't know, so I don't whatever
22 kind of a struggle that would be. But if I were to have to
23 do something to manipulate the system, I'm not sure about
24 that because I can't -- I just can't say what that would be
25 like. I would anticipate it would be pretty technical and

1 so that could be a struggle.

2 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you very much. No
3 further questions at this time, Mr. Chair.

4 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, Ms. Dickison, the time is
5 now yours.

6 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Good morning,
7 Ms. Hines.

8 MS. HINES: Good morning.

9 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Many of my questions have
10 been answered, but I do have just a few or a couple. I
11 noted that you cofounded the Progressive Women's Forum.
12 What is that organization?

13 MS. HINES: The organization is -- it's not
14 registered with anything. It's just a loose organization
15 that has come together. What we've done with that
16 organization is we wanted to educate ourselves and continue
17 being on the learning curve of understanding, you know, our
18 civil rights, understanding our diversity, understanding,
19 you know, the different issues that face us, becoming
20 informed about the whole climate change. And then,
21 essentially, trying to promote our shared humanity.

22 And so, what we've done with that is we've had
23 monthly meetings and we've brought in different speakers.
24 Some of those speakers we -- have been some of the same
25 people that we've had on our panel discussions for

1 International Women's Day. But it's to bring in different
2 ethnic groups and talk about biases, that type of thing.

3 One of our favorite speakers is a professor at
4 Cal Poly. And he has brought into play how religion is
5 such a -- can be, should not be, a divisive -- it's so
6 divisive in our lives. You talk about hyperpartisanship
7 it's, you know, hyper-religion. You know, the Muslims
8 versus Hindus, versus Christians, and so on.

9 And so, what we've attempted to do with this view
10 of our shared humanity, as I mentioned earlier, is bring in
11 perspective on what the core values of the Muslim faith,
12 and that type of thing. And so, we've had Dr. Lloyd
13 Moffett come multiple times to talk about that.

14 We've had our local, the police chief of San Luis
15 Obispo come and speak about the different issues facing the
16 community and the county with regard to homelessness, and
17 violence and, you know, that kind of a thing. So, those
18 are the types of things that we've done with the forum.

19 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Who is on that?
20 Who's it made of, who are the members?

21 MS. HINES: They're members here in the
22 community. The steering committee is a group of all women,
23 but the forum is open to -- not just people right here in
24 our community, but also in the county.

25 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Oh, okay. Okay, thank

1 you. So, you may have talked about this a little bit, but
2 in your essay when you talked about that large project you
3 were on, how you worked across, you know, different
4 disciplines, and multiple countries. What did you learn on
5 that project about the different cultures that will assist
6 you in the work with the Commission, should you be
7 selected?

8 MS. HINES: What I learned from the different
9 cultures is that we each have a different way of speaking
10 up. Like in the Japanese culture, their style of
11 communication is different. I learned that there's a
12 brashness in some cultures and there's a timidity in other
13 cultures.

14 One of the things that was very gratifying was
15 what we did was some of the people from some of the
16 manufacturing teams, I headed up, we had our participating
17 management program where we had teams fly into the United
18 States, that we had different gatherings together. And
19 they were able to talk about what they were doing. And
20 just experiencing the richness of them coming together.
21 Like some of them had never left their village. You know,
22 they were like -- they never left home more than like 25
23 miles and here they were coming to the United States.

24 And just being able to embrace that and see how
25 they respond to that. So, it was some of those personal

1 touches that were very, very gratifying.

2 And I think that it just really gives me an
3 awareness of each individual uniqueness. So.

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, you
5 moved to California in 2013, is that correct?

6 MS. HINES: That is correct.

7 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: What brought you to
8 California?

9 MS. HINES: Well, as I mentioned earlier my
10 husband had died and my brother moved in with me at the
11 time, and our sister lives in San Luis Obispo.

12 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Oh, okay.

13 MS. HINES: And so, we were -- my husband, like I
14 said had passed away, my brother retired, and so we just
15 came and visited, and just fell in love with the state,
16 fell in love with where I live, and it was nice to have
17 kind of our little tribe gathered back together again.

18 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Great.

19 (Pause)

20 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, most of my questions
21 have been answered. I have a couple of ones I'd like to
22 ask.

23 If you are selected as one of the first eight
24 Commissioners, which are done randomly, you'll be tasked
25 with selecting the next six Commissioners to round out the

1 Commission. What would you be looking for in those
2 individuals?

3 MS. HINES: Well, what I would be looking for,
4 what we would need to do is the first eight do a skills
5 assessment. We would need to look at who we are, what's
6 our demographic, and how can we closely mirror the
7 demographic of, you know, the region, the state we're
8 supposed to represent. You know, as closely as we could
9 with 14 people.

10 And so, I think the work would need to take place
11 in planning for what are we missing. And have there be
12 just a basic agreement on we think we're missing, you know,
13 XYZ. And as we would approach looking for that, I think
14 that we can take a page from your all's approach, and what
15 you've done in terms of coming together, rating the
16 different people with, you know, the impartiality, the
17 diversity, the relevant skills in mind. Keep those at the
18 forefront.

19 And I would look at the 14 people, you know, the
20 first eight would be -- like a puzzle, like a jigsaw puzzle
21 where you get the 14 pieces in this and they have to
22 interlock. And so, you would see that maybe the first
23 eight would be the frame and some pieces in the middle, and
24 then what's missing.

25 And to the best of our ability, possibly, I don't

1 know what the rules of the road specifically would be in
2 terms of us even being able to consult with you folks on,
3 you know, how you looked for different things. But learn
4 maybe some from you. Learn from the first eight of those
5 that have gone before. And then, do that homework and have
6 that firmly in mind and then go from there in selecting the
7 final six. That would be my process.

8 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. What would
9 you like to see the Commission ultimately accomplish?

10 MS. HINES: Well, I would like to see the
11 Commission ultimately accomplish its four maps. I would
12 like to see it accomplish facilitating public meetings such
13 that there's a -- the reaction to the meetings would be on
14 the plus side, and not the negative side.

15 I would like to see that the work of the
16 committee, you know, from the public, you know, has been
17 very nicely accepted. The maps seem reasonable, and
18 justifiable, and different stakeholders are happy as they
19 can be. So, yeah, there would be those that aren't with
20 the maps.

21 And then, maybe one final thing would be that
22 there's no legal challenge to it. So, that would be I
23 think a good thing to accomplish.

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I
25 don't have any further questions at this time.

1 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. Mr. Dawson,
2 we'll turn the time over to you.

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

4 Ms. Hines, I wanted to follow up on a couple of
5 things that you said in response to the standard questions.
6 I noticed that several times in response to several of the
7 questions you mentioned project management being important.

8 So, my question is how is project management
9 important in the context of the Commission? What would it
10 look like? What would that -- how do you envision that
11 working positively for the Commission?

12 MS. HINES: Well, the project management would
13 lay out not a critical path method, per se, but like a
14 chart, a plan. So, saying this is the start date, this is
15 the end date, these are the goals that we need to
16 accomplish. These are the tasks that we need to do. We
17 need to put it into some sort of a framework. We need to
18 do the upfront piece well.

19 Because there's a saying that there's never
20 enough time to do it right the first time, there's always a
21 lot of time to redo it. And we would want to make sure
22 that we do it right the first time, which is the
23 cohesiveness of the group, take time for that. And then,
24 lay out some dates. And, you know, like folks that need to
25 be brought in, consultants that need to be brought in, the

1 legal team that would need to be brought in. Get all of
2 the players into place, have dates set for that. So, it
3 would be managing to that and there would be follow up.
4 Have we lagged in the time frame? What are we looking at?
5 How do we make up time?

6 So, we would use the methodology to make sure
7 that we're tracking to that and recognize that there needs
8 to, you know, be some wiggle room every once in a while.

9 Get meetings, public meetings scheduled with the
10 help of administrative people well in advance, get it on
11 people's calendars, make sure that the 14-day notices are
12 lined out. So, that takes a lot of, you know,
13 organization. It's good to put it into a visual. And that
14 way you can see it visible then it's something that you can
15 work. It's an actual working tool. And so, that's what I
16 would start with and that's what -- I believe that's good
17 project management. Have a visible tool, have the follow
18 up on a regular basis, and then this anticipation of what
19 can go wrong and how do we avoid it, that type of thing.

20 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. One of the other things
21 that caught my ear was in your response to standard
22 question two, which is -- yeah, I think it was. You had
23 mentioned that you would like to see the Commission adopt a
24 code of conduct. And what would be the parts of your code
25 of conduct?

1 MS. HINES: Well, the parts of the code of
2 conduct is we speak as a voice of one. And when we make
3 decisions they're consensus decisions. We allow each
4 person to be heard. There are ways that we can hold each
5 other accountable to avoid going off on tangents. And how
6 can we -- what's our agreement to let that process work?

7 So, it would be a list of those types of things.
8 And it would almost be like we would work it out together
9 and we would have it in front of us. It's not like
10 something we would just, you know, talk about and say okay,
11 yeah. We would actually document it. You know, it would
12 be like -- you know, we wouldn't sign it, that type of
13 thing, but we would know that this is our agreement on how
14 we behave with each other, how we behave when we're in
15 front of stakeholders, that type of thing.

16 MR. DAWSON: I wanted to follow up on one of your
17 responses to Ms. Dickison's questions about you came to
18 California relatively recently. My question is as a
19 recently -- relatively recently arrived Californian, what
20 advantages do you think this might bring to your work on
21 the Commission and what handicaps do you think it might
22 bring to your work on the Commission?

23 MS. HINES: I think the advantages that I would
24 bring is -- the term that comes to my mind, I don't have
25 that implicit bias, you know, built into a particular area

1 or region, you know, that might be well entrenched in other
2 people to the point that they might -- you know, I don't
3 know that any Commissioner would be like this, to the point
4 that the folks in L.A. don't even count San Francisco as
5 part of California. You know, that's going a little
6 extreme. But I don't have that kind of an implicit bias.

7 I think that what is against me is the depth of
8 traversing the state. I don't know how many Commissioners
9 have been able to completely traverse the state. I've been
10 through a lot of it. I've seen a lot of California. I've
11 been to California multiple, multiple times.

12 But then, actually drilling down. Now, I have
13 that kind of surface, I know the surface of it. And I know
14 the surface of the people and I know the different regions
15 and all, but a drill down, I don't have that. And at some
16 point that could be a strike against me.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I notice in your
18 activities you discussed this Adopt-A-Poll. How did you
19 get involved in that?

20 MS. HINES: Well, the Adopt-A-Poll, we have a
21 service club here. And the service club is devoted to
22 giving back to the broader Nipomo community. And so, what
23 it does is different projects that we have fundraisers.
24 The service club has been in existence I think since 2012,
25 thereabouts, maybe a little bit later than that. And we've

1 been able to raise funds, about half a million dollars for
2 the broader community.

3 And so, the Adopt-A-Poll what we do is we work,
4 we have all the shifts, and the inspectors and everything,
5 and the money doesn't go to us. It goes to the service
6 club to be distributed to the -- we've done the food bank,
7 we've done women's shelters, we've done different
8 organizations like that. Five Cities Homeless Coalition.
9 And so, that's what we've done with part of that 500
10 million dollars [sic].

11 MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry the money goes to the
12 precinct workers, the poll workers?

13 MS. HINES: You know, precinct workers get paid
14 but we don't get the money. We as workers do not
15 personally get the money. The service club gets the money
16 that precinct workers normally get paid.

17 So, the money goes to the service club and then
18 we, the precinct workers decide that we want it to be
19 donated to Five Cities Homeless Coalition, for an example,
20 is how that flows.

21 MR. DAWSON: I see. Those are all my follow ups.
22 Do any of the Panel Members have follow-up questions?

23 CHAIR BELNAP: Mr. Coe, do you have any follow-up
24 questions?

25 VICE CHAIR COE: No follow-up questions.

1 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Ms. Dickison? I do not
2 have any follow-up questions.

3 CHAIR BELNAP: I do not, either.

4 All right, Madam Secretary, could I have a time
5 check, please?

6 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have 19 minutes, 28 seconds
7 remaining.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

9 Well, with the time remaining, Ms. Hines, we'd
10 like to offer you the opportunity to make a closing
11 statement to the Panel, if you wish.

12 MS. HINES: Yes, I would like to make a closing
13 statement. The first thing I'd like to start with is I'd
14 like to thank the Panel and you Mr. Dawson, all of those of
15 you in front of the camera for the dedication and the
16 service that you are providing for the state. I think
17 you're doing an awesome job. I appreciate the transparency
18 of the process.

19 And I'd like to personally thank Shauna and the
20 other folks I've talked with and all of the people behind
21 the camera who make this possible.

22 And I would like to do my final closing with some
23 excerpts from the letters of recommendation and public
24 comments that were submitted on my behalf. I'd like to
25 give voice to them. Of course, I've had the three letters

1 of recommendation and 19 public comments.

2 And so, I'd like to close, like I said, reading
3 some excerpts from some of these. I'll go through these
4 relatively quickly. I'll just read them and then give my
5 final expression. So, I'll start.

6 "Dorothy Hines is one of the most energetic and
7 committed individuals I know. She's organized and
8 efficient and through those skills is often a step ahead of
9 others in understanding what the next logical step should
10 be. She's not afraid to ask questions, nor to express her
11 thoughts and suggestions. Her sense of humor often
12 diffuses any tension that may develop. I see Dorothy as
13 diligent, organized, resourceful, and a team leader as well
14 as a participating team member. Dorothy is a woman of
15 strength, skills, compassion, with the ability to listen,
16 lead and inspire. With her ability to utilize her
17 technical and social skills to gather data, analyze and
18 defense positions, I highly recommend Dorothy Hines as a
19 member of the 2020 Census Redistricting Committee.

20 She brought civility, thoughtfulness, time spend
21 studying the issues, listening to others and effective
22 answers to the group. Her thoughtfulness in discussions
23 comes from studying issues thoroughly. Humor, tact,
24 thorough research and wise decisions are some of her many
25 strengths in dealing with people.

1 Ms. Hines is a natural leader characterized by
2 fairness, with an ability to be objective in a complex and
3 emotionally charged situation. She listens and is open to
4 the opinions of others, taking a thoughtful and analytical
5 approach in decision making. In all cases her candor,
6 tact, creativity and problem solving skills were visible
7 and appreciated. She's also adept at the ground work.
8 Research, writing, outreach, even clean up. Her
9 appreciation for California's beauty, diversity, human
10 rights protections and impact on the national agenda is
11 strong and evident.

12 I have never seen her less than gracious and
13 welcoming to anyone in any setting. Dorothy's innate
14 intelligence and amazing ability to immediately grasp a
15 situation are well known. Her analytical skills have
16 obviously served her well in life and offer an
17 extraordinary assets in anything she pursues. Her work
18 ethic is very strong. She absorbs lots of amounts of
19 information, studies and analyzes data, and draws logical
20 conclusions. She's able to reach sound conclusions and
21 make effective recommendations even when there are
22 overwhelming amounts of information or conflicting
23 interests to consider. Her approach is methodical and her
24 attention to detail is meticulous. She's a very good
25 writer and public speaker."

1 I have others here, but I'll go ahead and just
2 wrap up on a couple.

3 "Personally, I cannot think of anyone other than
4 Dorothy who would, or could serve on this Commission and
5 possess her analytical skills, intelligence, impartiality,
6 organizational skills, robust attitude, patience, and above
7 all her integrity.

8 California is fortunate to have Dorothy as a
9 resident and I believe she would be an excellent asset to
10 the Redistricting Commission. She's objective, fair, and
11 treats everyone with respect. She is willing and able to
12 travel and perform the duties to obtain an equitable
13 redrawing of the public political districts in our state."

14 So, with that, I want to thank these people for
15 taking the time that they have taken on my behalf to give
16 expression. And I just wanted to give voice to their
17 words. I'm humbled and honored by their input, as well as
18 humbled and honored to be considered for the Commission.
19 And I want to thank each and every one of you.

20 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you, Ms. Hines.

21 We're going to go into a recess now and we're
22 going to be back at 1:14 p.m.

23 MS. HINES: Thank you.

24 (Off the record at 12:00 p.m.)

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

1 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, I'll call this meeting
2 back out of recess, and we'll get started.

3 Ms. Dickison, can you hear me?

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Yes, I can hear you.

5 CHAIR BELNAP: And Mr. Coe?

6 VICE CHAIR COE: I can hear you just fine.

7 CHAIR BELNAP: All right. And Mr. Jeff
8 Comerchero?

9 MR. COMERCHERO: Very good.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: I said it right, okay. We're
11 going to get started with the standard questions. I'll
12 turn the time over to Mr. Dawson.

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

14 Mr. Comerchero, I'm going to ask you five
15 standard questions that the Panel has requested that each
16 applicant respond to. Are you ready, sir?

17 MR. COMERCHERO: I am.

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

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

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

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

1 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, first and foremost I think
2 it's clear that every Commissioner has to have the ability
3 to listen. And I'm sure you've heard that from every
4 applicant you've asked that question to, and my guess is
5 you'll hear it from every other.

6 But it goes beyond just listening. It really
7 involves hearing what's being said, taking it to heart,
8 taking it seriously, and having the ability to mold it and
9 fold it into all of the other inputs that you're getting.
10 So, it's more complex than just opening your ears and
11 listening.

12 I also think each Commissioner needs to be
13 politically flexible. Obviously, the Commission is
14 partisan. It's set up to be that way. And you've got
15 people on the left, and people on the right, and people in
16 the middle, and everybody's got a different option and
17 sometimes very strong.

18 One thing I've found in my career is that good
19 ideas come from everywhere. And every Commissioner has to
20 have an open mind sufficient so that they can recognize
21 good ideas whether they come from the left, or the right,
22 or the middle. It sounds easy to do, but it's not always
23 so easy for all of us who bring strong opinions to the
24 table.

25 I also believe that a Commissioner has to have

1 the right attitude and demeanor. And by that I mean we
2 must, when we're sitting up in front of the public and
3 soliciting their testimony, we must make them feel welcome
4 when they're there. There's an inherent mistrust of
5 government to begin with and if we're not doing what we
6 should be doing, if we're looking at the ceiling, or
7 looking out of the audience -- I've even sat on boards and
8 commissioners where people will get up to go get a cup of
9 coffee in the middle of somebody who's speaking. It's
10 really rude. But more than that, it creates an impression
11 that we just don't care. And I know we do and we will.
12 And so, I think that's very important.

13 I also believe that all Commissioners have to
14 respect each other and view each other as equals.
15 Normally, when we talk about equality we talk about race
16 and ethnicity, economic status and the like, and those
17 things are very important but that's not what I'm referring
18 to here.

19 I've sat on a lot of boards and commissions in my
20 career and very often, especially in regional, and state,
21 and national groups, big cities tend to look down on small
22 cities. Economically advantaged cities tend to look down
23 on those that are less advantaged. And we just can't have
24 that. Everybody has to realize that there are 14 seats on
25 that Commission and each Commissioner carries equal weight.

1 Everybody gets one vote and everybody's input is important.

2 As a whole, I think the Commission, again, needs
3 to show responsiveness to the public. It's not an easy
4 thing for most members of the public to come forward and
5 speak in a public setting. It's just not something they do
6 every day and they're not used to it. And we, as the
7 Commission, have to create an environment where they feel
8 comfortable doing that. If not, we're not going to get the
9 most out of those hearings.

10 I also think that the Commission, in the
11 beginning of the process, has to set a very aggressive work
12 plan. And this is not an easy task. It's a long, drawn
13 out process with many meetings. I think the previous
14 Commission, in 2010 and '11 held 70 business meetings and
15 34 public hearings. That's a lot of meetings. That's lot
16 of travel. And it's an awful lot of work. And that plan
17 has to be laid out on the front end and make sure
18 everybody's comfortable with it, and everybody's willing to
19 take up their fair share of that responsibility.

20 And finally, I think it's something that's often
21 overlooked is as Commissioners, whatever the board is, we
22 come from different backgrounds, different educational
23 stand points, obviously different geographies. That's part
24 of the makeup of the Commission and that's the design.
25 None of us would really be trained in the work that's being

1 done, but we might have similar experiences. And it's so
2 important to respect and listen to the staff of the
3 Commission. You're the ones trained to do it. And we
4 would really be remiss if we didn't listen to what you have
5 to say and guide us through the process, and allow you to
6 guide us through the process.

7 What would I bring to the Commission? Well, as a
8 21-year local elected official in Temecula, California, if
9 I haven't learned the qualities that I've just outlined, I
10 don't think I would have been there for 21 years, and I
11 don't think I would have been reelected four or five times.

12 I don't know for sure the number, but I've kind
13 of calculated in my head that over all those years I've
14 participated in about 1,500 public meetings. And I've
15 chaired about 500 of those. Those experiences, I think,
16 can be very valuable to the Commission.

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

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

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

4 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, that's potentially a very
5 serious problem, but I honestly think it has a very simple
6 solution if everyone's willing to adhere to it, and that's
7 simply to act civilly to each other. And I've seen both
8 and I've participated in both kinds where there's a lot of
9 friction, where groups tend to be more contentious than
10 collaborative, and it just doesn't work in the long run and
11 it just doesn't produce the desired outcome.

12 So, if we will just respect each other, give a
13 lot of weight to everything that each of us are saying, a
14 little joviality is fine, too, have a collegial type of
15 environment I think hyperpartisanship just doesn't get a
16 foothold if you do that. It just gets squeezed out and
17 everything goes a whole lot smoother.

18 In 2015 I was the mayor of my city that year, and
19 I instituted a program early in the year called "Temecula
20 Has Heart Because Nice Matters". And honestly, I thought
21 it was just kind of a feel good statement, maybe it would
22 bring a few smiles to people. But it took off in a way
23 that I never realized it would. And people went around
24 smiling all the time, knocking on their neighbors' doors
25 saying, you know, can I do anything for you? Can I mow

1 your lawn? Do you need anything at the grocery store?

2 Just smiling at strangers on the street.

3 And then, we asked them to post those good deeds
4 on a Facebook page that we had set up and we got literally
5 thousands of postings on that site. More from those who
6 the good deeds were perfected upon, than those who were
7 doing them and you would expect that.

8 And we held contests. We held a video contest
9 and asked people to recreate good deeds and we got hundreds
10 of entries on that. We had an art contest for both
11 children and adults, and asked them to create a piece of
12 art that said what Temecula has heart means to them. And
13 it was just incredible what happened during that year. It
14 became a magical year.

15 And it was just simply being nice to people and
16 the effect that that has. We're seeing it today in many of
17 our communities with what we're all dealing with where, you
18 know, neighbors are saying hi to each other again. And not
19 getting too close to each other, but really nice to see.

20 I know later in that year, in 2015 I was on a
21 business trip and I was in Hong Kong. And as I passed by
22 in the airport they had a Plexiglas case where they were
23 soliciting donations. And on the side of the case it said
24 "Hong Kong has heart." Well, I don't know if they got that
25 from us or where they got that from, but it certainly made

1 my heart sing when I saw that. It's a very simple thing,
2 but it goes a long, long way. And, you know, we just all
3 need to set the example, me and everybody else, and if we
4 do that, there's just no place -- hyperpartisanship has to
5 go in hiding because there's just no place for it. And I
6 believe that.

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

11 MR. COMERCHERO: I think it's invariable that the
12 Commission will be bombarded, both at public meetings and
13 probably written documentation by special interest groups
14 and, in particular paid advocates, whether they be
15 consultants, or executive directors of various
16 organizations. And that in and of itself is certainly not
17 a bad thing. Input is great wherever it comes from and if
18 it's good input, we need to hear it.

19 But I do think the Commission has to be on guard
20 because I've seen too often in my experience where paid
21 executive directors or consultants will be over zealous in
22 asking for everything. It demeans them and their comments.
23 They lose credibility when they do that.

24 And ideally what we'd like to see -- and again,
25 you're going to listen to all the input. But ideally what

1 you'd like to see is those people who come forward
2 representing either themselves, or an interest group, who
3 say I don't think we're being treated fairly in the
4 process. And then, we can look at that and make a
5 determination as to why that may be the case and solve that
6 problem, and that's why we're there. But when somebody
7 asks for the moon very often they get less than their fair
8 share, and that's unfortunate.

9 So, I think we as Commissioners need to have the
10 ability and the experience to recognize the difference.
11 And that's not an easy thing to do. It's really more
12 intuitive than anything else. But if we can do that, we
13 can solve a lot of the pushing and pulling back and forth,
14 and things are can run a whole lot smoothly.

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

21 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
22 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
23 conflicts that arose.

24 What lessons would you take from this group
25 experience to the Commission if selected?

1 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, in 2005 there was a land
2 use project that came forward in the County of Riverside.
3 It was right on our southwestern border of our city, in an
4 area of beautiful hills that surrounded our city and really
5 were the signature, and a big part of our identity as a
6 city.

7 The project was on 414 acres and it was to be a
8 rock quarry, a strip mining operation. The name of the
9 project was Liberty Quarry. It gained a lot of attention
10 both in the state and nationally, as well. It was a very
11 large project and it got to be very contentious. We as the
12 city decided to oppose it, that we just had too much to
13 lose. And so, we set about setting a budget, interviewing
14 and hiring consultants, technical experts to help us dive
15 into the environmental impact report to refute it where we
16 felt it made sense to do so.

17 And we knew we were in for a tough fight. And
18 then another group came forward to us and they were a grass
19 roots environmental group. It's called SOS Hills, Save Our
20 Southwest Hills. They had many members, quite a few
21 hundred in fact. And they were mostly environmentalists
22 and members of the Sierra Club.

23 Now, our city was growing very rapidly then, in
24 2005. We were actually at one time the fastest growing
25 city in America. So, there was a lot of development going

1 on. And any time you have a lot of development, you have a
2 little head butting between officials and environmentalists
3 because it's the natural way things are, and that's okay.
4 It makes for a good end result.

5 And they were coming to it from a different point
6 of view. They were concerned about the environmental
7 aspects, clearly. They were concerned that there's the
8 last free-flowing river in California that goes through
9 that property, from our city 20, 25 miles or so to provide
10 drinking water for Camp Pendleton. And they were concerned
11 it would be polluted.

12 They were also concerned that there were
13 endangered species that inhabited that area and it would
14 shut off their corridor, and that was very important to
15 them.

16 So, although we may have been at odds on
17 different projects throughout the years, we had a common
18 enemy so to speak in this case, and so we were forced to
19 work together and we took on that role.

20 Then as we were going through the process a third
21 group came in and it was the Pechanga Band of Luiseño
22 Mission Indians. A very powerful tribe in the state. One
23 of the most successful gaming tribes in the country.

24 And they told us their stories about how they
25 were adjacent to that land and they viewed it as their area

1 of creation. And they told us this beautiful story about
2 how father sun and mother earth got together there and
3 their civilization began. They likened it to the Garden of
4 Eden.

5 And I said to the tribal chairman, I said, Mark,
6 you have to go forward and tell that story to the planning
7 commission and to the board of supervisors when the time
8 comes. And he said, no, they've discussed it among
9 themselves with the elders of the tribe and that
10 information as very private to them, and they held it very
11 close, and they felt that they were doing a disservice to
12 their ancestors if they were to go public with this
13 information, and about their spirituality and the deep
14 aspects of their culture.

15 So, I said okay. But they did say they'd provide
16 help, they'd provide funding for us if we needed it, things
17 that we needed regardless.

18 And as we went further and further into the
19 process we were very concerned that we weren't winning the
20 battle. It was really difficult. And so, I called the
21 chairman again and I said, you know, how important is this
22 property to you? Because we're going to lose this fight if
23 you don't come forward and tell your story, and tell people
24 about that area and how sacred it is to you.

25 And finally they came back to us and said that

1 they would do that, and they did. It was very heartwarming
2 and, oh, in probably six or eight public meetings they told
3 that story, sometimes in their own native Luiseño language,
4 and they would interpret for it. People had never seen
5 that before.

6 And so, at the end of the day we prevailed and in
7 large part because of what they did. And we won the fight
8 three to two at the planning commission and then three to
9 two again at the board of supervisors.

10 But even with that, we were all concerned that
11 the project proponent, it was a large construction company,
12 still owned the land. And they had property rights. They
13 could come forward with another project, maybe smaller. Do
14 the same thing and revise their Environmental Impact
15 Report.

16 And so, we didn't quite know what to do, we were
17 worried. And I got a call a month or so later from the
18 tribe, and they asked me, can you come up to our parking
19 lot at the top of our -- the rooftop. At 2:30 that
20 afternoon we're going to have a press conference, and they
21 did. And they announced that after a 7-year fight they
22 purchased the land, \$22 million. It was a big hit to them,
23 even though they're a pretty well off tribe, but that's how
24 important it was to them.

25 And so, here we'd come through this long, years'

1 long battle with three very diverse groups, who came about
2 the same problem from different directions, with different
3 interests, but all with the same goal. And for me
4 personally, I learned a great lesson from that. I learned
5 that it doesn't matter how diverse you are and what you
6 think and what you believe on this side of your life, or on
7 this side of your life. If you have an issue where
8 everybody needs to work together, it can be done, and it
9 can be done very effectively.

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

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

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

23 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, first of all, I was born
24 and raised and went to school in a very rough section of
25 Brooklyn, New York. The Coney Island section, if you know

1 if it. Especially the 50s or so when I was going to
2 school, and the 60s, well, it wasn't a great place to be.
3 But everyone was in the same position. We were poor, but
4 we had a roof over our head and we ate every day. And the
5 makeup of that area, I don't have statistics, I'm just
6 going off the top of my head, but my sense is it was about
7 50 percent black, 25 percent white, and 25 percent Puerto
8 Rican. And we all were born into that. We didn't know any
9 better that we should be wary of each other, we were just
10 all people. So, that was the start of my experiences in
11 life, not really knowing about bias or anything like that.
12 People were just people and we all got along, mostly we all
13 got along.

14 But it wasn't until much later in my life, in
15 1997, when I was first elected to the city council, and
16 then I got involved quickly and heavily in the League of
17 California Cities, the National League of Cities, and in
18 years when I was the mayor in the U.S. Conference of
19 Mayors.

20 Each of those groups had committees, and I was a
21 member of committees of each of those groups, and we would
22 hold meetings three to four times a year. And in all cases
23 there was a host who was a mayor, a councilmember, and they
24 would, you know, bid to have the meeting in their city, and
25 they were very proud of their city. And so, when we would

1 have those meetings, we would have essentially a one-day
2 agenda, where we'd go over, you know, whatever the general
3 topics were that the state was dealing with.

4 And then, we would go out in the field, into
5 their cities, and the host would show us areas that they
6 were proud of and they wanted us to see, where they've had
7 successes in various programs. Maybe they were affordable
8 housing programs or cleanup programs.

9 But they also showed us areas that they weren't
10 so proud of, where they had problems and they were having a
11 difficult time solving them. And it ranged the gamut, you
12 know, almost all cities faced them. Whether it's the areas
13 of poverty, areas of gang violence, drug use, whatever it
14 happened to be. And then after those meetings, we would
15 sit down and work through the problems with the host and
16 provide whatever we could provide, because we were all
17 dealing with similar problems, in terms of best practices,
18 and the like and it would really be a collaborative effort.

19 And that experience was amazing through the years
20 that I did that. And many years, boy, everywhere from San
21 Diego up through Redding just about. Now, maybe not every
22 city, but a good deal of cities in California we had those
23 meetings. And we really had a hands on look, with our
24 boots on the ground, as to what was going on in those
25 cities and got to talk to a lot of people. Not just the

1 elected representatives, but also people in the field who
2 they wanted us to talk to.

3 I thought that was a tremendous experience and it
4 taught me an awful lot, and that's the part of the
5 experience that I would bring to the Commission.

6 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. All right, we will
7 now go to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20
8 minutes to ask his or her questions. And we'll start with
9 the Chair, Mr. Belnap.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, my first question is about
11 your two decades of elected public service. How will this
12 service help you be a more effective Commissioner?

13 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I think the work itself
14 that's done over the course of those years, and being an
15 elected official is pretty much as close as you can come to
16 the work of the Commission, at least in terms of process.
17 And being comfortable in public hearings, knowing what
18 questions to ask, knowing how to interact with other
19 Commissioners.

20 Nobody has the exact experience to be on this
21 Commission. There are only 12, 10 people in the state who
22 have that experience and none of them are applicants this
23 time around. So, the question is how close can you come to
24 duplicating that experience? And I do believe that those
25 are just things that you learn through years and years of

1 going through similar things.

2 CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. So, one of the factors
3 that the Commission has to consider as it's redrawing the
4 district lines is the boundaries of cities. So, as a
5 former city official can you describe why it is important
6 to keep city boundaries intact in the redistricting
7 process?

8 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I can tell you it didn't
9 work in our case in the last Census, in 2010. And I don't
10 mean to disparage the work of the previous Commission. I
11 realize that it's a very, very difficult task and lines
12 have to be drawn somewhere.

13 But we really felt the effects of that.
14 Particularly the Congressional district. We have two. The
15 northern part of our city is in the 50th and the southern
16 part in the 42nd, or maybe the other way around, I forget.

17 But there were times when our citizens didn't
18 even know who their Congress member was. And in our case,
19 and maybe this was unique, the councilmember on the
20 northern part of the city and going further up north, to
21 other cities from there, was somebody we were very familiar
22 with and he represented our city before, and we were very
23 comfortable with him. He'd been there a long time. He's
24 still there. And we were not happy with losing him.

25 The Congress member on the southern side of the

1 city, which just happens to be where I live, turned out to
2 be not quite the same and eventually last year had to
3 resign because he had done some things that weren't quite
4 proper. And so, for the last year or so we haven't had any
5 representation, no Congress member. And that was very
6 difficult.

7 To his credit, the one that represented us on the
8 northern side came to us and said I don't care who my
9 constituents are, if you need help I'm here for you. And
10 he was. And that was very helpful.

11 But we really saw the effects of dividing a city
12 in half, especially a city like ours which is pretty
13 homogeneous. We don't necessarily have pockets of
14 communities of interest. We have those interests there,
15 but they're really well divided amongst the city. And so,
16 by nature those same communities of interest were also
17 divided. And it just didn't work very well and it made me
18 think.

19 In fact, it was really the impetus for me to
20 apply for this Commission. That and the fact that I'm
21 retired and I'm going stir crazy right now and I want to
22 get back into public service because I love it. But it
23 really is difficult when you have to divide communities
24 like that.

25 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. So, if the

1 geography of a community of interest extends beyond city
2 lines and keeping the community of interest within the
3 district conflicts with keeping the city boundaries intact,
4 so the two interests, one being community of interest and
5 city boundaries, in this case they're in conflict. I know
6 that's not necessarily the case with your city. But I want
7 you to think through how would you evaluate that situation
8 as a Commission and reach a resolution to that conflict
9 between the two criteria?

10 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I mean every situation
11 obviously is different and has its own parameters. And
12 certainly that could happen, an area that you're looking at
13 could happen. And I'd have to look at that very carefully.

14 One thing a city manager told me one time, he was
15 explaining to me what my job was as a council member, and
16 he said sometimes you just have to split the baby. And we
17 all knew what he meant. You have times when rights
18 conflict. And it's a right for a community of interest to
19 remain solid and also the right of the city remain intact.
20 So, I think it's a very difficult issue. It would have to
21 be solved on a case-by-case basis.

22 For me, I think I would tend to keep the
23 community of interest intact because I think overall that's
24 the charge of the Commission. It's not necessarily to
25 preserve city boundaries. That's where I would tend to

1 lead, but you really have to look at all of the facts in
2 that case.

3 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, where -- I appreciate
4 your answer. And where I'm going with that and I guess
5 I'll ask it directly is given your history with your city,
6 and what happened to your city do you think you have a
7 stronger preference than maybe other Commissioners, maybe
8 even a bias towards keeping city boundaries intact in the
9 redistricting process?

10 MR. COMERCHERO: I probably do have more of a
11 bias than others. But, you know, I've sat on a lot of
12 regional boards and commissions and there's a difference
13 between sitting as a city council and wearing your city
14 council hat, and taking that hat off when you go to a
15 broader commission or a board. And that's what has to
16 happen here.

17 So, I would like to think that I have the ability
18 to see beyond my own city boundaries, I believe I do. But
19 that's the way it needs to be approached, I think.

20 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. In your
21 essay on appreciation for diversity you described a
22 realization you had while participating in a League of
23 Cities committee. Can you talk about that experience and
24 the realization you had?

25 MR. COMERCHERO: Sure. It was very young in the

1 job and very green. I had no experience whatsoever in
2 terms of city leadership and how to do that. But I got
3 cajoled to join the California League of Cities by a
4 colleague of mine and said, hey, I'm the only one from the
5 city representing us in that body, and I need some help.
6 And so, I said okay.

7 And they put me on a committee that was community
8 development -- economic and community development
9 committee. And there were about 40 members or so of that
10 committee and the very first thing they did, and the very
11 first meeting I went to was the chair asked for everyone to
12 introduce themselves, and as they went around the room to
13 give a brief story about what they felt was the principle
14 obstacle in their city to providing a high level of
15 community service.

16 And as fate would have it I was one of the last
17 ones to go. And so, I'm sitting there formulating what my
18 answer would be and I knew that just a night or two before
19 that we had had a rather contentious city council meeting
20 where we had identified \$8 million in funds that weren't
21 being used, and they could be reprogrammed in our capital
22 improvement program. And so, the meeting was all about how
23 are we going to spend this \$8 million?

24 And everybody had a different point of view.
25 Everybody had a project they wanted to do. Everything from

1 a road project to a children's museum, which is what I
2 wanted to do, to a new park, major sports park, and a
3 performing arts theater. It was all over the place.

4 And so, my answer was to be, well, we have some
5 politics going on and we can't decide how best to use the
6 public money. And as I'm listening to everybody give their
7 point of view and their answer I heard some remarkable
8 things to me. One in particular that really stuck in my
9 mind was a woman from the San Joaquin Valley, I believe,
10 she was the mayor of a fairly small town. And she said
11 that they were instituting a program of providing
12 basketball sneakers for a kids program, and they didn't
13 have the \$5,000 they needed to do that.

14 And I heard that, similar stories again and again
15 in that group, and I'm sitting there thinking my goodness.
16 I'm listening to this and everybody else's problems, and
17 I'm going to say that we have a hard time spending \$8
18 million?

19 It really made me realize very early in my public
20 career one how fortunate we were and, two, the level of
21 diversity that exists in California. Not everybody has a
22 healthy city. And I didn't know any different. And so,
23 that was a tremendous education and it really -- I mean I
24 can remember the exact words today, more than 20 years
25 later, it really tailored how I looked at my job for the

1 next 20 years.

2 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you for sharing
3 that. So, for 14 years you were President and CEO of
4 Rancon Group of Companies. So, please tell us about that
5 company and your role in it?

6 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I started as a consultant,
7 and I think it was 2002. I was looking to change careers
8 because actually, and I don't think you see this on my
9 application, I had a 25-year career before I ever got
10 involved in public, and in Rancon, in the toy business. I
11 was a manufacturing and consultant, and did marketing, put
12 marketing teams together and the like.

13 And then when I saw very significant changes
14 going on in that industry to where the niche that I had
15 created was rapidly disappearing and I had to remake
16 myself. And so, I had a talk with a fellow who was a very
17 good friend of mine, who happened to be a developer, and he
18 said have you ever thought about being a development
19 consultant? And I said, no, I don't know the first thing
20 about that. And he said, well, you've been a city
21 councilman now for several years in one of the fastest
22 growing cities around, you know a whole lot more than you
23 think you know.

24 And he helped me put together a group of several
25 different clients that I would start this consulting

1 company with. And I felt a little awkward because I felt a
2 little bit like a fish out of water but, you know, I plowed
3 forward. And one of the companies was the Rancon Group.
4 And it's a real estate development company. It was founded
5 in 1971. Very, very well respected in the community. It's
6 founder had been named citizen of the year in just about
7 every city where the company did business. He's a great
8 philanthropist and really a good community guy.

9 So, it intrigued me. I wanted to get involved
10 with them. So, I started consulting for him. He wanted to
11 use more and more of my time, so I let my other clients go
12 because I really liked where I was. And then, about a year
13 later he came to me and said, you know, I'm getting older,
14 I want to travel more. I don't want to be hassled with the
15 day-to-day of the company. Why don't you just take over
16 the company and become the President and CEO. I was a
17 little shocked by that. But I said yes and I did, and it
18 lasted for 14 years. We had -- until I retired.

19 We had at any given time 90 to 100 different
20 companies that made up the Rancon Group. Most of them were
21 single-purpose LLCs, so they weren't intense. Like they
22 weren't all big companies. But they all required
23 management and we had, you know, a fairly good sized staff.
24 And we just did land development projects. That was the
25 nature of the business.

1 Occasionally we built things, but usually we
2 didn't. We built some self-storage facilities. We built a
3 winery in Temecula's wine country and actually we're in the
4 process of expanding that. It's going to be one of the
5 most dynamic wine resorts in the world. So, I still watch
6 that. I still keep my fingers in it a little bit, although
7 I'm retired, but I don't really work at it.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. I didn't
9 catch what industry you were in for 25 years before you got
10 into city management or city elected office.

11 MR. COMERCHERO: Toys.

12 CHAIR BELNAP: Toys?

13 MR. COMERCHERO: Play things. Yeah.

14 CHAIR BELNAP: Ah.

15 MR. COMERCHERO: I know it always brings a smile
16 to people's faces. But it was a job and an industry just
17 like any other.

18 CHAIR BELNAP: Can you tell us about a toy that
19 you helped develop?

20 MR. COMERCHERO: Sure. I wasn't prepared to
21 answer this one. But I do remember, at least in one case,
22 a gentleman came to me, actually two gentlemen. And one
23 had been an executive with Mattel for a number of years, a
24 big toy company, and he was a toy inventor. And the other
25 was his brother-in-law, who was a marketer. And I met with

1 them in a hotel room. They wanted me to market this
2 particular product and put together a team to do so. And
3 it was called a Koosh Ball, K-O-O-S-H. And if you had kids
4 in that time, you probably would know what it was. And it
5 was this crazy ball that it just had a feel to it. It was
6 a bunch of rubber, wire looking things that were soft and
7 came out from it. And I looked at them and I was so
8 intrigued, and I said I don't know why this is going to be
9 a success, but it is. And it was. It was huge. And I
10 certainly wasn't the only one who shared that opinion. But
11 that was a great story, I enjoyed that one.

12 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

13 Madam Secretary, how much time do I have left?

14 MS. PELLMAN: Five minutes, 54 seconds.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

16 So, I guess I'll -- in either industry, whether
17 it be in real estate or in toys, can you give us an example
18 of the type of analysis that you would perform? Something
19 particularly applicable to the type of analysis that would
20 be performed by the Commission?

21 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, particularly in the real
22 estate development industry, when developing the project on
23 the front end there's a tremendous amount of analysis.
24 both the due diligence before actually buying a property
25 that you're going to develop, in which case the greatest

1 tool that I would use would be the County of Riverside's
2 GIS system. And it's very robust. And a good GIS system
3 has many, many layers, and you need to kind of navigate
4 around the layers that are relevant to you and those which
5 are not. But it would provide a tremendous amount of
6 information concerning a particular property. And all
7 you'd need to do is type in the APN number of the property
8 and a lot of things would come up that were very helpful.

9 In one of the ways it was helpful was often we
10 would look at a property that was maybe a little bit too
11 small or configured in a way that it didn't lend itself too
12 well to development. And, therefore, we would look at the
13 surrounding properties and see if there was the potential
14 to pick up another couple of acres, or whatever it would
15 be. And so, we'd need to research that and know who the
16 owner is of that property, what's their contact
17 information, and we would go from there.

18 Once we got started with a project then just
19 about all of the work was mapping. Mapping in terms of
20 plotting studies, doing residential configurations, looking
21 at geotechnical maps that gave you the topography of the
22 areas. I'll tell you, with all the projects that we did,
23 it was a very active company, we had a map room that was
24 constantly bursting at the seams. We didn't know where to
25 put them all. So, that was a big part of the work.

1 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. I have no
2 further questions. I'm going to turn the time over to Mr.
3 Coe.

4 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
5 afternoon, Mr. Comerchero. Thank you for taking the time
6 to speak with us today.

7 MR. COMERCHERO: My pleasure.

8 VICE CHAIR COE: In your application, I believe
9 it was the last essay you wrote, you indicate that you're
10 a proud Vietnam Veteran, and you told a little story about
11 your experience returning to American soil on your return
12 from the war. And something kind of flooded over you that
13 caused you to reflect on what America's principles mean to
14 you.

15 How do you think that that experience and that
16 perspective has benefitting your public service thus far
17 and how could it benefit this Commission?

18 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, one of the things it does
19 is inform your philosophies on where you live. And freedom
20 is such a precious thing and so many of us take it for
21 granted. I know it's trite to say that, but when you go
22 through an experience like a war, and being seven or eight
23 thousands miles from home, you develop an appreciation that
24 you just never thought you would.

25 And I'll tell you quite freely, Vietnam and

1 Southeast Asia was not a place I wanted to be. I didn't
2 choose to be there. I didn't like being there. But after
3 I came back and reflected on it, I became a very proud
4 American. I was proud to have fulfilled my obligations to
5 my country. And I took that very, very seriously.

6 You know, we all experienced in that war, when we
7 came home, something less than we would have liked. And we
8 experienced really hatred in some circles and, you know,
9 people yelled things at us. Some very nasty things.
10 Actually, it thickened my skin and gave me the ability to
11 be a council member.

12 But there is that appreciation. And I know one
13 of the things I did that even though it was many years
14 later, almost 50 years later, it still rang true. And in,
15 I think it was 2010, again that was the year I was the
16 mayor, and Governor, then Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
17 pronounced March 31st to be Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans
18 Day. In fact, we just celebrated it.

19 And I wanted to do something. I really felt
20 committed to right some wrongs that had taken place at that
21 time. And we rounded up all the Vietnam Veterans in our
22 city that we could find. We found about 60 of them. And
23 we had a special medal struck that we called the Mayor's
24 Medal. And one by one I put this medal -- they came to a
25 council meeting, so in public and on TV I put this medal

1 around each of their necks and officially welcomed them
2 home. I'll tell you, there wasn't a dry eye in the place,
3 including mine. And you can see I'm still emotional about
4 that.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you for sharing that,
6 appreciate that.

7 In one of your letters of recommendation the
8 author of the letter states that: You garner respect from
9 people of all backgrounds and viewpoints.

10 Since much of the success of this Commission's
11 work will depend on the vast and diverse residents of
12 California respecting and trusting the Commission, and
13 providing their viewpoints to the Commission, how would you
14 go about garnering the respect of the diverse population of
15 the State of California?

16 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I think in order to gain
17 respect you have to give respect, and that's the first
18 place I would look. And I mentioned that a little bit
19 before in some of my other answers. I think you really
20 have to show and demonstrate to the public that you're not
21 just there -- when you go into a city and hold a public
22 hearing, or whatever it is you're doing, you have to
23 demonstrate to them that it's not just a job. You're not
24 just there because somebody told you to be in this city at
25 this time, and listen to what the public has to say.

1 You really have to convince people and you do it
2 by your actions and your words, when you can, that you want
3 to hear what they have to say. You can't do your job
4 effectively unless you do. And that's critical to the
5 process. And the more you respect the public, the more
6 they'll respect you.

7 And I've found that over the years one thing that
8 I think is critical and that's doing the right thing. And
9 that sounds awfully simple, but no matter what that thing
10 is, no matter what you're dealing with, you never go wrong
11 doing something right.

12 And when do that, even if people disagree with
13 you at the end of the day they'll respect you for it. And
14 that's been the cornerstone of my time in public service.

15 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. I wanted to go back
16 to the example that Mr. Belnap brought up that you spoke
17 about earlier, on your League of California Cities, the
18 meeting, the experience you had listening to mayors and
19 council members of other cities speak.

20 That was in your appreciation for diversity
21 essay. And certainly from the stand point of appreciation
22 for socioeconomic diversity based on that example, but what
23 about other types of diversity? Cultural diversity, for
24 example, what did you learn maybe from that experience,
25 maybe from a different one about people of different

1 backgrounds, different cultures, various types of diversity
2 across the state that would make you an effective
3 representative for them on this Commission?

4 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I don't think I learned
5 that much of those aspects in that particular meeting. But
6 my work at both the California League of Cities and the
7 National League of Cities took us into some areas where I'd
8 never been before in terms of all of that, culture.

9 I learned things, for instance, at the National
10 League of Cities that representation, especially in areas
11 of the south and areas that were predominantly black were
12 very different than those that I had experienced and,
13 really, most of the cities in California, not all. It
14 really, when you get out, it's so critical. I don't care
15 what you're doing in public service, it's so critical to
16 get out. Get out from your desk, get out from your office
17 and go see the way other people live, and what they
18 believe. And I did that. And it was the greatest work of
19 my life, frankly.

20 And every time I would come home with something
21 different. And I would talk to my colleagues at home and
22 say you know what, look what they're doing in Tuscaloosa,
23 Alabama. We can do that here, or something similar and
24 adapt it to what we're doing. And very often that was
25 cultural.

1 There's no substitute for that. You can't get
2 that out of a book.

3 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you for that. So, as has
4 been discussed a little bit already, communities of
5 interest and identifying those is going to be one of the
6 biggest tasks in front of this Commission. But identifying
7 those communities, some are easier to identify than others,
8 some are less engaged or less obvious, so harder to find.
9 What tactics could you employ to identify communities of
10 interest across the state and particularly tactics that
11 could help the Commission inadvertently overlook some of
12 the less obvious communities that are harder to find?

13 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I think obviously holding
14 the public hearings, as in the case of the last Commission
15 in 32 different cities is very important, and you have to
16 do that.

17 But when you look at the numbers in their case,
18 2,700 people came to speak at those public hearings in 32
19 different cities and 34 meetings. Now, that's about 80 per
20 meeting and that's a lot to sit through. I probably don't
21 have to tell you what it's like to sit through a whole lot
22 of interviews and public speaking.

23 But that's not enough. I mean that's a very
24 small percentage of the population. You can try to bring
25 more people out through marketing efforts before you ever

1 go into a city to hold a public hearing, and go to the
2 right places and that, but I don't think that gets the job
3 done.

4 What I would like to see is a work plan that gets
5 us into a city a day before the public hearing, or at least
6 the morning of that public hearing. And I would like to
7 call well in advance so they can set it up, the city
8 manager of the city, the mayor of the city, and ask them to
9 set up more of a roundtable meeting for us. And a few
10 Commissioners could join. Obviously, we've got to deal
11 with the constraints of the Bagley-Keene Act. But put
12 together a mayor and a council member, a city manager, head
13 of the chamber of commerce, head of the dominant churches
14 in the area, the superintendent of schools. All of the
15 stakeholders, they're in that community. they know what
16 the flavor of that community is. And if we could sit down
17 with them for two or three hours and have a set of
18 prewritten questions, very much like you're doing, to start
19 off with. And really get them to open up about what that
20 community is all about. Where are the communities of
21 interest? How strong are they? How large are they? Are
22 they diverse or are they concentrated in one area? What
23 are the issues that those communities are facing? What's
24 important to them?

25 For some it may be issues of poverty, for others

1 it may be education, for others it may be crime in their
2 cities. Whatever it has to be those have to be identified.
3 And if you can't go directly to the source, and
4 realistically you can't, then the next best thing is to go
5 to the people who know more about those communities than
6 anybody else.

7 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. And once those
8 communities are identified, some of them may be less
9 comfortable, or for one reason or another engaging
10 government or, as you mentioned before, you know, coming to
11 public hearing types, of public meeting type settings. And
12 you mentioned doing things to make these folks feel
13 comfortable and welcome at these settings because they're
14 foreign to them and they're uncomfortable to them.

15 But my question is about for some of these groups
16 that are, you know, may be a little leery about engaging in
17 this type of process to begin with how do you reach out to
18 them and make them feel comfortable enough to even show up
19 to these meetings to provide their perspective, to help
20 better inform the work of the Commission?

21 MR. COMERCHERO: That's not easy. Even people
22 that are reluctant to come to meetings, it's not just
23 because they're reluctant. Let's face it, there's an awful
24 lot of apathy when it comes to our citizenry. Sometimes
25 that can be a good thing. Because if we're all doing our

1 job as public servants maybe they don't have to worry too
2 much about the things that we're doing.

3 But in those particular groups that you're
4 talking about, I think you have to reach out to them. And
5 that may mean going to where they feel comfortable being.
6 That may be a church. It may be a civic center. Probably
7 not, that's too much like government. And get government
8 out of it as much as you possibly can.

9 Obviously that's a challenge because you are
10 government. But the more you can convey that we're not
11 here to do anything other than to help you get proper
12 representation for your group, and with proper
13 representation there are benefits to that. You may get
14 more funding. You may be able to solve those problems that
15 are particular to your group.

16 But I'm not under any illusions that that's an
17 easy task. It's not. But you have to make every effort to
18 get to them in their own habitat, so to speak, because
19 that's where they feel most comfortable.

20 VICE CHAIR COE: You mentioned at the beginning
21 of your answer to that question the word "apathy" and
22 apathy amongst the population. Does the Commission have an
23 ability to perhaps get rid of some of that apathy within
24 the population?

25 MR. COMERCHERO: It's a noble goal and it's

1 certainly worth pursuing, but it's very difficult. I mean,
2 if you look back to that 2,700 number that addressed the
3 previous Commission, in 2011, there are roughly almost 16
4 million registered voters in California, and 2,700 people
5 spoke. That's a big number and it's nice to get that
6 input, but look at all the people who are not interested in
7 that. So, you do the best you can. You do whatever
8 outreach you can well before going into that city.

9 One of the things and this sounds funny, provide
10 coffee and donuts. That brings a lot of people out, you'd
11 be surprised. It's little things like that, what can you
12 think of that creates an environment where it's not just a
13 task for them to come out because they're not interested in
14 that. How can you make it a little bit more interesting
15 and even a little bit fun?

16 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. One further question
17 on your time with the League of California Cities. How
18 much did that involvement bring you to different parts of
19 the state?

20 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, as I said before, about
21 three or four times a year. We usually would have one
22 national -- well, not national. A statewide meeting, a
23 general meeting that was held in Monterey most years. In
24 the last several years they moved it out and moved it
25 around a little bit more.

1 They were pretty smart. They knew if you hold a
2 conference in Monterey, you're going to get a lot of
3 participation, and they did.

4 But we would go to cities all over the state,
5 everywhere. So, three or four times a year, three times a
6 year in other cities would host those meetings. And so it
7 was -- I would guess over the 20 years or so, probably got
8 to 50 cities or so where I had that experience.

9 VICE CHAIR COE: And from those experiences and
10 those travels did you learn anything about regional
11 perspectives and concerns that you think that would be
12 helpful to your work on this Commission?

13 MS. PELLMAN: We have four minutes, 35 seconds
14 remaining.

15 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you.

16 MR. COMERCHERO: The work we did was a little bit
17 more concentrated in cities, rather than regions, although
18 we were exposed somewhat to regional activities. You know,
19 and I participated in other groups, too. I participated in
20 a group at SCAG, Southern California Association of
21 Governments that encompasses six Southern California
22 Counties and other regional efforts. You know, Western
23 Riverside Council of Governments, as well.

24 But in those California League of City meetings
25 it really was more city-centric than it was regional.

1 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you. If you were to
2 be appointed to this Commission which aspects of that role
3 do you think that you would enjoy the most and which
4 aspects of that role, conversely, do you think you might
5 struggle with a little bit?

6 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I certainly would enjoy
7 the interaction. One of the things I've always enjoyed
8 about being on any deliberative body was listening to my
9 colleagues and formulating in my mind because there's
10 conflict, there's always conflicts, hopefully it's well
11 done and not contentious. But trying to think of ways to
12 pull people together in a common solution to where in the
13 end usually not everybody, or nobody gets all of what they
14 want, but everybody gets something of what they want. And
15 is there something that can be supportable?

16 I've always seen that it's better to move forward
17 collectively as a group, with a unanimous or as close to a
18 unanimous decision as you can, even if it means everybody
19 gives a little bit. So, I love doing that. I love playing
20 that role and I know I would enjoy that on this Commission
21 as well.

22 What wouldn't I like? Maybe the tedium
23 sometimes. I know what it's like to sit through public
24 hearings of many speakers at one time. And as I said, in
25 this case they averaged 80 a night. And if you give

1 everybody three minutes or five minutes to speak, or
2 whatever it is, it gets to be an awfully long night. And
3 you hope and you really work to be as fresh and as relevant
4 at 11:00 o'clock at night as you were at 6:00 o'clock, but
5 it's not easy. And so, that wouldn't be my favorite part
6 of it, but you just learn to do that and you power through
7 it.

8 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you very much, Mr.
9 Comerchero.

10 Mr. Chair, no further questions.

11 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, Ms. Dickison, the time is
12 now yours.

13 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Good
14 afternoon, Mr. Comerchero. So, a lot of my questions have
15 been asked. But why did you decide to retire and not seek
16 reelection when you did?

17 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, for one, I felt that we
18 were in a very rapidly growing city and we got to do an
19 awful lot of things. And after my last term, in the end of
20 2018, I felt that the work that I really enjoyed doing was
21 over, it was done. Successfully I might add, and very
22 gratifying. But there comes a time when it's just best to
23 step to the side and let somebody with some fresh ideas
24 come up and do some different things.

25 I was at an age where retirement held some

1 fascination for me and it still does, so I retired from
2 both my private life and my public life pretty much at the
3 same time.

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, in your
5 analytics essay you talked about in your city you went from
6 at-large districts to -- or at-large elections to district
7 elections. What was your role in drawing those districts?

8 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, one thing that our council
9 always did was divide up the work into council
10 subcommittees of two people. And so, I was appointed to
11 the subcommittee to deal with the redistricting.

12 We went through a process that was obviously new
13 to us. It wasn't redistricting, it was districting for the
14 first time. And so, we got very sage advice from our city
15 attorney, who'd been there many years and been through it
16 before. We brought on a consultant team to help us through
17 the process, and we followed their instructions.

18 We started out having a series of public
19 hearings. I believe it was five of them in roughly what
20 would probably wind up one each in the districts, although
21 we didn't know where those district lines for certain would
22 be.

23 And then, we took that input back, sat down with
24 the consultants and came up with three different scenarios
25 that all work from the stand point of meeting the

1 objectives. And the lines were just slightly different.

2 And so, it became our task at that point to take
3 those three maps to the full council, let them weigh in on
4 it, get their responses. And then, we went out again to
5 the community and held another series of five public
6 hearings in each of what would be those districts to get
7 public comment on where the districts themselves were
8 drawn.

9 And then eventually we voted as a council on
10 which of the three scenarios we were going to institute.
11 It was contentious. It surprised me a little bit that it
12 was. And the vote wound up three to two, which is a little
13 unusual in our city. But at the end of the day everyone
14 realized that's what we were doing and just locked arms and
15 moved forward.

16 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, in going through the
17 process did you -- did you recognize communities of
18 interests that you didn't realize you had in your area?

19 MR. COMERCHERO: You know, we searched for them
20 but we didn't find concentrated areas of interest. We
21 certainly found there were communities of interest, but
22 they were scattered throughout the entire city. And so,
23 for instance, one of the charges that we had was to see if
24 we could create a predominantly Hispanic district. And in
25 any scenario that we utilized the highest percent of

1 Hispanic in any district was 26 percent. And ultimately,
2 that was the scenario that we used.

3 But it made us wonder, frankly, why we were going
4 to districts and did we need to? But we also realized that
5 this was in that time and that period, and 10, 20, 30 years
6 from now the situations would likely be different. And so,
7 we were setting up a scenario that could accommodate the
8 needs of those years out.

9 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: You mentioned that that
10 experience was actually districting because there weren't
11 lines before. The understanding is California could lose a
12 Congressional district after this next Census. Based on
13 your experience with the districting you did there in
14 Temecula, how do you think that that's going to affect the
15 job of the Commission going forward?

16 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, it's certainly helpful.
17 It's not exactly the same experience. In the case of the
18 state we're dealing with existing boundaries that will
19 undoubtedly have to be moved. And so, it is somewhat
20 different. But the process is very much the same in terms
21 of the public hearings and seeking public input.

22 I've been trying to learn everything I -- well,
23 all I can about where California might be going in this
24 redistricting process. You know, I've found that of the 58
25 counties in California, 25 of them grew at a rate of

1 5percent or greater over the last ten years, or some of
2 them grew at 10 percent or greater.

3 But there were also 11 counties that lost
4 population. And so, there's been really quite a
5 significant shift in population in the last 10 years, even
6 the population itself has remained somewhat stagnant as a
7 state. That's going to have to be dealt with. And some
8 lines may have to be significantly moved. I'm sure the
9 objective will be not to create winners and losers through
10 that process, but I also think it's somewhat inevitable, as
11 evidenced by what my own city went through in the last
12 process where we were divided by Congressional districts.

13 And so, the experience is helpful, but certainly
14 some of it will be new as it will be to all of us.

15 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: One of the things you
16 mentioned in your response to questions three, one of the
17 problems that you could see the Commission encountering
18 would be to be bombarded by special interests or paid
19 advocates. And something the last Commission recognized is
20 that there were times that they believed some of the people
21 that were giving public comment were actually presenting
22 themselves as members of the community of interest, when
23 they really weren't and they had their own outside
24 interests.

25 How do you think -- do you think you have any

1 experience that would help you recognize who those people
2 are and how do you think the Commission should account for
3 that?

4 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, certainly, you know, my
5 experience in as many public hearings as I've participated
6 in kind of gives you an intuition about some of those
7 things. It's not an easy thing to do.

8 And as far as how the Commission should handle
9 it, I would listen to what that person has to say, whether
10 they have a self-interest or not because it may still be
11 relevant input, and if it is it should be listened to.

12 But undoubtedly that will happen and we have to
13 do the best we can to recognize it. You sometimes can pick
14 up things that people say. Also, and I don't know how the
15 Commission will choose to handle it, very often you can ask
16 a question of a speaker. Sometimes, again, based on open
17 meetings laws it may not be permissible, but you can flesh
18 that out a little bit, and that's helpful.

19 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. So, if you
20 were -- the way the Commission is selected, the first eight
21 are selected randomly and then the final -- and then they
22 are tasked with selecting the final six to round out the
23 Commission.

24 If you were selected as one of the first eight,
25 what would you look for in the other six Commissioners?

1 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, I think the first thing
2 that we would have to do is look at the makeup of the eight
3 of us. And knowing that the Commission needs to be and
4 should be diverse in many areas, diversity in all its
5 forms, see where the holes are. And then, looking at the
6 remaining -- if my math is right, I think there would
7 likely be 28 left in the pool, 9 Democrats, 9 Republicans,
8 and 10 Independents or decline to state.

9 And there would be two of each of those groups
10 that would have to be chosen to fill those additional six
11 seats. So, I would look at that individual pool and see
12 which people best suited the makeup of the existing eight.
13 And, hopefully, there would be more than one. And if there
14 is, then select the person who we think would be the best
15 person for the job.

16 One of the things I would like to do, and you
17 might not want to hear this so I apologize in advance
18 because the work that you're doing is so intense, but I'd
19 like to go back to the three of you and say, you know,
20 you've become very intimate with these applications, and
21 you've seen all the applicants. Of the nine left of the
22 Democrats, the 9 Republicans, and 10 Independents, can you
23 each give me the best two in each category that you would
24 rank as one and two.

25 I think if that's possible and if you would be

1 willing to do it, it would be foolish not to do that.
2 Nobody knows as much about everybody as you do, so that
3 input could be very valuable.

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. What do you
5 see as your role if you were selected as a Commissioner?

6 MR. COMERCHERO: Again, I think everybody has
7 their strengths and weaknesses. I enjoy being the
8 mediator. I've very often been called by people the voice
9 of reason. I don't get too excited. I like to be
10 analytical in how I approach things and that's what I'd
11 like to do here. And I really have always seen so much
12 value in having agreement rather than disagreement. And to
13 the extent that I could help facilitated that, I would
14 enjoy that and I would see that as my goal.

15 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: What would you like to
16 see the Commission ultimately accomplish?

17 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, clearly there's an
18 objective and that's first and foremost that has to be
19 accomplish the redrawing the lines. But I would like to
20 see the Commission be able to do that in a way that creates
21 the least controversy, in a way that examines the potential
22 loopholes in the beginning, and all along the process.
23 Because I think it's fairly inevitable that there will be
24 challenges at the end of the day. There will likely be
25 lawsuits. And to what extent can we bullet proof our

1 discussions and our decision making to where when those
2 lawsuits come they can clearly be defended. I think that's
3 very important. And it's easy to lose sight of that along
4 the way because it's kind of nebulous. And that's where we
5 could take really good direction from counsel to the
6 Commission, who could help us with that.

7 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Belnap, I
8 have no additional questions at this time.

9 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. We will turn the
10 time over to Mr. Dawson.

11 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap. Thank you
12 again for being here, Mr. Comerchero.

13 I have a couple of follow-up questions. I wanted
14 to -- I didn't quite understand, you left -- I'm sorry, you
15 resigned from the city council in 2018 but you at the same
16 time had a position with the County of Riverside?

17 MR. COMERCHERO: Yes. I've had a colleague on
18 the Temecula City Council, who we've served together for 11
19 years, and there was a vacancy on the Riverside County
20 Board of Supervisors in 2015. And he applied to fill that
21 vacancy and he ultimately was appointed by then Governor
22 Jerry Brown to fill that's seat.

23 And it was there was run year left on the term
24 and then he had to run for reelection. And he came to me
25 and he asked me if he won that reelection, would I consider

1 coming and being his chief of staff. I was still working
2 at Rancon at the time. I was still on the city council. I
3 had some conversations with my city attorney. I had many
4 conversations with my city attorney over the years. Being
5 a real estate developer, you always realize that there's
6 the potential and the perception of conflict of interest
7 and I never wanted to allow that to fester. And so, he
8 always knew what I was doing.

9 And he said, no, there was no conflict in doing
10 that. And I also consulted with the county council, as
11 well, and he said the same thing.

12 And so, I agree to retire from Rancon after many
13 years and go and join his staff. I was very excited about
14 doing that. He had I were great friends but we always
15 worked very well together. It might be of interest to note
16 as we talk about diversity, he was the first and still is
17 the only African American member of that board.

18 And when I took over his staff and worked with
19 him, we had a 12-member staff, 9 were African American.
20 And I believe and I hope I gained their respect as much as
21 I had respect for them throughout that process. I enjoyed
22 doing it. And it was only meant to be short term and at
23 the end of two years I wanted to move on. And by then he
24 felt his staff was in shape that he could bring on somebody
25 else and achieve what he needs to achieve.

1 MR. DAWSON: Well, thank you. You did answer the
2 next question that I was going to ask and that was about
3 the potential for conflict. And I will say as a long time
4 government staff attorney, I appreciate you reaching out to
5 counsel whenever there's a question.

6 MR. COMERCHERO: Yeah.

7 MR. DAWSON: And that does sort of lead to my
8 other question which is how did you navigate the potential
9 conflict of interest while you were working for Rancon,
10 while you were on the Temecula City Council, and were there
11 any projects you had to walk away from because of that?

12 MR. COMERCHERO: There were -- well, there were
13 several projects we walked away from in the sense that we
14 never got involved in them at all. And when I first took
15 the role as President of Rancon, I had a long talk with the
16 founder and I said two things. One, I don't want to
17 develop anything in my own city. We just don't need to.
18 There's plenty of opportunity elsewhere and it creates
19 serious problems for me.

20 And the other thing I said to him was I never
21 want to be asked to work on a project and support a project
22 that I couldn't support if the same project came to me on
23 the city council. I really wanted to do quality things and
24 so did he, and so it wound up a good marriage.

25 But I always was in my city attorney's office. I

1 was involved in a lot of land use projects throughout other
2 parts of the county and he always knew where my interests
3 were, what they were, what their percentages were, and he
4 was terrific in guiding me through any land mines that I
5 might encounter.

6 From time to time there was a project that I
7 recused myself from, an issue at the city council. Not
8 because it was a project I was involved in, but because the
9 decision we were making might potentially have an effect on
10 the project, even though it was outside of our city limits.
11 And so, I was very careful to do that.

12 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So, Temecula City
13 Council, that's a nonpartisan seat?

14 MR. COMERCHERO: Yes.

15 MR. DAWSON: How long were the terms?

16 MR. COMERCHERO: The terms were four years. And
17 by the puzzled look on your face, I see you might be
18 wondering why 21 years.

19 MR. DAWSON: Exactly.

20 MR. COMERCHERO: When the city first was formed,
21 it's a fairly new city. It's incorporated in 1989, so it's
22 only 31 years old. And when they started, for some reason
23 they made a decision to hold their council elections on odd
24 years. And after a while, and after I was elected for a
25 couple of years, we found that the turnouts we were getting

1 were just abysmal. I mean, we were lucky if we would reach
2 20 percent because there was nothing else going on in those
3 elections, except maybe a proposition or two.

4 And so, we decided to move our election cycle to
5 even-numbered years, three on one cycle, two on another. I
6 was the cycle where there were Congressional elections, and
7 the other two were on the Presidential election cycle.

8 And so, in order to effectuate that we had two
9 choices, legally. We could either shorten everybody's
10 existing term by a year or lengthen everybody's term by a
11 year. Well, nobody felt it was fair to shorten everybody's
12 term, so we elected to lengthen everybody's term.

13 So, although my first reelection was in 2001, my
14 second reelection was in 2006, and that was a five-year
15 term.

16 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. You talked
17 about the splitting of the city into different
18 Congressional districts. And I thought I heard you say
19 that one of the districts is now vacant?

20 MR. COMERCHERO: Yes. I'd prefer not to mention
21 his name, but you probably know what it is.

22 MR. DAWSON: No, that's all right. But my
23 question was have you considered running for that vacancy?

24 MR. COMERCHERO: No. I've had opportunities in
25 my career. People have tried to push me into different

1 elected offices that were higher than the city council. I
2 had no desire whatsoever. I was very comfortable. I felt
3 like the contribution that I could make at the local level
4 where you run into your constituents at the grocery store,
5 and on the street corner, you don't get that at higher
6 levels of elected office. And I was very content where I
7 was.

8 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Are you concerned about
9 the effect that COVID-19 could have on the redistricting
10 process?

11 MR. COMERCHERO: Well, yes, I think we all need
12 to be. And knowing that there are statutory deadlines
13 that have to be hit, how do you deal with the fact that
14 those timelines for the process, the time to accomplish
15 that may be compressed, possibly by quite a bit. And so,
16 there will have to be creative ways to deal with that, much
17 as you're doing here with these interviews.

18 I don't know what those solutions are to replace
19 30, to 35 public hearings around the state, but there may
20 have to be creative ways to do that.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Mr. Belnap, I have no
22 further questions.

23 CHAIR BELNAP: Mr. Coe, do you have any further
24 questions?

25 VICE CHAIR COE: I do not have any further

1 questions.

2 CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison? Ms. Dickison, do
3 you have further questions? I'll assume she doesn't.

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I could hear you. I'm
5 sorry, I couldn't unmute.

6 CHAIR BELNAP: No, no, you don't?

7 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: No, I do not.

8 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. I don't, either.

9 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. Madam Secretary,
10 could I have a time check, please?

11 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, 10 minutes and 34 seconds
12 remaining.

13 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

14 Mr. Comerchero, with the time remaining I'd like
15 to offer you the opportunity to make a closing statement to
16 the Panel, if you wish.

17 MR. COMERCHERO: Yes, thank you. You know, I've
18 been watching these proceedings just about from the
19 beginning. One of the benefits of being retired is you
20 have the ability to do that.

21 And I have to tell you that the work that you've
22 done and are still doing is remarkable. The task has been
23 monumental and you've done it with a great deal of
24 professionalism.

25 I'll tell you, all of us as applicants, and

1 really all of the State of California owes you a debt of
2 gratitude.

3 I'm hoping that my interview today has given you
4 a better insight into who I am and why I feel that I'm a
5 viable candidate for this Commission. From the very first
6 communication from this office, through today, you've made
7 it very clear that although there may be many nuances, the
8 key attributes that are needed to sit on this Commission
9 are respect for California's diversity in all its forms, a
10 demonstrated ability to place the good of the whole above
11 any individual biases, and the ability to understand and
12 absorb complex data leading to fact-based decisions.

13 I won't rehash all of what I've already said
14 here, but I hope that I've demonstrated that my life and
15 work experiences, both public and private, place me well
16 positioned to meet the challenges that the Commission will
17 undoubtedly face.

18 I appreciate the opportunity to be before you
19 today and I appreciate your time and efforts. I was very
20 gratified to have the support of all three of you, all
21 throughout this process. That meant a lot to me. And I
22 ask for your continued support as we go forward and
23 complete the process. Thank you.

24 CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

25 We're going to go into recess now and we'll be

1 back at 2:59 p.m.

2 (Off the record at 2:36 p.m.)

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

4 CHAIR BELNAP: We're going to come out of recess
5 and start this meeting. Mr. Coe, can you hear us?

6 VICE CHAIR COE: I can, Mr. Chair.

7 CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison?

8 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Yes, I can, Mr. Chair.

9 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, and we want to welcome
10 Anthony Leadholm. Can you hear us?

11 MR. LEADHOLM: I can thank you very much. It's
12 Leadholm, just FYI.

13 CHAIR BELNAP: Leadholm, okay.

14 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes, it is thank you.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, we're going to go into
16 the standard questions. I'll turn the time over to Mr.
17 Dawson.

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

19 Mr. Leadholm, I'm going to ask you five standard
20 questions that the Panel has requested each applicant
21 respond to. Are you ready, sir?

22 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes, I am.

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

25 What skills or competencies should the Commission

1 possess collectively?

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

4 In summary, how will you contribute to the
5 success of the Commission?

6 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I think the very first skill
7 that any Commissioner would need, and this also goes to
8 speak of the Commission as a whole, would be simply to
9 listen. The listening tool I think is first and foremost,
10 number one just to get an idea what communities -- what are
11 the priorities of the communities, themselves, but not
12 necessarily limited to the communities themselves.

13 When speaking with other Commissioners, I think
14 that is imperative, the ability to listen to all of the
15 Commissioners and what they have to say on top of listening
16 to the communities, themselves, should they have, you know,
17 questions, inquiries, or things that they would like the
18 Commission to handle.

19 In terms of attributes, I would like to say, and
20 it also again goes to speak to the Commissioners
21 themselves, the most important attribute for me would be to
22 remember that they're there to serve. The Commission is
23 there to serve. That the Commissioners are there to serve.
24 That their own interests or maybe agendas should be,
25 obviously, left alone. That they are there to serve the

1 people of California and then, more specifically if they're
2 talking about a regional issue, the people of that region.

3 In terms of whether or not I possess the ability
4 or the skill to listen, which I've said is my first, and I
5 do most definitely. I have been an academic counselor for
6 a number of years, over a decade, and that is the first
7 attribute that they look for when dealing with any type of
8 problem is your ability to listen wholeheartedly to the
9 situation at hand, and before you can either pass that
10 situation along to somebody who is more knowledgeable than
11 you, or making a decision, or solve the problem yourself,
12 to listen to that entire, entire -- that person's request
13 until you forward that or make a decision yourself.

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

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

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

1 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, as you know in this day and
2 age it's been quite crazy, just the temperance of any types
3 of social media like Facebook or Twitter, or Instagram, or
4 any of those outlets have just been increasingly polarized,
5 as you say.

6 And what I like to do as a general rule of thumb,
7 in my own life, is I try to assess anything that I'm going
8 to say before I speak it and determine whether or not it's
9 going to be helpful or not. If what I have to say is only
10 going to add fuel to the flame, or fuel to the fire then I
11 have to take a beat, stop, remove myself, or remove what I
12 was going to write and not send, or hit delete, if you
13 would.

14 I have a tremendous amount of background, like I
15 said, in my counseling arena in dealing with situations,
16 problematic situations between either faculty, students,
17 them, whatever the party is, not getting what they want.
18 And the situation could be increasingly -- the burden could
19 be extrapolated if I were to have said certain things.

20 So, my general rule of thumb is to have everybody
21 pause, perhaps, and I can provide this and say, okay, maybe
22 everybody we just need to take a pause, take a step back.
23 And then, what I ask my students to do is say look at this
24 from person B's situation. I would like you maybe to do an
25 exercise. I would like you to tell why person B is acting

1 the way or wanting the things that they want. So,
2 essentially, it's a form of role play. And having, whether
3 or not it's students, faculty, other counselors, or in this
4 instance other Commissioners, perhaps the public itself to
5 say, you know, hey, maybe if -- we're not getting anywhere
6 with this situation, how about you take the role of this
7 person and see if perhaps that could maybe enlighten them
8 in a way that they had not foreseen.

9 And if that doesn't work, the best remedy always
10 is just simply time to take a beat, to pause, remove
11 yourself from the situation and then come at it maybe ten
12 minutes later, five minutes later. Or if heads are a
13 little hot, or red-tempered as my family would like to say,
14 just again take a beat, pause, and go from there.

15 And I'd like to think that in all my years I've
16 been a very good facilitator. One of those people who will
17 jump into the middle of a disagreement, especially if it
18 gets a little heated and say, hey, that's enough. We're
19 not getting anything solved here. So, I have that ability,
20 I think and it's one of my strengths I would say is to kind
21 of get involved where things -- if I can sense that things
22 are getting heated, and not progressing or moving along in
23 any type of way that is acceptable, that I can see that
24 sort of facilitated, that sort of intermediate and,
25 hopefully, in the long run save time for everybody

1 involved.

2 So, that's what I would do. And I've had to do
3 it with my own family from time to time.

4 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

5 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

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

9 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, you know, I suppose the
10 answer to this question has perhaps changed a lot over the
11 last couple of weeks. And my response I guess now would be
12 time. I'm not certain exactly how -- that would be perhaps
13 the biggest issue involved due to this, you know,
14 remarkable situation that we're in with the COVID virus.

15 The amount of time that it's going to take to go
16 and accurately assess and draw these lines, and meet with
17 the people, I think that that might be the biggest problem
18 that we're facing if we're not allowed to go and do it
19 ourselves, actually go and see exactly where our lines
20 would be, and what the people in these communities would or
21 would not prefer.

22 And what I would suggest, I suppose, is, you
23 know, that's -- my goodness, I've had to deal with a lot of
24 application reviews, say for example. A lot of just
25 getting in to the meat of just sheer raw numbers and data.

1 And we've had deadlines bumped up, deadlines pushed back.
2 And I feel like in this unknown sort of time period that
3 we're living in, as to whether or not we're going to be
4 able to continue, or do things like we have been doing, or
5 had -- the way things were done, say, ten years ago, if
6 that's going to be an effective measure to take.

7 So, number one we'd have to figure out what could
8 we do to supplant any of the things that we did maybe ten
9 years ago and cannot do now due to this virus, or the well-
10 being of everybody.

11 And then, formulate a plan that we can all as a
12 Commission, you know, and local -- and with local officials
13 agree on in order to get to the ultimate goal of getting
14 these lines drawn, and approved by that end goal.

15 So, my guess is that time might be the biggest
16 issue facing this or you could argue uncertainty, just
17 because of the virus itself. But that would be my response
18 is to again have to work together to formulate alternate
19 timelines, if you would, or ultimate plans -- or alternate
20 plans, rather, in order to get us to where we need to be at
21 the end of the day.

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

1 where you had to work collaboratively with others on a
2 project to achieve a common goal.

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

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

8 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, when I was at UCLA, working
9 as -- I was running the chemistry and biochemistry graduate
10 program, and I was by myself at the time for a good two
11 years. The university was not hiring anybody and so I was
12 acting as -- you know, I was doing the job essentially of
13 three different counselors.

14 Well, we encountered a problem with our
15 international students. What was happening is we were
16 admitting international students and all of the students
17 were paid in some way, shape or form.

18 Now, we did this with our first year students by
19 becoming teaching assistants. All of the students, the
20 international students that we admitted and decided to come
21 to -- and join our program had to achieve certain standards
22 on their TOEFL and their test of spoken English. But UCLA
23 had a separate test to allow these students to teach.

24 We were finding that students were arriving with
25 acceptable scores on their TOEFL or the TSE, but then were

1 getting to UCLA where they would take these test scores and
2 they were not passing. And UCLA, then, would not allow
3 them to teach, which was a problem because we, meaning the
4 department, was on the hook for all of their tuition and
5 fees. Which is at that time upwards of, goodness, you
6 know, we're talking about \$55,000, \$60,000 that the
7 department was -- per student that the department was on
8 the hook for.

9 And so we had to collectively think of how we can
10 remedy this situation. And it wasn't just our department.
11 It was a lot of the STEM departments. So, we put together
12 a task force of, you know, counselors, or the people who
13 were in charge of the students in their everyday life. The
14 faculty members, their graduate advisors, and then also
15 student advocates themselves. And we tried to work out how
16 we could deal with this situation. What would cost the
17 departments the least amount of money because that -- and I
18 hate to say this, but it was factual. The bottom line was
19 our common goal was how do we get these students here to
20 teach and be effective for the undergraduate students
21 without costing the departments loads and loads of money?

22 Well, we thought about perhaps having them come
23 to summer school, but if they came to summer school they're
24 visas only allotted X amount of weeks. None of UCLA's
25 summer school sessions would have provided that for these

1 students. We thought we'd give them, you know, a buffer on
2 English prior to teaching and maybe that would help their
3 UCLA scores to allow them to teach. But the time frame
4 wasn't proper. We would have had to have gone into more
5 visa issues in terms of with their international status and
6 their F-1 status.

7 So, everywhere we turned we were encountering
8 problem after problem. So, I happened to suggest and I
9 kind of put the bug in the people's ears, and then they ran
10 with it, so I cannot take the credit, all the credit. But
11 I kind of put a bug in someone's ear and said, well, what
12 if these weren't technically classes that the students were
13 taking, maybe just training sessions?

14 Since the students, the international students
15 were allotted, I believe, six weeks before they come to the
16 United States, six weeks prior to their first class to get
17 acclimated. All of the sudden when I said, well, maybe if
18 they're not actual summer school classes, we had our ESL
19 people -- English as a spoken language people at the
20 university all of the sudden went bam. And they quickly
21 put together like a five -- anywhere from, depending on
22 their status, four- to six-week courses that these students
23 could then take, and then be able to properly coincide with
24 their visas so we were okay there, and then cost the
25 university nothing because every one of those students,

1 whether or not it was my department, or any of the other
2 STEM departments, they all ended up passing the UCLA test,
3 so it allowed them to teach. And then, therefore, UCLA
4 would cover that money, not the departments, which was the
5 ultimate goal.

6 So, that was one way that I was actually very
7 proud of because it ended up saving the departments a lot
8 of money, but it also meant that the undergraduate students
9 were getting actual or more effective teaching assistance
10 from our TAs. And the TAs felt a sense of pride because
11 they were speaking English much better than they would
12 have, and that they were.

13 So, I was very, very, very proud of actually that
14 thing where we kind of all had to band together, work
15 together, and were spit-balling, I mean to tell you, so
16 many different options, and we ended up coming to an
17 agreement on that one. So, that was something I was very
18 proud of.

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

24 If you are selected as a Commissioner, what
25 skills and attributes will make you effective at

1 interacting with people from different backgrounds and who
2 have a variety of perspectives?

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

7 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, first of all we can talk
8 about this geographically and then also, I suppose,
9 socioeconomically. Geographically speaking, I feel like
10 I'm at an advantage because I've been very fortunate to
11 have lived in three unique and distinct areas of California
12 for a good portion of my life.

13 I was raised, born and raised in the San Joaquin
14 Valley, in Visalia, and so I grew up in a very agrarian
15 region, one that really, really holds its farming dear and
16 its agriculture is extremely important. Also, very
17 conservative in that regard. So, I grew up with a certain
18 perspective on how California is.

19 When I got into college and then moved to UCLA, I
20 was in for a bit of a culture shock because it was the
21 furthest thing from the Central Valley. And I realized
22 very quickly that where I was from was considered less than
23 my many, many people who were at UCLA at the time. And I
24 had to sort of do a self-check and think, oh, goodness, I
25 always thought where I grew up was great. But having

1 multiple people say otherwise really kind of made me
2 reevaluate all of that.

3 And then, I ended up living in Los Angeles for 10
4 years. I got a job there as well, so I got myself immersed
5 in the more metropolitan existence and gained that
6 perspective.

7 And then more recently, when I moved up into the
8 Sacramento region to take care of my grandmother initially,
9 who had cancer, and then later on get a job, and then have
10 other aspects of my life progress as well, I got what it
11 was like to live in the more in between, as you say. And
12 that's not a *Stranger Things* reference.

13 But anyway, I was able to understand sort of the
14 difference of how they would mesh. So, I've lived in three
15 very, very unique regions. The Capitol region with, you
16 know, high government presence. The sort of Silicon Valley
17 excess, that presence over there and what that means to the
18 area. As well as the agricultural area -- or, excuse me,
19 the agricultural priorities that still remain in the
20 Sacramento region.

21 And then, all of those three, having ten years
22 living in each of them for at least ten years I feel like
23 gives me a sort of instinctual understanding of what is
24 proper -- or, excuse me, what is important in those
25 communities.

1 Now, to speak to the socioeconomic or the
2 diversity otherwise, and I say this I am a white male. I
3 cannot truly understand what people from other ethnicities,
4 what their background is and what their experiences have
5 been and, nor will I ever. But I am a member of a group
6 that has marginal -- you know, discriminated against over
7 the course of their lifetime, as a gay male.

8 And so, I do understand what it's like being a
9 historically bullied minority. Now, so I do get that. I
10 understand that. I can -- I have the ability to reach out
11 to, say, under-represented minorities in that regard and
12 say, hey, you know, I do understand to the best of my
13 ability what it is like being marginalized, I would say.

14 So, I have some background. And let me just say,
15 putting those two together, or putting the two things
16 growing up in a very conservative and very agrarian area,
17 while being gay was, you know, difficult. And that was my
18 difficult. Other people's difficult is completely
19 different. And the best thing that you can do is say look
20 I have a little bit of background in this. It is not what
21 you've experienced but, you know, I'm here to listen and
22 try to understand exactly what you're going through and why
23 that's important to them.

24 So, I feel like in that regard I've kind of run
25 the gamut a little bit so.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

2 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

3 MR. DAWSON: We'll now go to Panel questions.
4 Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her
5 questions. We'll start with the Chair, Mr. Belnap.

6 MR. LEADHOLM: Great.

7 CHAIR BELNAP: Mr. Leadholm, you mentioned that
8 you were an academic counselor at UCLA --

9 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: -- and UC Davis.

11 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

12 CHAIR BELNAP: How does an academic counselor
13 have to exercise impartiality?

14 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, boy. You know, that's a great
15 question. I feel like some of it is just instinctual.
16 And, well, there are counselors there that really didn't.
17 You basically had to look at the situation from every
18 single side possible and that was the key thing.

19 When encountering an issue you not only had to
20 take -- let's say the student was bringing you an issue of
21 some sort. Before you could, you know, jump on the side of
22 that student and wave the flag, and carry that in favor of
23 the student, you had to sort of look at that situation and
24 say, okay, how is this in terms of looking at it from the
25 faculty side, or from the programmatic side. Are the

1 students doing something that it is clearly not something--
2 that they should not have been doing? Are they doing
3 something correctly that the program does not maybe account
4 for, whatever that issue is? Or, are you looking at it
5 from a broader sense of a university side?

6 So, what I had to do is basically look at, you
7 know, whoever's bringing me this problem or this situation,
8 take it from their level or their point of view first. And
9 then always, always say I will get you -- you know, let me
10 look into that for you and I will get back to you. Never,
11 ever make promises right out of the gate. I can say things
12 like, wow, that does not seem very fair, but let me do some
13 investigation on your behalf and I will get back to you.

14 So, my solution always was to make sure that
15 number one whoever's bringing me that problem felt heard
16 and were heard whether or not it was a student, or if it
17 was a faculty member, or if it was the university
18 themselves saying, you know, hey, something's not going
19 right with your program. Okay, let me do some
20 investigation on that for you and I will get back to you
21 and see if there's merit to your, you know, for lack of a
22 better term gripe.

23 And do, then take the proper amount of time, do
24 your due -- or your investigation and then, obviously,
25 check with the program requirements, check with the

1 university. Check with other students they could be having
2 issues with or even other counselors and kind of have the
3 rapport with all of those subgroups to be able to say,
4 okay, hey, here's the situation. How is this looking from
5 your point of view? Is this a problem we need to look at
6 programmatically? Is it a problem we need to look at from
7 a university wide angle, or is this just a one-time sort of
8 blip in the radar that can be fixed right here and now?

9 And so, that was basically what I felt like I had
10 to do. I had to assess the situation number one, take a
11 step back, look at it from a much broader angle, a much
12 bigger picture than whoever brought me the initial problem,
13 do my investigation properly and then get back to all
14 parties involved, and let them know what I've -- what my --
15 you know where I felt the issue actually -- where it
16 actually was.

17 So, yeah. And you know what the tricky part
18 about being a counselor is that your person or entity who
19 is bringing you this problems changed. And so, it was
20 never -- you k now, I was not always just the student
21 advocate. I had to bring bad news to students because some
22 of the things that they were doing were in fact out of line
23 with program requirements and I had to put a stop to it.
24 And say, hey guys, you know what, no, this isn't going to
25 fly anymore. So, I had to be the bad guy. And other times

1 I had to take some of the concerns all the way up to the
2 university level and stand by my students all the way up
3 there. So, I was in fact a student advocate at times.

4 So, you know, it depended on the situation and
5 you just had to essentially listen to the initial problem
6 and then do your proper investigation, and then move from
7 there. And that's what I would take if I were a part of a
8 Commission such as this I would definitely bring that
9 expertise to the table.

10 CHAIR BELNAP: And I gather from your application
11 that at least some point in time part of your role as a
12 counselor was also admissions that you were looking into
13 who should be admitted into a particular program.

14 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

15 CHAIR BELNAP: Tell me how you exercised
16 impartiality in that situation?

17 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, dear. Well, you know, as you
18 know admissions or anything even like this, something of
19 this nature it is -- it can be looked upon by others as
20 very arbitrary as to who gets selected. Our goal, when we
21 were on the admissions -- in any admissions committee, and
22 let me say this, I was never a chemist or a film student,
23 or an engineer. So, I didn't have, what's the proper term,
24 you know, final say on who should have gotten in. But I
25 did facilitate those committees and I was a member of those

1 committees. More of, like I said, a facilitator.

2 However, I would -- you know, I was a part of the
3 panel and oftentimes faculty who were on those committees
4 would say, hey, what do you think about these two students,
5 what strikes you? And you just had to look at basically
6 what that panel, for that specific year, was looking for in
7 candidates, whether or not it was, you know, for example
8 more biochemist-oriented students. Whether or not the
9 student was doing organic synthesis in their research. You
10 had to kind of take a look at those files, look at -- read
11 the group for that year and say you know what, they were
12 looking at filling, you know, more slots or having a more
13 presence in the organic synthesis field. And so you know
14 what, let's push these candidates forward. And that was
15 what I would do. I would sort of read the room, read the
16 room of the year, and I mean that, you know, you had to
17 kind of understand what the committees were looking for,
18 present them with the most compatible applicants for what
19 they were looking to -- who they were looking to enter.

20 And then, if there were some questions, you know,
21 just you had to speak from the gut and speak honestly, and
22 that was it. Everything was obviously written down and/or
23 recorded, so we had -- there was no issue in terms of if
24 anybody wanted to look back, they could always check and
25 see exactly what was said in any of those meetings.

1 But if it was, you know, going down to this
2 student or that student, and I did have certain faculty
3 say, okay, it's down to this student or this student, if
4 you had your say who would you pick?

5 And I would say, well, you know, I got a better
6 vibe from this person in the meeting that I had with them
7 and I feel like they would do a better job in this program,
8 in this situation. And that's all I can do. And, yeah,
9 that's -- it was sometimes a very difficult choice when
10 you're speaking of, you know, thousands and thousands of
11 applicants, especially international applicants who we had
12 to whittle down to, you know, sometimes only take four to
13 eight out of, you know, thousands of international
14 applicants. It was sometimes very daunting.

15 But you just had to keep a good head on your
16 shoulders and remember what the ultimate goal was or what
17 the panel, what their ultimate goals were as a panel going
18 into it, and keep that in line always.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

20 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

21 CHAIR BELNAP: Still on the subject of
22 impartiality, I'm wondering if you have any other
23 experiences, whether it be work, volunteer, or life
24 experiences where you've had to set aside your personal
25 views to achieve a broader objective?

1 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I will say that it may seem
2 a little bit simple, but I have had to do it, and very
3 recently in fact. During the election I have volunteered
4 now over, goodness, I guess since 2014 -- 2016, I believe.
5 I have volunteered to work my local precinct. And they put
6 me right at the get go, right, to run the precinct, with no
7 previous history at all, and I was quite nervous.

8 But that is a situation, a day-long situation
9 where you do, you have to set aside everything political
10 that you may believe and just zip it, or go by the line.
11 And trust me in those precincts, as you probably all vote
12 and go into those precincts you probably have seen a lot of
13 more vocal people in those precincts while you may vote.
14 And, you know, you have to do what you're told in terms of
15 what those rules are and what is expected of you as -- for
16 me, as a Placer County Inspector, is what my title was.

17 And so, if that means, you know, having -- if I
18 had personal beliefs on say, for example, ID being shown
19 while voting, whatever those may have been. If a voter
20 comes in and trust me, I've had multiple voters come in and
21 say, oh, do I need to show you my ID, or why don't we have
22 to show ID when we vote? You know, my simple response is
23 yes -- or, excuse me, no, you don't, and that's it, and
24 move on. No more questions. And if they do ask other
25 questions, you just say that will not be necessary and you

1 move on, and you change the subject. Regardless of what my
2 political beliefs are on that situation you have to do what
3 you're supposed to do in that instance, as to not affect
4 the voter in any way, shape, or form.

5 And so, that happens and it's not just that
6 issue. You know, I've had to tell many people to, you
7 know, take that MAGA hat off, or turn that "I'm with her"
8 shirt around. Multiple times I had to do that. Again,
9 regardless of what my opinion was at the time, I had to,
10 you know, enforce those rules for the benefit and for the
11 good of all voters in that precinct.

12 So, that has not been difficult, but there have
13 been numerous accounts of people, you know, coming in
14 either wearing -- you know, wearing things, or buttons, or
15 things, or even communication. They're talking, you know,
16 can be considered technically illegal and I've had to put a
17 stop to it. And have, even though I may have agreed with
18 what they were saying.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you.

20 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah, no problem.

21 CHAIR BELNAP: So, I want to return to your
22 career in academic counseling.

23 MR. LEADHOLM: Sure.

24 CHAIR BELNAP: And the question I have is how did
25 your time in academic counseling increase your

1 understanding and appreciation of California's diversity?

2 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, wow. Well, since -- oh,
3 goodness, that's a question. So, I was responsible in all
4 three of those departments that I worked with, two schools,
5 three departments, for compiling of post-admission year
6 statistics. So, essentially, looking at what -- who
7 applied, and who got in. Of those who got in, who
8 accepted.

9 And so, I was directly responsible for compiling
10 a lot of that information and that meant dealing with just
11 tons, and tons, and tons of data. And seeing those reports
12 come to fruition gave me a real -- was not eye-opening,
13 because I am also from California, but it really gave me a
14 good idea as to in those years who were applying, and the
15 different types -- not types -- different subgroups of
16 people who were applying during those years.

17 So, I saw of those subgroups and I saw, you know,
18 the percentages of say, Latino -- Latin American, those of
19 Latin American decent, Californians. Oh, and I should say
20 this, working at UC most of the information that I would
21 put together were of the California applicants. Other than
22 the fact they wanted to know what is the percentage of
23 California, or the ratio between California and non-
24 Californians who were applying, other than that it really
25 stopped, and then it only factored in on the California

1 applicants themselves. The UC really wanted to see who was
2 applying within their own state. And that was the
3 information and I would just kind of footnote that.

4 So, we did, we had to put forth, oh, my goodness,
5 copious amounts of information that were just detailed,
6 where were these people coming from. UCLA wanted to know
7 why, for example, say, Central Valley students were not
8 applying there. And so, we had to put together reports,
9 and this is just one department, but we had to put together
10 a report and say, okay, why is it that people from the
11 Central Valley are not applying to UCLA.

12 When I put these reports together for, say, UC
13 Davis I noticed that, no, now that, the Central Valley had
14 a much more intrinsic sort of brotherhood with UC Davis.
15 And so, you could really see how UC Davis seemed to either
16 appeal or provide something that UCLA couldn't. So, those
17 are the types of information that I feel like I was -- I've
18 got to be very good at reading.

19 You would say, okay, now is it that UC Davis is
20 providing something more for those Central Valley students
21 or is it more than the Central Valley students just feel
22 like they belong more to a university that, technically, is
23 the Central Valley? So, you could go one way or the other.
24 But just putting together that type of information, as well
25 as the demographic information, ethnicity, things of that

1 nature, socioeconomics. Why are, you know, more people
2 apply to, say, UCLA film and television who are -- you
3 know, make X amount of -- you know, more money than others.
4 I don't know if you're ever going to get an answer to that.
5 You can subject -- and most of that type of stuff would be
6 done on the university level, rather than the departmental
7 level. But at least in compiling that information you can
8 at least surmise and see the just plethora of different
9 subgroups that is within our great state. You can see that
10 while you're compiling this information.

11 So, I would say that, to answer your question, it
12 gave me more of an appreciation for this great state
13 because I could look at see all of the different subgroups,
14 whether or not be it ethnic wise, socioeconomic, how much
15 -- you know, what their backgrounds are, or even
16 geographical. It's just the state has it all.

17 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

18 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

19 CHAIR BELNAP: Madam Secretary, can I get a time
20 check?

21 MS. PELLMAN: Yes. Two minutes, 35 seconds
22 remaining.

23 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. I don't think there will be
24 enough time for you to answer my remaining question. I'm
25 going to turn the time over to Mr. Coe.

1 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
2 Leadholm, good afternoon to you. Thank you for taking the
3 time to speak with us today.

4 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, my pleasure. Thank you.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: In your first essay you quote
6 James Madison, from the Federalist Papers.

7 MR. LEADHOLM: I do.

8 VICE CHAIR COE: Are you a bit of a history buff?

9 MR. LEADHOLM: I am. I am a bit of a history
10 buff. It's particularly American Revolution history buff.
11 Yes, I am, indeed. Over the past -- well, actually over
12 the past three years I have -- well, I've read Alexander
13 Hamilton's, George Washington's, Ulysses S. Grant, plus the
14 First Continental Congress. Yes, I really am.

15 VICE CHAIR COE: Do you see this interest or the
16 knowledge you've gained from the reading you've done there
17 as something that could benefit the Commission?

18 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, without question. And I think
19 I said that in my first essay, also, is that the main thing
20 that those -- reading the lives of these great men, and
21 sometimes conflicted men, and sometimes men who had lots of
22 faults, but the main thing that I took from that is it sort
23 of gave me the drive to want to serve myself. To want to
24 do something for this country or this state. I, you know,
25 wanted to give back in a way.

1 I was struck by how many of these men sacrificed
2 and put their lives on the line, truly put their lives on
3 the line or even gave their lives to something bigger, for
4 the sake of this great experiment. And if I took anything
5 out of that, which was a lot of things, but the main thing
6 was I almost felt like I hadn't done my part. That I was
7 -- I had left something wanting in my existence here as an
8 American. And I felt like I wanted to do something.

9 And initially what I decided to do was volunteer
10 for those election precincts, like you said. And then,
11 once I had made the decision to sort of get back into the
12 workforce, I happened to come across a little blurb with,
13 you know, Shape California's Future on it, and I clicked it
14 and was instantly struck. Like oh, my gosh, this is for
15 me. You know, this is how I can do it.

16 So, yes, that's what I took out of reading. I
17 felt almost inadequate reading these biographies and
18 feeling like I hadn't done my part to keep this great
19 experiment going. So, yeah.

20 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you for that
21 perspective.

22 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

23 VICE CHAIR COE: In the other relevant material
24 section of the application you mentioned some awards that
25 you received from UCLA --

1 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

2 VICE CHAIR COE: -- including two staff
3 achievement awards and a distinguished serve award. Why
4 did you receive these awards?

5 MR. LEADHOLM: Ah. Well, the two staff awards I
6 think it was primarily because we were losing counselors
7 left and right, and the university was not hiring. And so,
8 I will, not to diminish those awards, but the staff awards,
9 you know, basically by taking on tons of duties more --
10 more duties than I really should have been given at that
11 time. And the department, in recognition of that, gave me
12 a staff award.

13 Now, the James Lavelle Award, that one was a
14 particular honor because that was nominated by my grad
15 students. My grad students took it upon their own time to
16 nominate me as someone who always had the best interests of
17 the grad students at heart, someone they could always talk
18 to, someone who was always there listening, and always went
19 above and beyond what they expected of their actual
20 counselor. That one meant a lot because that was every
21 department nominated -- or, no, I'm sorry, that was
22 university wide, and so for that year I guess you can say I
23 was chosen as the best graduate counselor at UCLA for that
24 year. And that was something that meant a lot to me
25 because it was initiated by my grad students. It wasn't

1 just, you know, kind of like a fill out the paper, oh, we
2 have to -- somebody's got to get this award kind of thing.
3 My grad students took it upon themselves to do that and I
4 had no idea. It was quite special to me.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you for that. In your
6 work as an academic counselor, and you discussed a little
7 bit about it already, and you did in your essays. Again,
8 you talk about working with many different types of people,
9 diverse groups of people.

10 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

11 VICE CHAIR COE: And what, from your interactions
12 from -- with those people what have you learned about the
13 diverse groups of people that you've met, about their
14 perspectives, their concerns, their dreams, and their
15 goals, and those types of things that would make you an
16 effective representative for them on this Commission?

17 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I think the first thing that
18 I learned early on was to never assume anything and that is
19 the first and foremost thing is that just because somebody
20 is gay, or just because somebody is black, or just because
21 somebody is transgender, they don't automatically fit into
22 a niche group, or should never, ever, ever be pigeonholed.

23 And I'll say this about myself really quick,
24 before getting back to the students, as a gay male it would
25 have been very easy for people to, and have been my whole

1 life, assumed that I was much more liberal, obviously a
2 Democrat, these types of things, and they are quite taken
3 aback when they actually speak with me. And I say, oh, no,
4 I'm actually pretty darn conservative, or moderately
5 conservative, and I'm a Republican. And the look on their
6 face is just of sheer horror, usually. And they just --
7 it's hard for them to process.

8 I take that into -- I took that into my
9 counseling work because I did, I met so many different
10 types of students from all over the place. I can think of
11 one, and this is the one that put me in check, is I had a
12 transgender student who I did not know was transgender. I
13 just thought that she was a lesbian, a homosexual, and when
14 it came to -- when I came to find out that she actually --
15 he was born -- he -- excuse me, he was born biologically as
16 a male and then went through the surgery, but remained
17 attraction to women. I thought, oh, my goodness, now this
18 is going to enlighten me. I had to really sit down and
19 wrap my head around it because that was the furthest thing
20 from my mind when I first met this student. So, I got to
21 sit down with this student and really listen to her story,
22 and ended up doing so with many other of my students.

23 And so, the basic thing that I could say is that
24 whatever I think or whatever I initially assume about
25 anybody, I can't do that anymore. I had to put myself in

1 check and say you know what, I'm not going to know anything
2 unless I sit down and actually talk to this person, and
3 learn from them. Learn who they are. Learn where they
4 came from. Otherwise, you know, I'm just guessing. And
5 you can say that about any aspect of their lives.

6 But I know I'm part of that, not problem but part
7 of that sort of, you know, unexpected, you know, being gay
8 and conservative. But there are so many other sort of
9 things that would seem to contradict that this great state
10 has thousands of, you know, numerically. So, that would be
11 the one thing that I would take from having all of these
12 students, such a diverse group of students that I was
13 responsible for, and being advocate for was really learning
14 about them and kind of then turning it back on me and
15 saying, wow, I know I cannot assume anything anymore.

16 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. A similar question
17 but --

18 MR. LEADHOLM: Sure.

19 VICE CHAIR COE: -- in regards to geographic
20 diversity.

21 MR. LEADHOLM: Uh-hum.

22 VICE CHAIR COE: I mean you mentioned already
23 that you've lived in several different places, grew up in
24 the Central Valley, in Visalia, Los Angeles, and now Placer
25 County. And so, from your interactions with the people

1 that you've met in these regions what have you learned
2 about them that would make you an effective representative
3 for them on this Commission?

4 MR. LEADHOLM: Ah. Now, in that regard I have
5 found -- I don't want to contradict myself with the
6 individual here, but I feel like in that regards there are
7 a lot of, say, stereotypes that do hold true. That you
8 could go and say, you know, the Central Valley people are
9 just a bunch of aggies or, you know, they just like their
10 ag. And while I personally did not have anything -- you
11 know, my family, a teacher and construction, they had
12 nothing to do with agriculture. But I can say, yeah, that
13 type of stereotype actually held merit.

14 And whereas, you know, metropolitan people really
15 didn't seem to care about ag and where they got their food.
16 And you know what that seems to hold merit from my
17 perspective. That doesn't necessarily mean that it was,
18 it's just my own personal, you know, sort of analysis.

19 So, geographically and regionally speaking, I
20 feel like there are a lot of areas that do sort of bind
21 together with a common sort of interest, or a common goal,
22 or a common philosophy, or a common faith. Those types of
23 things do hold true in region to region. That's what I
24 have found, me, personally.

25 And you know what's so great is that other people

1 may have a -- may disagree with me and that's okay. I
2 don't see anything wrong with that, that disagreement, it's
3 just from their experience.

4 And so, from my experience I do see the regions
5 having specific interests that sort of hold them together
6 and I'm very fortunate to have been a part of three very
7 unique, uniquely different regions in that regard so.

8 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. I want to talk
9 about, I believe it was in your analytical skills essay you
10 mentioned your love of geography and your interest in maps.

11 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

12 VICE CHAIR COE: And that you have throughout
13 your life analyzing and in some cases memorizing maps of
14 all kinds. What kinds of work, professional or otherwise
15 have you done with maps?

16 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, lord. Well, I'm trying to
17 think. Professionally none, other than knowing the
18 difference when compiling data for, you know, like I was
19 telling you the compilation of, say, how has applied to
20 our department or this year. I did have to separate those
21 into geographic zones. Generally, they were already given
22 for me, but I did have to have a basic awareness of what,
23 you know, the Inland Empire meant and, you know, the
24 different between the San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento
25 Valley, and where that stops and where that ended. But

1 that's probably the extent of it in terms of that.

2 Now, real quick, though, now that I'm thinking
3 about it, on a much more local level, when we do work our
4 precincts, we do have actual maps that we have to go by
5 when we do have voters that come in and say, hey, we live
6 on such and such street, we would like to vote. If we
7 don't see them on our voting roster, then we have to kind
8 of do a little search and say, okay, actually, you know
9 what you're going to be in precinct such, and such, and
10 such, and such. That will be the church down the road.

11 So, I do have a little bit of background. I'm
12 not sure if that's something that you might be looking for,
13 in actually, you know, sort of assessing, oh, quickly, to a
14 voter, ah, you know what you're not in our precinct.
15 You're going to be down in this precinct. Figure out where
16 they live and move them to the precinct accordingly. Other
17 than that, that would probably be the extent of anything
18 sort of professional and/or volunteer.

19 Other than that, it would just be purely for the
20 sake of fun and being a nerd. In that regard, when I was a
21 little kid and just starting at Atlases forever, and ever,
22 and ever, and looking at populations. And I can remember
23 when there was an earthquake that killed 30,000 people in
24 some place, I don't know. When I was eight, I had to go
25 and change the population number on the actual Atlas

1 because it was therefore, you know, not correct anymore
2 because that earthquake had killed 30,000 people. So, I
3 had to make sure that that was rectified in my Atlas.
4 Which my mother did not love that I was writing in their
5 Atlas.

6 But yeah, it was just purely inquisitive and just
7 like I said being a nerd, and just loved looking at maps,
8 and could stare at my map app on my phone forever, and
9 ever, and ever. Yeah.

10 VICE CHAIR COE: So, I'd like to talk a little
11 bit about communities of interest.

12 MR. LEADHOLM: Uh-hum.

13 VICE CHAIR COE: And one of the biggest and most
14 important jobs in front of the Commission is going to be
15 identifying communities of interest across the state.

16 MR. LEADHOLM: Right.

17 VICE CHAIR COE: Some of those communities are
18 rather obvious, easier to identify, locate, and define.
19 Some of them are harder to locate, identify and define for
20 one reason or another. And how would you have the
21 Commission go about trying to identify these communities of
22 interest across the state, particularly paying attention to
23 not having -- not inadvertently overlooking some of the
24 less obvious communities of interest?

25 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I think -- oh, go ahead.

1 MS. PELLMAN: We have five minutes, 20 seconds
2 remaining.

3 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. Five minutes left,
4 thank you.

5 MR. LEADHOLM: I'll be brief, then. That's one
6 of the things where you have to rely on I think your entire
7 Commission. Those who are more familiar with specific
8 areas and have expertise or knowledge that they perhaps see
9 others don't, you would rely on them I would suggest to
10 maybe give the rest of the Commission the background.

11 And then from there, you can really have that
12 person take lead, whoever is from that area or knows about
13 that area, or perhaps knows about those types of groups
14 that you're referring to with more -- with more knowledge.
15 Those people on that Commission can take lead as to
16 ascertain the actual, say, geographic boundary of those.

17 So, I would just -- I mean that's how I would do
18 it. I mean I would have the people who, if you're looking
19 for a specific kind of subgroup have the people who are
20 either knowledgeable of those subgroups or the actual area
21 themselves take lead in actually getting into that area,
22 listening to the people, maybe uncovering subgroups that we
23 didn't even know existed, as you were saying. And that's
24 all just by listening and speaking to the communities
25 themselves.

1 VICE CHAIR COE: So, some of those communities,
2 they may not feel comfortable traditionally coming forward
3 and engaging with government, or with bodies --

4 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

5 VICE CHAIR COE: -- that are of authority, like
6 the Commission, and that can be for a variety of reasons
7 that those communities aren't comfortable doing that.

8 But since their perspective is very important to
9 helping the Commission do a thorough job for the citizens
10 of the state, how you make them feel more comfortable to
11 come forward and share their perspectives?

12 MR. LEADHOLM: Wow, that's an excellent question.
13 And I would just start by being honest with them myself.
14 If there was somebody who I thought their story would be of
15 benefit to the entire state, not just our -- the work we
16 were doing, I would try to speak to them one on one and
17 maybe share some intimate story of myself that could be of
18 relation. I feel like if there's anything that I could add
19 to this Commission itself is my sincerity and my ears.
20 Really, I feel like I listen to people very, very, very
21 well. And I'm very sincere in the stories that I may share
22 about my life. And I feel like that's what I would do
23 personally.

24 And to maybe help. You know, look, this was the
25 situation that I was in that could be of benefit to you, to

1 maybe give them a small push to share their story. It may
2 work, it may not, but I would never -- you know, I would do
3 it on the smallest scale possible in order to make them
4 feel that they could share it on a larger scale. So,
5 that's what I would do.

6 VICE CHAIR COE: Thank you. Madam Secretary, how
7 much time do we have left?

8 MS. PELLMAN: Two minutes remaining.

9 VICE CHAIR COE: Great. Really quick Mr.
10 Leadholm --

11 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

12 VICE CHAIR COE: -- if you were to be appointed
13 to the role, which aspects of the role of Commissioner do
14 you think you would enjoy the most and which aspects,
15 conversely, do you think might struggle with a little bit?
16 We have just under two minutes to go.

17 MR. LEADHOLM: I would enjoy the travel and
18 speaking to the communities one on one. That's the part
19 that I would love the most. I would be the one who would
20 say I will go to this place or I will go this place. I
21 would love to hear -- I guess I would love to hear what the
22 needs, what the issues that different communities within
23 California felt that were important to them in terms of
24 how, you know, the boundaries would be set up. That would
25 be the part for me, personally, that I would feel like is

1 the most invigorating, the most exciting, the most fun for
2 me.

3 VICE CHAIR COE: And which aspects of the role do
4 you think you might struggle with a little bit?

5 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, you know, perhaps, you know,
6 I'm not all that -- maybe the cartographer part about it.
7 You know, the map drawing and saying, okay, if we draw here
8 -- I'm more of a people person than I am, you know, a
9 linear person. So, maybe that part I would say. But,
10 yeah.

11 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, I think I'm about of time
12 so, Mr. Chair, I will yield the rest of my time, however
13 little that may be.

14 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

15 MR. LEADHOLM: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIR BELNAP: We'll turn the time over to Ms.
17 Dickison.

18 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Good afternoon, Mr.
19 Leadholm.

20 MR. LEADHOLM: Hello, how are you?

21 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I'm fine. So, many of my
22 questions get asked since I'm last, but I do have some.

23 MR. LEADHOLM: Okay.

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: You talk about being the
25 inspector/supervisor of the voting precinct in --

1 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

2 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I think it was pretty
3 much related to, you know, being impartial. But what did
4 that position entail? What kind of work was that?

5 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, essentially what you -- it
6 starts about a week before and what you do is you basically
7 take a training. And you still have to take it, it's
8 required by law here in Placer County that all inspectors,
9 which is the head person for that specific precinct. So,
10 when you go and vote in that room, usually one room,
11 sometimes there's multiple, but in that room there's one
12 person in charge. And they, for whatever reason they
13 decided to put me in charge right out of the get go, and I
14 have done that now since, I believe, 2016. And so a week
15 prior you go and you have to take a refresher course, which
16 lasts a half-a-day, sometimes three-quarters of a day,
17 going over every aspect of possible shenanigan, weird
18 experience with the voting machines, with the voting
19 ballots themselves, workers, voters unruly, all the whole
20 gamut.

21 And then, up until this past election we were
22 actually given the actual ballot. And then, we had to
23 house those ballots for a week, making sure that nobody
24 tampered with them and they did not come into, you know,
25 somebody's hands who they shouldn't have been.

1 And then, the day of the election we would go and
2 we would get there like an hour before. We had to make
3 sure that all of the machines were set up properly, excuse
4 me, and working properly. So, set up and functioning. And
5 then, be ready. That all the ballots, everything on the
6 table was ready to go before that first 7:00 o'clock, 7:00
7 a.m. go to, or initial time when people could start to
8 vote.

9 And then, throughout the day you had -- each
10 person has a duty throughout the day, and I gave myself
11 always the hardest one, which is dealing with the
12 provisional votes or the conditional votes now that they're
13 called, since Governor Newsome just kind of amended that to
14 allow people who were not registered who can now actual
15 vote. So, we have provisional and conditional now.

16 And I would be responsible for those. So, I
17 would make sure that these students when they come in -- or
18 excuse me, these voters when they would come in and say,
19 oh, I would like to vote, and you look on the voter roster
20 and you do not see their name, and then you basically
21 investigate as to why, and which section they would fit in,
22 provisionally or conditionally, to ensure that their vote
23 does get counted. So, I -- that's what my job would be.

24 So, I was the -- I'm the one who puts out the
25 flames within that precinct. I'm there until 8:00 o'clock

1 at night. Then when they close, we put everything back
2 together and we make sure that every -- that all of our
3 votes and ballots are accounted for so that there's no off
4 numbers. We make sure that every vote has a ballot, put
5 that all together, and then we have the responsibility to
6 take them over to the drop off center where there are, you
7 know, armed guards and we dropped all those ballots off.
8 And then, my day usually ends at about 10:00, 10:30. It
9 starts at about 4:35. So, that's a bit, it's a lot for one
10 day. But it's something that I do enjoy.

11 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Well, what did you
12 learn from that work, from especially doing the conditional
13 and the provisional votes? So, I'm assuming that you, you
14 know, you spent a lot of time probably working and talking
15 with different people.

16 MR. LEADHOLM: Yes.

17 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, what did you learn
18 from that that could assist you in the work of the
19 Commission and working with the public?

20 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, again, back to what I was
21 saying with Mr. Coe, you learn not to assume anything. And
22 this also comes back to that. I learned not to just assume
23 because a voter may look one way, or talk one way, or acts
24 one way, I'm not there to assume that obviously he's going
25 to be pigeonholed into some subcategory.

1 You have to listen. Number one, you just have to
2 listen. I know I've been saying this kind of over and
3 over, but it's kind of my mantra. You have to listen to
4 every single person and make them feel heard, and actually
5 make them heard. And we -- that's what I've learned as
6 later on in life, you know, where I'm not in that same
7 student arena as I was, I still treat these voters in my
8 precinct as if they were, say, my students from yesteryear.
9 And I listen to their entire situation and then I have a
10 plan that will then I will follow based on what they tell
11 me. And sometimes it's not very clear and cut out. You
12 know, it's not very clear and we do have to do a little
13 investigating. And sometimes it's over my head and I do
14 have to call in the big boys, as we call them, and really
15 get down to business.

16 But for the most part what I've learned is just
17 again treat everybody as if you don't know a darn thing
18 about them and let them tell you, and just learn from that.
19 And in that instance, the goal is to make sure that their
20 vote is -- excuse me, their vote is counted and that's the
21 ultimate goal.

22 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay.

23 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, you said you
25 wanted to make sure, you have to listen and make sure

1 everybody feels like, you know, that they're heard. What
2 are some steps you can take maybe at a public meeting, or
3 otherwise to make sure that the public feels like they're
4 being heard and they're -- what they have to say is being
5 considered?

6 MR. LEADHOLM: My -- I would suggest basically on
7 just engaging on whoever was doing the speaking. So, those
8 who want to be heard, you know, they will make themselves
9 known. The trick is definitely to engage with them. Not
10 to, you know, look down at your paper, taking notes, not
11 really make eye contact with them. To share stories that
12 they may relate to that could make them feel at ease as to,
13 yeah, you know, what, that gentleman who spoke to us about,
14 you know, his problems when he took on this, that, and the
15 other, that he heard us. He made sure, you know. Do
16 something to reassure those that you feel like want to be
17 heard, need to be heard. Make sure they feel like they're
18 heard. And that's the best I can say. Engage them, you
19 know. Like I said, eye contact, remembering their names,
20 things of that nature, their groups or whatever, and also
21 just maybe share something a bit intimate that, you know,
22 you say you know what I understand on some level, perhaps,
23 how you might feel, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And they
24 may take solace in the fact that you at least, you know,
25 engaged with them, that you weren't just, you know, sitting

1 there, say, writing notes, or looking down the whole time
2 or something like that. So, that's what I would do.

3 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, you talked
4 about living in the three regions. And if I remember
5 right, you kind of talked about, you know, in the
6 agriculture region the stereotype would -- you know, the
7 stereotype was true or whatnot.

8 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah, I --

9 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: My question kind of goes
10 to more along the line of need. So, okay, what did you
11 learn about the different needs of groups of people based
12 on where they lived and how that might affect what they
13 were looking for in representation?

14 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, that's a fantastic question,
15 actually. So, for example, I mean I could just off the top
16 of my head, the needs of, say, a Visalian or somebody from
17 Porterville, or somebody from Fresno obviously may not, or
18 aren't the same as somebody living in Santa Monica, or the
19 west side in Los Angeles.

20 And I can just say, giving specific examples,
21 even more recently I would argue that if you took a poll
22 in, say, the Tulare County, Fresno County, Kern County,
23 Kings County Region that they would say water would be a
24 need for those people, and they would prioritize water as
25 something very, very fundamental and important to that

1 area.

2 If I were to ask the same question in, say, West
3 Los Angeles, now I don't know right now, but when I lived
4 there, which was about, let's see, ten years ago, I would
5 venture to say -- again, this isn't scientific, but I would
6 venture to say something to the effect that transportation
7 would be the most -- one of the most important issues. How
8 to get from point A to point B without spending an hour,
9 especially if it's only a mile away.

10 And so, you could really sort of -- well, the
11 reason why I would know this is because I was part of that
12 citizen group who say, for example, would have said these
13 were important. And when I lived in Los Angeles, oh, my
14 goodness, transportation would have been the number one
15 concern for me at that time. And I venture to say for many
16 of my fellow citizens.

17 And in the Sacramento area that's a little
18 different because I am up here in Placer County, which
19 definitely is part of the Sacramento metropolis. But I
20 would say growth is probably one of the bigger issues up
21 here. That's just, again, non-scientific, it's just me
22 doing my best guess. But you can see where water, and
23 transportation, and maybe growth aren't very similar on
24 paper, but are extremely important to those regions. So,
25 you can see how just region by region priorities absolutely

1 change.

2 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: And how might that affect
3 what they're looking for in a representative?

4 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh, I see. Well, you know, when
5 you're drawing lines -- thank you for bringing me back
6 there. When you're in charge or responsible for drawing
7 actual lines, you certainly don't want to maybe cut off a
8 region where they hold similar priorities, if you can help
9 it. Where you would draw a line and maybe group them with
10 like somebody from the Central Valley, and maybe group them
11 with somebody from the Central Coast. If at all possible,
12 I would hope that wouldn't happen. Because, again, you
13 would have, you know, contrasting priorities. So, that's
14 how by knowing what those priorities are regionally, I
15 think that you can really help in determining what those
16 lines are and what not to do, and where not to, say, cross
17 regions I would say.

18 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, you mentioned
19 earlier that you made the decision to get back into the
20 work force. Are you still looking for work at this point?

21 MR. LEADHOLM: I am, yes.

22 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay.

23 MR. LEADHOLM: And so, this is sort of -- yes, I
24 am. And this is sort of -- I had a number of options. I
25 was actually thinking about going back to school. And back

1 to Mr. Coe's thing, I was possibly, you know, thinking of
2 getting my PhD in history. And all of this has sort of
3 been put on hold at the moment, as you --

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Right.

5 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah, and so a lot of this is on
6 hold. So, I'm not sure. We'll see how this plays out and
7 we'll go from there.

8 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Well, my question
9 was going to go to how would you balance the work of the
10 Commission and anything you have that might be in the
11 hopper at this point?

12 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, right now this is my number
13 one priority. So, I would -- as it stands right now, I
14 wouldn't have to juggle. If anything were to have come
15 along, this obviously gets my allegiance because number one
16 it's the first thing that I would have, you know, given my
17 time to.

18 But number two, I honest to goodness cannot think
19 of much of anything that would be more exciting for me
20 personally than to do something like this. So, the short
21 answer is I wouldn't have to juggle it because this would
22 be the only thing on my plate.

23 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, the first
24 eight Commissioners are selected randomly.

25 MR. LEADHOLM: Uh-hum.

1 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: And then, they are tasked
2 with selecting the next six Commissioners to round out the
3 Commission.

4 MR. LEADHOLM: Right.

5 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: If you were one of the
6 first eight, what would you look for in the other six?

7 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, what I would --

8 MS. PELLMAN: And we have five minutes, 20
9 seconds remaining.

10 MR. LEADHOLM: Okay.

11 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you.

12 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I think first of all you'd
13 have to look at who was selected first of all. You'd want
14 some sort of balance. You'd want some sort of mirror to be
15 shown with the entire group on that Commission.

16 So if, for example, you had a tendency that those
17 ping pong balls selected, you know, six to eight people,
18 you'd want to make sure that they were more diverse
19 afterwards, and maybe lean to having the representation go
20 elsewhere. So I would -- that would be my first order of
21 business would be hopefully to make sure that the rest of
22 the board made and constructed a board that accurately, as
23 best we could, filled out the -- a mirror of, say, what
24 California looks like. That's what I would be looking for,
25 initially. Obviously, all of the other things at this

1 point, if they made it that far they're going to be solid
2 candidates who have been vetted back and forth and, you
3 know, at that point you'd just have to look and see which
4 one you felt like completed the team. Okay.

5 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, on the flip side of
6 that, if you weren't selected as one of the eight, why
7 should they select you as one of the six?

8 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I'll just sort of reverse
9 that then. You know, hopefully, at that point I would be
10 there as a voice to some entity, whether or not it was the
11 Central Valley, which I feel like I would provide a good
12 voice to. Whether or not it was having somebody
13 represented in the LGBTQI, I guess now. But I would hope
14 that those voices would be fulfilled. Not that they would
15 select me just merely on that, but I feel like if there
16 weren't anybody on the panel -- or, excuse me, on the
17 Commission that could directly, maybe speak for those
18 communities, then I would hope that I could be of service
19 in that regard.

20 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay, thank you.

21 Mr. Belnap, I don't have any further questions at
22 this point, so I yield my time.

23 CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you.

24 Mr. Dawson.

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

1 Mr. Leadholm, once again thank you for being
2 here. Good afternoon.

3 MR. LEADHOLM: Good afternoon.

4 MR. DAWSON: I just have a couple of quick
5 questions. I wanted to follow up with you on one of your
6 responses to the standard questions was that possibly one
7 of the threats to the Commission was the COVID-19
8 situation. And I was wondering if you could expand your
9 thoughts on that?

10 MR. LEADHOLM: Oh. Well, I'm not actually --
11 that's more to the -- my fear that it could be. I'm not
12 certain exactly how things, the timeline so to speak, that
13 was more of my concern was the effect on the timeline. I
14 know that there are rigid timelines that need to be
15 followed. And I just felt that having to utilize the group
16 to set up other, you know, say timelines, new timelines
17 because of the COVID that's more to what I was referring
18 to. Having to put in, I guess, extra time. And I would
19 hope -- I'm certainly available but, you know, those with
20 time restraints, I hope that wouldn't be a problem for
21 those on the Commission themselves.

22 MR. DAWSON: Oh, okay. Thank you.

23 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

24 MR. DAWSON: We spoke a bit about your experience
25 as an advisor and a counselor, but I was interested if you

1 thought that maybe -- you spent some time as a stay-at-home
2 caretaker, and I wonder if you thought that that --

3 MR. LEADHOLM: Yeah.

4 MR. DAWSON: -- has a particular -- that's a
5 particular perspective that would be useful on this
6 Commission?

7 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, you know, yes and no. It
8 makes you internalize a lot of things, I will say that.
9 And for lack -- and for better or worse. And in not
10 dealing with the public on a regular basis, which was
11 something that I was very, very used to, it took a lot out
12 of me to sort of switch gears. And I was able to do that
13 because I wanted to.

14 So, I would say that what it did allow me was to
15 introspectively gain -- I was able to gain a part of myself
16 that I maybe didn't know was there. Because I was dealing
17 with a dying grandparent for a very long time. Somebody
18 who I was so very, very close to. That experience in and
19 of itself was life changing.

20 And for me, dealing with the public, public
21 students so much, I just had dealt with so many different
22 types of people, having to come to terms with just sort of
23 spending time with one or two people throughout my day was
24 something that I had to learn how to do, to switch gears.

25 So, I will say that in doing so I gained that

1 ability to be a little bit more versatile with my day-to-
2 day life. And to be perfectly honest, that experience also
3 allowed me to get into touch with my spirituality that I
4 did not realize was there before. And I can now relate to,
5 say, subgroups who would hold spirituality -- or regions
6 that would hold that spirituality dear to them. And I
7 could actually speak to that with them. So, that's what I
8 would have to say about that.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Those were the only
10 follow ups I have. Mr. Chair?

11 CHAIR BELNAP: I don't have any follow ups.
12 Mr. Coe?

13 VICE CHAIR COE: I do have one, if we think we
14 have time. I don't want to run over and not allow enough
15 time for a closing statement.

16 MS. PELLMAN: We have eight minutes, 2 seconds.

17 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, I'll go ahead and ask it
18 really quickly. Mr. Leadholm, under standard question
19 three, in terms of the greatest problem the Commission
20 could encounter, you said that a couple of weeks ago, kind
21 of in a pre-COVID world, your answer would have been
22 different to that question. And I was curious what would
23 your answer have been if this pandemic hadn't kind of taken
24 hold of the world?

25 MR. LEADHOLM: Well, I think, yeah, and actually

1 I'd given some thought to that. And I would just try --
2 what I was going to say, as I was doing some preparation
3 for this, was essentially just finding -- because
4 California is such a unique and diverse place is finding a
5 Commission that could represent all of those. And I don't
6 know if that's in fact possible.

7 So, what I had thought I was going to answer
8 before the virus, you know, epidemic, or pandemic arose was
9 to making sure, again, that those subgroups that may feel
10 marginalized, perhaps, that they were able to felt heard.
11 And that was what initially was my biggest -- what I felt
12 was the biggest fear is that each of those subgroups, or
13 however many you want that have them, whether or not they
14 were dealing with ethnicity, or if they were dealing with
15 socioeconomic issues, or geographical that they felt heard.
16 And that -- if there's somebody on the Commission that
17 could hopefully speak to them and felt heard, or relate to
18 them directly. That was my one concern, yeah.

19 VICE CHAIR COE: Okay, thank you. No further
20 questions, Mr. Chair.

21 CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison, do you have any
22 further questions?

23 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I do not have any further
24 questions.

25 CHAIR BELNAP: Madam Secretary, could I have a

1 time check, please?

2 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, six minutes, 25 seconds
3 remaining.

4 CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

5 Mr. Leadholm, with the remaining time I'd like to
6 offer you the opportunity to make a closing statement, if
7 you wish.

8 MR. LEADHOLM: Ah, thank you very much. Well,
9 essentially, what I would just like to reiterate is the
10 fact that my years of experience in generally listening to
11 people is one of the reasons, really the main reason why I
12 decided to even throw my name into the ring for this
13 Commission.

14 I truly cannot emphasize enough how much I do
15 enjoy speaking with people and listening to their stories,
16 and then drawing the maps and the actual -- the job that we
17 would be doing on a national level is just -- I feel like
18 this Commission was really made for me. And I just -- I
19 would consider it a tremendous, tremendous honor should I
20 be selected from here on out. So, that's it.

21 CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. We appreciate your time
22 this afternoon.

23 We're going to go into recess now and we're going
24 to be back tomorrow, Friday, at 8:59 a.m.

25 MR. DAWSON: Correct.

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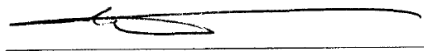
(Thereupon, the Applicant Review Panel meeting
recessed at 4:24 p.m.)

REPORTER' S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21st day of April, 2020.



PETER PETTY
CER**D-493
Notary Public

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were transcribed by me, a certified transcriber and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript, to the best of my ability, from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.



MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367

April 21, 2020