

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

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2020

8:59 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCESMembers Present

Angela Dickison, Chair

Ben Belnap, Vice Chair

Ryan Coe, Panel Member (Present via Zoom)

Staff Present

Christopher Dawson, Panel Counsel

Yvonne Le Tellier, Executive Secretary

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II (Present via Zoom)

APPLICANTS (Present via Zoom)

Karen Koenig-Sanko

Cheryl McDonald

Linda Akutagawa

Karla Van Meter

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P R O C E E D I N G S

8:59 a.m.

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3 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning. Calling the
4 Applicant Review Panel meeting to order, it's Monday, April
5 6, 8:59.

6 I want to welcome Ms. Karen Koenig-Sanko. Did I
7 say that right?

8 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: It's Koenig-Sanko.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Koenig-Sanko, thank you.

10 Before we get the meeting started, I just want to
11 remind everyone to silence their cell phones. For those in
12 the room, which there aren't any, the restrooms are
13 outside. And in case of emergency, just follow the
14 instructions of the CSA staff.

15 Ms. Koenig-Sanko, I'm going to turn the meeting
16 over to Mr. Chris Dawson to read you the five standard
17 questions.

18 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay, thank you.

19 MR. DAWSON: Good morning, Ms. Koenig-Sanko. I'm
20 going to read you five standard questions that the Panel
21 has requested that each applicant respond to. Are you
22 ready?

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes, I am.

24 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills and
25 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

1 What skills or competencies should the Commission
2 possess collectively?

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

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

7 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I spent a lot of time thinking
8 about this question and I have lots of attributes that I
9 thought everybody should have, and skills, but I've
10 narrowed them down to seven.

11 I think that everybody should have integrity and
12 be honest. This is a fairness issue, so we need to have
13 integrity and honesty in play.

14 You have to have interpersonal skills. You have
15 to be able to work well with other people and you have to
16 be able to stand your ground, but give in when needed.

17 You need to be able to communicate effectively.
18 Get your point across.

19 You also need to be a critical thinker and have
20 analytical skills because maps are going to have to be made
21 and those skills are going to be needed to make it happen.

22 You have to have the ability to understand the
23 concept of community identity, whether that's cultural,
24 religious, geographic that whole community identify will
25 play a huge part in this.

1 Have a focused mind when addressing a new
2 situation and then, the ability to read and understand
3 maps.

4 I do believe that I have all of these. I've
5 developed them over the years as a teacher and through my
6 professional education.

7 And I believe that the Commission as a whole
8 needs to work as a unit. And as it works as a unit
9 everybody's strengths will outperform any of the weaknesses
10 that might be represented by the group.

11 Again, I believe I possess all of these and more.
12 I have developed this over my years of teaching, and
13 parenting, and living, and working. I do have the strength
14 to go outside the nine dots because sometimes the solution
15 to the problem, you have to come at it from a different
16 angle. And I have developed that ability to look at
17 problems from a different angle, or a new angle.

18 Actually, one time I was at a training and
19 because of my questions and the way I would direct things,
20 they gave me the nickname of parallax. Parallax is a
21 science term. It's an astronomical term. It's used, a way
22 of locating stars in the night sky by looking from
23 different positions.

24 The best way to explain it, I think an example
25 for most of us to understand is if you've ever used a

1 camera and you've looked through a viewfinder, and through
2 the camera lens itself, the viewfinder is a slightly
3 different perspective of what the camera actually takes a
4 picture of. And that's kind of what parallax is, you're
5 looking at the problem but you see it from a slightly
6 different angle to solve the problem. And I have developed
7 that ability.

8 So, I believe that all of us, including myself,
9 will work really hard and will bring all of our abilities
10 and skills that we've all developed over the years to make
11 sure that the citizens of California get a voice, that each
12 of us gets a voice by lending my expertise of understanding
13 our population as a whole and combining it with my personal
14 integrity, my honesty, my critical thinking skills, my
15 analytical skills, and my mapping skills because I have
16 developed those over the last few years also.

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 and conflict?

4 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: The first part of that, what
5 characteristics do you possess, I believe I possess the
6 ability to be fair. I've been teaching in the classroom
7 for 26 years, and in doing that I have developed the
8 ability to be fair.

9 This issue of mapping is really an issue of
10 equality and it needs to be the focus. We're trying to
11 make this an equal level playing field for everyone.

12 So, our partisanship I really believe needs to be
13 left at the door. Yes, I will be representing my group of
14 California citizens that see things the way I do, but we as
15 a whole have to make this a playing field that's level, and
16 leave the politics to the politicians.

17 So, I believe that we need to be able to stand up
18 when needed, but we need to -- you need to -- I know that I
19 can in fact stand up for what's right, but I can also stand
20 down when emotions get out of control, and help to loop
21 back around to the focus of what's going on at that time.

22 I'm a teacher of teenagers and preteens. And you
23 can't be a really good teacher of that age group if you
24 don't have the ability to see the emotions starting to rise
25 and being able to calm it back down, and bring it back to

1 the center point that you're working on. So, I believe
2 that I have that ability and I believe that it would be an
3 attribute to the Commission.

4 The second part of the question is what will you
5 do to ensure that the work is not polarized? I remember
6 when we first voted on this issue. And I told my husband,
7 as we were walking home from the poll that I would really
8 like to be on this Commission because I believe that this
9 job is one of a qualitative nature that has a qualitative
10 buffer to it.

11 You know, the politics, as I said earlier, should
12 be left to the Assembly and Senate Members, the House and
13 the Senate Members, and the Governor. It's not our job to
14 be political. It's our job to make a playing field that is
15 fair. It is a fairness issue.

16 You know, when we first went to elementary school
17 you learned about fairness on probably the first week of
18 school, when your teacher divided the class up into two
19 teams so that you could play a sport, and she divided it up
20 by talent, and ability, and we learned right from the start
21 what is fair. She didn't make one team heavy with the
22 talent and the other team light with the talent. She kept
23 it equal.

24 So, I think that that's our job and that bias and
25 conflict may arise, but we need to be able to keep it in

1 control. But our goal is to make the playing field, it's
2 not to play the game.

3 I will stand up for this all the way through that
4 fairness is the process. I want this to strengthen our
5 state. I want to see this Commission's maps strengthen the
6 state, not weaken it in some--one way or another.

7 This is, like I said, a numbers game. Sticking
8 to the numbers, deducing the communities around our state,
9 getting into that concept of communities' identify. I'm
10 not a politician and I'm not planning on ever being one.
11 But if I was in the shoes of a politician, I would want the
12 playing field to be as level as possible.

13 I was taught this from the start, like most of us
14 were, and that's what I would strive to do. I think there
15 is a lot of polarizing going on right now, but I think that
16 if we keep focused to the task we could keep that to a
17 minimum while working together.

18 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question three. What is
19 the greatest problem the Commission could encounter, and
20 what actions would you take to avoid or respond to this
21 problem?

22 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: To be honest, I think we're
23 already experiencing the greatest problem that could
24 happen. How are we going to do this work, this job
25 remotely? How do we secure the work as we do the work?

1 How do we keep everybody involved, on the same page,
2 without being in the same room? How do we secure those
3 communications and build a community so that we can build
4 these great maps that we need to build? It's hard to build
5 things remotely. It's hard to feel like a community
6 remotely, but we'll have to do that.

7 If we get out of this quicker, that would be
8 great, but there's no guarantees that we will. I have some
9 experience building community from my doctorate program,
10 because I went to Drexel University and half of the cohort
11 was here in Sacramento, and the other half of the cohort
12 was in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And we were given lots of
13 group assignments to do. And in those group assignments we
14 had to come together and work out the logistics of time,
15 and talent, and getting to know each other so that we could
16 get the jobs done, so we could get the assignments done.

17 And one thing I learned is that it takes extra
18 time if you're doing things remotely. It's hard to build
19 that community, but in the end it can be done. And if you
20 know anything, one of the things that I learned is that
21 Californians and Pennsylvanians don't think alike. We
22 address life very differently. And so, it was interesting
23 in building our community, but in the end we worked very
24 well together.

25 I know that it's easier to compromise face to

1 face than through digital media, so that would be another
2 issue that would have to be addressed is that -- because
3 people tend to stand their ground a little bit more on a
4 media environment, a digital media environment than when
5 face to face. So, again, it's that whole building a
6 community with a like-minded goal in mind.

7 When this stay at home is lifted, then the issue
8 becomes an issue of working out the logistics of the actual
9 work, and traveling around the state, being compromising
10 with your time, and efforts, and being willing, and open,
11 and eager to work with each other and not forgetting that
12 the goal of this is to make a fair, balanced, level playing
13 field.

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

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

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

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I was part of Delaine Eastin's

1 Industrial and Technology Education Task Force, and I
2 served as the legislative subcommittee chair, and we
3 researched and developed an extensive report on the
4 condition of industrial technology education in California,
5 and the actions needed to repair the damage.

6 My job was basically to look at all the
7 legislation that affects IT classes, and how it worked for
8 or against us. One of the examples was at this time, when
9 we first started doing IT classes in California parents
10 paid shop fees for materials used by students, and
11 legislation came along that made it so that parents could
12 no longer be charged those fees that they had to come from
13 the school districts. And so, we were looking at things
14 like that, things that might have caused problems.

15 There were many voices at the table, there were
16 many different opinions, but we worked really hard to meet
17 that challenge to get all on the same page.

18 Since in the field of industrial technology there
19 are eight pillars of industry, there were eight different
20 focuses of the people on the committee, and we had to bring
21 everybody together to get on the same page because we were
22 looking at the whole picture, the whole picture of what was
23 going on and not just our individual slice of the picture.

24 So, some of the things, it was challenging. We
25 had factual debates, but we had set standard for the

1 committee of following Robert's Rules, and compromise were
2 made, and we ended after almost a year of time working at
3 this with a detailed report, and an action plan to how to
4 repair and strengthen the industrial technology education
5 in California. And the report was given back to Delaine
6 Eastin.

7 And what did I learn from this? What would I
8 take from that experience into this one is that there will
9 be times when we don't agree. So, more research will be
10 needed to -- so that a fair compromise can be reached.
11 These are 14 people, 14 different views. It might be a
12 view that's cut on the political lines or it might be
13 something totally different, but there will be times when
14 compromises will need to be made.

15 The Commission will have to agree somewhere on a
16 set of operating practices because we are individuals
17 working, trying to work as a team, and conflicts have to
18 come up and there has to be practices in place that will
19 help shorten that disagreement period of time that we will
20 be faced with.

21 I think the biggest lesson that -- is that not
22 everyone's going to like the end results. And I'm not
23 talking about the Commission. The Commission will like the
24 end result because we will have worked hardest on it. We
25 will have put it together, we will believe that it's as

1 fair as it can be. But there are going to be people who
2 voted for the Commission in the first place that don't like
3 the outcome. And that is something that you have to be
4 ready to accept. That no matter how great your maps are
5 there may be and there will be people who do not like them.

6 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

7 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

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

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

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

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I'd like to address this
21 second half of the question first, and then the first half.
22 To me, this is the best part of living in this great State
23 of California is that we are so diverse. We have people
24 from all over the world living here. And I have taught for
25 26 years. I have taught at the north end of the Elk Grove

1 Unified School District for the most -- for the majority of
2 my teaching career. I started at Florin High and I'm now
3 working at James Rudder Middle School, and I spent some
4 time at Elk Grove High.

5 And when I started teaching there were 21
6 languages taught, spoken -- not taught, spoken at Florin
7 High School, 21 languages. Cultures, that campus was so
8 rich in culture it was an exciting adventure every single
9 day. When I was there I got to eat food I never even heard
10 of before. I visited homes of students whose lifestyle,
11 culture, language was completely different than mine.

12 I went into homes where there was just one family
13 living. And then, I went into home where four or five
14 generations lived in that home, where the house -- where
15 every room in the house, the living room, dining room,
16 every room in the house were bunk beds, three-high bunk
17 beds, which I had never seen before.

18 And the family table was outside in the backyard
19 under an awning, and there was a kitchen. The kitchen was
20 a normal kitchen, but there was also kitchen fire pits out
21 in the backyard, too.

22 It was an amazing time for me to learn about all
23 of the different cultures that make up our great state. It
24 was an exciting adventure every day, like I said.

25 I've had to work with mom and dad, and with their

1 child, but then I also had to work with husbands with their
2 wives, because we have cultures in our state, the Hmong
3 specifically, who marry very young. And it was unique to
4 have a -- it wasn't unique, but it was unique the first
5 time it happened was when a husband came in and wanted to
6 know why his wife's grade was where it was and what she
7 needed to do to make it better. And he was all of 14 years
8 old. And it was an exciting time.

9 From there I went to work at Elk Grove High,
10 which is where I went to high school. And Elk Grove High
11 is a more affluent area with less diversity. And I got to
12 learn and work with our affluent population and their
13 culture, and their expectations for their children. And
14 after being there for eight years I asked to go back and
15 work, to get back to the middle school. Partly because I
16 loved the diversity of that part of our district and
17 largely because I wanted to see what it was like working
18 with our preteen and teenage students.

19 So, again I was back in with the high culture
20 diversity. We have 17 languages spoken at our school.
21 When I started this year, to give you an example of what
22 it's like at our school, I teach electives, and I teach
23 computer technology. And, you know, my fourth period class
24 is my EL class and there's -- when the school year started
25 I had 24 students. Twenty of the 24 students spoke little

1 or no English at all. And worked with them all year and
2 seen their growth, and enjoyed their outlook on life and
3 how they see things very different from us. And I've
4 learned a lot.

5 I'm presently learning about the Afghani refugees
6 that have moved into our area. And if we weren't in this
7 situation that we're in, the stay at home, we were actually
8 going to go to a center for a day and learn all about their
9 culture. I'm believing that we'll still get to do that
10 when this stay at home is lifted and we can go back out,
11 and be together again as a community.

12 I've learned a lot about our socioeconomic
13 disadvantaged population from working at Florin High and
14 Elk Grove High. And I've also learned a lot about the
15 Baha'i community, because I was approached by the Baha'i's
16 youth program. It's called the Junior Youth Empowerment
17 Program. And I've worked with them for about five years,
18 now. I've learned about their belief system and it's been
19 a really fun, exciting adventure for me.

20 Before this, when I was a child, my dad was in
21 the military. He is in Air Force. I was born in Japan on
22 a military base and came home, and have lived all over the
23 United States on military facilities, which are a highly
24 diverse population. So, I don't if people outside the
25 military understand that the military bases are very

1 diverse because we are trainers of the world's military,
2 and they come to our bases, and they live there, and they
3 work there, and then they go home.

4 And so, from a very young age, I remember when I
5 was in the 9th grade having Iranian pilots sitting at the
6 dinner table with us at night, because my dad was a fighter
7 pilot, but trainer, he taught by that time in my life.

8 I also remember in the 4th grade we lived in
9 Selma, Alabama, and I watched from the fence -- the base
10 had a fence line beyond the school, because the school was
11 in the front of the base, and it was an anniversary. I
12 believe it was the 10th Anniversary Walk. There were no
13 cameras, there were no politicians. It was the only time
14 in my life that I saw the gates of a base closed and
15 locked. To this day I still don't understand why they did
16 that. But I thought it was interesting because what I saw
17 was -- excuse me -- the gentleman and a horse drawn, or
18 pack animal-drawn wagon, in a shiny suit. And behind him
19 was a group of very, mostly poorly dressed individuals.
20 They appear to be poor. Some had shoes on, some didn't
21 have shoes. And that, of course, made a huge impact on a
22 4th grader, understanding that they're walking to
23 Montgomery and they have no shoes on.

24 I also remember that I got mad at the guy in the
25 fancy outfit in the wagon because there was a lot of

1 elderly people walking and I felt they should be in the
2 wagon and he should be walking because he was a young guy.
3 I don't know all of the details of that walk, I just know
4 what I experienced at that time in life.

5 And I believe I have a heart for an African
6 American community because of these experiences that I had
7 when I was a child.

8 When I was in the 11th grade, I had the privilege
9 of being an exchange student to Australia. And it was
10 quite the experience, I learned a lot about the fact that
11 just because somebody looks like you, doesn't mean they
12 have -- they have anything there -- that they're anything
13 like you. It was a great time of learning for me to be
14 immersed in a culture that was completely -- that looked
15 like should be just like us, but they were not.

16 So, it's important to know that our culture and
17 our customs are ingrained in us. Even if we're not aware
18 of it, it's who we are. And so, the more experiences
19 you've had with people of different races, religions,
20 cultures it has an impact on you.

21 My personal family is a melting pot in itself.
22 My mom is first generation and her parents, when they
23 arrived in California they were farmers, and they were
24 fishermen, and they worked in the canneries.

25 And my dad's family came -- his ancestors came to

1 the United States before it was the United States, back in
2 the 1600s. My distant ancestor gave to the birth child
3 born in the New Amsterdam, which is New York City today.

4 I have -- have and had sisters-in-laws from
5 Holland, Mexico, Vietnam. And my late brother-in-law,
6 Lincoln, was from Oklahoma and he was African American.

7 So, I believe that my extensive travel as a
8 child, my experiences as an adult, and my family makeup
9 make me -- give me an ability to see things from a unique
10 angle, that parallax again. I believe my experience and
11 knowledge of many of the cultures represented by our
12 population make me effective when interacting with people
13 of different backgrounds.

14 I think that as you learn about the backgrounds
15 of the cultures, of the citizens that make up this great
16 state, it gives you an insight that those who don't know it
17 do not understand. There have been times while I've been
18 teaching that I did things that to me were everyday things,
19 but to a student whose culture was different than mine, it
20 was upsetting to them, and I had to learn that.

21 And so, I believe that my experiences, my
22 understanding of the backgrounds would make me effective in
23 understanding and appreciating the people and the
24 communities because I already do. I love this great
25 diversity of our state and the people that make up that

1 diversity.

2 So, I believe that I would be very effective
3 working with this Commission when meeting the people from
4 all the different backgrounds. And it's an exciting
5 adventure, too.

6 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Dr. Koenig-Sanko. We
7 will now go to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will
8 have 20 minutes to ask his or her questions. And we will
9 start with the Chair, Ms. Dickison.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning, Dr. Koenig-Sanko.
11 Thank you so much for meeting with us today.

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, good morning to you,
13 too.

14 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I would like to start on
15 your impartiality essay. You mentioned that you have
16 served on several committees where decisions are being made
17 that will affect many children's lives for many years. Can
18 you tell us what the committees are that you're referring
19 to in that sentence?

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, I believe I was talking
21 about several at the time. Starting way back at Florin
22 High School there were committees that I worked with, with
23 students to determine where they could go, what we were
24 allowing to happen, what things are made available for them
25 to proceed in their educational careers.

1 Right now, I'm working with a committee that's
2 working on -- we have some issues. As you know bullying is
3 a huge issue right now. And so, we have to help our
4 students get their emotions under control, along with their
5 ability to think in the moment, right now, so that they can
6 overcome sometimes the emotion of reacting, instead of
7 acting when they're being bullied.

8 And so, right now we're working on a committee.
9 I'm personally working on a committee that's working with
10 kids to teach them those things. How to be resilient, how
11 to be responsible, how to be respectful those are issues
12 that are huge and those are issues that will determine
13 where kids go, because as you know, in the world that we
14 work in that respect and responsibility will take you far.
15 And resilience, teaching yourself that if you get knocked
16 down that's okay, get back up. That's hugely important.

17 And so, I believe that -- just that committee
18 alone, is important for helping our kids be prepared for
19 the future.

20 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Can you provide a
21 specific example of working on those committees in which
22 you had to show impartiality?

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, I am a Republican and I
24 work in a field that's dominated by Democrats, so sometimes
25 my viewpoints are very different. So, there have been many

1 times where I've had to say we need to stop and rethink
2 this, and put some more of the responsibility on the
3 student and less of the responsibility on the rest of us.
4 And that has sometimes ruffled feathers, but we've worked
5 through it and reached compromises, and then moved forward.

6 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. In your
7 diversity essay you say: California's diversity is
8 enhanced by the uniqueness of the regions of our state.

9 Can you share your experience in different
10 regions of the state and how where a person lives may
11 influence what they need from a representative?

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes. Well, I went to -- my
13 first college was Chico State, so that's going up to the
14 north. Northern, not all the way to the north, I did spend
15 some time in Redding, too.

16 But that population has specific needs. It is --
17 it was at one time just a college town. It is no longer
18 just a college town. It is a thriving industry. It has
19 one hospital, still, that whole area of California. It
20 definitely has some medical needs up there.

21 Representatives, I believe, should be working to help
22 expand that and to get more medical talent in that area.

23 We also have our growers, the farmers of our
24 communities, our Central Valley, they have definite issues
25 that are different than ours. They have issues of water.

1 There's a huge water issue right now. I just drove through
2 there not too long ago and my heart went out to them that
3 there were so many fields that were dry, or not planted at
4 all, which would normally have things already in them. And
5 we feed the world, so I believe that they have issues that
6 are very different than ours.

7 I was down in the desert and right now there's
8 earthquakes happening down in Palm Springs, and Rancho
9 Mirage. And that is an issue that a lot of California
10 faces, the earthquakes that we have and the damage that is
11 done to their homes, and the frightening experiences of
12 that, and the safety precautions that our legislature needs
13 -- our legislators need to take into account for that
14 population.

15 We also have our border populations. We have
16 issues of a lot of the medical facilities down there have
17 been closed due to border issues and that needs to be
18 addressed, and brought back so that the citizens of the
19 State of California have medical facilities that they need.
20 I know that in this time of crisis some ships have been
21 brought in to the southern part of the state to help with
22 the medical issue. But we really need to -- that needs to
23 be addressed for in the future.

24 We also have our coastal communities and their
25 needs are very different than the needs of the Central

1 Valley. We have our wine country that survived a horrific
2 fire and the issues that come with rebuilding, as with the
3 area of Paradise, too, the rebuilding there, and then, in
4 Southern California, too, with the Hunter Fire. So, there
5 are many different issues that face our different cultures
6 and areas.

7 And then, you look at it culturally. We have
8 blocks of cultures that live around our state and they have
9 an identity, and they have needs that are different. Each
10 culture has different needs. We just have a vast diversity
11 of population and with different needs.

12 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. So, speaking
13 of communities, one of the things you mentioned in one of
14 the standard questions was this concept of community
15 identity. Can you expand on that?

16 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes. When it comes -- I guess
17 the easiest one to talk about, I'm just going to pick a
18 culture, let's say the Hmong culture. They have an
19 identity that's unique. Their children marry young. They
20 are a more farming-based culture. So, maybe not the youths
21 that are going to our schools will be farmers, but they
22 come from a culture of that. They come from -- they have
23 little needs, little wants, but they have an identity all
24 themselves. They are -- they have their own belief system
25 and they function in a community that's different. They

1 live in houses with many people and not just one family.
2 There are many families there. And that is unique to their
3 culture.

4 Yes, there are other Asian cultures that do the
5 same thing that they live in groups. That is unique
6 compared to you and I who probably live in one home, one
7 family, maybe a roommate, maybe not. But mostly, we're one
8 family.

9 So, food; the Hmong eat different. They cook
10 their food differently. They eat different foods. So,
11 that, there's a community identity that comes from that.

12 I hope that --

13 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Great.

14 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: -- I made that clear.

15 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So, thinking about that
16 and thinking about the different things that communities
17 need, can you tell us from your experiences some of the
18 concerns from the different communities in your area, and
19 what kind of binds those communities together?

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, I think that in the --
21 where I teach, it's a socioeconomically disadvantaged
22 population. And they work closely with each other, within
23 their part of -- based on their community identity. So,
24 the Hmong work with the Hmong and, you know, the Afghanis
25 work with the Afghanis, and the Baha'i with the Baha'i.

1 So, each of them has their own needs and they
2 help each other within their own communities. And I'm not
3 sure exactly what you're asking but is that what you were
4 asking about? About the fact that they work within their
5 own communities to help each other.

6 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. So, then my next
7 question is going to go to the background check. As you
8 know, there were some social media posts that came up on
9 your background check. Have you seen those posts?

10 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes, uh-hum.

11 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. If you were -- if
12 you were selected as a Commissioner can you talk to us of
13 how you would address questions from members of the public
14 concerning the posts?

15 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, I would expect them to
16 understand that if I'm a Republican representative that I
17 would have Republican type posts. And Ava's post was
18 totally to support her as a woman who has made a company
19 and she's selling hats, and I think that's great.

20 I think one of them was a comment that I made to
21 somebody else that I was kind of being rhetorical,
22 sarcastic, and it was just -- there was nothing by it. If
23 you look through my social media, as it says, you'll find
24 that family members I tend to be sometimes -- I'm not
25 snarky, but I like to give a push back sometimes, and they

1 give a push back to me and it's great. We have a good
2 time. I'm not a family member -- in my family, we're not
3 the kind that -- most of my family is Democrat, not
4 Republican, so we get along fine when we're together, but
5 we just have different views on things. So, sometimes we
6 say them on social media, but there's nothing meant by it.
7 You know, no malice is meant by it.

8 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, how
9 would you go about ensuring members of the public that you
10 hear them and their concerns and will give their concerns
11 fair consideration?

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I would definitely tell them
13 because I believe -- in all my heart I believe that this
14 process is not -- is a process of being fair, making a
15 level playing field, and I totally and completely believe
16 that, and I will tell them that I will do the best of my
17 ability to make sure that in the end the maps that are
18 drawn make the playing field fair for everybody, so that
19 everybody's voice is heard. Everybody's vote counts.

20 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Can we get a time
21 check, please?

22 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have six minutes, 24
23 seconds remaining.

24 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. If you were
25 selected as one of the first eight Commissioners that are

1 selected randomly, could you describe what you would be
2 looking for in the other six Commissioners to round out the
3 Commission?

4 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I would be looking for people
5 who are fair-minded, that that's their focus, that they're
6 not coming into this looking to sway the Commission to go
7 one way or the other. This is not a political process,
8 this is a fairness process. This is a number-crunching,
9 with a qualitative buffering to keep the community
10 identities in place. This is not let's see who can up one
11 another. That's not what this process is about. It's not
12 what the voters wanted when we voted for it.

13 And so, I would be looking for people that have
14 that same viewpoint that this is not a political -- yes, in
15 the end this is going to be used politically by our
16 politicians. But our piece of this puzzle is to make a
17 fair playing field and that's what I'd be looking for in
18 the Commissioners. If I was one of the first eight, I
19 would be looking for people who see this as the same, in
20 that light that this is a fairness process.

21 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. What would
22 you like to see the Commission accomplish, ultimately?

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I'd like to see great maps
24 built. I would like to see that more people vote because
25 they feel their voice is being heard and that their vote

1 counts. That's what I'd like to see happen.

2 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you.

3 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

4 PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I have no further
5 questions at this time, so I will turn it over to Mr.
6 Belnap for his time.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good morning.

8 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Good morning.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I'd like you to describe your
10 experience and your familiarity with Arc-GIS and other
11 mapping software.

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: About, I think it's five years
13 ago -- well, it's been more years than that. It's been
14 like since 2000. Mark Epstein was a college professor at
15 Merritt College, and he was a friend of mine from long
16 before that. And he said come check out my class. So, I
17 went there and at that time it was a GIS class. It was
18 interesting. I was an industrial tech teacher at Florin
19 High School. And I said, well, this is real interesting,
20 Mark, I'll have to see how I can fit it in because at that
21 time I was teaching drafting, and CAD, and woodshop, and
22 auto shop, and science.

23 And so, I went back and I saw there's some
24 application in the science class, but I never developed it
25 much, and we kept in contact over the years.

1 And then, he came to me about five years ago and
2 said, hey, I think I've figured out a way to teach this to
3 seventh and eighth graders. I think I have simplified the
4 instructions enough that anybody could learn how to do it.
5 And I said okay, let's give it a shot.

6 And so, at that time I was teaching some Project
7 Lead The Way Students. They were all kids who had had math
8 of level one algebra, they were algebra students, so they
9 were advanced middle schoolers. And I said, let's give it
10 a shot with these. So, we did the eight lessons with them
11 and we learned how to -- you know, the kids learned from
12 scratch. We had to teach them simple things like, you
13 know, latitude and longitude because they didn't have --
14 hadn't developed that skill well. So, we started from
15 scratch and we taught them all the way to actually making
16 maps.

17 And if you've -- are you familiar with the My
18 California Mapping competition that Esri puts out?

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: No, I'm not.

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay. It's a competition that
21 it's actually a national competition and the students have
22 to make maps. They can make tab maps, they make all
23 different kinds of maps. And in it, the competition is
24 they have to take some kind of topic about our state and
25 expound it into a map, in a storybook form, a story map.

1 And our first year -- the first year that we did -- the
2 first year we didn't do any competition, we just did the
3 eight lessons. The second year we entered the competition
4 to see how well our students matched up with the rest of
5 the state, what the rest of the country was doing,
6 actually. And we won first place. Our students did beyond
7 what most of the other middle schoolers were doing because
8 the competition is divided in, you know, 4 to 8, and then 9
9 to 12.

10 And last year we did it again and this time we
11 won first, second, third, fifth, and honorable mention.
12 So, we won all but one place because our students' skills
13 are advanced.

14 So, basically, with what I've learned, because I
15 learned it right along with the students because Mark comes
16 in as the expert, and I do the eight lessons with the kids
17 every year. And so, basically, I can go from scratch and
18 build a map. So, it may not be as elaborate as someone who
19 does it professionally for a living, but I can definitely
20 build a map and I understand the concept of shape files,
21 and all of that.

22 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you, appreciate the
23 background on that. Throughout your interview today you've
24 emphasized that you want to create district lines that
25 represent a level playing field, you've used that metaphor.

1 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, as it relates to the
3 district lines that the Commission will create what does it
4 mean to make a level playing field, what would that look
5 like?

6 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: To me that it means that the
7 districts are divided evenly, but sometimes that may not be
8 available. So, there may be equal number of districts that
9 make the playing field level in the end.

10 I do believe that we could get to where -- I
11 mean, it could be a pie in the sky. I don't know all the
12 numbers yet, because I haven't studied them yet, but I
13 would love to see where the districts were evenly matched
14 so that the parties could be fairly in competition like be
15 a fair competition and not so that it's heavy on one party
16 and light on another party, but fairly equally matched. I
17 don't know if that's available in all the areas, in all the
18 districts of our state, but I do believe that we should get
19 as close to that as possible. And I believe that that
20 might be one of the reasons that some of our districts are
21 huge because the Commission tried to do that. But again, I
22 haven't seen all the numbers to know if that's accurate.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, if I'm getting what
24 you're saying, you'd like to see districts where you'd have
25 a roughly, and I'm not saying exact numbers, but equal

1 number of Democrats as Republicans, and then mixed in there
2 with some independents?

3 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: And Independents, yes.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah. All right thank you.
5 And if that's not possible within individual districts were
6 you saying, well, at least that the number of districts
7 where there's more Democrats than Republicans would be at
8 least roughly equivalent to the number of districts where
9 Republicans outnumber Democrats?

10 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Correct.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: So that the playing field as a
13 whole is still level.

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So --

15 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: It's not just Republicans and
16 Democrats, there's Independents, too.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Right, right.

18 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Independents.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. This is just a
20 matter of curiosity in my mind, when you were answering a
21 question from Ms. Dickison and you were talking about the
22 different issues that our state is facing you indicated
23 that there's medical facilities near the California border
24 that have been closed due to border issues. If a person
25 wanted to get more information on that where would they go

1 to read about it?

2 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: To Southern California. You
3 could look up online under emergency facility closures in
4 Southern California.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Oh, it's just Google that
6 general thing?

7 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-hum.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. So, what are some
9 of the border issues that are causing the closure of the
10 medical facilities?

11 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I think that at the time that
12 that was happening it was mostly the fact that, you know,
13 medically, our emergency rooms down there can't say no when
14 someone comes to the emergency room with an issue. But it
15 doesn't mean that they can always -- they can't say no,
16 even if the person can't afford to come to their facility.
17 And if those numbers get too large, then the facility ends
18 up having to shut down because they can't afford it. And I
19 believe that was what the issue was at the time that that
20 was happening. But I haven't looked into it since we were
21 studying issues to put in maps. That was one of the issues
22 that I thought of that maybe we should look at that, so
23 it's been a while.

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yeah. And did you -- your
25 students, did you end up picking that as a subject or

1 something else?

2 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: No, they picked two of the
3 fires to work on. Also, what our ports produce, what gets
4 imported and exported through our -- I think we have 8
5 ports or 11 ports, I don't remember right now, off the top
6 of my head -- out of the California ports.

7 And then, they did one on digital literacy.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right thank you.

9 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

10 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, I want to return to the
11 social media issue that Ms. Dickison had asked you about.

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

13 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, I guess there's different
14 experiences we have and I'll use this word "lens", and I
15 think as you have now become a candidate for the
16 Commission, and if you became a Commissioner I think your
17 lens would be different, the way that you're viewing
18 things.

19 So, now that you're viewing these posts from the
20 lens of being a candidate for the Redistricting Commission
21 do you see any cause for concern regarding any of these
22 posts?

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Nah. I think if people don't
24 know me they might have some concern because I -- I think
25 one of the ones that you picked was my comment about Obama

1 and his birth certificate, which is a moot point, which is
2 kind of the reason I said that. Because it was like
3 somebody was making a point that didn't need to be posted
4 and so I came back with kind of a sarcastic thing.

5 And I think that maybe I shouldn't have made that
6 statement. I didn't think it would even become an issue
7 because I was just responding to a friend. But I can see
8 where someone might misconstrue that.

9 But personally, again, I don't think this task
10 force, or this Commission's job is a political one. It is
11 strictly a numbers and community buffer issue, and it's a
12 -- politics, I know this is a funny thing to say, but
13 politics shouldn't play a role in this. Politics
14 determines the numbers on the paper and the communities
15 determine how things are cut up. And I think that anybody
16 could be hard left, hard right, total Independent could do
17 this job and do it right if fairness is where they're
18 keeping their perspective. And I think that I have no
19 problem addressing what I've posted and talking to anybody
20 about it.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, excellent. Because I
22 do have a question about one of the posts and I think
23 you've already referred to it, and I think you said it was
24 sarcastic, but you indicated that it was referring to
25 former President Obama.

1 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Right.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: The post said: I'm still
3 waiting for someone to question how an illegal got to serve
4 eight years as our president and no one questioned his
5 connection to Russia.

6 So, what you're telling me today is that that was
7 a sarcastic comment?

8 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yeah, I was being sarcastic.
9 Because I don't remember what the whole post -- I don't
10 even remember, now. I saw it the other day and I meant to
11 review -- remind myself what it was about because it was so
12 long ago. It was just a -- you know, I get tired -- I'm
13 sorry, I'm one of these people that some days I'm just
14 tired of political posts, so I become sarcastic, and it
15 doesn't always come across in media, social media. That's
16 why, you know how I was saying that it's hard to build
17 community when you're doing it digitally because sometimes
18 it doesn't come across the way you said it to people's
19 viewpoints.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Uh-hum.

21 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: And so, that's always going to
22 be an issue no matter who you are, or what you are, any
23 time you're on a social media platform, you know, you have
24 to be careful because people -- at the time you're talking
25 to the person who made the post, you're not talking to the

1 whole world and that's how sometimes we get messed up in
2 our social media because we're not thinking about that
3 thousands of other people are going to read it.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, that's understandable.
5 So, just to be clear, do you believe that former President
6 Obama was in this country illegally or legally, where --

7 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Oh, I believe he was in our
8 country legally. There's no issue about that at all.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, the next question
10 I have is for a post where you agreed, it wasn't your
11 quote, but you said "yep", which means I agree, I suppose.

12 It says: I'll start caring about the struggles
13 of illegal immigrants when all 39,471 homeless Veterans
14 living in America are well fed, well sheltered, and well
15 taken care of.

16 So, my first question is do you believe that our
17 society could better support our homeless Veterans?

18 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I think our -- I'm a military
19 brat. I think that we are shameful in our we handle our
20 Vets in this country. And I think we need to do a better
21 job of taking care of our Vets. And I'm not saying don't
22 take care of the illegals, I'm not saying don't take care
23 of other people, but I'm saying we need to first take care
24 of our Vets and we need to do a better job of it.

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And so, what's --

1 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: So, I was agreeing with that
2 person.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: What specific way would we
4 better support our Veterans?

5 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay. My daughter is a
6 decorated war hero from the Iraqi Freedom, and when she
7 came home she had a really bad case of PTSD, as a lot of
8 our soldiers have. You know, she was a woman in a war
9 zone, just a little background; woman in a war zone, no
10 battle buddy. You know, you're supposed to have a battle
11 buddy of your same sex. She was the first female in a
12 forward support battalion. She was the first battalion
13 leader, platoon leader in that position, a woman. So, a
14 lot of things were happening at that time. She took 144
15 people there, she brought all of them home. Nobody came
16 home in a body bag, they all came home.

17 And she had horrible PTSD. And at that same time
18 I was trying to do some other stuff and I came across this
19 gentleman who told me about a psychiatrist who was doing
20 this wonderful work helping our soldiers with PTSD and that
21 he was trying to get the military or our government to pick
22 his program up to help all of them. And he got me in
23 contact with that man. I got Tara in contact with that
24 doctor. And she went through his program and it changed
25 her life. It brought back my daughter.

1 And, but you know to this day this program is
2 still not being used across our military, and it should be.
3 All of our -- every soldier that comes home should have the
4 opportunity to go through this program and to learn how to
5 -- it's called neuro-linguistic programming. And what it
6 does is it helps the person, from what I understand
7 because I didn't go through it, she did, it helps them
8 disassociate or back away from when the memory comes.
9 Instead of being in the memory, it's more like their
10 watching the memory. They learn how to just pull back from
11 the situation. So that instead of having the emotions, the
12 anger, the fear, the aggressive feelings and everything
13 that comes you don't have that. And it's an amazing
14 program and it should be available for -- just think if we
15 could help our Veterans with PTSD how many less homeless
16 Veterans we would have.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. We appreciate you
18 sharing that. Do you believe it's possible that the
19 government, our society should simultaneously support our
20 Veterans and people who are here illegally?

21 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes, I believe that there's --

22 MS. PELLMAN: A quick time check, we have three
23 minutes, 10 seconds remaining.

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right thank you.

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I believe that there's -- our

1 arms are big enough to take care of both of them. But I
2 think that priority should go to the Veterans first.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Well, thank you
4 for sharing that information with us and your perspective.
5 I don't have any further questions, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.
7 Mr. Coe?

8 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Oh, could I make one more
9 statement?

10 MR. DAWSON: It will have to come after Mr. Coe's
11 time.

12 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: Good morning, Dr. Koenig-
14 Sanko. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us
15 today.

16 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Good morning.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: I'd like to stick on that
18 topic that Mr. Belnap had regarding that specific post
19 regarding the Veterans and the undocumented immigrants.

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-huh.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: A slightly different question.

22 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: As you probably know, the work
24 of the Commission will be driven heavily by the results of
25 the 2020 United States Census to ensure that people living

1 in California have appropriate relative political
2 representation. And the Census, as you're probably aware,
3 counts all peoples living in California whether they're
4 registered voters, homeless, incarcerated, citizens or non-
5 citizens.

6 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Correct.

7 PANEL MEMBER COE: Some -- well, all Censuses in
8 the past have had some level of undercounting. Some
9 populations are harder to count. Homeless population has
10 traditionally been a difficult one to ensure is fully
11 counted for the Census.

12 Do you think the Commission should be concerned
13 about accurate Census counts of homeless persons,
14 particularly homeless Veterans?

15 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I'm not sure what you mean by
16 concerned by it. We don't have the ability to redo the
17 Census. We don't have the ability to impact the Census.
18 We just need to make -- we just need to encourage everybody
19 to fill out the Census.

20 As a Commission, we have to work off the numbers
21 that the Census gives us. I don't believe that we can work
22 around the Census. I mean I haven't heard that concept
23 before. But there is a concern that our homeless aren't
24 going to be counted as they should be, but at the same time
25 I have to believe that the people out doing the Census are

1 doing their jobs. I have to trust that they do their job
2 so that I can do my job to the best of my ability. They're
3 doing their job to the best of their ability.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Do you think the Commission
5 should be concerned about undercounting any other groups in
6 regards to doing its job to the best of its ability?

7 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I think -- to be honest, I
8 think that there's going to be undercounting of everybody
9 because there's going to be people that just don't do it.
10 You know, they're just not going to do it. They don't want
11 to be -- they want to be in the shadows. We have people
12 that want to be in the shadows. I don't know why, but they
13 do.

14 So, I think that there's a high probably that in
15 every category that there's going to be undercounting. But
16 I don't know a process to -- unless we go around and then,
17 you know, make them sign on the line, and put their fingers
18 in dye, and we go around and make sure everybody has, you
19 know, a dyed finger to make sure that everybody gets
20 counted. I don't -- I think that's just an inherent flaw
21 in the system and we have to believe that we're going to
22 get the best representation of the population of our state
23 through the Census.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: In your essay that you put
25 together on other relevant material, you state that you're

1 not a political person. In light of the two social media
2 posts brought up by Mr. Belnap that were just discussed,
3 can you expand by what you mean by that?

4 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yeah, I make comments, but I
5 don't get politically involved in things. You know, like I
6 support my friend's, you know, her little hat company
7 because she's a woman, Hispanic, and she started a hat
8 company, so I posted that.

9 I think that I don't -- I mean I'm not out there
10 running for office. I'm not -- you know, I'll make
11 comments when I see things, but I make comments on both
12 sides of the fence at times. I think that I just don't get
13 politically involved. I don't -- I talk. You know, some
14 days I might get, oh, you know, I'm thinking I want to talk
15 about politics today. But on the whole I don't really talk
16 about politics.

17 Like I said, I work in an environment where most
18 of the people were Democrats, so it wouldn't be wise. You
19 know, I would be outnumbered if I were to start anything
20 there, so I just never have. I just don't get -- I'm a
21 conservative, I have conservative views. I want to take
22 care of our, you know, Veterans first. It comes from a
23 long line.

24 But at the same time I have two sisters that were
25 -- sister-in-laws who were illegal when they got married

1 into my family. They are legal today, but they weren't
2 legal at that time. So, you know, it's -- I don't know, I
3 started out as a Democrat, but I'm a Republican and I have
4 been since Reagan. But I'm a person who looks at an issue
5 and says I agree or I disagree with it. I don't look at it
6 and say, well, what do the Republicans have to say or what
7 do the Democrats say to do with this issue? I have voted
8 on both sides.

9 I work for public schools. There are many issues
10 that my Republican friends don't agree with that I vote
11 for. And then, vice-versa, there are things that my, you
12 know, my colleagues don't agree with that I vote for. I
13 just don't -- that's who I am. My daughters tell me I'm a
14 centrist, but at the same time I'm very conservative to my
15 Democrat friends.

16 PANEL MEMBER COE: Now, you mentioned you have
17 things that you agree with, things that you disagree with.

18 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-hum.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: If there was -- if you were a
20 Commissioner and you were out in the community gathering
21 the input of community members, somebody from the public,
22 and they were expressing views that they said reflected
23 their community, but you disagree with them politically,
24 how would you handle that?

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: It's--I'm not part of the

1 equation. They're telling me about their community. I'm
2 not in their community. I am a recorder of the information
3 and I analyze the information. My political views aren't
4 part of the equation if I'm out there working with the
5 people. I'm looking at what they -- who are they? It's
6 not who am I, it's who are they. Again, remember, I'm not
7 looking at this as a political thing. I'm looking at this
8 as a fairness thing. I'm going out there to be fair to the
9 citizens of the State of California.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Staying on the subject of
11 communities and speaking with community members, some
12 communities are less engaged and may feel uncomfortable
13 engaging with government for one reason or another.

14 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-hum.

15 PANEL MEMBER COE: But the input of all
16 communities, as many communities as we possibly can is
17 still important to the work the Commission's going to do so
18 that they have the most information available to do their
19 job well.

20 As a Commissioner how would you go about trying
21 to make those communities that may be concerned, or are
22 uncomfortable engaging normally, how would you go about
23 making them feel more comfortable to come forward and share
24 their perspectives?

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Well, you have to come in with

1 a soft hand, and with a warm heart, and with a big smile
2 and tell them that you're in here to learn about them. You
3 want to know about their community and what they see are
4 needs that they need.

5 And yeah, there are people -- you know, I'm a
6 teacher and I can tell you I've taught a lot of illegals, a
7 lot. And when I first started teaching -- this is an
8 example for you. When I first started teaching there was a
9 big walkout, and I don't remember what it was about, but it
10 was with our Hispanic community. And I thought, oh, I'm
11 not going to have any Hispanic students in my class today
12 because of the walkout. And yet, every period I kept
13 having all my Hispanic kids present.

14 So, finally, about third period it was like,
15 okay, I have to know what's going on, why aren't you guys
16 out in the lot?

17 And this one boy said because we're illegal and
18 we don't want to draw any attention to ourselves, so our
19 parents told us to stay in the classroom. Thus, I
20 understood that then.

21 Well, a couple of years ago I had -- a big
22 discussion came up in my classroom, in one of my classrooms
23 about illegals leaving the state. And some of the kids
24 knew I was Republican. You just want us to leave the
25 state. I said, no, I'm second generation. I don't want

1 you kicked out of here, I just want you to be legally here.
2 I want you to do whatever it takes to get legally here.

3 But they were voicing it loud, and angry, and
4 totally opposite of what had been happening in my class 20
5 years earlier, where the kids were quiet and shy. And I
6 think that we have had a change in -- I think people in
7 California and our communities in California are getting
8 more vocal, and they are a little more willing to speak if
9 we are willing to listen. And I think we need to listen
10 more when we're out there working with our communities.

11 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. I'm just looking
12 through my notes here. As the one to ask questions last, a
13 lot of my questions have already been addressed.

14 So, if you were to be appointed to the Commission
15 what aspects of the role of a Commissioner do you think
16 that you would enjoy the most and, conversely, which
17 aspects of being a Commissioner do you think you might
18 perhaps struggle with a little bit?

19 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Interesting question. I just
20 think the whole process will be fun. I think every aspect
21 of it will be fun. Number crunching's not my favorite
22 thing to do, which is kind of funny since I teach
23 engineering and computer technology, and my favorite
24 subject in school was mathematics. But just the number
25 crunching in itself that's why I'm not an accountant it's

1 not my favorite thing.

2 But I think being out there with the people and
3 being able to go into the communities, and getting to meet
4 all the diverse population of our state will be the most
5 fun about this whole process. And working with 14 other
6 people, some who agree with me and some who disagree with
7 me, but to be able to become a team, and a unit, and work
8 together as a unit for the good of our whole state I think
9 that would be an amazing adventure.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. Madam Chair,
11 at this time I have no further questions.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

13 Mr. Dawson, do you have follow up questions
14 today?

15 MR. DAWSON: Yes, I do, Madam Chair, thank you.

16 Good morning again, Dr. Koenig-Sanko. Thank you
17 for being here.

18 I had a question for you. In your essay which
19 talks about your relevant analytical skills you mentioned
20 doing research for your doctoral dissertation.

21 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes.

22 MR. DAWSON: My question is what was the subject
23 of your dissertation? What research analysis did you do
24 and how does this demonstrate your analytical ability?

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay. My doctorate thesis

1 looked at three things. It looked at a process called
2 PBIS, which is positive behaving intervention and support.
3 It's a system that is used, started in the special Ed
4 community. It was only used with special Ed students and
5 it has now expanded across all students, and all schools in
6 the State of California and across the United States PBIS
7 is used.

8 So, that one aspect was looking at that, the
9 figures, the stats, and the improvements that other schools
10 had experienced. What worked, what didn't work. And what
11 they suggested to bring that into a school.

12 Secondly, I looked at critical thinking programs,
13 how to teach kids how to think, and the different programs
14 out there. Different research that had been done with
15 elementary, middle school, and high school students, even
16 though my focus was middle school I looked at all of those
17 to see how critical thinking impacts teaching kids how to
18 think, how it changes the kids' ability to respond in a
19 situation.

20 And then the last thing was the brain, and
21 mindfulness -- not -- mindset. Not mindfulness, mindset.
22 And a positive mindset, having that growth mindset, that
23 positive mindset, that growth mindset that anybody can
24 learn. That intelligence comes from trying things, not
25 that you're just born with it. That fixed mindset is that

1 you're born that way, that you're that, that your
2 intelligence comes from however you came out of the -- your
3 mom, that's the intelligence that you have, that you'll
4 have for the rest of your life.

5 So, I was looking at those two things, the -- I
6 mean, these three things, the mindset and its impact on
7 children, and improving grades, and behaviors in schools.
8 Looking at thinking skills instruction and how that impacts
9 students' ability to respond in a situation. And then, the
10 positive behavior intervention and support system, and how
11 that also contributes using that three-legged school to
12 improve school culture, climate, and students' engagement.

13 Because the whole goal is to get kids more
14 engaged in school because we've seen a huge lack -- a
15 disengagement of students. Yes, they're in the classroom
16 and they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, but
17 they're not engaged. And engagement is where learning
18 becomes exciting and that is when students take charge in
19 their life. And so, that's what I did.

20 And so, looking at those three things, looking at
21 all the statistics, looking at all the data, I spent
22 several years going it and taking that information and
23 fitting it together, showing how those three programs when
24 operating simultaneously can improve schools, and student
25 engagement. That's what I did.

1 And so, I believe that all of that is what will
2 go into -- all of those skills that I developed in that
3 research will help me with this research when we're looking
4 at communities and the needs, their needs, and the state's
5 needs, and that building of a level playing field.

6 MR. DAWSON: And that was mostly statistical
7 data, do I understand that?

8 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: It was some statistical data.
9 A lot of it was just hard data. You know, it was 385 kids
10 and this is the result. This number did this. This
11 number, you know, this was the results. So, it was some
12 statistical, it was some qualitative showing changes in
13 behavior. Because, you know, sometimes numbers don't tell
14 you, don't show you the true impact of what's going on.

15 MR. DAWSON: And that was my question. This is a
16 blending of --

17 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes.

18 MR. DAWSON: -- of qualitative and quantitative
19 data?

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes, that's exactly. My
21 course was originally a mixed methods and went to a case
22 study because I narrowed it down. But in reality, there
23 was mixed methods in the research.

24 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. I wanted to return
25 to one of your responses to one of the standard questions

1 where you -- I believe the statement was that you -- that
2 the Commission is not -- is to make the playing field level
3 and not to play the game. And you used that level playing
4 field --

5 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Right.

6 MR. DAWSON: -- for several times. Is your idea
7 of a level playing field within the context of a
8 legislative district, for example, one in this that there
9 is an equal chance that the Republican will win and with
10 the Democrat, are we talking about a competitiveness?

11 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Right. Yeah, I'm -- that's
12 what I mean. I mean that it's fair. That a district --
13 but I also know that there may be areas where that's not
14 available. But like I said, I've never been on the --
15 served on the committee before -- or, the Commission
16 before. I have not studied the stats before. I'm like
17 every other Californian, I go off what the Commission did
18 ten years ago and I look at my district. So, I believe
19 they did their job. And I believe that it's our job to
20 continue to do that, to keep it fair. This is a fairness
21 issue, it's an equality issue, it's making each district
22 fair so that anybody could win. If the best candidate is
23 an Independent, that Independent should be able to win.

24 MR. DAWSON: In your response to -- I wanted to
25 follow up on something that you -- an answer to Mr. Coe.

1 You had given the example of teaching students, they're
2 undocumented students and they didn't want to participate
3 in the demonstration because they didn't want to draw
4 attention to themselves.

5 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-hum.

6 MR. DAWSON: Now, thinking about the Census, is
7 that the same sort -- do you think that that kind of
8 concern among undocumented persons would also lead them to
9 not participate in the Census?

10 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: I think that there is -- that
11 is an element. But I think a bigger element is the number
12 of our immigrants, legal or illegal that don't speak our
13 language. And that, alone, will keep them from being
14 involved.

15 We have a lot of -- I can tell you we have a lot
16 of -- I have taught lots of kids and when I called home, I
17 didn't get to talk to mom and dad. I got to talk to
18 another child in that household, or another adult in that
19 household that spoke the language. So, I think we have not
20 only people who don't want to bring attention to
21 themselves, but we also have the issue of language in our
22 state.

23 MR. DAWSON: But to be clear, non-English
24 speakers should be included in the count, correct?

25 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yes, yes. That's what I'm --

1 yes, I totally believe that. If you live in this state,
2 you should be in the count of this state. But I'm not sure
3 that that will happen because we -- like I said, the
4 language barrier is -- it's not just a spoken thing. There
5 are languages that don't -- you know, like in my school, an
6 example. We have to send home everything in English and
7 then we have to send home -- if the parents are Spanish, we
8 sent home stuff in Spanish. If they're Hmong, Vietnamese.

9 But what about all the other languages? We
10 don't. We don't have to send them home in those languages.
11 So, that's -- to me that's a problem because if mom and dad
12 are from the Ukraine and they don't speak English, why
13 aren't we sending the stuff home in their language?

14 So, and that's the same thing with our Census. I
15 think that we are going to miss some people because of the
16 language barrier. We're going to miss some people because
17 they don't want to draw attention to themselves.

18 MR. DAWSON: So, then, potentially communities
19 that have a large number of non-English speakers or
20 undocumented persons, they will be undercounted and,
21 therefore, will not be properly represented. Do I
22 understand that --

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Not necessarily because I
24 think that there are going to be people in those same
25 communities that are going to speak up. Whether they can

1 speak the language or not, they're going to speak up.

2 And that was kind of the point that I thought I
3 was making earlier is that there has been a change in our
4 population of not being as shy as they used to be, and not
5 being don't-want-to-be-noticed.

6 Yeah, we're going to still have an element of
7 that, but we're going to have an element of students'
8 parents who are talking to us, who are saying I'm here,
9 count me. I don't want to be left out of this process.

10 So, I think that it was probably worse 20 years
11 ago than we're going to see today. I betcha our Census, if
12 we could go back and really do the Census by who everybody
13 was here, I think there would be larger numbers missed back
14 then than there will be this time around.

15 But I think that we're still going to see some
16 numbers not be accurate. But that's going to be true for
17 whether the person is a working person in the State of
18 California, they just don't want to do the Census. I don't
19 want to be counted, you know, that's going to happen, too.

20 MR. DAWSON: Okay. And so, just so I'm clear,
21 all persons residing in California should be counted
22 without regard to immigration status?

23 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Yeah, because there's no way
24 to -- we need to just count all the bodies. We need to
25 count everybody.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

2 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Uh-hum.

3 MR. DAWSON: Madam Chair, I have no more follow-
4 up questions, if any of the Panel do.

5 And Madam Secretary, what is our time?

6 MS. PELLMAN: Six minutes, five seconds
7 remaining.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: I have no further questions.
9 Mr. Belnap?

10 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not have further
11 questions.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 Dr. Koenig-Sanko, at this point I would like to
15 offer you an opportunity to make a closing statement to the
16 Panel, if you wish. We have -- how much time, Madam
17 Secretary?

18 MS. PELLMAN: Five minutes, 42 seconds.

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

20 MS. KOENIG-SANKO: Okay. I wanted to -- just
21 wanted to go back to -- I did make the statement, but I
22 just wanted to say that, you know, I have two members of my
23 family who were illegal when they joined our family. Got
24 married in America, they were illegal. They are legal
25 today. And so, the issue of legal/illegal, I am second

1 generation and I believe everybody should come to the
2 United States legally. I think that you -- not only does
3 it protect us, but it protects them, too. And I just wish
4 that we could come up with a solution that helps all of our
5 population. And so, I do believe that some people are
6 going to be underrepresented in this Census, but I think
7 it's going to be just as many of the shadow members of our
8 society as it is people who don't want -- can't answer the
9 Census because they don't speak our language.

10 I really believe this is a fair, this should be a
11 fair process. That we should -- the Commission should work
12 to make it a level playing field for everybody. And I
13 would love to be part of this Commission to do just that.
14 To help every voice in this state get a voice and to help
15 every vote count.

16 So, I thank you for this opportunity to do just
17 that.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Dr. Koenig-Sanko.

19 Our next interview starts at 10:45, so we will go
20 into recess until 10:44.

21 (Off the record at 10:26 a.m.)

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

23 CHAIR DICKISON: The time being 10:44, calling
24 the Applicant Review Panel back to order.

25 I want to welcome Ms. Cheryl McDonald. Welcome.

1 And we're going to get started and turn the meeting over to
2 Mr. Chris Dawson to read you the five standard questions.

3 MS. MCDONALD: Thank you.

4 MR. DAWSON: Good morning, Ms. McDonald.

5 MS. MCDONALD: Good morning.

6 MR. DAWSON: I'm going to read you five standard
7 questions that the Panel has requested each applicant to
8 respond to. Are you ready, ma'am?

9 MS. MCDONALD: I am.

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

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

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

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

18 MS. MCDONALD: First of all thank you very much
19 for this opportunity. I don't envy you the two months of
20 having to go through this. But I'm very glad to be here.

21 With respect to the Commission as a collective
22 body, I think we should start there. The task before the
23 Commission is very complex and involved a number of skills
24 and strategies. We have to -- all of which we have to
25 collectively be able to grasp and then translate to each

1 other, and then to the community at large.

2 We have to be able to conceptualize the problem
3 and the issues numerically. We have to do it spatially,
4 understanding the relative placement of people and
5 ideologies, for lack of a better word, and we have to be
6 able to understand them culturally.

7 Now, the Commission has a whole must have the
8 access to the skills and insights to be able to cover all
9 three of those broad areas. But it's unrealistic and
10 unreasonable to expect that every Commissioner is going to
11 have a solid grasp of all of those kinds of ways of
12 interpreting and understanding the world. We have our
13 different strengths.

14 So, as a whole we should have that numeric
15 capacity. There should be members of the Commission who
16 are capable of understanding numerical language and being
17 able to translate to that who those of us who don't
18 typically think in terms of numbers, large or small.

19 We need to have people as part of the Commission
20 who can appreciate the spatial relationships that we're
21 dealing with so that we don't wind up with maps, and
22 districts that are unnecessarily awkward, to say the least.

23 And we need to have people who understand
24 culturally the data that we're getting, both from
25 individuals and from the numbers themselves, as well.

1 Again, I don't think that every Commissioner
2 needs to have great capacity in all of those areas. Every
3 Commissioner ought to be able to -- ought to be capable of
4 understanding them once explained by the experts of the
5 group. But I do think we should have that expertise within
6 the Commission as a whole.

7 Individually, well, I think the Commission as a
8 whole needs to be computer literate. Again, there are
9 going to be some people who are more adept at understanding
10 and using tech capacities, but all us are going to have to
11 be able to utilize some baseline if only for communication,
12 but also for being able to understand the way in which the
13 data is being manipulated.

14 I think the Commission as a whole needs to be
15 competent in terms of organization. It needs to be able to
16 set very clear goals and processes for moving towards them.
17 We have a very short period of time in which to accomplish
18 a great deal, so we need to have people who are capable of
19 both structuring an organization and a process, and being
20 able to work effectively within that.

21 And I think -- I think the Commission as a whole
22 needs to be composed of people who are competent
23 communicators. That needn't be in English only. I can
24 certainly see people whose language strengths are other
25 than English because we will have access to interpreters in

1 other ways of communicating. But people should be
2 competent in expressing themselves orally and in writing.

3 And finally, in terms of the Commission as a
4 whole, pardon my language, but I think we need to have good
5 BS sensors. I think that there are going to be people who
6 are going to be interested in steering the conversation in
7 particular directions and that the Commissioners need to be
8 focused on what is a true and accurate representation of
9 individuals and data. And what is spin, for lack of a
10 better word.

11 So that those are competencies that I think need
12 to be present in the Commission as a whole.

13 Now, with respect to individuals, again, I think
14 every individual ought to bring some particular strength in
15 one of those perceptive areas, numerically, spatially,
16 culturally, or technically in order to be able to
17 contribute to the expertise of the group.

18 I think that individually--every individual needs
19 to be, well, for lack of a better -- emotionally mature.
20 In the law we often refer to it as having a judicial
21 temperament. It doesn't mean that you have to be Mr. Nice
22 Guy all the time, but you need to be able to behave and
23 respond in a mature manner in dealing with all kinds of
24 people. And individuals need to have that capacity.

25 Let's see, I think I've addressed language

1 competency. Again, it needn't be in English, but every
2 Commissioner needs to be able to express his or her opinion
3 in writing, orally, and be able to read and understand the
4 volume of material that we're going to be dealing with.

5 I believe -- yes, I think that pretty well
6 describes the way I see the group of the whole and
7 individual parts of it working to provide the expertise to
8 move the whole enterprise forward.

9 Oh, yes, you wanted to know what I bring to the
10 party. I see my strengths as being organizational. I am a
11 very organized person. I am capable of putting together a
12 project map. Helping people identify goals and how to move
13 forward toward them.

14 I also have developed a fairly broad cultural
15 competency. We'll talk about that more later. My history
16 and background has enabled me to interact with a broad
17 variety of people, not just ethnically and linguistically,
18 but economically as well.

19 Oh, excuse me, I've got tea. And so, I think I
20 bring a sensitivity to the cultural issues that we're
21 likely to encounter.

22 And finally, I am a good writer, I am. And I'm a
23 very good editor. And I do believe that I communicate
24 orally well, as well. So, in terms of making sure that the
25 ideas upon which we agree as a Commission get expressed

1 effectively and clearly to the broader community, I think I
2 can play a significant role in that respect.

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

9 What characteristics do you possess, and what
10 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
11 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

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

15 MS. MCDONALD: Well, let me start by saying like
16 many families, elements of mine are fractured, shall we
17 say. And my nieces and nephews call me Switzerland. They
18 usually do it laughing, but I do take that as a vote of
19 confidence. I am one in the broader family who works
20 actively to maintain relationships across some very
21 interesting divisions.

22 But to go back to the original issue, these have
23 been incredibly difficult times and we all are finding it
24 hard to maintain a sense of balance, if not running to our
25 individual enclaves in self-defense. I am trying very hard

1 not to do that and have been part of a number of informal
2 initiatives to open up conversations across political
3 differences and among friends, in particular, to make sure
4 that people stay focused on the important aspect of their
5 relationship and find a way to work through the differences
6 that they've seen.

7 But I think that there are a number of things
8 that we can be very explicit about as a commission in order
9 to minimize that kind of fracturing within our own work and
10 support the perception from the broader community that the
11 work is being done in the sense of the good of all, and not
12 of some.

13 The first thing, of course, is respect. I think
14 that all of the Commissioners need to be serious about
15 their respect for one another as individuals, and their
16 respect for the mission and process in which we are
17 engaged.

18 As an example, I have a real problem with the
19 term "political correctness". I think that that is a
20 shorthand for ignoring the fundamental dignity of other
21 people. And so, I tend not to use that. I don't like
22 using that term. I think the issue is that people need to
23 be respected for who they are and who they choose to
24 present themselves as being. And so, if we start there,
25 then we aren't dealing with my interpretation or your

1 interpretation of somebody else. We allow individuals to
2 represent themselves. So, respect is the first issue.

3 The second is integrity. That you say what you
4 mean and that you mean what you say, and stand by that. I
5 think the we need to be committed to honestly presenting
6 our individual opinions, whether or not they are those of
7 the rest of the group. We can't deal with coming to
8 consensus if we don't have honest expressions of our own
9 position, and who we are.

10 Third, willingness to listen. Not just to hear,
11 but to stop and think about what it is the other person is
12 trying to express. As we go further into these questions,
13 we'll come to the concept of issues and we might as well
14 start now -- interests, rather. We might as well start
15 right now.

16 Interests are the real drivers behind individual
17 opinions. They're the things that form the opinion. I
18 care about my community because it makes me feel safe and
19 my family feel safe, not just because I'm a general do-
20 gooder. And I think that when we can take the time to
21 actually listen to what people are saying their opinions
22 are, and probe and encourage them to get beyond that to the
23 interests that drive them, we discover a broader range of
24 potential agreement and consensus than we do if we just
25 stay at the surface. So, willingness to really hear what

1 is behind an opinion or an observation.

2 Flexibility. The willingness to say, you know, I
3 hadn't considered that. It changes my opinion somewhat.
4 To shift when presented new evidence, to change direction
5 when circumstances change. Flexibility is going to be
6 crucial, again, to avoiding the perception that we have
7 come in with an agenda, and with a particular end goal in
8 mind, and are completely unwilling to consider the validity
9 of other positions.

10 And commitment to the process. In a way that
11 flows from flexibility.

12 Understanding that this is a very complex
13 process, it involves a lot of competing issues. We're not
14 going to short change or shortcut it, but we are going to
15 work through it in a way that is transparent and clear from
16 the beginning so that people can follow us from the
17 beginning to the end.

18 And finally, common sense. We are going to set
19 up some rules of procedure, we are going to be governed by
20 some others, external, and we need to understand,
21 acknowledge and adhere to that. But there are going to
22 make times when that doesn't make sense for one reason or
23 another, and I think we have to be willing to acknowledge
24 that as well, and again with flexibility and commitment to
25 the clarity of the process work our way through that.

1 Now, in terms of my own contribution to avoiding
2 the appearance of polarization, I am -- I am committed to
3 expressing my opinion. I don't believe that sitting as a
4 wallflower and criticizing in the back of my head is going
5 to advance our process at all. So, I will be there. I'll
6 express my opinion. It will be out there for folks to take
7 issue with or agree with. I will defend it, but I also
8 commit to the decision making process that the Commission
9 decides on, and not the second guessing and backbiting that
10 often happens in groups.

11 There are probably going to be times when
12 individuals take issue with one another, maybe fairly,
13 maybe unfairly. I believe in and will actively work toward
14 addressing the resolution of those kinds of conflicts in as
15 diplomatic a manner possible. Sometimes that might be
16 disagreeing publicly on an issue. Sometimes that will be
17 speaking privately to one or another Commissioners. But
18 with the objective of supporting the integrity of our
19 ultimate product I will exercise my best judgment in
20 deciding how to move forward with that. Again --

21 MS. PELLMAN: Just a quick time check, we have
22 nine minutes remaining.

23 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-oh.

24 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Ms. McDonald, I want to
25 make sure you get the opportunity to answer all five of the

1 standard questions.

2 MS. MCDONALD: Gotcha, let's move on.

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

7 MS. MCDONALD: Okay. I think in these uncertain
8 times it's difficult to talk about the singular greatest
9 problem. We are dealing with a very constrained time
10 frame. We're going to have substantial operational
11 challenges just logistically. Language, all kinds of
12 things.

13 And there may or may not be some question about
14 the viability of our underlying data. So, there are a lot
15 of things that we are going to need to think about.

16 Internally, we could have individual, personal
17 hostilities. I think we have talked a little bit about
18 that in the previous question. They need to be addressed
19 and they need to be addressed as diplomatically as
20 possible.

21 Externally, I should go to that right away
22 because I don't know that it's going to come up otherwise.
23 We could be looking at a second Corona wave, which will
24 substantially complicate data gathering in terms of meeting
25 with communities and talking to people. We could equally

1 be looking at a major earthquake or fire. Those are
2 totally reasonable in this state.

3 And finally, and no less significantly, I think
4 we are going to be looking at an election atmosphere, not
5 just until November, but all the way though to January and
6 possibly beyond that is going to be fraught. I think
7 people, we're all fragile as a result of the Corona, but
8 that's another layer of crazy.

9 I think we need to outline steps necessary --
10 that might be necessary to extend our deadlines. It may
11 not be realistically possible to get this work done in the
12 established time frame, and we need to be ready ahead of
13 time for the process to address that.

14 I think we need to prepare a very clear security
15 plan. I want to be as open and as public as possible, but
16 I think that that's something that we should be concerned
17 about and prepare.

18 And I think, as you have had to do with these
19 interviews, we need to prepare a backup, a technical backup
20 for getting work done that will need to be done whenever
21 the whatever hits.

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 MS. PELLMAN: And we have five minutes remaining.

9 MS. MCDONALD: Okay. The project was getting
10 approval of a -- sorry, time frames. Getting approval of a
11 special assessment for a homeowner's group. The special
12 assessment was likely to be in the \$20,000 range for each
13 of the homeowners, most of whom were first-time buyers in
14 an experimental project. So, people had a great deal at
15 stake and a lot of different opinions about the legitimacy
16 of the way in which those decisions were going to be made.

17 I was on the board of directors at the time, so
18 charged with -- with four other folks charged with
19 conducting the community conversation to address all issues
20 and make sure that we could in fact get the approval, a
21 two-thirds vote approval to move ahead.

22 We did that through community meetings, through
23 individual meetings, through a great many surveys. We did
24 everything we could in public. We tried, when we had
25 public meetings we encouraged not to speak immediately

1 after one another, so that everyone could hear and think
2 about what had previously been said.

3 As I said, we acknowledge persuasive arguments
4 and did make some changes. And we continued to try to look
5 to interests.

6 Last, but not least, when the decision was made
7 we moved on.

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

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

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

20 MS. MCDONALD: In the interest of time, I'm going
21 to refer you back to one of the essays in my original
22 application. I was born and raised in the middle of Los
23 Angeles, in an area called J Flats. It was a Japanese and
24 Latino neighborhood, but it was in the center of town and I
25 went to school, all the way from elementary through high

1 school, with kids from literally all over the world.

2 I have subsequently traveled in India, Africa,
3 Russia, Asia, both on business or for projects, but also
4 for my personal interests. And part of that has led me
5 ultimately to decide to study anthropology, cultural
6 anthropology at the University of North Carolina for five
7 years. Didn't get the PhD, but I did everything else.

8 Those are the experiences, briefly the
9 experiences that have formed me and I think that's given me
10 -- contributed to my skill set. I am adept at breaking
11 down unfamiliar processes and questions, both from my legal
12 training and from anthropology and mediation, so that I can
13 -- I can grasp questions that I don't understand and
14 formulate them in a way that makes it possible for me to
15 understand them. I'm --

16 MS. PELLMAN: We have 45 seconds remaining.

17 MS. MCDONALD: Okay. From teaching I've learned
18 the power of analogy, which helps other people understand
19 new lessons. And I'm not afraid to admit what I don't know
20 and I'm not afraid to apologize when I'm wrong.

21 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. We will now
22 go to Panel questions. Each of the Panel Members will have
23 20 minutes to ask his or her questions. We'll start with
24 the Chair, Ms. Dickison.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning, Ms. McDonald.

1 MS. MCDONALD: Good morning.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you for taking the time to
3 meet with us today. First, in your impartiality essay you
4 mentioned that you recognize impartiality doesn't require
5 one to cease to be human, but it does require honest
6 acknowledgement of the biases we see.

7 Could you tell us what are your biases and how
8 will you ensure that they don't influence your decisions as
9 a Commissioner should you be selected?

10 MS. MCDONALD: I don't like mean people. And
11 that might sound flippant, but in these days it's very easy
12 to see actions that others have taken with what they
13 believe to be good justification as mean, or mean-spirited.

14 And I -- it is a struggle for me, but it is a
15 struggle that I recognize and definitely try to engage in
16 to understand at least what might be motivating behavior
17 that I would broadly characterize as mean. Mean or mean-
18 spirited.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

20 MS. MCDONALD: I've -- it's that's such a -- for
21 me that's such a -- that's such an all-encompassing term.
22 I can think of it in very trivial kinds of examples and
23 then larger ones, like the situation at the border. And
24 so, it is a struggle for me to listen for the
25 justifications that are behind the actions of people doing

1 things to which I object. I can still object, but we
2 should talk about those as opposed to merely making a
3 judgment about the action.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. You talked
5 about, in your impartiality essay, serving as the Chair of
6 the Key Church Committee for a proposed major renovation
7 project.

8 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: How does this example
10 demonstrate the ability to be impartial?

11 MS. MCDONALD: As with the situation I described
12 with the homeowners association, in both of those -- in
13 both of those circumstances we were dealing with people who
14 have very, very deeply held, strong beliefs that were in
15 conflict with those of others.

16 In the homeowners' situation it was largely about
17 money and the degree to which people's long-term
18 livelihoods felt it was.

19 In the church situation, it had to do with
20 family, and history, and the significance of religious
21 ritual to individuals and to the community as a whole. And
22 so, you couldn't even -- you couldn't even begin the
23 process of the renovation without dealing with all of these
24 conflicting interests.

25 Now, I came into it from a very different -- a

1 very particular perspective. This was not a church in
2 which I had spent decades. It was not a church at which my
3 family had invested years of significance. And so, it was
4 easier for me to see, oh, well, practically speaking we
5 ought to do this, that, and the other thing.

6 But I couldn't do that. We had to -- we had to
7 provide a way for the other perspectives to really be
8 expressed and to feel as if their concerns were going to be
9 respected and addressed.

10 So, a big part of my job was setting up the
11 various processes by which that could happen. Again, small
12 group meetings in some instances. There was a study --
13 there were study groups. There were large community
14 meetings. We approached it from a variety of directions.
15 But I could not, even though I was Chair of Worship, I
16 could not ram this decision down anyone's throats. This
17 had to be a consensus we all came to.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, in your
19 diversity essay you talked about your experience where you
20 grew up, and you mentioned it earlier. One of the things
21 you talked about was that your graduating class spoke more
22 than 40 languages.

23 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum, or dialects.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: What did you learn from these
25 many diverse different people about their communities that

1 will assist you with connecting with various communities
2 throughout California?

3 MS. MCDONALD: A number of things. I learned not
4 to take personally how many communities -- how some
5 communities viewed me as a threat, or different, or
6 unacceptable, and how to work through that with people.

7 I learned different practices for acknowledging
8 important times in folks' lives. Simple things like the
9 Quinceanera for turning 15, as opposed to for other folks
10 it was the 16th birthday, the 18th birthday.

11 I learned about the significance of family and
12 how that varied from one group to another. For some
13 families it was perfectly normal to have three generations
14 living in the same household. That's the way things were.

15 For others of us, we're raised in a much more
16 American framework. The idea was grow up and move out.

17 So, there were a number of different ways of
18 living that came to be normal for me to sort of wait and
19 see what somebody introduced me to.

20 Now, I mentioned later in that essay that I went
21 to India thinking, oh, I'm so adept at this flexibility I'm
22 ready for anything. But I can certainly say that there's a
23 baseline in terms of the way human beings feel about being
24 human. And I got to India and I had my legs kicked out
25 from underneath me. It was a totally, totally different

1 view of the world and the significance of life.

2 So, through all of these I have had reinforced
3 over and over that I have to be -- admit the possibility of
4 difference, the possibility that the person with whom I'm
5 speaking is coming from a perceptual framework that may be
6 a little different from mine or may be very different from
7 mine. But I cannot assume that I've got that nailed.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: So, one of the things that the
9 Commission is going to be tasked with doing is identifying
10 communities of interest throughout the state. Given what
11 you've learned from your different experiences, what
12 methods do you think the Commission should employ to
13 identify these communities of interest?

14 MS. MCDONALD: Well, obviously, you begin by ask
15 them. Putting out just a general request for communities
16 of interest to identify themselves. I'm sure that there
17 are existing -- existing frameworks from which to work.
18 But again, I would not take those as gospel. I would like
19 to see the Commission more broadly extend an invitation to
20 communities who feel a natural affinity to identify
21 themselves, and make the argument for their coherence.

22 And it would take -- I think it would take me a
23 little bit more time to think about precisely how to do
24 that, but that would be the objective.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: What are some of the things that

1 you think may influence a person's or a group's preference
2 when they're looking for representation and can that vary
3 through different regions of the state?

4 MS. MCDONALD: I'm sorry can you restate the
5 beginning of that question?

6 CHAIR DICKISON: What do you believe are some of
7 the things that can influence one's preference when looking
8 for representation and how could that differ between
9 various regions of the state?

10 MS. MCDONALD: Certainly economics can influence
11 the way in which individuals or groups evaluate their
12 preference for representation. But I think, too,
13 preservation of specific practices or lifestyle choices.
14 For example, maintenance -- the significance of maintaining
15 a more rural atmosphere in an area like Camarillo, or
16 Northern Ventura, or Ventura, as opposed to the high-
17 density development further south along the coast.

18 The question of density, yeah, and the kind of
19 lifestyle that is possible in a mountain community or an
20 agricultural community as opposed to our more urban areas.

21 There are communities in the state, there are
22 ethnic communities or national communities that have
23 developed within the state that probably have a significant
24 interest in acknowledging their particular way of living.
25 I'm thinking of the Basque people, and the Hmong people,

1 and the Vietnamese. Whether or not those communities
2 maintain a coherent -- whether or not they maintain
3 coherence at this point in their development in California,
4 as opposed to ten years ago, or ten years from now that
5 could be an issue. But I think it's something that needs
6 to be revisited every ten years. It's one of the reasons
7 why we take the Census.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

9 MS. PELLMAN: We have five minutes remaining.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. You mentioned that
11 members of the Commission may need to have a good BS sensor
12 to understand true and accurate information. One of the
13 things the last Commission thought was that at some of the
14 events, when they were receiving public comment, some of
15 the speakers may have not actually been representing the
16 communities that they said they were representing and might
17 have ulterior motives.

18 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Do you think in your training
20 you have a special ability with the type of skill to
21 recognize that type of thing?

22 MS. MCDONALD: I would not presume to say it's
23 infallible by a long shot. But I am broadly read and
24 thoughtful. And think I would be sensitive to let's call
25 it performance. I do believe that there are vested

1 interests in the state who would like to preserve certain
2 realities. And I think those are Democratic, Republican, I
3 think there are all kinds of people out there who have an
4 agenda they want to push, and probably have a great deal
5 more experience at this process than we as a Commission are
6 likely to. Certainly going into it.

7 And so, I would be -- that's something I would be
8 sensitive to and I would like to see the Commission think
9 specifically about how we might work around.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Can I get a time
11 check?

12 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have two minutes, 28
13 seconds.

14 MS. MCDONALD: Okay.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. If you're selected
16 as one of the first eight Commissioners who are selected
17 randomly, you would be tasked with selecting the next six
18 Commissioners. What would you be looking for in those
19 Commissioners?

20 MS. MCDONALD: I would be looking to fill in the
21 gaps on the perceptive map capacities that I mentioned in
22 response to the first question, to make sure that the
23 Commission had the broad range of skills that they're going
24 to need in order to do the job.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I don't have any

1 further questions at this time, so I yield and Mr. Belnap
2 will be taking.

3 MS. MCDONALD: Thank you.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good morning, Ms. McDonald.

5 MS. MCDONALD: Good morning.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I want to ask you a question
7 from your impartiality essay. Now, you talked about your
8 work in mediation. I see in your application that you
9 taught mediation at Pepperdine for seven years.

10 MS. MCDONALD: I did.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: When did you work as a
12 mediator?

13 MS. MCDONALD: Oh, I would work -- I worked as a
14 mediator briefly, but for -- I was not employed as a
15 mediator briefly before I taught at Pepperdine. I did it
16 on a voluntary basis with a Christian Conciliation Service.

17 And then, I worked as a mediator, again on a
18 voluntary basis, through the time that I was teaching at
19 Pepperdine. So, I was never gainfully employed as a
20 mediator.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. So, you came into the
22 teaching mediation, I guess the key element that helped you
23 obtain that position, was it your JD?

24 MS. MCDONALD: Yes, and my experience because I'd
25 worked with a number of the folks who were teaching at

1 Pepperdine when I took that position.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. and you worked with
3 them in volunteer work or professional?

4 MS. MCDONALD: Yes.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Your volunteer work, okay.

6 MS. MCDONALD: Yes.

7 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And the volunteer work
8 that you engaged in while you were at Pepperdine, was that
9 with a particular organization?

10 MS. MCDONALD: No. It was generally we were --
11 the folks down at the Institute for Dispute Resolution were
12 frequently asked if we would be helpful with various groups
13 or organizations --

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

15 MS. MCDONALD: -- who had a problem. So, we were
16 called in often.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right thank you. Can you
18 describe an experience in mediation where you had to set
19 aside a personal view or bias to help the parties come to
20 an equitable agreement?

21 MS. MCDONALD: Yes. I was involved in a
22 mediation at that -- I was part of a two-person team who
23 was helping mediate a dispute between a college student and
24 professor. The college student had accused the professor
25 of sexual abuse. And it was when -- it was a claim that he

1 denied. It was sexual impropriety, it wasn't abuse.

2 And the college had asked us to come and mediate
3 the dispute between the two in order to try and resolve it
4 at a level outside of the court.

5 I have some very strong views about sexual abuse
6 and power dynamics, and I had -- at the same time, I also
7 have some very strong views about false accusations. It
8 was just a very -- it was very, very difficult and it was a
9 very, very difficult situation for everyone involved. The
10 college was involved. The student was involved. The
11 professor was involved.

12 The resolution was that the professor
13 acknowledged the impropriety of some remarks or suggestions
14 that he had made. The student accepted the
15 acknowledgement. And also expressed -- I'm trying to keep
16 gender out of it, too. Also expressed -- what am I trying
17 to say. Not over reaction. But the student had a
18 secondary agenda for pushing the issue beyond what had been
19 -- would otherwise have been appropriate.

20 And I think everyone came out of it bruised, but
21 with some degree of resolution. And that was very
22 difficult to work through.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. In your
24 essay on appreciation of diversity you focused much of the
25 writing on your travels within and outside of California.

1 And I'd like to give you an opportunity to describe what
2 work, or volunteer experience or project where you worked
3 with people having a variety of different backgrounds to
4 achieve a common objective. Do you have such an example
5 from your career or volunteer efforts?

6 MS. MCDONALD: Where I worked with folks with --
7 oh. When I -- my first trip to Africa was to Ghana. Will
8 that meet your --

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yes. Yes, proceed.

10 MS. MCDONALD: My first trip to Africa was to
11 Ghana, where I worked with a number of pastors from all
12 over the country, as well as their American partners. They
13 were involved in a project that was social -- was providing
14 wells to small villages all over the country.

15 So, we had -- we had city Ghanaians, we had rural
16 Ghanaians, we had American partners and advisors, and there
17 were -- so, there were cultural confusion -- you know,
18 cultural differences. There were differences between the
19 funding and accounting aspects of the project and the
20 mission-driven service aspects of it.

21 And the idea of -- the time that I spent with
22 them was to help them develop a sense -- a set of protocols
23 that they could all work together on to meet some very
24 specific goals for the project. I only had a week and a
25 half with them. And it was -- it was challenging, to say

1 the least.

2 But again, in working in small groups,
3 particularly mixing them up with various cross-cuts, either
4 the American and Ghanaian accounting people, the mission
5 people, then cross-cutting putting mission people together
6 with accounting people we began to open up people's minds
7 to the ideas of -- to the issues and interests that were
8 behind their individual perspectives, and they could figure
9 out ways then to say, oh, okay, well, we both want to
10 accomplish this. We can do it from these two different
11 ways, as opposed to just writing off the opinion of the
12 other folks.

13 I'm trying to think if there's something else I
14 wanted to say about that. I think --

15 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Well, let me ask you a
16 question about that experience.

17 MS. MCDONALD: Sure.

18 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: What principles did you learn
19 from it that you could take and use in your work as a
20 Commissioner?

21 MS. MCDONALD: I'm glad you followed up with that
22 one because that was the thought that just went out of my
23 head. It's the power of analogy. It's being able to put
24 people in an unfamiliar situation, but help them recognize
25 the familiar aspect that is there.

1 I'll give you an example from a different
2 situation. I was doing a training with judicial mediators
3 in Texas. These are all retired judges. They'd all gone
4 through the election process multiple times. And the
5 seminar was on -- was to help them be more sensitive to
6 women in the profession and was mostly -- I think it was
7 like 90 percent men in the room.

8 And we were talking about -- well, someone
9 mentioned the fact that in the process of election all
10 these judges recognized that every six years or so the
11 spotlight's on you all of a sudden. Everything you do,
12 everything your family does gets dissected, looked at, high
13 profile, and how uncomfortable it is to be that -- have
14 that much attention focused on you.

15 And I was able to make the analogy to women
16 lawyers and with that level -- with the feeling of that
17 level of scrutiny on a regular basis. And the men began to
18 say, oh, you know, I hate living that way. It's
19 uncomfortable. But after the election's over it's done.
20 And they could see that for the women lawyers with whom
21 they were dealing there's never an election where it
22 disappears. The focus is always there.

23 It was a big ah-ha moment for them. And analogy
24 has proven to be a very, very useful tool in teaching
25 mediation in other conversation, problem solving.

1 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. There's
2 something also from your application I'm curious about.
3 You worked for nearly nine years as a Senior Program
4 Manager for Worker Education and Resource Center. What is
5 that organization and what was your role in it?

6 MS. MCDONALD: The organization develops training
7 programs -- well, it's actually morphed a great deal over
8 its existence. But in the time that I was working for them
9 we developed training programs primarily for the low wage
10 union workers in the healthcare system in L.A. county.
11 WERC, W-E-R-C, was the product of an agreement between the
12 county's largest healthcare union, SEIU, and the county --
13 L.A. County Department of Health, but that actually got
14 extended to beyond just the Department of Health.

15 And the idea was essentially how do we support
16 essentially growing talent from the bottom up and providing
17 opportunities for advancement for lower wage workers. So,
18 we did a number of things. We started off doing primarily
19 structuring and sponsoring nursing programs for non-nurse
20 employees. So, we would do the selection. We did -- we
21 provided classroom experiences for those folks to get their
22 prerequisites done. We provided coaching. We provided the
23 coaching and encouragement for them.

24 We would buy a classroom at the city college, the
25 community college for example to teach biology for these

1 working folks. So they could keep their jobs and be
2 prepared for a nursing course, and ultimately graduate and
3 become nurses within the county. So, that's one thing we
4 did.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And what was your specific
6 role in that organization?

7 MS. MCDONALD: I was the Senior Administrator,
8 which in this case meant doing a little bit of everything.
9 I did HR. I did a lot of the contract work. I oversaw our
10 accounting. But I also helped develop training programs
11 and deliver training programs.

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: So, this particular
13 experience, could you argue that there were aspects of it
14 that increased your understanding and appreciation for
15 diversity as well?

16 MS. MCDONALD: Yeah, because I was dealing -- we
17 were dealing with many folks who had not -- had no college
18 experience or very little college experience. People who
19 without our support would have no way of making this move
20 possible. And we could -- we saw lives change.

21 And the last group with whom I worked were nurses
22 from the county. They were already RNs, but I was coaching
23 and supporting them through a program of getting their
24 licenses as nurse practitioners, which was a significant
25 improvement for them.

1 But again, people from a variety of backgrounds
2 not typically college educated on a path.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. So, I just
4 want to follow up on something that was in your
5 application, but you also mentioned it. You were studying
6 cultural anthropology at the University of North Carolina.

7 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Was that distance learning or
9 were you there in person, in North Carolina?

10 MS. MCDONALD: No, I moved to North Carolina. I
11 was there for five years. It was another cultural
12 experience. I had been born and raised in Los Angeles and
13 lived here my whole life. I was the third generation
14 Angelina. And I didn't buy a sports car, I moved to North
15 Carolina as my midlife experience.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And you mentioned that
17 you went through the program it was a PhD program.

18 MS. MCDONALD: Correct.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: You went through the program
20 but didn't end up getting your PhD. Can you tell us what
21 happened?

22 MS. MCDONALD: Two things happened. Honestly,
23 the PhD program really was structured with the idea of
24 ultimately teaching and I really never had any intention of
25 teaching.

1 But the second thing that happened was that my
2 mother, who was back in L.A. and was getting much older,
3 and more frail, needed me home. So, I came home to L.A.
4 and it just wasn't possible to -- I had the research done,
5 but to find the time to sit and actually write it.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. Madam
7 Chair, I have no further questions.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.
9 Mr. Coe?

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: Well, thank you, Madam Chair.
11 Good morning, Ms. McDonald. Thank you for taking the time
12 to meet with us today.

13 Many of my questions have been addressed by my
14 colleagues already, but I did want to ask you about
15 something that I believe you started off with in your very
16 first essay, which was you speak about being a teenager, a
17 young adult during the Civil Rights Movement?

18 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: And that you watched people
20 like you be attacked and brutalized, but in California you
21 did not have to face the daily choice of having to stand up
22 and hide.

23 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: Bearing witness to such things
25 as you grew into adulthood have to have had a profound

1 impact --

2 MS. MCDONALD: Yes.

3 PANEL MEMBER COE: -- on how -- on you and how
4 you view the world. How do you think that shaped you as a
5 person?

6 MS. MCDONALD: Well, for one thing I absolutely
7 honor and respect the right to vote. That is to watch
8 people have to die to ensure that right for everyone was
9 just -- it was just wrong. It was just wrong. And I can
10 in no way take that right for granted. I never have
11 personally. And it's why I feel so strongly that no one
12 should have to do that, that everyone has a right to have
13 their voice heard without dogs and fire hoses.

14 It's why I think this process is so important and
15 it's so important for us as Commissioners to be committed
16 to the protection of the right for everyone, not just folks
17 who agree with us.

18 There are a lot of things about democracy that
19 are unfortunate and there are times when I think some
20 people really -- probably, you know, I'd be happier if they
21 didn't exercise the right, but that's not the point. It is
22 all -- it belongs to all of us and I never, ever want to
23 have to see anything like that again.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: How do you think that that
25 perspective will benefit the Commission should you be

1 appointed?

2 MS. MCDONALD: I think that that's a central
3 tenet that we, as Commissioners, need to explicitly adopt
4 from the beginning. I talked about commitment to the
5 process and commitment to the mission that's being
6 attributes that all Commissioners have to have. But I
7 honestly believe that as a group we need to be explicit
8 about doing our best to ensure that to the extent humanly
9 possible we respect the right of everyone to have his or
10 her voice heard.

11 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. In your essays and
12 in some of the answers you've already given today you
13 talked about all the experiences you've had working with
14 very diverse groups of people, both at home and abroad in
15 some of your work. And I'm wondering from those
16 experiences what do you think it is about those
17 experiences, or what have you specifically learned from
18 those experiences that you think would make you a good
19 representative for the diverse population of California?

20 MS. MCDONALD: I think that I physically manifest
21 some elements of diversity, but I also believe that I
22 articulate other voices respectfully and in ways that
23 people recognize. So, no one person can actually embody
24 all things, be all things to all people. But I believe
25 that people can and do trust that mine is a voice that can

1 speak for them authentically and respectfully.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Well, to switch
3 really quickly to the topic of communities of interest that
4 Ms. Dickison talked about a little earlier, my question is
5 regarding so communities are easier to find than others.
6 You mentioned having communities come forward and identify
7 themselves. But some communities would be rather hesitant
8 to do so --

9 MS. MCDONALD: Uh-hum.

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: -- aren't necessarily
11 comfortable engaging with authorities or with the
12 government. If you were to be on the Commission what would
13 you do, because as many perspectives as the Commission can
14 gather in their work is important to doing the best job
15 that they can. So, getting those groups to come forward
16 and feel comfortable sharing their perspective is going to
17 be a challenge.

18 MS. MCDONALD: It is.

19 PANEL MEMBER COE: How as a Commissioner would
20 you go about making some of those communities feel
21 comfortable coming forward to share their perspectives to
22 better inform the Commission?

23 MS. MCDONALD: The Mr. Rogers thing comes to me,
24 "Look for the helpers." I think that the Commission is
25 capable of researching and probably identifying people who

1 are advocates for a lot of communities that maintain
2 distance and privacy. And I think for the Commission to
3 approach the advocates for strategies and advice on how to
4 reach them, and hear them would be -- would be the wisest
5 way. But that is going to take some research on our part.

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. If you were
7 to be appointed to the Commission which aspects of the role
8 do you think you would enjoy the most and, conversely,
9 which aspects of that role do you think you might struggle
10 with a little bit?

11 MS. MCDONALD: I would struggle with the numeric
12 data stuff, you know, just the numbers. I can understand
13 them, but that's not my strong point. I can follow, I'm
14 educable, but I am not somebody who spontaneously thinks in
15 terms of numerical analysis, let's put it that way. But
16 again, I am very educable.

17 My strengths are going to be more in terms of
18 that eliciting interest, finding, hearing, listening for
19 and translating what seem to be the motivating forces for
20 these various communities of interest, and helping to
21 figure out how most effectively they might be grouped from
22 a cultural stand point.

23 My other contribution I think is communication.
24 I think I had my moments today when I've wondered whether
25 or not I've got a grasp of words, but I think that's the

1 situation, talking for an hour and a half.

2 But I am a good writer. And I'm a careful writer
3 and a good editor, and I am confident that I can help make
4 sure that our communications are thoughtful, respectful,
5 honest, and transparent.

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you, Ms. McDonald.
7 Madam Chair, no further questions at this time.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

9 We'll turn it over to Mr. Dawson now for follow-
10 up questions.

11 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you
12 again for being here Ms. McDonald.

13 I wanted to ask you about your application. I'm
14 trying to follow the timeline. It looked like you went to
15 go work for Chubb and Son after graduating from UCLA?

16 MS. MCDONALD: Correct.

17 MR. DAWSON: And you were an underwriter at the
18 beginning of your career there?

19 MS. MCDONALD: I was.

20 MR. DAWSON: And then, it looks like you were --
21 then you went to law school at Loyola while you were still
22 working at Chubb, is that correct?

23 MS. MCDONALD: Exactly.

24 MR. DAWSON: Why did you go to law school? Was
25 that a career opportunity to remain there, to become an

1 attorney at Chubb?

2 MS. MCDONALD: Law school had always been in the
3 back of my mind for a number of reasons, anyway. I loved
4 working at Chubb and particularly at that time. But I was
5 constrained in terms of upward mobility because my husband
6 had hemophilia, and so we could not live just anywhere. We
7 needed to stay in L.A. And that was a period in which if
8 you were going to move up, you needed to be able to be
9 transferred.

10 So, I took advantage of the time and the fact
11 that we did not have children at that point to go to law
12 school, with the idea of maximizing my professional
13 capacity there.

14 MR. DAWSON: Okay, thank you. While you were at
15 Chubb and working as an attorney, it looks like you did
16 construction defect liability litigation. But I took some
17 of your discussion today to indicate that litigation really
18 didn't fit your personality and you were more drawn towards
19 the ADR and mediation side, is that correct?

20 MS. MCDONALD: Exactly. That's correct. That's
21 why I left practice.

22 MR. DAWSON: Understood. So, when you were at
23 Pepperdine and you were teaching, it says you taught
24 mediation, negotiation, and cross-cultural alternative
25 dispute resolution. Was that a single class or was that

1 three different classes?

2 MS. MCDONALD: That was three or four different
3 classes.

4 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

5 MS. MCDONALD: It was multiple classes. I also
6 ran the externship program as a BIZ UA (phonetic).

7 MR. DAWSON: And that was to place students with
8 firms or government --

9 MS. MCDONALD: Not with firms. We placed
10 students in judicial offices and in public service
11 organizations, primarily. Not with private firms.

12 MR. DAWSON: I see. What is cross-cultural ADR
13 and how is that -- what makes it cross-cultural?

14 MS. MCDONALD: Well, in Los Angeles -- well, let
15 me back up. One of the other things that I was doing or
16 that I was teaching at Pepperdine was a clinic, a mediation
17 clinic. We had students, both law students and non-law
18 students who were working on a master's degree in
19 alternative dispute resolution.

20 And I set up a mediation clinic and taught
21 mediation, but the clinic was intended to provide them an
22 opportunity to practice those skills. And we worked in
23 small claims courts around L.A. and Ventura Counties.

24 Now, in small claims courts in L.A. and Ventura
25 County you are going to get people from many cultural

1 backgrounds in conflict. And many times that's the reason
2 why they're in conflict.

3 So, it was really the emphasis was much more on,
4 again on how to elicit those interests, the background
5 interests that were in conflict and find a way to translate
6 them so that the parties can understand. Being sensitive
7 to language differences, not just in terms of different
8 words, but the different significance of words. That's --
9 those are some ways in which cross-cultural differed from
10 the standard mediation class.

11 MR. DAWSON: Now, thinking towards if you are
12 selected to serve on the Commission, do you think that this
13 experience might give you a particular insight or
14 sensitivity in identifying the cultural drivers that
15 different community groups might have around the state?

16 MS. MCDONALD: I would hope so. It certainly
17 gives me a different sensitivity. I am -- I am aware of
18 the fact that you cannot just translate from English to
19 Spanish, or Hmong, or whatever. That there's a whole
20 constellation of meaning that comes with statements,
21 practices, and that we need to be aware of those, and try
22 to make sure that we understand as fully as possible what
23 is being said.

24 MR. DAWSON: I see, thank you. Let's see.

25 MS. PELLMAN: Excuse me, quick time check. We

1 have seven minutes remaining.

2 MR. DAWSON: Oh, thank you. I just have one more
3 follow up. In your response to standard question three,
4 which was about the greatest potential problem the
5 Commission could face, you say we're currently in a
6 potential crisis, which is the COVID-19 situation. Are you
7 concerned about the effect that the COVID-19 situation will
8 have on the Census and the underlying data that the
9 Commission will need to rely upon?

10 MS. MCDONALD: Yes. Yes, I am concerned. I'm
11 concerned about the effective ability of follow up for
12 people who don't respond to the initial request. I'm
13 concerned about -- well, both in terms of will we have
14 sufficient numbers of people to go out and ask those
15 follow-up questions? Are people going to feel safe letting
16 someone in. That's on top of the questions of immigration
17 status. I mean, there's immigration, there's health. So,
18 I am very concerned about the impact this is going to have.

19 MR. DAWSON: And by immigration status, you're
20 referring to the situation where undocumented folks might
21 be less likely to want to engage with the Census workers?

22 MS. MCDONALD: Might conceivably, yes.

23 MR. DAWSON: Yes. Okay, thank you. Those were
24 all my follow-up questions, Madam Chair. If you have -- if
25 any of the Panel has any additional follow ups.

1 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I do not have any
2 additional follow-up questions.

3 Mr. Belnap?

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not, either.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

6 PANEL MEMBER COE: No follow-up questions.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: There are no more follow-up
8 questions.

9 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Ms. McDonald, with the
10 remaining time, I'd like to offer you the opportunity to
11 make a closing statement to the Panel, if you wish.

12 MS. PELLMAN: And we have five minutes remaining.

13 MS. MCDONALD: Okay, thank you very much. As I
14 said in my initial -- oh, I am losing my voice and I'm
15 sorry. As I said in my initial essay, there are very many
16 things that I can't do and haven't been able to do to
17 improve the quality of our democracy, but this is something
18 that I honestly believe I can do to make a contribution,
19 and I would very much appreciate having that opportunity.

20 It's gone. It's gone. Thank you.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Ms. McDonald, for
23 speaking with us today.

24 Our next interview starts today at 1:15, so we
25 are going to recess until 1:14.

1 (Off the record at 12:11 p.m.)

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

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Time being 1:14. Calling the
4 Applicant Review Panel meeting back to order.

5 I'd like to welcome Ms. Linda Akutagawa. Did I
6 say that correctly?

7 MS. AKUTAGAWA: It's close.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

9 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Akutagawa.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: Akutagawa, thank you. Welcome
11 for your interview for today. I'm going to turn the right
12 over to Mr. Chris Dawson to read you the five standard
13 questions.

14 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 Good afternoon Ms. Akutagawa. I'm going to read
16 you five standard questions that the Panel has requested
17 that each applicant respond to. Are you ready?

18 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Yes.

19 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills and
20 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

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

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

25 In summary, how will you contribute to the

1 success of the Commission?

2 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, to the question of what
3 skills and attributes should all Commissioners possess and,
4 specifically, what skills or competencies should the
5 Commission possess collectively. I believe that in
6 addition to the three that were noted on the website,
7 relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial,
8 appreciation for California's diverse demographics and
9 geography, I also believe that these are some other skills
10 and attributes that the Commission should have
11 collectively.

12 One, curiosity. Two, open-mindedness. Three,
13 critical thinking or the ability to discern fact from
14 fiction, objectivity versus opinion. Next would be number
15 four, ability to balance competing needs. Five, long-
16 standing knowledge of California. And in my opinion, at
17 least ten plus years of residency given the task that this
18 Commission is being charged with. Next would be legal
19 knowledge, understanding of political landscapes, common
20 sense, and people before party.

21 I think that the task of redistricting is one
22 that I think collectively, while each person may not have
23 each one, I think collectively this is the skills and
24 attributes, competencies that I would love to see on a
25 Commission, as a resident of the State of California.

1 B, in terms of, of the skills, attributes and
2 competencies that each Commissioner should possess, which
3 do I possess? I believe that -- in no particular order, I
4 believe that I do have the ability to be impartial. I
5 believe that I am open-minded. I most definitely believe
6 that I have an appreciation for California's diverse
7 demographics and geography. I do have a long-standing
8 knowledge of California as a native Californian. I believe
9 that I have curiosity, as well as the analytical and
10 critical thinking skills. And also, the ability to balance
11 competing needs.

12 In summary, I believe I would contribute to the
13 success of this Commission in two ways. And I think -- I
14 say two ways because I believe that there are two ways to
15 measure success of the Commission. One is the Commission's
16 end product, which is the redistricting map. And second is
17 the Commission's process.

18 So, with the end product or the redistricting
19 maps, collectively I believe that all Commissioners would
20 bring our skills and attributes to ensure redistricting
21 that meets the following objectives. Fact-based,
22 objective, credible, sound, clear, and legally defensible.

23 Individually, I believe that I would contribute
24 to the credibility of the Commission's work and, therefore,
25 its success by bringing to the forefront my experiences

1 shaped as a minority within a minority, growing up in
2 California. And now, as a leader in one of our state's
3 fast-growing communities, for me I will always carry
4 memories and feelings shaped by invisibility and
5 marginalization.

6 Through my work I both seek out and am often
7 exposed to the demographic, geographic, and economic
8 diversity of California. I believe that my work and my
9 experiences growing up in California motivates me to be
10 mindful of others who may not be part of the larger
11 majority or larger minority, and it pushes me to ensure
12 that all diverse points of view are included, balanced, and
13 considered.

14 I believe that I'll also contribute to the
15 objectivity, soundness, clarity of the Commission's
16 redistricting work through my values and belief in fairness
17 and equity. It drives my actions to be open-minded,
18 curious, and also questioning of the status quo.

19 My values also include a strong belief in the
20 importance of high quality work and I will expect to draw
21 often from my analytical and thinking critical thinking
22 skills to ensure that the Commission's work will be fact-
23 based and legally defensible.

24 However, for the Commission to be successful and
25 achieve an end product that meets all of these desired

1 outcomes, I believe we must all commit to a process in
2 which we all listen actively and carefully, ask the hard
3 questions, be willing to challenge each other and the
4 status quo. Be willing to be wrong. Engage fully. Insure
5 inclusivity. Seek and proffer diverse perspectives. And
6 most importantly follow the rule of law and apply
7 appropriate legal principles and standards.

8 And given that this is a high stakes process that
9 will be influenced by competing agendas and perhaps large
10 egos, I believe I can bring in my abilities as an
11 experienced and long-time facilitator, and utilize my
12 skills such as active listening, ensuring equal
13 participation, and moving the discussions forward to meet
14 goals and objectives.

15 I've also learned that focusing on common
16 objectives that also result in benefits for a broader group
17 of people or organizations often yields greater and more
18 impactful results for all.

19 Also, additionally, as CEO of a nonprofit
20 organization, I often have to balance the needs and
21 interests of my staff with the needs and interests of my
22 board of directors. And I believe that I would bring those
23 competencies, such as impartial consideration of all
24 perspectives, careful analysis of data, thoughtful
25 consideration of the needs of the minority, as well as the

1 majority, keeping in mind the greater good and not what is
2 beneficial to an individual or a single entity, as well as
3 additional skills and ability to contribute to the success
4 of the Commission.

5 Work -- well, I guess question number two, I
6 guess. Should I just move on to that or --

7 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Should I go ahead -- and let
8 me ask question number two. Work on the Commission
9 requires members of different political backgrounds to work
10 together. Since the 2010 Commission was selected and
11 formed, the American political conversation has become
12 increasingly polarized, whether in the press, on social
13 media, and even in our own families.

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

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

20 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Thank you for that question. I
21 think in terms of the characteristics that I believe I
22 possess that will protect against hyperpartisanship, I
23 believe that I do bring the ability to be impartial and
24 open-minded. Also, curious. And also, bringing my
25 analytical and critical thinking skills. And as I had said

1 earlier, I think that ability to discern fact from fiction,
2 and also to discern objective opinion versus subjective
3 opinion. And the ability to balance competing needs.

4 I will share that I do come from a politically
5 mixed family and so, I've learned to navigate different
6 political perspectives and philosophies. And also, being a
7 native Californian I very much have an appreciation for our
8 state's diverse demographics and geography. And also,
9 having been here for my entire life, definitely I believe a
10 long-standing knowledge of the state, having seen it just
11 evolve in the way it has, and as it continues to evolve.

12 I believe that fellow Commissioners should also
13 possess the skills, as I mentioned that were on the
14 website. The relevant analytical skills and the ability to
15 be impartial and an appreciation for our state's diverse
16 demographics and geography. And I think those three were
17 on there because I think those are the minimal
18 characteristics that we should all have.

19 But in addition to that, I think it would be
20 nice, again, for our other fellow Commissioners to bring on
21 curiosity and open-mindedness as well, too, and the
22 critical thinking skills, and the ability to balance
23 competing needs.

24 I would also say people before party. I think
25 those things would at least be able to ensure that we'll be

1 looking for that common good and what is going to be the
2 best for the State of California and its residents.

3 In terms of what would I do to ensure that the
4 work of the Commission is not seen as polarized, or
5 hyperpartisan, or avoid perceptions of political bias and
6 conflict. When I responded to the question above, as well
7 as the previous questions, and also the questions on the
8 application form, I believe that I responded to those
9 questions with that particular question in mind. How do we
10 avoid hyperpartisanship or perceptions of political bias
11 and conflict.

12 I think that having that is definitely one of the
13 influencing factors in the way I think I would shape all of
14 my answers. I think given the state of our political
15 discourse nationally, as well as just in terms of our
16 regional and local politics, the perceptions may be hard to
17 avoid. But as much as possible, I would seek to stay
18 focused and remind the other members of the Commission that
19 we have a larger vision and mission to accomplish, the
20 successful achievement of the Commission's end goal and
21 product.

22 And additionally, while this may seem cliché, I
23 think I would point to my background and my work as a
24 facilitator and also as a nonprofit CEO. I would suggest
25 and encourage an opening Commission retreat with all the

1 Commissioners to quickly build understanding and
2 relationships amongst the Commissioners, and facilitate a
3 sense of team amongst the Commissioners.

4 I think I've found that the more we can build
5 relationships, build trust, get to know each other better,
6 I think the more we're going to be willing to listen to
7 each other, to understand each other, and to also see some
8 other, different perspectives versus just immediately just
9 saying you're this and you're that because of what your
10 political beliefs may be.

11 I would also encourage continued team building
12 and relationship building activities to reinforce the
13 commitment and sense that the Commissioners are all a
14 united team working towards a common goal. I believe that
15 when most, if not all of the Commissioners across various
16 political perspectives can maintain and model some level of
17 cohesiveness, then I think it will lend greater credibility
18 and assurance within the communities that the work is not
19 polarized or hyperpartisan.

20 I think that becomes really important because how
21 we model it, how we talk to each other, how we interact
22 with each other I think sends messages to people as to
23 whether or not they can trust what we're doing, how we're
24 doing it, and whether or not the end product is something
25 that they, too, can believe it. That it is something that

1 was very carefully thought through and taking into the
2 account many, many different diverse perspectives.

3 And I will also -- I believe that I'll also draw
4 upon my values and belief in fairness, and equity, and high
5 quality work, and the behaviors that result from that,
6 those beliefs and values, such as open-mindedness,
7 curiosity, and the quest to discern fact from fiction, to
8 avoid perceptions of political bias and conflict. I think,
9 to me, that's really important.

10 The Commission would have a really important task
11 and I believe that being able to ensure that it could be
12 done as best as possible in a way that would be seen as
13 being free of a bias would be, I think, a really important
14 goal that we should all work together towards.

15 And lastly, and as importantly I would advocate a
16 push for transparency. And regular, and if possible,
17 frequent communication with communities and stakeholders.
18 I think it's important that they also understand what we're
19 doing and what we're going through so that they can be
20 brought along on the journey that the Commission is going
21 to be on to ensure a fair and equitable redistricting
22 process. And for me, I think that that's going to be a
23 really important part of ensuring that we would not be seen
24 as being hyperpartisan or politically biased.

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. AKUTAGAWA: For me, I mean there's a lot of
5 different things that I think that could be encountered.
6 But I think for me what really struck me the most is that
7 communities don't trust the Commission and eventually the
8 end product.

9 I think referring back to your hyperpartisan
10 question, I think that there is a real suspicion of
11 government, but also about what government entities are
12 producing. And that's where I think being able to discern
13 fact from fiction is going to be important.

14 But more importantly, to be able to help provide
15 a way in which the communities that we'll be representing
16 and working with can trust in what we as a Commission would
17 be doing. I think it's important to be fair, to care, to
18 be inclusive, and to be also common sense.

19 So, the actions that I would take to try to avoid
20 those problems I think first starts with communication.
21 It's communication, communication, communication. And as I
22 just mentioned previously, I would advocate a push for as
23 much transparency as we can legally provide. I would also
24 push for and advocate for regular and, if possible,
25 frequent communication with communities and stakeholders.

1 I think the more people feel like they're being informed,
2 that they're kept engaged, and that they're being brought
3 along, I think that way then there's less likelihood of
4 misinformation being pushed, misinformation being shared.

5 I would also advise that the Commission identify
6 and get to know key influencers in various communities.
7 Ensure that they, too, are kept up to date and informed of
8 the work and progress of the Commission. I think that that
9 will also be an important way of ensuring not only more
10 trust, but also, hopefully, less likelihood of perceptions
11 and charges of hyperpartisanship and political bias.

12 And lastly, I think it would be important for us
13 to create commitment and the sense Commissioners are all a
14 united team. Again, I think if we're seen as being at
15 cross-purposes, then that is going to create I think the
16 kind of the foil for distrust amongst all the communities
17 that will be relying on us. And I think that's where it's
18 important that we come together as a united group.

19 And I believe that when most, if not all of the
20 Commissioners across various political perspectives can
21 maintain and model this level, or some level of
22 cohesiveness, then it will lend greater credibility and
23 assurance within the communities that the work can be
24 trusted.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question four. If you

1 are selected, you will be one of 14 members of the
2 Commission which is charged with working together to create
3 maps of the new districts. Please describe a situation
4 where you had to work collaboratively with others on a
5 project to achieve a common goal.

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

9 What lessons would you take from this group
10 experience to the Commission if selected?

11 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, I have two examples that I
12 want to share with you. The first example is using my role
13 as the CEO of my organization. We recently underwent a
14 strategic planning process and together with our leadership
15 team on staff, and our board of directors we underwent
16 essentially a year and a half long process to determine and
17 to develop this strategic plan.

18 We worked with a consultant. But we also had a
19 strategic plan committee of the board that also helped with
20 the -- with guiding and representing the board's
21 perspective, and working with myself and two of my
22 executive team members to produce, eventually, what would
23 be our strategic plan for the next three years.

24 And so, my role in the group or in this
25 particular project was both as the lead staff person, as

1 the CEO, but also working as that representative to the
2 board as well, too, and interacting and liaising with the
3 board committee. And I believe, I described myself, and I
4 think I described this in my application as well, too, I
5 feel that I'm the fulcrum. I'm the one that creates that
6 balance between the board and the staff. And it's a --
7 just being able to undergo that kind of process is
8 interesting.

9 This is my third strategic plan, but this year
10 was the most interesting in the sense that this was the
11 greatest level of engagement that I've had from the board
12 and it was great in the sense that they were much more
13 invested in being able to provide input in what they wanted
14 to see in the strategic plan. Interestingly, in the
15 previous years there's been some engagement, but not to the
16 level that we had this year.

17 And I will say that there were some, perhaps,
18 rough spots that had come up during the course of the
19 planning phases that we had. I think there were some
20 disagreements in both approach, but also in terms of some
21 of the conclusions that we had. And at times it was from
22 my staff side, at times it was from the board's side. At
23 times it was a result of our consultant.

24 And I believe that I was the one in the middle,
25 or at least that's the role that I chose to take is the one

1 in the middle, ensuring that all sides were being heard.
2 That we were coming together, having conversations. At
3 times it also meant that I had to have one-on-one
4 conversations with staff, with the consultant, with the
5 board, and then having joint conversations where
6 appropriate, and then having a larger conversation with the
7 board committee, the consultant, and the staff to be able
8 to resolve and come to a place that we were all agreeable
9 to, that we all felt that we could be comfortable with.

10 And I think a lot of it was centered around the
11 idea that we all had a common goal that what we're doing,
12 what we're trying to do is what's best for the
13 organization. And I think that that common goal makes
14 things easier.

15 And there were times when there were compromises.
16 There were times when it was more a matter of clarification
17 of what was meant on one group's perspective over another
18 group's perspective. I think eventually what we ended up
19 with is a product that we're comfortable with, that we can
20 all feel that we can very proudly stand behind. And so,
21 for that, that's something that I feel like I've really
22 taken a -- I continue to learn from these kinds of
23 opportunities in terms of working with people with
24 different interests, different agendas, different
25 perspectives, but we all share a common goal.

1 I want to share another project example in which
2 -- it's a little bit different from my organization, but
3 it's related to my organization. So, as CEO of my
4 organization, my nonprofit organization, I'm also part of
5 coalitions and partnerships with other organizations. And
6 there's this one in particular called the Alliance for
7 Board Diversity. It's a national collaboration of four
8 diverse leadership organizations, which includes my
9 organization representing Asian and Pacific Islanders,
10 along with organizations representing Black African
11 Americans, Hispanic Latinos, and women.

12 And around this particular project what we're
13 trying to do is to advocate for greater diversity on
14 Fortune 500 corporate boards. And within that this year,
15 the last -- I'm in my second year right now. My role is as
16 Chair of this Alliance for Board Diversity.

17 Now, this is an all-volunteer group. It's not a
18 formally constructed partnership, or collaboration, or
19 organization. It is an informal organization of our four
20 organizations, and all working together to move towards
21 this larger goal of seeing greater diversity on corporate
22 boards.

23 And so, as part of it we also have a partnership
24 with Deloitte Consulting, and around--partnering around a
25 research report that we, every two years, put out together,

1 jointly. And recently there were some conflicts that arose
2 in regards to some perceptions of not respecting the terms
3 of the agreement that our organizations have with them.
4 And we recently had a joint meeting with all of our
5 organizations and Deloitte.

6 What was interesting is each of the different
7 organizations, the partner organizations, had a different
8 perspective on the situation related to this conflict that
9 was perceived with Deloitte. And some organizations were
10 in different places. Other organizations were in
11 completely other places. Partly because we all have
12 different relationships individually with Deloitte. Some
13 were we don't care. Let's just tell them what's wrong, why
14 we're bothered. Others were let's be more careful. I
15 don't think that there's any harm meant on their end.
16 Others were, well, we need to say something, but we just
17 need to be careful about how we go about saying it.

18 So, the joint meeting that we had with them
19 recently was the solution. What we did is we ended up
20 taking on a little bit softer, somewhat more indirect
21 approach to addressing the conflict.

22 And my role was to balance the needs and
23 interests of all the other three organizations to ensure
24 that their needs were all met, but at the same time
25 addressing or at least informing and bringing up with

1 Deloitte that there was an issue that came up that was
2 really bothering the partners. And so, it was a difficult
3 conversation. But all in all, working together with
4 another partner, my partner and I were able to
5 diplomatically bring up the issue and have a discussion
6 that then led to, I believe, a resolution that I think
7 satisfied all of us.

8 And so, I believe that that's an approach that I
9 would also bring to the Commission as well, to -- I'm more
10 than happy to have difficult conversations, but I also
11 believe that working together, in partnership with
12 everybody collaboratively will end us -- will take us to a
13 place where I think we can continue to work more
14 effectively together.

15 MS. PELLMAN: A quick time check, you have four
16 minutes, 30 seconds.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

18 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Okay.

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

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

1 have a variety of perspectives?

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

6 MS. AKUTAGAWA: I'll repeat some of the ones that
7 I've said before that I think are important for
8 Commissioners to have. I think if I'm selected as a
9 Commissioner, I think some of the skills and attributes
10 that I would bring in interacting with people from
11 different backgrounds, and who have a wide variety of
12 perspectives are I think my -- the ability to be open-
13 minded and having an appreciation for our state's diverse
14 demographics, and geography, and my knowledge of
15 California, as well as my curiosity about people. I think
16 I -- every one of us has something interesting to share,
17 has interesting backgrounds and stories, and I'm always
18 curious as to what makes people tick. And I'm interesting
19 in hearing their stories.

20 I think in terms of the experiences that I've
21 had, I wrote on my application that I'm a lifelong native
22 Californian. I was born and raised here in Southern
23 California. I went to school here. I got my college
24 degree here. I've lived my adult life here. And I
25 oftentimes felt that growing up as a minority within a

1 minority, California was a different place. I often felt
2 that my voice as an Asian American, as well as I think for
3 other diverse Californians as well, too, was regularly
4 erased, or rendered invisible, and oftentimes counted
5 really for nothing. We were certainly not oftentimes cited
6 in terms surveys, and polls that often that were put in
7 place.

8 Today, I know California is in a very different
9 place. Diversity is one of our state's greatest strengths.
10 And I think ensuring that our diversity is reflected and
11 honored in our civic and political process, including a
12 commission like the Redistricting Commission is important
13 in terms of fair and equal representation, and ensuring
14 that our perspectives are reflected.

15 And I grew up in the working class suburbs of the
16 San Gabriel Valley. And there, growing up, it was not the
17 kind of community that it is now. It was a majority
18 Mexican American kind of community, working class white.
19 And I felt a very strong affinity with all of my friends
20 who were, at the time, Mexican American and white, with
21 very little Asians. Although now, it's a very different
22 kind of place.

23 But I think what also has helped is that my
24 immigrant father has instilled in me a broader appreciation
25 of California's diverse landscape. And so, I really very

1 much look fondly on some our family road trips across all
2 regions of California during my formative years. And as a
3 student at Cal State L.A., I saw that it was an environment
4 that the diversity of a student body was reflective of the
5 changing demographics. And I lived and worked for nearly
6 two years in San Diego.

7 Today, I'm leading a nonprofit organization. I
8 travel all across the state. And I feel that it exposes me
9 to the demographic, geographic, and economic diversity of
10 California.

11 I'm working with people from corporate leadership
12 all the way to student activists, who are coming from
13 working class and other low-income backgrounds. And really
14 just, you know, just being able to work across all
15 different kind of economic sectors.

16 I've had the fortunate privilege of being able to
17 participate in programs through Asian American Advancing
18 Justice, a program called Leadership Development --

19 MS. PELLMAN: Thirty seconds remaining.

20 MS. AKUTAGAWA: -- and Interactive Relations,
21 The California Connections Program, and also on Southern
22 California Edison's Consumer Advisory Panel has really
23 helped to expose me to a broad range of different people.

24 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. We're going
25 to now go to Panel questions. Each of the Panel Members

1 will have 20 minutes to ask his or her questions. And
2 we'll start with the Chair, Ms. Dickison.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon, Ms. Akutagawa.
4 So, I was looking at your diversity -- or, your essay on
5 impartiality and you talked about your experience as a
6 member of Southern California Edison's Consumer Advisory
7 Panel, and how it challenged you to listen to and consider
8 opposing opinions and perspectives, and reconcile it with
9 the needs of the company and the larger customer.

10 Could you provide an example of a time that you
11 changed your mind after considering certain information
12 when participating on this panel?

13 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Thanks for asking that question.
14 I think I would -- we were presented often with a lot of
15 different aspects of the Southern California Edison
16 business. And one of the -- I think one of the -- I would
17 say one of the issues that really sticks in my mind even
18 today is really thinking about how Edison -- Edison's
19 relationship with what they would call, I guess it's like
20 the future grid. You know, the way the new, I guess
21 electricity, and what's that going to mean in terms of the
22 way that they're going to deliver electricity.

23 What was really interesting is being able to see
24 from their perspective how they've been also able to shift
25 to the use of -- or leveraging solar energy. I guess I

1 always thought solar energy was -- it would be something
2 that would be good, but I didn't really see how it aligned
3 with the Southern California Edison energy kind of plan.
4 And it was interesting to see how they explained how
5 they're able to -- I guess they're not the generators,
6 necessarily, so it would be -- I'm doing a terrible job,
7 actually, of explaining it. But just the way they
8 explained it that eventually they're going to be able to
9 have people, if they have solar panels, the company is
10 going to be able to draw upon those solar panels as part of
11 their energy transmission.

12 It was very interesting in the sense that there
13 were some different perspectives on how solar energy would
14 be used. I think it was just seen as something that would
15 be -- something that would be detrimental to the company,
16 even though there is a move towards nontraditional
17 electrical generation.

18 And being able to understand that and hearing
19 from different people who had different perspectives around
20 the role of solar energy, as well as other green energy
21 uses was pretty interesting for me, as somebody who wasn't
22 very well versed in it. And I'll be honest, even though I
23 have concerns about being much more environmental friendly,
24 I'm also -- I also thought about how is this going to help
25 us because not everybody is going to be able to afford

1 solar energy, and the kind of programs, and I think other
2 perspectives -- or, more programs to help bring these
3 opportunities to more people are things that I'm watching
4 with interest now.

5 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, you've
6 been working at LEAP, Leadership Education for Asian
7 Pacifics since 1992?

8 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Yes.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Can you tell me a little bit
10 about LEAP? I'm not really that familiar with it.

11 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Sure. So, we are a leadership
12 development organization founded to, as I like to say,
13 grow, develop and uncap the talent of Asian American,
14 Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander leaders that I
15 believe is in all of our community members.

16 I like to say that the work that we do spans from
17 the classroom to the boardroom across various life stages.
18 And a lot of the work that we primarily are doing is
19 helping people transition from one life stage to the next.

20 So, we're working with students in college
21 transition into their first jobs, their early career jobs.
22 We're working with people who have been working in their
23 roles, whether it's in corporations, nonprofits, higher
24 education institutions, government sector roles, working,
25 transitioning from their early career roles to mid-career.

1 And then, from mid-career roles to transitioning more into
2 executive level roles.

3 We believe that that's where our sweet spot has
4 been in terms of being able to help people really find how
5 they can best be effective as leaders within the kind of
6 roles that they are now, but more importantly what they
7 could do when they -- as they look towards their next step
8 in their career.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: And you do that through
10 training, advocacy, both?

11 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, our work is primarily
12 leadership development programming. We do multiple-day
13 programs that are integrated, and really helping people to
14 discover themselves. And all of our programming is from an
15 Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander cultural lens.
16 Really helping them to discover how they can be their most
17 authentic self as a leader.

18 And so we have multiple-day programs, as I
19 mentioned, that are integrated across days, as well as over
20 several months. We do cohort-driven programs. And then,
21 we also provide workshops that are half-day, one-day. And
22 then we also do a lot of educational work in terms of
23 presentations about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,
24 as well, too, in terms of depending on what an organization
25 or a client may want from us.

1 In this time of COVID-19, we're also doing a lot
2 of work to help keep our community members connected
3 together. So, what we're providing is virtual
4 conversations based around themes that people are
5 interested in. And really, just trying to provide
6 opportunities for what I would call mental resiliency.

7 I think right now we're all working at home. We
8 have our families in some cases, for those who are
9 fortunate to have families with them. People may have
10 coworkers if they are working remotely. But I know that
11 over the course of the day as I think about how we just
12 normally go about our days we oftentimes interact with
13 people, and we don't have that. So, right now, random
14 people, you know, just someone that we might run into that
15 we know at lunch, or somebody we'll know -- we'll meet for
16 the first time. Those little kinds of interactions are
17 something that we're trying to replicate right now.

18 And so, we're pivoting in terms of being able to
19 provide something for our community while we're in this
20 moment of COVID-19.

21 And so, it's also helping us to shift in terms of
22 the kind of programming that we'll be providing, hopefully,
23 to more people, but a lot of our work is face to face. And
24 again, really trying to help people discover and really
25 leverage their most authentic selves from the cultural

1 perspective, either as someone who's Asian American or
2 Pacific Islander.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, based on the
4 work that you do with LEAP, what skill sets do you think
5 would translate and assist you in connecting with
6 communities throughout the state in the work of the
7 Commission?

8 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Well, I think for me, in terms of
9 the work that I do, a lot of what I do is the leadership
10 development. I think really helping people to discover
11 their best self in terms of their best and most authentic
12 self.

13 I think also what I would be able to do, and I
14 think this is normally just how I operate, is I'm curious
15 about people. I think the work that I do is centered
16 around that curiosity of people, both in terms of knowing
17 them, but also I would consider myself to a degree an
18 educator, as well, too, and helping people to understand my
19 communities.

20 And so, I think that that kind of back and forth
21 and being able to have exchanges, and to learn from each
22 other is something that I think is something that I would
23 bring to the Commission.

24 And I think with that comes with -- with that,
25 also, an open-mindedness. Because I think as I'm curious

1 about people I try really hard not to go in with a
2 preformed notion.

3 And I had actually a moment, this happened about
4 a couple years ago. I travel around the country for the
5 work that I do, delivering -- I deliver training, as well
6 as just running my organization. Part of what I do is I
7 deliver training as well, too. And so, I've been
8 facilitating for close to 30 years, now. And a couple
9 years ago I had the chance to do some work at NASA in
10 Florida. And again, I just take people at who they are, at
11 least that's what I try my best to do. And there was -- I
12 was there for two consecutive days. And each day I was
13 having lunch with the people that I was working with. They
14 were in the diversity and inclusion area, and so we would
15 have lunch together. And we would just have conversations,
16 I think just normal conversations, every-day conversations
17 that I think people who are just breaking bread would do.

18 And it was on the second day and one of the --
19 one of the individuals who I was sitting and having lunch
20 with made a comment that it was interesting to me. She
21 goes, oh, you know, this has been really nice. I just
22 didn't expect that. I thought because you're from
23 California, I thought you would be different. And I
24 thought, oh, I never thought about that I would be
25 different. I just thought we're just people and I never

1 thought about it in this kind of way.

2 But it struck me that they must have thought or
3 had some preformed notions about me. Maybe because of my
4 ethnicity, maybe because I'm a woman, maybe, obviously
5 because I'm from California. But I think just in having
6 just the kind of normal conversation I think they were able
7 to realize that. I'm as much a normal person as they are,
8 as well, too, and I think we found commonalities.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, in a lot of your
10 work you've advocated for Asians and Pacific Islanders.
11 What do you see as the Commission's role in advocacy?

12 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Well, yeah, a lot of my role is
13 advocating for the Asian and Pacific Islander communities.
14 And I would say that that's probably my primary focus.

15 I will also say that I'm an advocate for all
16 diverse communities as well, too. I think that we are only
17 as strong as all of us standing together.

18 And I think in terms of the Commission and its
19 role in advocacy, you know, advocacy is -- at least for me
20 it's a little bit of a loaded work. I think it depends on
21 what you mean by advocacy.

22 There's advocacy as in I'm going to lobby for one
23 position or one perspective, only. Or, advocacy could also
24 mean that I'm here to represent the viewpoint of a group of
25 people or groups of people, but at the same time to ensure

1 that their perspectives are not overlooked, or ignored, or
2 left out, but not at the cost of marginalizing another
3 group.

4 And so for me, it's more advocacy in the latter
5 way that I think in terms of the Commission's role advocacy
6 is to ensure that all of the diverse communities within
7 California are included in this whole entire process. That
8 their needs are also considered very seriously.

9 And I know we have so much diversity. And even
10 within the larger diverse groups there's even more levels
11 of diversity. I'll just use the Asian American community
12 as an example. I know it's easy sometimes for people think
13 that we're monolithically all the same. You know, the
14 stereotypes about us as being the model minority is pretty
15 common in terms of the work that I do and what I hear.

16 But we're also a community that when I present
17 and talk to others who are interested in learning more
18 about the Asian American community I speak to them and I
19 say, you know, one of the first things I say is we are a
20 community of extremes and we have a lot of diversity. But
21 oftentimes people see just one end, which is we're very
22 wealthy, and well-educated. But we have everybody in
23 between and we have also a significant portion that are
24 struggling, that are not as well educated, that are not as
25 wealthy, and have great needs, but oftentimes may be

1 overlooked.

2 And so, and I know that's the same in the other
3 diverse communities as well, too. And so, I think our role
4 as a Commission is to ensure that all of those different
5 perspectives, and advocating for all of the communities
6 that may be overlooked or marginalized are going to be
7 brought in.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

9 MS. PELLMAN: We have three minutes, 42 seconds
10 remaining.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: So, the first eight members of
12 the Commission are selected randomly and then they are
13 tasked with selecting the next six. If you're one of the
14 first eight, what would you be looking for in those final
15 six Commissioners?

16 MS. AKUTAGAWA: I think I would like to know just
17 what the first eight Commissioners would bring. And I
18 would like to look for Commissioners that would help to
19 balance out and can complement the skill sets, and the
20 competencies, and the attributes of the -- of the eight
21 that have already been randomly selected.

22 I think the more balance and the more well-
23 rounded group that we can have, then the likelier, then,
24 that we're going to have a product, you know, end result
25 that is going to be again, I think, not only much stronger,

1 but the likelihood is one that will be seen as both
2 credible, and sound, and legally defensible as well, too.

3 I think that I will also acknowledge, having done
4 the work that I've done that diverse team can bring
5 conflict with it, but I think if there are ways in which we
6 can find how we can all find that common ground, I think
7 we're going to come out better together for having
8 complementary, but diverse skill sets on the Commission.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I don't have further
10 questions at this time. So, I'm going to turn it over to
11 Mr. Belnap for his 20 minutes.

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Hi. Good afternoon. Thank
13 you for being with us. I want to follow up on a few of
14 your answers today, mostly because I'm curious and just to
15 fill in a few blanks for me.

16 You've said a couple times that you're a minority
17 within a minority. What do you mean by that?

18 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, and I would say so I grew up
19 here in California. And the California today is a very
20 different California from when I was growing up. I grew up
21 in the San Gabriel Valley and I was the -- we were the only
22 -- my family was the only Asian family in the region that
23 -- at least -- and when I call region, I mean literally as
24 I think about being, you know, a child in the area I grew
25 up in. Within the blocks that I lived in we were the only,

1 really, Asian family in the nearby area. And everybody
2 else around me was Mexican American. And I tell people,
3 it's like I very specifically say Mexican American because
4 at the time when I was growing up everybody was Mexican
5 American. There was not the kind of Latino diversity that
6 I think we have now. And we also had white working class
7 folks as well, too.

8 And growing up through, just through K through
9 12, high school, and even to a degree maybe even into
10 college. But more just thinking about growing up into high
11 school I used to look at the yard signs for local city
12 council elections, for mayor, and I was an avid reader, so
13 even in junior high and high school I would regularly read
14 the newspaper to just understand what's going on around me.
15 And I always noted with interest that whenever there were
16 polls taken in the State of California, especially the exit
17 polls or other kinds of polls about what do people in
18 California think I always noted that there was always
19 black, Hispanic, and white on the kind of polling numbers
20 that they collected, but never any polling on Asians.

21 And within that I realized that I was part of a
22 demographic in the state that didn't have a voice. And we
23 were a minority within the minority group.

24 And today it's a little bit different, I think,
25 now, but it is different, but it isn't different. So,

1 Asian Americans now make up the second largest minority
2 group in the State of California after Latinos. But, yet,
3 it still is interesting to me that polls could be conducted
4 in the State of California and there is not an Asian
5 American perspective reflected. It's not every time, but I
6 do see it once in a while. And I think it's interesting
7 that in a state that has nearly 15 percent Asians, and
8 Asian population in the State of California that they
9 couldn't find enough to, you know, get polling numbers on.

10 And so, it's just interesting to me. I think
11 that's why I speak about being a minority within a
12 minority. And I think that that has influenced me in terms
13 of the way I see the world, the way I do my work, the way
14 in which I feel like when there are minority perspectives
15 even within the larger Asian community, I feel it's
16 important to ensure that other minority voices are -- are
17 at least encouraged to be included, to speak up. And also,
18 cognizant of my role that when I've in more diverse spaces,
19 too, that I have to speak up as well, too, and to be able
20 to provide at least a perspective as well.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. I'm also curious,
22 in your answer to question four you talked about an issue
23 related to Deloitte and a coalition that had been put
24 together. So, what was the issue related to Deloitte that
25 was bothering some of the partners in the coalition?

1 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, yeah, thank you for asking
2 that. I didn't know how much detail to give. So, we have
3 an agreement between the four partners and Deloitte, so we
4 jointly put together a research report that looks at --
5 it's a census of Fortune 500 board directors that are
6 African American, Hispanic, Asian, and women, and Deloitte
7 is our partner in terms of gathering some level of data,
8 and then our group each do some additional level of data
9 verification.

10 And as part of that project, we've been -- we're
11 in our second iteration with, second I guess round with
12 Deloitte. And as part of the agreement one of the things
13 that our four partner organizations were very specific
14 about saying is that should any partner want to utilize the
15 joint data that they do need to notify the other partners
16 and let us know.

17 What had happened is that we had a point of
18 conflict between our four organizations and Deloitte around
19 including in this census report our recommendations for
20 what companies could do to increase diversity or to get
21 more diverse board members onto their board. And in this
22 particular case Deloitte was very adamant that they did not
23 want to include those recommendations in our census report.
24 So, we thought, okay, then we'll just do the census report
25 and our four organizations as a Joint Alliance for Board

1 Diversity will just issue our own separate report with our
2 recommendations.

3 We were getting ready to do so. We had been
4 trying to notify Deloitte that we were going to be coming
5 out with that. And we were getting ready to do so and they
6 then notified us that they are coming out with their own
7 version of the recommendations in partnership with a
8 completely different organization, referring to our data,
9 not giving us really any kind of credit other than a very
10 small line embedded within a very dense press release.

11 And you could imagine that the partners were not
12 too happy, particularly the lead research organization
13 partner on this, and they were not too happy to see that
14 the work that we had done had been taken advantage of, and
15 especially because they were the ones that were the reason
16 that we did not go out with that in our joint report.

17 And so, we had to have a conversation with the
18 lead partner from Deloitte about it. Each of the other
19 organizations, they all have varying relationships with
20 Deloitte, so there was some desire to preserve that
21 relationship.

22 And even though my organization doesn't have a
23 relationship with Deloitte, I still have to keep into
24 account the needs of my other three partners, and we wanted
25 to find a way in which we can successfully resolve this

1 without blowing the entire relationship. And so, I think
2 we were able to do that. There's still some grumbling, but
3 I think for the most part people are satisfied that we had
4 our say, the lead partner was put on notice that what we
5 agreed upon was not followed, and that we'll see what's
6 going to happen going forward. But she is aware that we
7 were pretty unhappy about what had happened.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Does the coalition provide --

9 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Maybe that was a little more,
10 maybe more than you wanted to know.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: No, that's what I wanted to
12 know. Does the coalition provide funding for the research
13 that Deloitte does or do you provide data?

14 MS. AKUTAGAWA: We provide data. So, we each are
15 responsible -- so, there's no funding that's provided.
16 Each organization I guess you could say provides our own
17 resources from each of our organizations to conduct the
18 work.

19 So, Deloitte does the initial round of data
20 gathering and then that data is shared with each of our
21 other organizations. And then what we do is data
22 verification, and so, each of our teams are responsible for
23 data verification. And then, Deloitte, once the data's
24 revised or verified, then Deloitte is responsible for PR
25 and the I guess the production of the final report that is

1 distributed.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. And one
3 other follow-up question, so LEAP, the organization that
4 you're CEO of, how does it get its funding?

5 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, we get our funding from
6 various sources. We get corporate sponsorships, foundation
7 funding, and individual donor, and also fee-for-service.
8 So, what we do do is the leadership development programs
9 that we provide, we have either straight fee-for-service
10 relationships where a company will hire us to come in and
11 provide leadership training for their employees or as part
12 of the sponsorship packages that we have, or the
13 sponsorship relationships we have with our sponsors we'll
14 also include some of our leadership development programming
15 as part of the sponsorship package option.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Does LEAP engage in
17 any legislative advocacy?

18 MS. AKUTAGAWA: No.

19 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

20 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Other than we're asked sometimes
21 to sign onto a letter, we'll do that related to things that
22 may be in alignment with either Asian American -- Asian or
23 Pacific Islander community issues, or issues related to
24 nonprofit organizations. But we do not do any lobbying,
25 either in Sacramento or in Washington, D.C.

1 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. You've
2 spent the majority of your professional career advocating
3 for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. I'd
4 like you to provide us an example or an experience that you
5 have had that would demonstrate to other ethnic communities
6 that they should trust you to listen to their concerns, and
7 advocate to them -- advocate for them, if warranted.

8 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Sure. So, I think one would be
9 the Alliance for Board Diversity example. I did say that
10 we don't lobby. I did, though, have the opportunity, for
11 example, to testify before the House Financial Services
12 Committee related to the Alliance for Board Diversity, and
13 specifically around corporate board diversity.

14 I was there, though, in my role as Chair for the
15 Alliance for Board Diversity. So, I was very cognizant of
16 my role there as the Chair of the Alliance for Board
17 Diversity, that I'm not there just to advocate for Asian
18 Americans and Pacific Islanders, and having more from my
19 community on corporate board.

20 I was very careful and I was also very much
21 cognizant that I wanted to make sure that I equally
22 represented a perspective that was representative of the
23 black African American community, the Hispanic Latino
24 community and then, of course the Asian and Pacific
25 Islander community as well, too. And then, of course also

1 bringing in data or sharing data with the committee about
2 the representation of women across all of those different
3 ethnic communities.

4 I also have another example that I would give to
5 you. I oftentimes partner with other, different ethnic
6 communities, in particular in Southern California. Last
7 year I had the opportunity to partner with the African
8 American Board Leadership Institute, the California Latino
9 Leadership Institute, the L.A. African American Women's
10 Public Policy Institute, the Women's Business Enterprise
11 Council, and also the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning
12 Council.

13 And that was around an opportunity to get or
14 educate our communities, our diverse communities around
15 opportunities on state commissions, boards and commissions.
16 And so, it did feature Assemblywoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove
17 for that particular event.

18 But I work, I definitely look for ways and the
19 Executive Director of the African American Board Leadership
20 Institute and I, we oftentimes are looking for ways where
21 we can partner together. We've had some other projects
22 that we've tried doing some work on jointly, together.
23 Some which don't always materialize because the funding
24 doesn't come through. But where it is that we can, we do
25 try to work together. And I believe that as much as I can,

1 I do try to advocate for other communities in addition to
2 my own.

3 I believe that in terms of success for the Asian
4 and Pacific Islander communities, I think we also need to
5 advocate for others as well, too. Because I think, you
6 know, we are here because others have done the same for us.
7 I believe it's important that we do the same for others as
8 well, too.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. One more
10 question. Can you walk us through an example of an
11 analysis you have performed where you had to compile and
12 analyze data, and other information?

13 MS. PELLMAN: Time check, we have five minutes,
14 20 seconds remaining.

15 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Okay. I think part -- one of the
16 things -- oh, I guess I would -- I would point to, and I
17 think I shared this in my application. I wrote -- I was
18 asked to do a scholarly article in which I did have to
19 gather data as well, too. I think in terms of -- I'll be
20 honest, I think in terms of that one it's data that I was
21 familiar with, but it was looking for data. And it was
22 also a practitioner's point of view in terms of leadership
23 in the Asian American community.

24 But I am oftentimes looking for and gathering
25 data for the workshops and presentations that I give. In

1 that particular article, I was looking for representation
2 of Asian Americans in different industry sectors, and
3 looking at different sources. I will say that Google is
4 awesome and it has helped a lot in terms of looking for the
5 kind of data that may be out there.

6 If you're asking or if you're wondering do I do a
7 lot of statistical analysis and things like that, I will
8 say that that's not something that I do or have had a
9 background in, in terms of my career. So, but I do look
10 for regulatory, I think, data that will help to tell the
11 story that I'm trying to tell. And, unfortunately,
12 sometimes it's out there and sometimes it's not. And but I
13 try as best as I can to ensure that what I'm trying to
14 explain is also backed up by data as well, too. I just
15 don't want to leave it to just it being my opinion.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. Madam
17 Chair, I have no further questions.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. We'll turn the time
19 over, now, to Mr. Coe.

20 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good
21 afternoon, Ms. Akutagawa. Thank you for taking the time to
22 speak with us today.

23 You serve on the boards of several organizations
24 that advocate for the rights and advancement of the
25 Asian/Pacific Islander community, as well as the

1 advancement of women. And I'm curious if you could tell us
2 a little bit about your roles on those boards and also why
3 you choose to serve on those boards?

4 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, I serve on -- I'll start with
5 the Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council. I serve on
6 that one. So, on pretty much all of them right now, partly
7 also because of my role at my organization it's hard to
8 take on something more than, other than being on that
9 particular board.

10 But the APPPPCON, or A3PCON Board, that's one of
11 my more recent ones that I serve on. I choose to serve on
12 that one because it is an umbrella organization of all of
13 the various Asian and Pacific Islander serving
14 organizations in Southern California. It's one in which I
15 believe it's important not only that I be involved in, but
16 it would help to understand what the challenges, as well as
17 the issues that other organizations and other communities
18 in and around Southern California are facing.

19 I'm also on the board of the Asian and Asian
20 American Institute at California State University Los
21 Angeles. That one is -- I'm on that particular board
22 mainly because it's my alma mater. And I'm trying to find
23 a way in which I can give back more to the school. And the
24 previous director was someone that I had gotten to know,
25 and when she formed this organization or this institute she

1 asked me to serve on it.

2 She has since stepped down. There's a new person
3 that's been on board. It's a little less active than it
4 was previously and so, that one I still sit on, but we
5 don't get together or meet as frequently as we had in the
6 past, before that.

7 I also serve on the Asian Women's Leadership
8 Network. It is a network of Asian women leaders. The
9 intent when they originally started was to be a national
10 network, but they're more right now of a network that is
11 based in New York City. I am still committed to that
12 particular organization. I served as a vice president on
13 that network. But I remain committed to it mainly because
14 of my relationship with the woman who's the president of
15 that particular organization and I believe that it's
16 important for me to support her, as well as support the
17 organization.

18 I also serve on Japanese American Community
19 Services. It is a community organization. And this is
20 also something that I chose to serve on mainly because the
21 bulk of my work, as you can see, is within a broader Pan
22 Asian America community setting and I don't know as much
23 within the Japanese American community, even though that's
24 my ethnicity. And this was the one connection that I had
25 in terms of serving in a capacity that helped or enabled me

1 to be engaged in a specifically Japanese American kind of
2 setting.

3 I think I also mentioned that I have been on some
4 other boards through Southern California Edison's Consumer
5 Advisory Panel, which I am no longer on. It's been about,
6 now, two and a half, three years when I was last on that
7 board.

8 I am currently an appointee to the California
9 Department of Insurance, their Insurance Diversity Task
10 Force. And I served previously as the vice chair of the
11 task force, but right now I am a member of the task force.

12 And the other perhaps two things that I would
13 mention, it's not necessarily formally a board, but that
14 would be the Alliance for Board Diversity. I'm currently
15 serving as the chair of this national collaboration.

16 And then LEAP, the organization that I run is
17 also involved in a partnership with the anti-defamation
18 league in Southern California. They formed what's called
19 the Asian Jewish Initiative, which is -- again, it's an
20 informal coalitional partnership of various Asian American
21 organizations, together with the ABL in terms of looking at
22 areas of interest and being able to create relationships
23 across our two communities.

24 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. In your
25 essay on impartiality and the information you've given us

1 today, you spoke about your role and experience as CEO of a
2 nonprofit, and your service on serving on some of these
3 boards you've talked about as examples of times you've had
4 to -- or roles in which you've had to make impartial
5 decisions. I'm wondering if you can give us a specific
6 example of a time where you had to make a difficult
7 impartial decision that maybe involved setting aside your
8 preference or your self-interest.

9 MS. AKUTAGAWA: I think I would -- well, one, I
10 think I would point -- well, let me -- okay, I'll start
11 with the Alliance for Board Diversity and I think I point
12 to that because that's outside of my normal realm of work.
13 I think that's one, again, in which I believe that in my
14 role as the chair I need to be impartial and to ensure that
15 when I speak, whether for example when it's -- when we
16 released the report for media interviews, when I spoke in
17 front of the House Financial Services Committee, I believe
18 that those are times in which I needed to ensure that I be
19 as fair and as impartial as possible in terms of not
20 weighting -- or, giving greater weight to my organization
21 and the Asian American community. Some people say that I
22 should do that. You know, I should be advocating even more
23 strongly given my role, but I do believe very strongly that
24 if I'm there representing all of the other -- all four of
25 our organizations I need to give equal weight to each of

1 the organizations. For me, I think that that's a really
2 important of kind of my role that I have.

3 I would say that when I work in partnership with
4 other diverse groups like, for example, when we were
5 talking about the boards and commission education event
6 that we did with the African American Board Leadership
7 Institute, the California Latina Leadership Institute, the
8 L.A. Women's Public Policy Institute, again I think it's
9 really being able to ensure that we have equal
10 representation of each of our diverse communities' voices
11 that are represented as well, too.

12 Also, in the course of my work, I just thought of
13 one other example that I'd like to give. So, in the course
14 of my work we work in partnership with not only my Alliance
15 for Board Diversity organization partners, but we also are
16 involved with an annual event that we all do together with
17 Morgan Stanley. It's a big, multicultural leader's
18 conference.

19 And one of the things that we all play a role in
20 is suggesting speakers, suggesting topics. And one of the
21 things that I believe that I try to do is to ensure that
22 when I see that there is a lack of representation of
23 speakers from one of the other diverse communities, I try
24 my best to think about and making suggestions for other
25 diverse communities, and not just trying to put forth names

1 for the Asian American community. I think the purpose of
2 these multicultural gatherings is so that we can hear from
3 different people. So, I really try to keep in mind that if
4 that's the case, then I don't want to make it just about
5 Asian Americans, I don't want it to be just about African
6 Americans. I want to see Latinos. I want to see other
7 diverse speakers from other diverse communities involved in
8 this as well, too. So, I take that role very seriously.
9 And I know that, luckily, other partners are also doing the
10 same as well, too so --

11 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. In your first
12 essay and a little bit so far in your discussion today,
13 you've discussed that as a young person and as a minority
14 within a minority that you saw engagement as something that
15 was for other people, not people like you. That your voice
16 as an Asian American, as well as those of other diverse
17 Californians were regularly erased, rendered invisible, and
18 counted for nothing.

19 One of the key objectives that the Commission
20 will have to encounter is identifying communities of
21 interest throughout the state, including those that may
22 think similarly to how you viewed engagement as a young
23 person.

24 So, having experienced that yourself, do you
25 think that you would have a unique ability to reach out to

1 those communities that normally don't engage with
2 government in order to encourage them to share their
3 perspectives to better inform the Commission?

4 MS. AKUTAGAWA: I think that -- I'll be honest.
5 I mean I'm not going to promise that I would be able to in
6 every single case. I think that I can promise, though, is
7 that I would ask the questions. I would advocate and
8 strongly encourage that in cases where there are
9 communities that are not being heard or that do feel like,
10 yeah, they're not included.

11 And actually, one of the ones that I would
12 probably point out that would most likely that would feel
13 that way is the Native American community in California. I
14 know that there are various Native American Tribes and
15 Nations in California, but we don't oftentimes hear from
16 them.

17 And whether or not I would be personally able to
18 reach in to connect with them that would be hard to say. I
19 have network that I could try to tap into to see if they
20 could help me connect or help the Commission connect.
21 Where I can, I would absolutely -- would try my best to
22 ensure that we reach for all those communities. I think
23 within the Asian American communities I would also -- or,
24 actually, within the Asian American, and Native Hawaiian,
25 and Pacific Islander communities, I think the communities

1 that I believe are oftentimes are overlooked and often, I
2 know, feel very invisible are the Pacific Islander
3 communities. And I think for that, those are ones in which
4 I would definitely be able to draw from my network to
5 ensure that their voices are also being heard as best as
6 possible.

7 And I think there are challenges that make it
8 difficult for these communities to be included, but I think
9 as best as possible I think it's important that we try to
10 make -- create the conditions by which they can also be
11 engaged or included as well, too.

12 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. I have a question
13 kind of similar to one that Mr. Belnap asked earlier about
14 you advocating for or representing different diverse
15 groups. But I wanted to frame mine within the context of
16 geography and the various regions throughout the State of
17 California.

18 So, I see that you're from Orange County. So,
19 I'd like for you to talk a little bit about your
20 experiences in different parts of the state, the people
21 you've met there, and what you've learned from these people
22 about their needs, and their desires, and their preferences
23 that would make you an effective representative for them on
24 this Commission?

25 MS. AKUTAGAWA: So, let me start by saying I grew

1 up in the San Gabriel Valley or East L.A. My office is in
2 downtown L.A., in Little Tokyo. I live in Huntington
3 Beach. I lived for a period of time in San Diego. And I
4 have family members on both my side and my husband's side
5 in Northern California, spread out from the East Bay all
6 the way through, down to the South Bay in the Peninsula.
7 And so, I just have people spread out all over the place.

8 And currently, right now my nephew and his wife
9 are emergency room doctors in Visalia, so I now have a
10 personal connection to Central California as well, too.

11 And so, I think that was part of what I meant in
12 my essay answers about just having that kind of extensive
13 connection across all of those different regions.

14 I think San Diego's a very different place now,
15 than when I was living there almost 30 years ago. And it's
16 interesting remembering making the drive from Southern L.A.
17 to San Diego because I would work in San Diego, but then I
18 would come home on weekends to be at home, see my friends,
19 see my family. My work takes me all across the California
20 region.

21 But I do want to point out, too, one thing. And
22 I think, so because of that it's really interesting, I feel
23 like I think for me, being able to move through all of
24 these different geographic regions seems normal. But I
25 will say that sometimes I'm surprised that there are people

1 who never leave a very finite region. There are people
2 that I know who live in the South Bay of Southern
3 California and literally never leave that particular area.
4 Or, they've grown up in Orange County and have never gone
5 more than 5 miles up the 405 to somewhere.

6 And the thing I would see in the South Bay, as
7 well, too, and so -- or, in Northern California. But this
8 part of perhaps who I am. I'm curious, I want to know. My
9 husband and I, we spent time in the Central Coast, as well,
10 too, partly because of my dog. She freaks out at
11 fireworks, so we make it a point to drive to Monterey so
12 that we're spending some time there. And I know it speaks
13 to a privilege that I have to be able to drive up there.
14 It just alleviates her and it alleviates us.

15 But it enables me to see, as we drive through the
16 regions, the different geographies of California. And one
17 of the most impactful experiences that I had, that I think
18 really helped me to -- that helped me to gain a better
19 appreciation for the Central Valley that I don't think I
20 had, other than driving through it, was a California
21 Connections Program that I did through the Southern
22 California Leadership Network.

23 And it was a California wide program. We went to
24 San Diego, we were in Southern California, but it was
25 really the visits and the meetings that we had with

1 farmers, and with the military folks there, with small
2 business people, and educational leaders in the Central
3 Valley that really gave me a different depth appreciation
4 for what the Central Valley is grappling with, and how
5 different it can be from the -- I would say Southern
6 California, San Diego, and the Northern California, San
7 Francisco Bay Area kind of issues.

8 And it's really just amazing that in our state we
9 have that kind of diversity that we have from farmland, to
10 the urban landscapes, to the cities, to the suburbs to, you
11 know, everything and anything in between. And So, I think
12 for me that's what makes California fabulous, but it's also
13 what is going to make California complicated.

14 And that's why I think, you know, to me having
15 that kind of long-standing knowledge about California
16 becomes important because over the last ten years there has
17 been quite a bit of change. And I think for anybody who
18 would be serving on the Commission, I think needs to have a
19 perspective that is rooted in really having some of that
20 understanding of the kind of both geographic changes, and
21 what's been wrought in all of our different geographies,
22 but also the demographic changes as well, too.

23 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Could I get a time
24 check, please?

25 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we only have one minute, 30

1 seconds remaining.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, great. No further
3 questions at this time, Madam Chair.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Mr. Dawson?

5 MR. DAWSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Thank
6 you, Ms. Akutagawa. Actually, I was going to ask you about
7 the California connection thing, so you anticipated my
8 question.

9 I did want to ask you about you, in addition to
10 your leadership of LEAP, you are on many boards. One, two,
11 three, four, boards I count in your activities. How will
12 you balance your work on the Commission, if selected, with
13 your professional and board commitments?

14 MS. PELLMAN: Mr. Dawson, just a quick time
15 check. We have five minutes remaining of the total 90.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

17 MS. AKUTAGAWA: I would say that of the boards
18 that I have, the Alliance for Board Diversity I will be
19 stepping down as the chair as of January 2021, so my time
20 is coming to an end on that particular one.

21 In terms of my role on the other boards, I
22 mentioned that the Asian and Asian American Institute Board
23 that one is fairly low key, probably meet once a year, now.
24 The Japanese American Community Services that meets, I
25 would say probably once every other month right now, but I

1 don't anticipate that becoming a problem. We usually meet
2 by phone.

3 And in terms of the California Department of
4 Insurance, we do meet quarterly, but I'd have the option of
5 meeting by phone on that one as well, too.

6 The Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council one
7 that does meet on a monthly basis. But that one I think
8 they would see my service, if I were to be selected on the
9 Commission, as something that would be in which would be
10 seen as beneficial. So, I could either speak to them about
11 taking a leave of absence or depending on how they would
12 feel, perhaps just allowing me to miss some of the monthly
13 meetings depending on the intensity of the meeting
14 schedule.

15 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

16 I have no further follow up, Madam Chair, if
17 there are any follow ups from the Panel.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not have any follow ups.

19 Mr. Belnap?

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

22 PANEL MEMBER COE: No follow-up questions.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: No further follow-up questions.

24 MR. DAWSON: Madam Secretary, how much time is
25 left in the 90 minutes, please?

1 MS. PELLMAN: Three minutes, ten seconds.

2 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Ms. Akutagawa, with the
3 remaining time we'd like to offer you the opportunity to
4 make a closing statement to the Panel, if you wish.

5 MS. AKUTAGAWA: Awesome, great. Well, first of
6 all thank you very much for having me participate in this.
7 I will be honest, I didn't think I was going to get this
8 far. And so, it's been a pleasure being able, and an honor
9 being able to be considered as a viable candidate to come
10 this far.

11 I really do believe that this is a chance for me
12 to serve the state and the citizens of California in a way
13 that is different than what I've done in my role as the CEO
14 of a nonprofit organization. I've always felt like I would
15 love to be able to do something more and I thought that
16 this would be one of those opportunities that would have
17 both impact, but also more importantly one in which I can
18 really bring a lot of the skill sets and attributes that I
19 believe that I have that would really enable the work to be
20 done in a way that I think is reflective of what really
21 makes California special.

22 And so, I am hopeful that I will have an
23 opportunity to go forward and to be able to be a part of
24 this process, and be able to serve the citizens and
25 residents of California. So, thank you very much for this

1 consideration and opportunity.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Ms. Akutagawa for
3 meeting with us today.

4 Our next interview is at 3:00 o'clock, so we will
5 recess until 2:59.

6 (Off the record at 2:44 p.m.)

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

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Calling the Applicant Review
9 Panel meeting back to order.

10 I want to welcome Ms. Karla Van Meter for her
11 interview. And I'm going to turn the time right over to
12 Mr. Chris Dawson for the five standard questions.

13 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 I am going to read you five standard questions
15 that the Panel has requested each applicant respond to.
16 Are you ready to begin?

17 MS. VAN METER: Yes, I am.

18 MR. DAWSON: 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. VAN METER: Great. I believe probably the
2 first thing that's needed for a Commission would be a level
3 of numeracy. Not that you would have to be able to distill
4 a number from some sort of equation, but that you could
5 understand how a number had been distilled. And that when
6 you see a number, you can understand what it's
7 representing, it's just a basic skill.

8 The other thing in a situation like this that I
9 think is important is that people be culturally tolerant
10 because the Commission's being purposely made of people
11 with certainly different politics, so that people can focus
12 on a shared task, and a shared goal, even if you have
13 different motivations, or you don't share you basic
14 assumptions about life.

15 Similar, I used to work in San Francisco in a
16 bank with people, new immigrants from various countries,
17 and Americans, and people that were trying to learn
18 English, but we all spoke COBOL. And we would have to
19 figure out how to work together.

20 Another thing is in this situation the ability to
21 compromise and to commit to it. To work through a process
22 to find a compromise, and stick with it, and move forward.

23 And working under a deadline as apparently the
24 time scale is limited and demanding. So, working under a
25 deadline and being able to admit if you need help so that

1 you won't -- you know, everything will progress.

2 As far as the group, I think it's very important
3 that there's some diversity of education and experience.
4 Because if everyone has a similar background you end up
5 with group thinks, you don't find -- you don't have someone
6 to see a different problem and also see a different
7 solution.

8 My experience has been that it's surprising, and
9 certainly when I was in software I worked with a man whose
10 education was in art, and most of the time we -- I could
11 come up with a solution working with my analytical ways,
12 but every once in a while he had the solution that no one
13 had thought of. So, that's diversity.

14 People be able -- as a group, you need to be able
15 to communicate effectively to explain the process that is
16 done, especially if a house seat is going to be lost, and
17 also with the differential probability -- I mean
18 differential privacy that's going to be used for the first
19 time in the Census, that the effects that we may have we
20 don't even know. But the ability to explain the process
21 that the group goes through even amongst themselves to
22 discuss it clearly and to communicate it to the outside
23 world.

24 And probably, also, being able to deal with -- I
25 don't know if pressure groups is the right term. But I one

1 time had to give a presentation to Consumers Union, and I
2 gave a presentation to a group of Autism advocates. There
3 are a lot of people that you hear from who are probably at
4 the ends of the spectrum of attitudes, and most people are
5 probably in the middle, and you hear mostly from the ends.
6 So, the ability -- the group needs to be able to listen to
7 these people, hear them, and understand, deal with their
8 questions, but not be overly influenced --

9 What I would bring to this? I have a number of
10 analytical skills. I received a PhD in epidemiology,
11 majoring in bio stats and epidemiologic methods in 2008.
12 My research was the geography of autism in California. I
13 was studying the location of autism, whether there were
14 clusters and what they're associated with.

15 Since then I have worked a great deal with
16 giving, democratizing data as we call it, the first
17 interactive map of healthcare associated infections, the
18 Open Data Portal for the California Department of Public
19 Health, which was a pilot for the one, now, that has been
20 released at the California Health and Human Services
21 Agency.

22 I've got a great deal of the specific skills for
23 dealing with geographic data, understanding and
24 manipulating it.

25 And projects, I've worked on a number of projects

1 bringing them to completion. I've worked on dealing with
2 presentations to, as I said, specific interests groups, as
3 well as executives and bureaucrats. I've worked with the
4 federal bureaucracy and within California bureaucracy.

5 And I worked for over a decade as a cross-
6 cultural trainer, working with people that have to work in
7 a different country. And, surprisingly, we talk about the
8 different cultures in different countries, but as those of
9 us in California know there are a lot of different cultures
10 in California. And helping people to be able to work with
11 people with a different experience, different culture.
12 They would at least share the industry.

13 So, I have all of those skills. And I also have
14 time because I've been retired for a year and a half, so I
15 could really focus on this project.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

17 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum.

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

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

1 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

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

5 MS. VAN METER: I would rather like to add to
6 that. I understand and we all know that the political
7 scene has gotten much more polarized. But I think there
8 are some other things that are polarized values that have
9 been coming up in the last ten years. And one of them I
10 think is the conflict between the need for privacy or
11 confidentiality and the need for accuracy and data.

12 And I have watched this I've been dealing with it
13 for, oh, probably since 2011. And that is as polar a
14 problem I think as the political differences. And you're
15 get people who are adamant that they need to have their
16 privacy and other people who say that accuracy is
17 important.

18 And I think that the differential privacy being
19 initiated with the 2020 Census is going to be one of these
20 types of topics. It's going to be very controversial and
21 you're going to have a lot of people on both sides using
22 some very strong language, probably.

23 So, I would throw that in with politics. So,
24 what do we do? How would we deal with this?

25 Personally, as I said, I have worked as an inter-

1 cultural trainer for -- I did that for a decade before I
2 went back to university, because the business sort of
3 shrunk after the tech bubble burst. There wasn't as much
4 money for it. And also, they started sending younger
5 people back and forth and they didn't so much -- it didn't
6 matter nearly as much if a young, low-level person fails as
7 if a higher level person fails.

8 And most of the 90s I worked with groups of
9 machinists, and machine operators who were going over to
10 China to set up factors. And most of that work, there was
11 a whole lot of it in the 90s, not so much in the '00s

12 So, back to how do we keep this from getting
13 polarized? I think one of the things I learned in cultural
14 training and I learned from dealing with people is that
15 everybody -- people may have different motivations for
16 being on the committee. It's worth finding out and getting
17 comfortable with each other. Why are you on the committee?
18 You want the committee to be a success, but what's it going
19 to do for you. And it's worth acknowledging that.
20 Somebody needs this to further their career well, great,
21 then maybe they want to be pushed further forward and be
22 more of a spokesman.

23 It doesn't matter, if the goal is success, it's
24 worth knowing what people's motivations and as possible
25 actually fulfill them.

1 As far as the politicization, it comes from, I
2 think, to a large extent their cultural differences. And
3 the best way to deal with that is to patiently listen to
4 each other. So, at the very first everyone, other than
5 sociopaths, wants to be an honorable person, wants to do
6 the right thing.

7 The problem comes that when you actually what is
8 the right thing to do? And it's amazing the variety you
9 get. And that's what the group needs to do at the
10 beginning. Everyone, presumably, is committed to a fair
11 election. But when you ask how do they define fair
12 election, it's probably going to be 14 different -- maybe
13 not 14, but probably eight or nine different definitions.

14 And as a group to sit down and say, okay, now,
15 what can we agree on? What very basic things can we agree
16 on and don't assume that anyone else agrees with your
17 definition. Come up with that, bring it forward, define
18 it, and then work with that.

19 And as a general attitude, other than working
20 through coming up with that basic definition, sticking to
21 it, coming back to it is just an attitude of not assuming
22 things. Working in -- and I just say CDPH, that's
23 California Department of Public Health, where I've worked
24 for the most part in the last ten years, there's two main
25 places with work. One's in Richmond. One's in Sacramento.

1 When I worked in Richmond it was really
2 interesting because you'd sit in a meeting and frequently
3 people would make a joke about the news, presuming we're
4 all Democrats. Well, I wasn't, but I keep my mouth shut.

5 Then I went to Sacramento and there were a number
6 of meetings I sat in, in Sacramento, where people would
7 make jokes presuming we're all Republicans or Libertarians.
8 And I knew there were one or two Democrats in there.

9 So, just to step back from that sort of behavior,
10 just at the get-go, as this is the way we're going to be.
11 We're not going to crack jokes and presume we all agree.

12 So, once we've done that to try and remove the
13 hyperpolitical between us, then it's a whole lot easier to
14 not be seen as hyperpolitical. And in communicating with
15 -- communicating with the outside world and telling people
16 about the work that's being done is to stick with that
17 common definition that is now basically the mission of the
18 Commission. Just stick with it and keep coming back to it.
19 And communicate it clearly.

20 The one other thing that I noticed looking at the
21 work of the 2010 Commission is that probably in developing
22 maps you would want to do the first iteration. You would
23 not want to pay any attention to politics. But you develop
24 it and then when -- in statistics when we do a model, we
25 always test it. So, you would develop a map and then test

1 it because the database, and it's the statewide database,
2 they have that information. So, you can develop a map and
3 then test it again. What affect would it have on
4 registered voters?

5 And if you get a map from the outside, from some
6 public people, test it. See what effect it has and then
7 you have to iterate.

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

12 MS. VAN METER: Well, presuming that the
13 catastrophic that any Commission like this would have that
14 the Commissioners could not agree on a map to submit in
15 time, four maps. Presuming that's not a problem, then the
16 big problem I think is going to be the differential
17 privacy. Because so far the Census Bureau is still working
18 on it. We don't know exactly how it's going to affect.

19 We do know that their test data that they
20 released last fall, the researchers in Virginia found a
21 household with 90 occupants. Probably not a good idea.
22 That instead of historically what has been done, I think
23 they started in 1940, is you either repress or you
24 aggregate. And that's what we did at CDPH. When you come
25 up with -- we call it small cell, Census calls it small

1 area. When you have a table, rows, columns, it's a cell.
2 So, in that cell, if that's a small number is it going to
3 be something that could -- is it a pseudo-identifier?
4 Could you take that number, match it against some of the --
5 all of the other data out there and find someone's
6 identity? And this is becoming a bigger and bigger
7 problem.

8 So, if you're going to suppress data you end up
9 with, and this is what we were having trouble with in the
10 Vital Statistics query system we were trying to rewrite, is
11 that you might end up suppressing so much information that
12 people aren't going to get -- be able to do anything.
13 There's a move now to understand health effects at the
14 neighborhood level. To get that level of accuracy, you're
15 going to have small numbers. And this is what the Census
16 is looking at. Everybody wants to know Census block for
17 all sorts of reasons. The health effect to get grants,
18 everything.

19 And so, this new, differential privacy, they're
20 introducing random noise. They're going to perturb
21 someone's location, their age, their race, and what's this
22 going to do to actually drawing lines?

23 At the California level we'll have the same
24 totals. But at the Congressional district level we don't
25 know yet what it's going to do. And I think that's going

1 to probably be a big problem. Because the system they're
2 talking about they've started, they got it from Google and
3 from Apple, who don't care about details. And this whole
4 redistricting is about details. It's about drawing a line.
5 And if you are going to perturb particularly race, how do
6 you define Cambodia Town? You use race to define Cambodia
7 Town in a Census block. Well, if all of the sudden those
8 people, some unknown percentage are no longer going to be
9 Asian, it's going to be a problem.

10 And what I can do to help, I have worked with
11 this problem. I have worked with -- when I was in
12 healthcare associated infections I had to -- we were
13 working on new, there were new risk adjustments for
14 hospitals. And I worked with a statistician at CDC on what
15 they were doing and how. Because, obviously, the Census is
16 not going to tell us exactly how they're doing it because
17 then someone could reverse engineer it.

18 But I have worked with the federal statisticians
19 before trying to get information out of them or at least
20 feedback. I have done sensitivity analysis on data that
21 has been variously cleaned and manipulated to see what
22 effect it is. So, I think those analytical skills would be
23 very useful in trying to see what the unknown effects are
24 going to be.

25 That's my specific worry for the Commission.

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

7 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
8 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
9 conflicts that arose.

10 What lessons would you take from this group
11 experience to the Commission if selected?

12 MS. VAN METER: Well, the biggest project I've
13 had in the last ten years was the Open Data Portal for
14 CDPH. It was all a very -- I had a rather strange
15 position. I was working at CDPH. I was open to something
16 new. And Este Geraghty is an MD who was very interested in
17 spatial analysis. And when she first learned about spatial
18 analysis it was at UC Davis, where I was her teaching
19 assistant. And I taught her how to use ArcGIS, and the
20 various spatial tools. Este is now the head doctor at Esri
21 working with -- she works for the company that produces our
22 GIS. She just became -- she just loves mapping and spatial
23 analysis.

24 So, she came to CDPH from UC Davis as the center
25 director for the Center for Health Statistics and

1 Informatics. And she came in as a reformer with lots of
2 projects. One of them was the Open Data Portal pilot. So,
3 she and I talked and she said come work with me, and you do
4 the Open Data Portal. I've got a whole bunch of other
5 things I'm doing. Well, I was a Research Scientist III,
6 which is senior epidemiologist, which has a technical
7 seniority, but is not managerial level at all. And, you
8 know, you're officially not a manager.

9 So, I was in a position where I was pretty much
10 running this project but I did not have official authority.
11 What I did have was a high level champion. And so,
12 anything that needed authority, I would just write
13 something up, give it to Este, and she would send it out.

14 So, this is a brand-new project. It's not
15 something that had been done by anyone within the Health
16 and Human Services Agency. It was not, in fact, something
17 that was seen as a necessary thing to be done by most
18 people at the agency. So, Este had obtained funding for it
19 from the California Healthcare Foundation. And along with
20 that, well, it came with a deadline.

21 So, luckily, I had a high level champion and I
22 had a deadline, and it was funded. So, I -- from the
23 beginning I had to set up a timeline, a schedule of what
24 are we going to do when, and present that to the executive
25 committee at CDPH. And then, we had to ask them to send us

1 people, representatives from the different centers to work
2 on this project. There wasn't a whole lot of volunteer
3 action here. There had to be a lot of thumb twisting, and
4 whatever, and I simply would have to get Este to do that.

5 I eventually got a group together, of course,
6 officially about 20 people from the different centers,
7 different centers within CDPH. CDPH, like many
8 bureaucracies was completely siloed. So, we're talking
9 about taking data from all these different centers and
10 sending it out, putting it on a portal so that public
11 people can access it.

12 Well, everybody was collecting their data in
13 different ways. The small cell size problem, we all solved
14 it in different ways. In one center we suppress at 7, in
15 another we suppress at 20, and another we combine things.
16 They're all different. And so, right from the beginning
17 there were some problems. And the other thing was a lot of
18 people simply didn't want to do it.

19 So, how did I deal with that? Well, I chaired
20 these meetings and I spent a lot of time finding out who
21 were the people who were the most respected? Who were the
22 people whose voices would be heard and listened to by the
23 other people? And those people I would sit down and talk
24 to, and get their input, be it negative, it didn't matter.
25 Just to hear what they had to say and what were their

1 reasons for being negative. And some of the reasons were
2 perfectly reasonable. And that was an important thing to
3 find out all the reasons why they didn't want to do it, or
4 they thought it was going to fail, or they thought it was
5 dangerous, or some of them were just too busy. So, if you
6 can get those --

7 MS. PELLMAN: Excuse me, time check. We have
8 five minutes remaining.

9 MS. VAN METER: Oh, okay. I mean, to get those,
10 the people that had the authority and the influence to get
11 them on board, maybe not actively, but to get them on
12 board. And then, to move forward by coming up with
13 proposals and having them -- have their input and then come
14 up with a compromise that they could go along with.
15 Everything we did had to get sent up to agency and sent
16 back down, but we did move forward. We met our deadline
17 and we came up with a portal that could be -- it was agreed
18 upon and we did finish on time, and on budget.

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

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

1 have a variety of perspectives?

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

6 MS. VAN METER: Well, experiences. I worked as a
7 cross-cultural trainer because I saw the opportunity to do
8 that because at the time I was working in software in San
9 Francisco, which was a multicultural, multiethnic, multi-
10 sexual orientation and identity. It was a very multi
11 place.

12 I found I turned into being the department
13 translator. I was the cultural translator. So, at the
14 time in the early 90s, there were a great number of people
15 coming to this country from former Soviet countries, and
16 also from Asia, and from lots of places, and were being
17 recruited off the plane to be programmers because they were
18 needed. They all spoke COBOL. That was about it.

19 I ended up probably, reaching back to my
20 childhood I'm a Navy brat. We lived in many, many
21 different places. I lived on a farm, I lived on bases, I
22 lived all over California. And so, I'm very aware of
23 different cultures and apparently I'm patient to listen.

24 So, I was doing that in San Francisco, explaining
25 immigrants to the locals, explaining locals to the

1 immigrants. Stopped a few nasty situations by saying
2 culturally that person doesn't know that that's a no-no, so
3 we just need to explain it.

4 So, as a cultural trainer I used to do programs
5 and sometimes they were only one day and sometimes they
6 were two days. And if I had a two-day program, the
7 interesting thing is you take someone who's -- we're trying
8 to explain that in this other culture if someone -- we do
9 things differently. Someone's motivated maybe for very
10 different reasons than you're motivated and you need to
11 acknowledge their motivation. Or, someone things that an
12 honorable person's going to lie through their teeth in
13 order to protect their fellow employees or their family and
14 that is a good person. How to deal with that?

15 And the interesting thing to me is once -- if
16 you're talking to someone, especially if I was talking with
17 someone who's from another country coming here, after day
18 one if you listen to people and let them talk, and don't
19 react, just listen, and are respectful, the interesting
20 thing was on day two I would then have -- people would open
21 up and talk about things that you would -- things that were
22 pretty amazing because they felt respected.

23 MS. PELLMAN: Forty-five seconds remaining.

24 MS. VAN METER: That's it. Listen to people and
25 respect them, and understand their motivation, and what

1 they're telling you might be filtered through their culture
2 and you need to listen and try and see what was the
3 underlying concern.

4 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

5 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum.

6 MR. DAWSON: We will now go to Panel questions.
7 Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her
8 questions. We'll start with the Chair, Ms. Dickison.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you for meeting with us
10 today, Ms. Van Meter or Dr. Van Meter.

11 MS. VAN METER: Oh.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: So, you were talking, you were
13 just talking the cross-cultural training, so I'll go to my
14 question on that. What are some of the principles of
15 cross-cultural training that will assist you with the
16 Commission's work?

17 MS. VAN METER: Probably principles, one of the
18 big things is to try and understand that we all have
19 cultural filters when we communicate. There's literally
20 graphics of one person talking and he has his own cultural
21 assumptions, and then the communication comes through that,
22 and the other person has their cultural assumptions and is
23 trying to go through.

24 So, in communication to try and get to the under
25 -- to listen and then ask questions to see what the base

1 issue is. Because sometimes if -- certainly, when we talk
2 about a problem we often have our own solution in mind, and
3 someone from a different -- with a different experience
4 might have a totally different solution. But if they're
5 just hearing my phrasing, which includes my idea of what
6 the solution should be, they're not going to understand
7 what the actual problem is.

8 I'm trying to think of an example. I'm not
9 coming up with an example straight off my head. But that
10 would be, the communicating through the cultural
11 assumptions is probably the basic point. And I could give
12 you a -- it would take a while, though, a basic little
13 exercise we used to do that highlights some basic
14 differences.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: How could you use that knowledge
16 in the work of the Commission, maybe, and reaching out to
17 communities?

18 MS. VAN METER: In reaching out to communities
19 probably one of the big things is to be respectful of what
20 it is they want to say. In some communities, it's
21 important that, oh, very important that elderly people have
22 a say. So, making sure, I mean just physically making sure
23 that everything's accessible, that there are translators
24 are available. And that we're patient and not going to
25 interrupt someone who's speaking slowly or whose

1 understanding of what I'm saying requires rephrasing.

2 Technical, trying to avoid technicalese when
3 talking to people who are not technical people. And
4 patience. Patience and a bit of humility, which is sort of
5 one of those fuzzy words. Like we are a Commission and you
6 are regular old people. That everybody is -- that anyone
7 who is on a Commission is a public servant and being
8 respectful.

9 It's one of those soft kinds of knowledge things.
10 It's a little hard to come up with specific quantitative
11 responses to some of those questions.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, you
13 mentioned that you've lived mostly in Southern California,
14 but you also lived in the Mojave Desert, Albuquerque, and
15 then on a farm in Kansas.

16 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: And then, later in your
18 adulthood you moved to San Francisco. What did living in
19 those places teach you about communities and what may bind
20 them together, and how that can differ throughout
21 California and the different regions?

22 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum. Okay, well, I was in the
23 Bay Area, I was mostly in the East Bay as an adult. It is
24 interesting how areas are bound together. Certainly, if
25 you're on a Navy base, well, that's what you have in

1 common. And then, it's an entire way of life. You're all
2 used to moving every two years. And dad works and mom
3 probably doesn't, and you're living in housing. And if you
4 mess up, then your dad gets in trouble. So, it's a whole
5 -- that is a cohesive group right there.

6 But you would always, even if you -- whether you
7 were on base or not, you'd be in school with the locals.
8 And it's interesting to me in Kansas, it was a small town,
9 and the farmers were all very tight. And they had, you
10 know, different churches. The Catholics and the
11 Protestants tend to be a little bit tighter here or the
12 other. But a tornado came through town; nobody cared, it
13 was just the whole community was tight.

14 And Southern California not so much. You had
15 different interest groups. When we lived near the beach, I
16 am so old that when my father was a junior officer with
17 four kids we lived in La Jolla. Probably no one could go
18 near that now, if they're not multi, multi billionaires.

19 And in a place like La Jolla there wasn't a whole
20 lot of cohesion. There were lots of different groups and
21 they just happened to be living together.

22 In the Mojave, the people outside of the base
23 they were all together about water, and they didn't like
24 the people on the base very much.

25 And in Oxnard, it's a farming community. And it

1 was interesting to me to see the shared interests of the
2 farmers and the migrant workers. The kids -- I was a
3 child, of course. The kids, the families actually -- the
4 children had interests together, and they cared about the
5 weather, and they cared about the crops.

6 And then, when I moved up to the Bay Area, we're
7 very far removed from all of that. Politics was much more
8 important. People tended to -- you know, tended to have
9 political groups. By then I had children, and so the
10 children's school group.

11 But Berkeley and the area around Berkeley is not
12 a place that I would talk about cohesion, really. Oxnard,
13 yes. Kansas, yes. Berkeley, no, there really wasn't much
14 of a community cohesion.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: So, in your essay on
16 impartiality, you mentioned the diversity of concerns.
17 Actually, I think that was in your diversity essay, I
18 think. You mentioned the diversity of concerns and how you
19 interacted with county health departments and you noticed
20 that diversity.

21 What did you learn in that situation that could
22 help you in connecting with communities throughout
23 California in the different regions?

24 MS. VAN METER: That is very -- that was very
25 interesting. Literally, in the thing I mentioned that

1 there's one doctor who was the part-time county health
2 officer for two of the small mountainous communities. And
3 when I finally got in touch with him, I mean he's a very
4 busy man, the different of his concerns versus any of the
5 large counties, I mean not even L.A., just San Diego, or
6 any of those, you know, three million population counties.
7 In those counties, when I would interact with them, I would
8 never talk to the county health officer. I would talk to
9 one of many epidemiologists in one of many departments.
10 And they were concerned with their specific very technical
11 thing.

12 And when I get -- when you get out into the rural
13 areas, their world is actually much broader. Their
14 experiences, their concerns are much wider because each
15 person has to cover a lot of different things.

16 When you talk with people in a dense city, people
17 tend to get more specialized. And yes, there can be a lot
18 of different groups, but they all tend to be more
19 specialized. There are very few people who are going out
20 and getting their own food, and also holding down a job
21 doing something technical.

22 So, in the rural areas, and my husband for years
23 had a cabin up in Mendocino, out off the grid, and rural,
24 and you find that rural people have to be really much --
25 each person has to have a lot of different skills and

1 concerns. Whereas urban people not so much.

2 And I think that's something that sometimes when
3 we live in the urban area we don't think about it, we don't
4 realize it, how somebody who might tell you that they're in
5 a rural area and, oh, I'm a plumber, but that doesn't mean
6 that that's all that person's concerned about. He's
7 probably -- he might also have a farm where he grows a lot
8 of his own produce and he cares desperately about issues
9 for farming. So, I think that was an eye-opener for me.

10 CHAIR DICKISON: You also talked about creating a
11 couple versions of the Healthcare Associated Infection's
12 interactive map, with one of your coworkers. In creating
13 that map what type of data sources did you work with?

14 MS. VAN METER: The data sources for that,
15 initially we had data directly from hospitals. And then,
16 in the hospitals it got standardized as --having hospitals
17 report on healthcare associated infections became a very
18 hot topic at the time. And we passed a law in California,
19 in 2009, and other states were also passing laws. So, the
20 data, by 2010 CDC started their own -- started their own
21 project called National Health Safety Network, NHSN, and
22 their own statisticians, and developed their own risk
23 adjustments.

24 So, hospitals are being required to send their
25 data to NHSN. So, we started dealing with the data coming

1 from NHSN. We had nurses who went out to the hospitals and
2 helped them figure out how to collect the data and how to
3 report it. But it would go to CDC and then we would get it
4 from CDC. CDC developed risk adjustments and if we didn't
5 like them, we could talk to them because we're California,
6 and we're big. We have -- you know, they listen to us.
7 And I worked with the statisticians when they were trying
8 to adjust how they adjust the risk assessment for the
9 hospitals based on what the hospital is and what their
10 patient population is, so that it would be a fair
11 comparison.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: So, based on that discussion,
13 you're familiar with working with large datasets?

14 MS. VAN METER: Yes. My dissertation was five
15 years of California birth, and there's about a half a
16 million California births every year. And my last job I
17 was working in -- with Vital Statistics for California.
18 They're very large datasets.

19 MS. PELLMAN: Just a time check, we have six
20 minutes, 42 seconds remaining.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I see as part of
22 your dissertation you worked with mapping in defining
23 clusters?

24 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: And worked with -- you also

1 worked with population information with that as well,
2 didn't you?

3 MS. VAN METER: What we were originally using was
4 birth data, so it was purely birth data. Not population
5 existence, just births. But we took five years' worth of
6 birth data, so it was almost two and a half million. And
7 it looks -- when you map it out, it looks a lot like
8 California, regular -- the population. I mean you're
9 missing out on -- Palm Springs is not as well represented
10 as it would if you had your whole -- the standards. So,
11 but it was a birth population.

12 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. If you were selected
13 as one of the first eight Commissioners you would be tasked
14 with selecting the next six to round out the Commission.
15 What would you be looking for in those six Commissioners?

16 MS. VAN METER: Based on what the first eight
17 were like, I would be looking for some diversity in
18 experience, skills. As I said, if I'm there, I have
19 analytical skills. I wouldn't want to be the only person
20 who had analytical skills. But I would want people that
21 had good communication skills. And most of all I would
22 want people that want -- are happy working in a team. So,
23 people that have some experience working in a team or who
24 just from interviews seem to be willing. I mean maybe they
25 own their own small business and they don't officially work

1 on a team, but maybe they work as a volunteer in something,
2 you know, with -- here we have Redwood Gospel, but whoever
3 puts on the meals for the homeless or something. As long
4 as they have some experience working with teams because if
5 you're never done it, that's a really important thing.
6 Some experience with that and communication skills.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: What would you like to see the
8 Commission ultimately accomplish?

9 MS. VAN METER: Four sets of maps on time. I
10 think given this year's situation we may lose a house seat.
11 We definitely have to deal with the differential privacy.
12 And I know after ProPublica's investigation or their report
13 on the 2010 Commission there was a lot of, oh, these people
14 have been manipulated. I would hope that we can avoid
15 ProPublica saying we were easily manipulated again.

16 Although I figure, obviously, if one side tries a
17 trick, then the other side's going to do the same thing if
18 it was a trick.

19 But I would hope people would respect the work
20 we've done and that people would feel that we'd done a fair
21 and decent job, with what we had to deal with. Because I
22 think, as I've said, I think the differential privacy is
23 going to be an issue.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. I don't have any
25 further questions, so I'm going to turn the time over to

1 Mr. Belnap.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good afternoon. I have a few
3 questions related to your application. But first, I have a
4 curiosity related to the word "differential privacy". So
5 that differential, why is it -- why that adjective, what
6 does that mean?

7 MS. VAN METER: I didn't name it. I'm sorry. I
8 myself--It's just that's what the process is called. It's
9 been around since like '06 and whoever came up with it
10 said, oh, this is differential privacy.

11 I suspect that the implication is that it's not
12 the sort of sledgehammer that we've been using that like
13 just, oh, suppress it, just have an empty space, or
14 aggregating. That it's going to be more technical, more
15 scientific I think is what they're -- but I didn't name it.
16 It's just a name.

17 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. So,
18 what does an epidemiologist do?

19 MS. VAN METER: An epidemiologist is dealing with
20 the health of populations. And when people ask me about it
21 and they start asking medical questions I always go,
22 whoops, I don't care until you're a number. And
23 truthfully, what I see a lot and because I've worked with a
24 bunch of people, certainly with Open Data Portal, we went
25 out and talked to a lot of people in Sacramento, the

1 Hackers Club, and people that were data scientists.

2 And the different between epidemiology and data
3 scientists, as I've seeing a lot of -- I was doing some
4 reading and made a -- was the epidemiologist on a little
5 panel last week. But you're getting people now who say,
6 oh, I'm an epidemiologist, I'm a data scientist. The whole
7 nuance, the science, the art of epidemiology is I've got a
8 number here, and I've got a number here, and there seem to
9 be a correlation. But is that causation? Or, is there
10 another causation below that's causing both of them?

11 It's a huge issue. And you -- with the whole
12 Coronavirus people are going, oh, here's one thing and it's
13 related with the cases, so that's the answer. Well,
14 probably not. And I think a lot of what you end up doing
15 is saying, well, maybe not. Because you're looking for
16 bias, you're looking for how was that data collected,
17 what's it really representing, and are you asking the right
18 question of your data?

19 So, I mean it's a great example with all the
20 Coronavirus that, A, we don't know a lot, but we can try
21 and estimate it. But that estimate has a wide, wide
22 confidence interval, so it's like somewhere in there is
23 probably the truth. But is it this little point? Maybe.
24 And the whole thing about how fatal is it? That question
25 can't be answered without the data of how many people are

1 infected, and we don't have that.

2 So, epidemiology is statistics with a whole lot
3 of caveats and searching for what's actually valid in the
4 connection, and in the question.

5 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And epidemiology was not your
6 first career?

7 MS. VAN METER: No.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: What was your first career?
9 It was in software development or --

10 MS. VAN METER: Yes.

11 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: -- programming?

12 MS. VAN METER: Yes. Well, to be honest, on my
13 resume I tend to drop it because it was so long ago, my
14 first career I was a single mom, and young children, and
15 the most that -- the easiest -- well, not easy, but the
16 most convenient thing is to be in sales because then you
17 can take off time in the middle of the day to deal with
18 your kids, and go back and do it at night. So, I actually
19 did start in sales.

20 And then, when I remarried and could go back to a
21 more reasonable schedule, I did go back into software
22 because it was -- you know, my education was in statistics,
23 math, sociology. So, I went back into software and I was
24 working in software in finance. And I worked at Deltanet
25 and I worked at Wells Fargo Bank. And then, it's a whole

1 bunch of different names, but it was the same division. It
2 just kept getting sold. And so, that's where I was
3 working.

4 And then, I segued into cross-cultural training.
5 But my husband hated me working weekends. That was one
6 problem with software. And software is technically very
7 interesting, but if you want to do a right brain or a left
8 brain thing, it's just all on pretty much one side except
9 for the cultural work I ended up doing.

10 And so, then I segued into cultural training,
11 which was fascinating while it lasted. And when it
12 suddenly became a part-time job my husband looked at me and
13 said, well, the kids just finished college and didn't you
14 want to be an epidemiologist? I had studied epidemiology
15 as an undergraduate. And so, why not?

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. How does an
17 epidemiologist have to exercise impartiality?

18 MS. VAN METER: Again, you're mostly looking at
19 numbers. But everybody tends to have a pet project or a
20 thought. Certainly, in my dissertation my advisor was and
21 is very, very concerned about chemicals in the environment.
22 I'm actually married to an environmental chemist. And he's
23 not so -- he tends to see it a little less emotionally than
24 my advisor did.

25 It's amazing when you're talking about a class or

1 in some technical way you're talking about a situation, but
2 then when you do a study it's really important to say this
3 is my question. And the answer I get I'm going to go for.
4 And so, it's important to say if my question is, is there
5 an effect -- as my dissertation was, was there an effect
6 that was not explained by demographics. It was explained
7 by demographics. And if that's the answer, and especially
8 if you get a negative answer, you know, I'm looking for
9 something and, oh, I can't find it, it's very important to
10 not get married to your earlier assumption. And say, yeah,
11 well, I guess I just proved myself wrong.

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. In your
13 recent work as an epidemiologist have ever had to produce a
14 report, like a published, a public report?

15 MS. VAN METER: Uh-hum, yeah. The Surgical Site
16 Infections Report of 2012 and 2013. When I went back, the
17 Open Data Portal was not a report, it was a thing. And
18 when I went back as a retired annuitant in 2016, myself and
19 one other guy produced the 2017 version of the California
20 health -- or the County Health Profiles Report. So, it's
21 produced by CDPH every year in association with the
22 Conference of Local Health Officers. So, my name is just
23 in acknowledgements, but that was it.

24 And I worked on a -- I've got two studies,
25 articles that I wrote, and one that I was one of the

1 authors on.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And what experience
3 have you had at receiving legal advice and/or applying
4 legal criteria to your work?

5 MS. VAN METER: In all of the major projects, the
6 interactive map, we got a little bit. Legal advice came
7 via, we wrote -- designed, came up with the map, sent it to
8 the center head, and they were talking to CDPH's in-house
9 legal people.

10 Again, on the Open Data Portal we would produce
11 something, send it to agency, they would run it by their
12 lawyers. So, I have not personally gotten the chance to
13 speak with -- okay, twice I spoke with the lawyers in a
14 meeting. They didn't like the Open Data Portal.

15 And the Vital Statistics query system, again, the
16 whole question of small cell sizes and identity, possible
17 reidentification, I've heard from them, but I haven't been,
18 you know, one-on-one can we do this.

19 Certainly, for--if I was on the Panel I would
20 want to hear what the legal interpretation of the State of
21 California is of exactly how the Voting Rights Act, because
22 it's changed over time and if you look at it, it's a bit
23 confusing. So, I would certainly want to work with a
24 lawyer as to what it literally means for--in 2020.

25 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you. Madam Chair, I

1 have no further questions.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.

3 Mr. Coe?

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
5 good afternoon, Dr. Van Meter. Thank you for taking the
6 time to speak with us today.

7 In your essays, even though I know you spoke
8 briefly about it earlier, you were -- I'd like to hear a
9 little bit more about your experience growing up in a
10 military family that was moving constantly to new locations
11 and what perspective you think this experience could bring
12 to the work of the Commission.

13 MS. VAN METER: Well, one thing I am 70, so this
14 was a while ago. And luckily, I think for a Navy family
15 luckily I was from a large family, there were four of us.
16 As my mother used to joke, for the first two weeks when we
17 lived anywhere my brothers actually got along. So, we had
18 -- being in the Navy, it makes your family very important.
19 You get to be very close to your family because it's the
20 only thing. They're the only people that continue all the
21 way through your childhood.

22 I remember reading something about how somebody
23 could have a piano teacher or someone who could be
24 incredibly important and have a huge influence on a child's
25 development of their values or personality, and I looked at

1 -- told my sister about it and we looked at it and said,
2 piano teacher, never lasted more than two years. So, it
3 makes your family incredibly important.

4 But also, if you're the least bit curious and if
5 you're going to make friends, well, you're going to have to
6 get out there and get to know people. It was fascinating
7 to me, when we went to Kansas I was seven years old, and I
8 was coming from La Jolla Elementary School. And in the
9 little scholastic newspapers that you know get when in the
10 school, there was an article, something had happened at
11 Scripps, and that's in La Jolla, California. And there was
12 a little pronunciation guide there so you could say La
13 Jolla. And my teacher in Kansas called it La Jolla. And I
14 raised my hand and said, I went to La Jolla Elementary,
15 it's La Jolla, and proceeded to have a discussion with my
16 teacher. And it ended up being La Jolla. And that was a
17 real big one for me. It was like okay, here the authority
18 figure is the authority figure and you don't mess with it.

19 And then, going to some places I got a chance to
20 get to know -- at Ocean View Elementary in Oxnard I got to
21 be friends with a girl who was a bracero's kid. And she
22 was there -- you know, the kids would come and sometimes go
23 with their parents. And they were -- would learn English
24 and would not keep up with a lot of the various subject
25 matters because they were mostly learning English and then

1 catching some stuff. And her world view, and she was a
2 really nice girl and, God, she was beautiful, and just what
3 she was doing in her life. And we were friends for a short
4 while, but for me everybody -- a friend that you can have
5 for three months is good because nobody's going to be your
6 friend for more than two years.

7 And then, the next year I bumped into a girl who
8 was some local person, who's dad was a farmworker, and
9 somebody else's dad who owns a gas station, and somebody
10 else. You could get to know so many different people and
11 you also -- I guess you could be a little bit more
12 experimental because if you live somewhere and you get to
13 know someone, they're going to be there forever. You're
14 only going to be there for two years. You might as well
15 get to know as many people as you can.

16 And it was amazing the variety of different
17 people. I could go on, but it's more of the same that --
18 you know, it was surprising, you're in there in a class,
19 but if you talk about what's life outside of the class it's
20 so different.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: And do you think that
22 perspective could benefit you in some way on the
23 Commission?

24 MS. VAN METER: I think -- well, and like you
25 referred to me as Dr. Van Meter. I don't call myself Dr.

1 Van Meter unless I happen to be doing an epidemiological --
2 you know, someone's called me in as an epidemiologist and I
3 have to be an expert, then call me Dr. Van Meter.

4 Other than that, one thing I think I learned as a
5 kid and stayed with me is that there are a whole lot of
6 different kinds of expertise, and only a few of them do you
7 get a PhD for. There are people who really -- and in fact
8 technical knowledge, there's some mechanics who could run
9 circles around myself and whole bunch of other people and
10 they don't have a degree.

11 And so, other than the guy or woman that I let,
12 you know, cut my body with a knife, I'm not calling people
13 doctor. I just think it's some sort of old leftover thing
14 from back when the world was much more hierarchical.

15 I think from my childhood I've gotten an
16 appreciation of different life paths and how much people
17 can know that I might not have even had an idea about.

18 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. I'd like to move
19 on to your essay on impartiality for a moment. In that
20 essay you discuss how you recognize that you had a bias
21 towards the use of expert opinions. You explained that you
22 discovered this through the use of a survey where you
23 received the opinions of others, namely the people that
24 matter to you the most, the customers, and not experts that
25 wouldn't be using the product that you had created.

1 Without using a survey or gathering data in that
2 manner, how does one go about identifying their own biases?

3 MS. VAN METER: Well, actually, the reason we did
4 that survey is I'd been talking to all these people in all
5 these different states, and their public health
6 departments, and coming up with all these ideas. And I
7 actually sat down over dinner and I was talking to my
8 husband and I said, you know, I need some other input. And
9 so, I literally printed off some of the different --
10 different mockups of websites and I went to see a couple of
11 friends in town. One who used to be the -- he's retired
12 from being in the city government and the other, his wife,
13 who had retired from being -- running the senior services
14 for our local nonprofit.

15 And they're users. I thought, I know a couple of
16 people who are users and I just went over and asked them.
17 And I flipped through these things and that was the big
18 eureka moments. Like, oh, man, they're not looking at this
19 anything like -- and when I showed them the bells and
20 whistles one that I was terribly proud of, they found it
21 confusing.

22 So, without doing a survey, it's amazing that if
23 you just talk to people, and if you know of some people
24 that aren't exactly like you, you can get input. I go to a
25 church. I have a friend who was homeless for a number of

1 years. She's not right now, she lives in a really nice
2 motorhome, but it's a little iffy. Knowing people that
3 don't have the same experience as me, and just ask.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Have you discovered any other
5 personal biases and if you have, how do you ensure that
6 those don't interfere with your decision making
7 capabilities?

8 MS. VAN METER: Personal bias. I definitely am
9 biased towards people that do logical presentation. It's a
10 deep sigh, take a breath, and relax, and listen when people
11 are not being logical. That was something I -- it's a
12 skill I picked up doing cultural trainings, but it -- my
13 actual bias is towards people that just get to the point,
14 get it out there.

15 And so, I have to literally take a breath and
16 say, okay, we are now going to exercise the skill of
17 patience and listening. So, that's probably the biggest
18 thing that comes up. It's like could you talk in bullet
19 points for me, but that doesn't happen very often. So, I'd
20 say that's my big bias.

21 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. I want to talk a
22 little bit about the interactive mapping tool that was
23 discussed earlier. I think you mentioned in your
24 appreciation for diversity. I think Ms. Dickison brought
25 it up. Was that for public use?

1 MS. VAN METER: Yes.

2 PANEL MEMBER COE: It was. What tool was
3 specifically used in creating that for public use?

4 MS. VAN METER: Going back a few years. We used
5 -- we had an outside contractor over in San Francisco. And
6 it was not an -- they constructed it. The base map was not
7 an ESRI map. I think it was just a flat polygon map. And
8 they may have been starting with a Google base. Nowadays
9 probably it -- I think it is currently. We still have it.
10 It's on a Google base.

11 And we do not actually do the map. It was
12 contracted out. And then, it's a point map so that each
13 hospital has a point location. And around the side there's
14 a list where you can find the map on a list, a medical
15 list, then the hospital point just comes up. And then, the
16 data would be listed there. And we did not actually put it
17 together.

18 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thanks. Do you see
19 interactive mapping tools, specifically tools, interactive
20 mapping tools that could be provided to the public as part
21 of the role in the work of this Commission, in the
22 redistricting?

23 MS. VAN METER: As a final product or as an input
24 method?

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: Well, I was leaving that open-

1 ended to see what you thought the role -- my point -- I
2 guess, if you're asking me, I was thinking would it -- in
3 terms of an information gathering to allow the public to
4 use a map in some way to provide information to the
5 Commission or any other way that you could see it playing a
6 roll.

7 MS. VAN METER: That -- yeah, I hate it when
8 people say that's a good question to get space time. That
9 really is an interesting point. As an input. Could be
10 done as a means as getting input from people, rather than
11 -- I understand for the 2010 Commission people came in with
12 here's my map as an input where people could say what about
13 this line here, what about that line there.

14 That quite possibly could be done. One of the
15 things would be if you have something where you take input,
16 to be ready to be inundated and to certainly have to watch
17 out for, you know, an interest group that wants to, you
18 know, hit the button 500 times.

19 So, you know, working to avoid things like that,
20 it could be a very interesting way to get information from
21 people that have a concern. You know, like don't cut my
22 town or my subgroup of L.A., don't cut us in half. That,
23 you know, could be a very -- it could be useful.

24 Certainly, as a tool, a final tool for public
25 just dissemination that's always useful. I mean when they

1 say interactive map, it just means you can choose. You
2 know, like show me my district. It's just a way to
3 disseminate the information and that surely would be
4 useful.

5 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. So, in your
6 application and in your conversations today, you talk about
7 your experiences. Obviously, I asked you about living in
8 various places. You've talked about your experience as a
9 cross-cultural trainer and various other experiences
10 working with diverse people. And I'd like to know what you
11 think is -- if you have to pick one thing as the thing that
12 you have learned with your experiences with diverse people,
13 in different places, and different cultures, what have you
14 learned from them that you think that would make you an
15 effective representative for them on this Commission?

16 MS. VAN METER: I think it's that I've come to
17 appreciation, and again exempting the sociopaths, I have
18 come to appreciate that no matter what someone appears to
19 be doing that at base, somehow that person is trying to do
20 -- I mean maybe there are a few people who want to see
21 themselves as victims, but sometimes most people have a
22 good reason for what they're doing.

23 I do remember a friend who had a brother who was
24 homeless. And my friend got him a job as a gardener. And
25 his brother had serious mental health problems. And his

1 brother quit. You know, it's like why did you quit the
2 job? And he said he couldn't stand giving so much pain to
3 the grass.

4 I can't say -- yeah, okay, this is an extreme
5 case. This guy did have a mental health problem. But he
6 had a good reason for what he was doing. He didn't just
7 quit the job. He couldn't stand hurting the grass.

8 And I think that's the one thing I've found is
9 that no matter what, when people come -- have their -- you
10 know, say things that I might think are outrageous, or
11 disagree with me that they have a reason. That would
12 probably be it.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. If you were to be
14 appointed to the Commission which aspects of that role do
15 you think that you would enjoy the most and which aspects
16 of that role do you think that you might struggle with a
17 little bit?

18 MS. VAN METER: While I read about it, I just
19 thought this looks great. I've been looking for something
20 that was time delineated, and was not going to be a full
21 time, long-term, open-ended commitment so I thought, oh,
22 this sounds good.

23 Analytics, I like an analytic challenge and I
24 think this is going to include an analytic challenge,
25 serious analytic challenge. And I really like working with

1 groups. I think working in a team. And I love working
2 under a deadline. And I'm not still working in Sacramento
3 because that project is still dragging and, really, it
4 should have been an 18-month project and I just -- I'm old.
5 So, I thought that's enough.

6 But the challenge of it might be that there could
7 be some times when it's going to take some hard work,
8 concentrated time. That would be a problem. And there
9 might be -- there probably will be some issues with people
10 who have different goals. You know, they define a fair
11 election differently. I think there's so many different
12 ways of looking at the Voter Rights Act. It's going to be
13 very important to get a lawyer to explain this is the way;
14 this is what we're going with.

15 But in general I think it would be a great
16 opportunity. I would love to do it.

17 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Madam Chair, no
18 further questions.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

20 Mr. Dawson, do you have any questions?

21 MR. DAWSON: Just a few, thank you Madam Chair.

22 Ms. Van Meter, I had a couple questions about
23 your time at CDPH. Were you mostly based in Sacramento?

24 MS. VAN METER: No, I was -- well, I was about
25 four years in Richmond and then I was a year and a half in

1 Sacramento, and then I retired and came back for almost two
2 years. So, sort of half and half.

3 MR. DAWSON: Oh, okay. Well, because I noticed
4 that you'd said that you had done some work presenting
5 reports and procedures to legislative staff.

6 MS. VAN METER: Yeah. That was specifically the
7 Interactive Map. We presented that to -- there was, I'm
8 going back, I can't remember the legislative member who had
9 championed the healthcare infection reporting law. And so,
10 that person was following it closely. So, when we got the
11 Interactive Map up, we went and presented it to that
12 person's legislative staff.

13 MR. DAWSON: Okay. So, since you can't remember
14 the member's name, I'm going to take it that you no longer
15 have a close relationship with her, that member of the
16 Legislature.

17 MS. VAN METER: Never met the person.

18 MR. DAWSON: Oh, okay.

19 MS. VAN METER: Presented to his or her staff and
20 that was in 2012.

21 MR. DAWSON: Understood. In the interest of
22 transparency, when you were at CDPH were you or any of the
23 projects you were working on subject to an audit by the
24 California State Auditor's Office?

25 MS. VAN METER: No. Not that I know of. Again,

1 I was not managerial level, but not that I know of.

2 MR. DAWSON: I see. So, you were never requested
3 by this office to provide documents or other records?

4 MS. VAN METER: No.

5 MR. DAWSON: Okay.

6 MS. VAN METER: Nope.

7 MR. DAWSON: I would hope you would remember us
8 if you did.

9 MS. VAN METER: Yes. I was just trying to think,
10 I was just going to add that some of -- certainly, and my
11 job was not, but some of the Open Data Portal, the
12 contracting part was funded by the California Healthcare
13 Foundation.

14 MR. DAWSON: I see. I wanted to follow up on one
15 of your responses to the standard questions. And you
16 identified, in response to the question what was the
17 greatest problem, you discussed the differential privacy
18 aspect. And I was wondering as a scientist, who relies on
19 data, do you have any concerns about the quality of the
20 Census data that is going to be coming out of this ongoing
21 Census, particularly in light of the COVID-19 issue?

22 MS. VAN METER: I'd be lying to say no. They
23 haven't -- with that test data that they released last fall
24 the researchers who looked at it came up with some pretty
25 wild variations. And they said, well, we'll go back to it

1 and work on it, and nobody's heard from them since as to
2 what work on it means.

3 COVID-19, I think there are people a little
4 concerned about the historically under-represented with the
5 imputation they've also cut back on field work, and they're
6 going to have to cut back on field work. The imputation
7 for an unresponsive household, where they're going to have
8 to go to other sources to just impute, okay, well, we think
9 this is what these people would be like.

10 Yeah, there's some questions about COVID-19
11 cutting back on field work, and then the whole -- this is
12 the first time with the internet responses.

13 MR. DAWSON: Right.

14 MS. VAN METER: So, there are certain groups that
15 are going to be well documented. I am one of them. You
16 know, we're all sitting here at computers. I'm sure we've
17 all responded to the Census. But the folks that don't have
18 computers, yeah, I have some questions.

19 MR. DAWSON: Right. I was thinking along the
20 lines of folks who have traditionally been the subject of
21 under-counting, homeless, migrant workers, recent
22 immigrants, it seems to me that there might be concern that
23 those problems will be exacerbated.

24 MS. VAN METER: I think that's definitely a
25 possibility. As I said, an unresponsive household and then

1 also with the fieldworkers being cut back.

2 Paradise there's, I think, a process report, and
3 whatever. How many people are they going to say live in
4 Paradise? They're all burnt out. There are a few of them
5 and I guess they're going to locate them somewhere else,
6 but then Paradise is basically going to have less
7 representation for everyone.

8 So, yes, there are issues. Technically, they're
9 fascinating. As far as -- I have to admit that.
10 Epidemiologists get really excited with pandemics, it's
11 sort of one of those negative things. But technically it
12 would be a fascinating question--thing to deal with, but I
13 do have questions. Especially that the historically under-
14 reported may get more under-reported.

15 And also, with the random noise. I mean, are we
16 going to lose -- to some extent lose the definition of
17 them.

18 MR. DAWSON: Uh-hum, thank you. Those were all
19 my follow ups, Madam Chair, if the rest of the Panel
20 Members have any additional follow ups.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: I do not have any additional
22 follow ups. Mr. Belnap?

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: No follow-up questions.

1 MR. DAWSON: Madam Secretary, could I have a time
2 check of the remaining 90?

3 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, we have seven minutes, 50
4 seconds remaining.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Ms. Van Meter, with the
6 remaining time I'd like to offer you the opportunity to
7 make a closing statement to the Panel, if you wish.

8 MS. VAN METER: Yeah. Well, the first thing I'd
9 like to say is I would like to thank you all for your work
10 interviewing all of these people. And I know I'm not
11 allowed to send you little thank you emails because that's
12 -- this is an official process. But I do appreciate all of
13 your work and your thoughtful questions having read my
14 statement, along with all these other people. So, thank
15 you for that.

16 And I think that the whole process is -- I've
17 been explaining it to various friends and associates, and I
18 think it's a very well-defined process. I've worked in
19 government and things aren't always well defined. I think
20 the fact that eight of the people are going to be chosen at
21 random, once you get down to -- you should be able to find
22 60 people in the State of California who could certainly do
23 the job.

24 And so, I think it's actually brilliant that
25 eight of the people are chosen at random and then they

1 choose other people that they feel they could use. And,
2 obviously, it would incline people to work together.

3 I was impressed reading over the 2010's report,
4 the handbook that they created. I've helped create a
5 handbook and those things take a lot of time. And I'm glad
6 that they did that. And it looks to me like this is -- you
7 know, people often talk about how California doesn't get
8 everything going well politically. And I think this looks
9 like one process that we're actually doing well. And I
10 would be very, very pleased, proud to be part of it.

11 I think I have skills that would be useful and I
12 would be very proud and happy to be a part of the
13 Commission.

14 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Ms. Van Meter.

16 Our next interview is scheduled for tomorrow
17 morning at 9:00 o'clock, so we will recess this meeting
18 until tomorrow morning at 8:59.

19 (Thereupon, the Applicant Review Panel meeting
20 recessed at 4:24 p.m.)

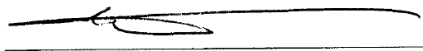
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REPORTER' S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21st day of April, 2020.



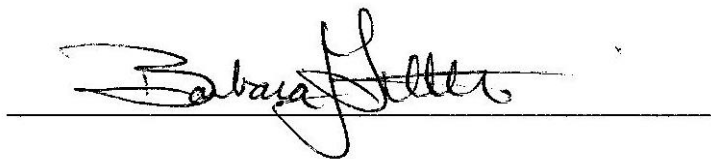
PETER PETTY
CER**D-493
Notary Public

TRANSCRIBER'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 transcribed by me, a certified transcriber.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Little", is written over a horizontal line.

Barbara Little
Certified Transcriber
AAERT No. CET**D-520