

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
And Remote by Zoom

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020

10:44 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

APPLICANT REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS:

Angela Dickison, Chair (Via Zoom)

Ben Belnap, Vice Chair,

Ryan Coe, Panel Member,

APPLICANT REVIEW PANEL STAFF

Christopher Dawson, Counsel

Shauna Pellman, Auditor Specialist II (Via Zoom)

APPLICANTS

Gurinder Aujla (Via Zoom)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

10:44 a.m.

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2
3 CHAIR DICKISON: Good morning. The time being
4 10:44, I would like to call the Applicant Review Panel
5 meeting back to order.

6 Before we get started for today's interview, I
7 want to remind everybody both online and those in the room
8 to please silence your cell phones. For those in the room,
9 the restrooms are outside in the hallway. And in case of
10 an emergency, just follow the instructions of CSA staff.

11 I would like to welcome Mr. Gurinder Aujla. Did
12 I say that correctly?

13 MR. AUJLA: Oh, that's correct. Thank you so
14 much.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay.

16 MR. AUJLA: And I would like to thank the Panel
17 for putting in an extra day, and this board staff to give
18 me this opportunity.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: Yeah, thank you for taking the
20 time to meet with us.

21 MR. AUJLA: Thank you.

22 CHAIR DICKISON: I'm going to turn the meeting
23 right over to Mr. Dawson to read you the five standard
24 questions.

25 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 Mr. Aujla, I'm going to read you five standard
2 questions that the Applicant Review Panel has requested
3 each applicant respond to. Are you ready?

4 MR. AUJLA: Yes, I am.

5 MR. DAWSON: First question. What skills and
6 attributes should all Commissioners possess?

7 What skills or competencies should the Commission
8 possess collectively?

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

11 In summary, how will you contribute to the
12 success of the Commission?

13 MR. AUJLA: Okay, so what skills and attributes
14 should all Commissioners possess? I think the skill of
15 public participation. Active listening is crucial to
16 ensuring that people participate because they have to elect
17 candidates of their choice and ability to understand the
18 strategies of redistricting.

19 I have read through the agendas of the Commission
20 now in place. I have seen that there will be some training
21 opportunities on the Voter Rights Act and discussions on
22 court cases where maps have been challenged. But I think
23 Commissioners must have the ability to apply the protocols
24 like respecting boundaries of the political subdivisions,
25 communities of interest, contiguity, compactness, et

1 cetera.

2 And then they'll have -- they should have the
3 ability to draw lines which will pass the Constitutional
4 muster, meet legal parameters while balancing public
5 inputs. Flexibility is another skill.

6 Ability to spot issues, if any, with expert
7 opinions, testimonies, et cetera.

8 And now, going to part A of the question, what
9 skills or competencies should the Commission possess
10 collectively?

11 I think the whole Commission must be permeable,
12 able to absorb viewpoints of others and draw fair
13 conclusions. And Commissioners should have the ability to
14 bind together. I think advocacy for fair representation
15 must be a collective aim of the Commission no matter what
16 their party preference is. This attribute could be a
17 challenge, but I'm very confident that when people come
18 together to ensure -- to pursue common goals they can set
19 aside personal bias and preconceived notions.

20 For example, I've seen this happen in court. So,
21 when juries are empaneled we have jurors from different
22 walks of life, but they're able to bind together and follow
23 the law, admonishments of the court, and come to fair
24 conclusions. Jurors can segregate emotions from facts,
25 read the voracity of witnesses, appreciate the evidence.

1 Well, they're actually the smartest people in the
2 courtroom.

3 So, the other competency I would say is to put
4 your personal beliefs aside and make decisions based on
5 facts in front of you. And third-eye perception, open-
6 mindedness is important. Data can be misleading. The
7 capability to see through illusions and go beyond
8 realities. For example, computer-generated data does not
9 mean it's neutral. Like you don't know like how the
10 samples were taken. Were the samples large enough to
11 represent the general population or were the samples random
12 to a wide bias.

13 And the other competency I think or skill is
14 Commission members must be collectively objective.

15 And going to part B of the question, of the
16 skills, attributes and competency that each Commissioner
17 should possess, which do you possess?

18 I think all the competency I have just mentioned
19 I possess all of these. And the other competencies I think
20 I possess is legal interpretation. Due to my background in
21 law, I'm able to interpret the law and understand
22 legislative intents.

23 Ability to foresee legal challenges. I would
24 call it a chess player perception. You have to keep in
25 mind that there will be legal fireworks, I hope not, once

1 the maps are out. So, you have to draw lines in congruence
2 with the intent of the initiatives and the parameters set
3 forth.

4 Fair play is another competency I have or skill I
5 have. I believe in zealous advocacy for my cause, but at
6 the same time I believe in fair play. This gives me the
7 flexibility to see other persons' perspective.

8 And I'm free of unconscious bias. I consciously
9 eliminate if I have any, but I don't think so I'm a person
10 with biases.

11 So, in summary, the part C, in summary how will
12 you contribute to the success of the Commission? I think
13 my legal experience, my multicultural background, the
14 experience I have gained as a team member of statewide
15 Commissions like judicial counsels, Court Interpreters
16 Advisory Panel, Advisory Committee on Providing Excess in
17 Fairness that would be a plus.

18 My ability to educate myself. I'm a quick
19 learner. I'm confident I will be able to meet the
20 challenges of understanding the strategies of
21 redistricting. I have read the previous agendas of the
22 Commission. I have tried to read articles on
23 redistricting. For example, by University of Chicago Law
24 School, Citizens Guide to Redistricting by Brennan Center
25 for Justice to gain a better understanding of the process

1 of redistricting. And that shows I'm serious about this
2 opportunity.

3 Being an immigrant, I started from scratch after
4 coming to U.S. I think I have the resilience and resolve
5 to pursue goals and cope with the stress of deadlines, and
6 the complex situation that might arise while working on the
7 Commission.

8 Lastly, I have a very unique perspective.
9 Actually, my maternal grandfather was a unanimously elected
10 headman of the village council for 20 years. I was
11 introduced to the concept of social justice and fairness at
12 a very young age. The majority of issues or disputes were
13 resolved at the village council level in those days, in
14 India. I have a lot of experience acting as a conciliator
15 to resolve the issues between opposing factions.

16 This experience comes in handy to resolve any
17 differences that could crop up amongst the Commissioners.
18 Thank you.

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

25 What characteristics do you possess, and what

1 characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess,
2 that will protect against hyperpartisanship?

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

6 MR. AUJLA: First of all I would like to mention
7 that the selection process for the Commission is carefully
8 designed to be insulated from political influence. It's 14
9 members are selected from the public at large through an
10 elaborate procedure administered by the State Auditor. The
11 whole process itself acts as a sieve and I'm confident that
12 to a large extent the people who wind up on the Commission
13 will be fair minded and avoid perceptions of bias and
14 conflict.

15 Having said that, I'm aware of the fact that
16 Americans are undoubtedly living in an increasingly
17 polarized times. Regarding to a study conducted by the
18 Puro Center (phonetic), 62 percent of the Americans believe
19 that there's a problem with the ability of Democrats and
20 Republicans to work together.

21 I personally believe that sunlight will inspire
22 confidence in the process and the outcome will be
23 recognized as fair. Again, an objective stance of the
24 Commission is one of the aspects.

25 And going to part A of the question, what

1 characteristics do you possess and what characteristics
2 should your fellow Commissioners possess?

3 I think a good understanding of the history of
4 the initiatives that led to the formation of Commission is
5 important. The knowledge about the deadlocks between
6 Democrats and Republicans in the 1970s, especially after
7 the one-man, one-vote revolution of 1960s. And another
8 deadlocks afterwards in 1980s, 1990s. The Supreme Court
9 interventions and appointment of special masters. In the
10 1990s, California elected a branch deadlocked again on the
11 district lines. And the California Supreme Court once more
12 stepped in and appointed three new special masters to
13 formulate the plan.

14 The master employed the same redistricting
15 criteria as their predecessors in 1970s, including
16 precisely the same definition of the communities of
17 interest to which the six were required to correspond.

18 So, it's important to remember what happened and
19 what led to the formation of this Commission.

20 As in 1970s, the California Supreme Court again
21 praised the masters, expertizing the art of reapportionment
22 and outside observers commended the plans for their
23 remarkable number of competitive districts.

24 So, the Commissioners have to keep in mind what
25 history has taught us. That hyperpartisanship will lead to

1 deadlock and this remarkable institute created by the
2 voters of California could go defunct and the task of
3 drawing lines might fall back to traditional alternatives.

4 And going to part B of the question, what will
5 you do to ensure that the work on the Commission is not
6 polarized?

7 I think I will constantly eliminate in-group
8 tendencies of my fellow Commissioners, the Commission -- I
9 think the Commission should jointly decide how to deal with
10 the specific circumstances of polarization.

11 And as a reminder to maintain impartiality in our
12 operation, I'll keep reminding that research suggests
13 political neutrality is favored over political bias, with
14 Republicans, Independents and Democrats.

15 So, everyone need to soften their adversarial
16 urge to achieve higher objectives. View any conflicts as
17 an opportunity to resolve by appealing to the logical
18 facilities of other members of the team. Thank you.

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

23 MR. AUJLA: I think timing. The redistricting
24 process always has one eye on the clock. A vast majority
25 of (indiscernible) set themselves deadlines far earlier

1 than the candidate's filing date. The amount of time the
2 Commission devotes to each part of the redistricting
3 process can affect the resulting district lines. For
4 example less time the Commission has to negotiate over
5 various proposals may make it more prone to deadlocks,
6 which might involve other backup institutions to step in,
7 in the drawing of lines. Conversely, with more time,
8 public hearings may reveal unintended consequences of a
9 particular proposal and allow the redistricting body to
10 avoid -- to adjust the maps accordingly.

11 Another, you know, the COVID-19 crisis, due to
12 this unprecedented health crisis, the Commission will have
13 unprecedented challenges. The Commission is like an
14 emergency hospital for redistricting purpose and public
15 access to the Commission cannot be limited. With more
16 submissions may be a new normal for public engagements,
17 which has its own challenges and limitations.

18 The limitations on the Commission to visit the
19 districts have drawbacks.

20 Census figures could be another challenge due to
21 this health crisis. The Commission might have to correlate
22 the data from the previous Census, keeping in mind the time
23 sensitive nature of the work.

24 And what actions will you take to avoid or
25 respond to this problem? I think we should leave time for

1 educating Commissioners, educating the Commissioners about
2 how districts are currently drawn, and criteria of
3 redistricting. Like consistency with natural and political
4 boundaries, contiguity, compactness, communities of
5 interest. I think education is important to streamline the
6 work of the Commission.

7 And I think, then, the other action would be to
8 address the problems, not the symptoms. The most obvious
9 signs of redistricting dysfunction may be symptoms, not
10 problems. You know, for example, some reformers highlight
11 districts with an exceedingly irregular shape may have
12 problems. It might either impede or facilitate fair or
13 equitable representation. You don't know. So, we have to
14 focus on the problems that might crop up early on. Thank
15 you.

16 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

17 Madam Secretary, may I have a time check, please?

18 MS. PELLMAN: Yes, there are 15 minutes, 25
19 seconds remaining.

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

1 Tell us the goal of the project, what your role
2 in the group was, and how the group worked through any
3 conflicts that arose.

4 What lessons would you take from this group
5 experience to the Commission if selected?

6 MR. AUJLA: So, I'm presently serving on the
7 California Judicial Council's Court Interpreters Advisory
8 Panel as a voting member and this body deals with the
9 development of statewide policy and court interpreters and
10 language needs.

11 So, as a policymaking body for the judiciary, the
12 Judicial Council of California is responsible for providing
13 fair and impartial administration of justice in state
14 courts of California. The availability of language access
15 serves as essential to the fair and impartial
16 administration of justice, as well as fundamental rights
17 guaranteed by the California Constitution.

18 So, California Superior Courts recorded over 4.4
19 million interpretations for the four-year study period.
20 So, our committee was entrusted with the task of credential
21 review criteria for the certified and registered court
22 interpreters, developing procedures for handling rules
23 governing disciplinary actions.

24 We had a group of people with diverse interest
25 who were on the commission, like judges, court CEOs, legal

1 advisor, interpreters employed by the court, freelance
2 interpreters, HR personnel, as well as personal
3 representatives of the National Center for the State
4 Courts. So, with so many perspectives and viewpoints it
5 was a challenge on every step to reach consensus.

6 So, my role was to provide impartial inputs and
7 recommendations to the group regarding establishing a
8 process to issue court interpreter credentials and to
9 review allegations of professional misconduct or
10 malfeasance against certified and registered interpreters.

11 The other thing was to define the due process
12 protections and procedures governing the credential review
13 process.

14 And the other thing was seeing that California
15 certified and registered court interpreters need to meet
16 and maintain minimum professional standards of practice.
17 Safeguarding the quality and integrity of credentialed
18 court interpreters in California. So, we had to review
19 grounds of sanctions on interpreters, like what would be
20 the grounds, like violation of California Rule of Courts,
21 gross incompetence, deliberate misrepresentations, knowing
22 and reckless disclosure of confidential or privileged
23 information. Fraud, dishonesty, conviction of felony or
24 misdemeanor.

25 So, how the group -- the other part of the

1 question is how the group worked through this conflict.
2 So, I think the transparency was the key. Through dialogue
3 and constructive argument we were able to identify the
4 areas of agreement and disagreement.

5 Quality of team members to be objective, focusing
6 on perspectives, not on personalities.

7 So, eventually, on September 24, 2019 the
8 Judicial Council approved and adopted the California Court
9 Interpreter Credential Review procedures.

10 We have similar upcoming challenges and projects
11 in 2020 agenda for this panel. I'm also working on
12 California Judicial Council's Advisory Committee on
13 Providing Access and Fairness. This committee makes
14 recommendations for improving access to the judicial
15 system, fairness in state courts, diversity in judicial
16 branch, and court services for self-represented litigants.

17 I'm confident that the kind of project this
18 advisory board undertakes will further sharpen my skills
19 and attributes needed for an ideal Commissioner.

20 Secondly, my experience as a lawyer who has
21 worked on numerous cases in People's Court in India. So,
22 the main thrust of the People's Court is reconciliation.
23 So, when no compromise is reached, the matter goes back to
24 the regular court. So, while conducting this proceeding,
25 the judge acts as a conciliator, and not as an arbiter.

1 Its role is to persuade the parties to hit upon a solution
2 for reconciling the contesting differences.

3 So, I think this is essentially an evaluation
4 process in which a panel of neutral lawyers, judges, and
5 prominent citizens propose a settlement after hearing the
6 facts and claims involved in the dispute. I think this
7 role helped me a lot all these experiences, to be on the
8 Commission.

9 I think the B part of the question was what
10 lessons will you take from this group experience to the
11 Commission, if selected?

12 Experiences, yes. I think when you work as a
13 team you can break complex tasks into parts and steps. And
14 you can plan and manage time as a group. You can refine
15 understandings through discussion and explanations, give
16 and receive feedback. You can challenge exemptions. You
17 can ask yourself questions what if I'm wrong.

18 I think I personally developed a stronger
19 communication skills. As a group you are able to tackle
20 more complex problems. You can designate roles and share
21 diverse perspectives. Thank you.

22 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five. A
23 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
24 meeting with people from all over California who come from
25 very different backgrounds and a wide variety of

1 perspectives.

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

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

10 MR. AUJLA: Yes, California ranks as the most
11 culturally diverse state in the country. The redistricting
12 process in California asks that both its nominee pool and
13 its final Commission reflect the racial, ethnic, geographic
14 and gender diversity of the state. In general, the more
15 diverse the party drawing the lines represent the diversity
16 of the state itself, the more likely it is that the final
17 district plan will fairly balance the various interests and
18 communities in the state.

19 So, going to part A of the question. If you are
20 selected as a Commissioner. So, I think being an immigrant
21 and coming from a multicultural background I always
22 celebrated differences to better understand other cultures.
23 I was born in a country where diverse cultures are
24 celebrated. We get together to celebrate holidays,
25 festivals and try to understand cultural histories

1 together. I think I've been naturally trained to accept
2 diversity. It is my natural skill or attribute I can say.
3 And coming to California further enhanced my appreciation
4 for diversity.

5 So to me, culture is like an iceberg. There are
6 objective and subjective sides of the culture. For
7 example, style of dress, food, work ethics, concept of
8 self, beliefs about child raising, the way you greet
9 people, beliefs about hospitality, religious beliefs,
10 concepts of beauty, rules of life behavior, and your
11 concepts of fairness.

12 I can speak seven languages which allows me to
13 interact with a wide variety of people. I have always
14 supported the idea that diverse populations tend to be more
15 cohesive than those that are homogeneous.

16 I think my answer to part A of your question will
17 flow over to part B as this one should. The questions are
18 intertwined. So, going to part B, what experience have you
19 had that will help you to be effective at understanding and
20 appreciating people and communities of different
21 backgrounds, and who have a variety of perspective?

22 I have a multiple experience. I have worked as a
23 truck driver. So, as a truck driver working for a business
24 engaging produce distribution all over California, I had
25 opportunity to crisscross through California. I have been

1 to, to name a few, Hammond, Calexico, Mojave, Barstow,
2 Needles, Yreka, Bay Area, L.A., San Diego, Sonora, Central
3 Valley, Taft, Porterville, Palmdale, Lancaster, Shasta.
4 So, I'm actually privy to the geographical and cultural
5 diversity of our state. I've had the opportunity to
6 interact with store owners from the worst, you know,
7 cultures, backgrounds, employees. I have delivered produce
8 to commissaries, prisons, federal penitentiaries. I have
9 had the opportunity to talk to inmates who work in
10 commissaries, guards, police officers. I have picked up,
11 you know, loads of produce from farms and cooling centers
12 in remote parts of the state that give me an opportunity to
13 engage with people who work there.

14 And, of course, you cannot miss the geographical
15 diversity of our state when you're driving almost more than
16 300 miles across the state on a daily basis for four years.

17 And secondly, as an immigration advocate I have
18 an opportunity to work with attorneys who represent
19 clients. And as asylum and family education cases, you
20 come across several opportunities to learn about the
21 political and cultural atmosphere of different countries
22 and communities, and what issues the immigrant communities
23 from the worst backgrounds face.

24 I think, lastly, my experience working as an
25 interpreter for eight years and continuing, I interact with

1 colleagues, court users, court staff, judges, lawyers,
2 defendants, deputy sheriffs, from the worst backgrounds on
3 a daily basis. And you tend to gain knowledge about their
4 communities by default. You learn about their facial
5 expressions, greetings, hand gestures, attitudes about
6 personal space, religious beliefs, and especially what
7 their concept of fairness is, as most of the court users
8 come to the courts to seek justice and fairness is a top
9 priority.

10 So, while working with the courts I've learned
11 how, you know, what are different issues with different
12 communities of domestic violence. I have seen that some
13 cultures don't want any state interference as to how their
14 children should be raised. Parent should have absolute
15 right to discipline their child. How drug-related issues
16 and crimes affect different communities. Family law
17 issues, child support, community property matters. How
18 people correlate the U.S. law to their beliefs and customs.

19 So, I come across a multitude of perspectives in
20 my everyday life. Thank you.

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

25 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

1 Again, thank you, Mr. Aujla for meeting with us
2 today.

3 MR. AUJLA: Thank you.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: So, you talked about your
5 different professional experiences. You talked about being
6 a truck driver, and an interpreter, and an attorney, which
7 are all in your application.

8 Can you -- so, you may have answered part of the
9 question, but what I wanted to know is how the work in
10 these different areas prepared you for the work of the
11 Commission, specifically first in the role of public
12 outreach and engagement. And then, secondly, in
13 identifying communities of interest throughout the state.

14 MR. AUJLA: Let's see, as far as identifying
15 communities, I mean I have traveled to different areas of
16 the state. And for example, like Little Saigon is an
17 example in Sacramento. It's where most of the businesses
18 are owned by Vietnamese. So, I have been all over the
19 state as a truck driver or as an interpreter.

20 So, outreach is important while working on this
21 Commission and we might develop outreach materials and in
22 different languages, and have interpreters who can go out,
23 although, with this COVID-19 situation it could be a
24 challenge.

25 So, I think I have that experience of diverse

1 outlook and geographic, you know, diversity. I can
2 appreciate that.

3 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay. What methods do you
4 think, given the COVID-19, what methods do you think that
5 the Commission can kind of employ to try and reach out to
6 communities of interest and identify them?

7 MR. AUJLA: I think we'll have to -- as the
8 Commission will have to develop some outreach materials,
9 maybe animated videos. Develop pamphlets in, you know,
10 different languages which could be distributed.

11 And I think video remote solutions is an
12 important aspect of this, but it has its own limitations.
13 So, we'll have to, as a Commission now, we'll have to reach
14 the constituents and it could be through social distancing,
15 video remote solutions, and I think we'll have other
16 experts who can provide inputs on these efforts.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, based on your
18 travels, can you tell us about some of the concerns of the
19 different communities you've seen throughout California and
20 describe how those concerns may bind that community
21 together, and identify it as a community of interest?

22 MR. AUJLA: Okay, a community of interest, I
23 think that this is really close to my heart being a
24 minority. And communities of interest are likely to have
25 singular legislative concerns so might, therefore, benefit

1 from cohesive representation.

2 So, first of all, I belong to a minority
3 community with less than two percent in my native country
4 of India. So, first of all, the issues of the Sikh
5 community, to which I belong I can say, they had a turban
6 issue. You know, people had to fight for their turban as a
7 part of the dress to make it a part of armed services,
8 uniform, police uniforms. And there was hate crimes,
9 mistaken identity due to the fact that turban is also
10 associated with Muslims.

11 So, another communities of interest, and other
12 issues they face are like immigration fraud committed by
13 self-styled immigration consultants. That's one of the
14 major issues amongst some communities of interest. So, to
15 point out a few, I think those are the few that I know and
16 there could be other issues that I cannot think of now.

17 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. What factors do you
18 believe may influence one's preference when they're looking
19 at governmental representation and how could that differ
20 between the various communities or regional locations of
21 the state?

22 MR. AUJLA: Can you please repeat your question,
23 I think I didn't get it?

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Sure. What factors do you
25 believe one's preference when looking at governmental

1 representation and how may that differ between various
2 communities and regions of the state?

3 MR. AUJLA: I think every community has their
4 peculiar interests and issues. So, people living in
5 different part of the state, in different geographic
6 locations are like rural and urban areas have their own set
7 of issues. And people living in a desert might have their
8 peculiar, you know, issues and they would like to have
9 representatives of their choice, who can bring up their
10 issues, while people living in metro and urban areas,
11 agricultural communities.

12 So, because of the diversity of the state people
13 have their own peculiar issues.

14 CHAIR DICKISON: All right. Okay, in your
15 impartiality essay you wrote that: It's obviously not easy
16 to be impartial since we human beings are quite naturally
17 prone to develop biases and prejudices. It's our
18 upbringing, education, and social interactions that shape
19 our outlook on life and society.

20 Based on that what are your biases and how will
21 you ensure they don't influence your decisions as a
22 Commissioner?

23 MR. AUJLA: I think one of my biases could be
24 that minorities don't have a voice. So, as I said, I will
25 constantly, you know, try to avoid or eliminate this bias.

1 And there could be unconscious bias, if any, and again I'll
2 have to figure out if there are any and constantly try to
3 eliminate it. And I think I have been brought up in an
4 environment that was culturally diverse and that's how I
5 have been trained not to have biases or notions. So, I
6 think my background does help me a lot to eliminate, if any
7 biases I might have.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, you talked about
9 your part on the subcommittee team that developed the
10 credential review criteria for interpreters. And one of
11 your letters of recommendation also discussed that.

12 MR. AUJLA: Uh-hum.

13 CHAIR DICKISON: What did you learn from this or
14 other team experiences that can help the Commission quickly
15 develop into a cohesive team?

16 MR. AUJLA: I think the transparencies that even
17 you are working as a team, you have to be transparent in
18 your ideas and you should be overt and express those ideas.
19 And I think different perspectives of people, when they
20 share their perspectives, and you have the opportunity to
21 gauge if you are right or wrong. And when you work as a
22 team you learn from the experience of other people. And if
23 you do like constructive argument, I mean these things
24 really, you know, help people to bind together. And when
25 you have higher objectives as aim, when you try to, you

1 know, concentrate on the perspectives and not on the
2 personalities, I think that's the most important thing that
3 I have learned that binds people together.

4 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. You also talked
5 about -- oh, here it is. In one of your -- in your answer
6 to question four you talked about that as a group you can
7 designate roles. What role do you think you would fill on
8 the Commission?

9 MR. AUJLA: On the Commission I think I can fill
10 the role of a conciliator, a negotiator. I think that I
11 have a lot of experience working, as I've told in my
12 previous answers, working as a lawyer in People's Court,
13 and as an interpreter as working on this committee. So, I
14 think I'm a good negotiator, so I think I can assume that
15 role in between people.

16 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. So, I see that you
17 came to California, was that in 2007 or before that?

18 MR. AUJLA: No, I first came to California in
19 1998, but then I was a student at that time, and then I
20 went back to India to complete my education and, you know,
21 do my graduation and law degree. And then, I came back to
22 California in 2006 I suppose.

23 And in between I visited California a number of
24 times in between 1998 and 2006.

25 CHAIR DICKISON: What made you decide to come to

1 California?

2 MR. AUJLA: Oh, I think the diversity. I mean
3 that was a factor. And most of my family was here in
4 California. So, it's easy to get absorbed in a culturally
5 diverse state, so I think that was one of the major factors
6 to decide to live here in California.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: You've talked about that coming
8 to California further enhanced your appreciation for
9 culture. Can you describe a specific experience that
10 enhanced that?

11 MR. AUJLA: I think working, I have worked as a
12 store clerk when I initially came in, and I think that job
13 really enhanced because I was working at a 7-Eleven store
14 and you really appreciate how many people come in there,
15 and how many languages they could speak. And they all
16 looked different and they have their perspectives, and you
17 really enjoy talking to them and you learn about cultures
18 worldwide.

19 And then, again, my job as a truck driver, I mean
20 I was in remote parts of California. I have been to metros
21 and seen how people react there, what their perspectives
22 are. So, I think in all these years I mean it has further
23 refined my perspectives on diversity.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

25 MS. PELLMAN: Quick time check, we have six

1 minutes, 26 seconds remaining.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you.

3 So, if you were selected as one of the first
4 eight Commissioners who are selected randomly, you would be
5 tasked with selecting the next six to round out the
6 Commission. What would you be looking for in those
7 individuals?

8 MR. AUJLA: I think I'll try to plug the gaps, if
9 there are any. I think diversity would be a major factor
10 in my mind. I would like a Commission that's culturally,
11 you know, diverse. And I'll see if we have Commissioners
12 missing from any particular geographic locations. So, I
13 think those are the two major factors that I will look at.
14 And, of course, what background a person is coming from.

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

17 MR. AUJLA: I would like to see the Commission
18 ultimately accomplish competitive district lines.

19 CHAIR DICKISON: All right. Okay, I don't have
20 any further questions right now. Thank you for meeting
21 with us. And at this time, I'm going to turn the time over
22 to Mr. Belnap.

23 MR. AUJLA: Thank you.

24 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Good morning. I want to talk
25 to you -- talk to you about your time as an interpreter.

1 In particular I want to ask how do you feel an interpreter
2 has to exercise impartiality?

3 MR. AUJLA: See, interpreters are -- it's the
4 part of your job because you are interpreting for
5 defendants, witnesses, you know, both the parties at the
6 same time. So, it has to be -- you have to be impartial
7 because -- and you cannot pick sides, you cannot have
8 biases. So, this job actually trains you to eliminate any
9 biases you have or it trains you for impartiality because
10 you are working with the prosecutors at the same time
11 you're working with the defense attorneys. You're working
12 with the victims of crime. You're working with the
13 perpetrators of crime.

14 So, I think it's a very good experience to
15 inculcate impartiality and eliminate biases.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Can you think of a time in
17 your career as an interpreter where it was difficult to
18 exercise impartiality and you were successful in doing so?

19 MR. AUJLA: I think child molestation cases are
20 the difficult ones because of your -- sometimes your
21 personal belief towards safety of children. So, but I
22 think your training, your ethics training you have to go
23 through as an interpreter to be impartial that comes in
24 handy. So, those are difficult situations, but I had some,
25 you know, situations where I had to interpret in some

1 cases, but I think my training came in handy and I was
2 still impartial.

3 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. So,
4 you indicated in your application also, today, that you
5 were selected to serve on the Advisory Committee on
6 Providing Access and Fairness, convened by the Chief
7 Justice in California. How were you selected to this
8 committee?

9 MR. AUJLA: See, the Judicial Council sends out,
10 you know, invites if somebody wants to get on this
11 commission. And there's a pro forma that you have to fill
12 in and attach to your resume, and send it to the Judicial
13 Commission. Then, the Chief Justice of California appoints
14 you on the Commission after going through your resume and
15 whatever other, you know, experience you put on.

16 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Has the work on this
17 committee started yet?

18 MR. AUJLA: Not much. We had a couple of just,
19 you know, telephone conferences. Because of this COVID-19
20 situation I haven't done much work on this. I was
21 appointed to this commission in, I think, September 2019.
22 So, haven't had much opportunity to work on this commission
23 particularly.

24 But I have worked on the Court Interpreters
25 Advisory Panel for almost the last, I think more than three

1 years.

2 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. There's a
3 quote I want to read from your application. This is in
4 your essay on appreciation for diversity. And then, I'd
5 like to ask you a question.

6 So, the sentence reads: Cultural blindness,
7 superficial understanding of cultural differences,
8 disregard of cultural values, bureaucratic insensitivity to
9 cultural diversity and ethnic differences, all these give
10 rise to inadequate national policies for social, economic,
11 and political development.

12 So, tell me what you mean by cultural blindness
13 and how is it bad?

14 MR. AUJLA: See, by cultural blindness I mean
15 when people don't appreciate diversity, people don't know
16 -- I mean they are cocooned in their own self, and all they
17 know is about their culture and their religion. So, that's
18 -- and governments and the representatives turn a blind eye
19 to these situations and that's what I call cultural
20 blindness. And if a people doesn't have, you know, fair
21 representation in the political arena, and policies, those
22 are made, political policies or other social policies those
23 are made, they lack, you know, representation for those
24 people when you're culturally blind.

25 So, and you are unable to get what these

1 culturally diverse people bring to the table and you lack
2 opportunities of development in national policies and, you
3 know, that's what I would say.

4 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. Do you
5 still practice law?

6 MR. AUJLA: Yes, I do. I do go to India for, you
7 know, like a month or two and I help out my buddies there.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: You help out who there? I
9 didn't hear that.

10 MR. AUJLA: Oh, my buddies who practice law
11 they're long--

12 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay.

13 MR. AUJLA: Yeah, as a group.

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And so, I understand that you
15 travel to India to practice law. Do you also do so
16 remotely from where you're at here in California?

17 MR. AUJLA: No, I do not do it remotely. The
18 only things I do remotely is, you know, sometimes I
19 represent people with U.S. Embassy in India, because I'm
20 registered as an attorney there and I can represent people
21 at consulates. So, that I do via emails and, you know,
22 things like that.

23 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: What requirements would you
24 have to fulfill in order to practice law in California?

25 MR. AUJLA: See, I am registered with the

1 California State Bar as an out-of-state attorney. It's
2 because I belong to a common law jurisdiction, so
3 California State Bar allows you to register as an attorney.
4 The only thing you have to do is just take the Bar exam,
5 like everybody else do.

6 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And have you ever taken the
7 Bar exam here in California?

8 MR. AUJLA: Yes, I did take the Bar exam and I
9 was unsuccessful by a narrow margin. But I was glad that
10 -- I didn't take any courses at that time, like the Bar
11 prep courses and stuff. I just bought some, you know, Bar
12 prep books on eBay, and prepared for the test. And I did
13 pretty well on the test.

14 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: And what's your plan in the
15 future? Do you plan on taking the Bar exam?

16 MR. AUJLA: As of now, no. I'm pretty satisfied
17 with what I'm doing. I think I have more to offer being an
18 interpreter than being an attorney, so that's my take on it
19 as of now.

20 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. How
21 familiar are you with the legal criteria associated with
22 the Commission's work?

23 MR. AUJLA: See, the legal criteria we'll have to
24 follow is, of course, the Voter Rights Act Sections 2 and
25 5, and then you have the California Constitution actually

1 places a priority on the congruence of political
2 subdivisions and communities of interest. And then, you
3 have factors like compactness, contiguity. You cannot
4 split communities or you cannot crack them, or pack them.
5 So, I have tried to, you know, gain knowledge on these
6 strategies of redistricting with whatever time I had. And
7 if I'm selected on the Commission, I'll put in a lot of
8 effort to educate myself.

9 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: All right, thank you. You
10 indicate that you are a volunteer immigration advocate. Is
11 this for a particular organization or for just people you
12 know?

13 MR. AUJLA: No, just people I know, I just try to
14 help them so that they don't end up with, you know, people
15 like immigration consultants and stuff. So, I can guide
16 them to nonprofit organizations or, you know, help them out
17 if I can, especially with translations, you know. And I
18 can still represent them at the embassies and consulate.
19 Those are in India. So, I think that's how I play my part
20 in that.

21 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, thank you. I don't
22 have any further questions at this time. I'll yield the
23 rest of my time, Madam Chair.

24 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap.

25 Turning the time now over to Mr. Coe.

1 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

2 Good morning to you, Mr. Aujla, thank you for
3 taking the time to speak with us today.

4 MR. AUJLA: Good morning, Mr. Coe.

5 PANEL MEMBER COE: My colleagues have asked a lot
6 of my questions, so I only have a few. But you've talked
7 about your time as an interpreter for it looks like almost
8 the last eight years. And in that role you've provided
9 interpretation services in a number of different languages.
10 I think you mentioned seven languages you speak. And
11 you've provided these services at U.S. Citizenship and
12 Immigration Services, and in state courts and court
13 departments.

14 And I'm curious how you think the experiences as
15 an interpreter could be beneficial to your role as a
16 Commissioner.

17 MR. AUJLA: See, the Commission has to take into
18 account the minority communities, communities of interest,
19 and I think I can help shape if we have to, you know,
20 develop any outreach materials for minorities and
21 communities of interest in different languages. And maybe
22 -- and the other thing is I have a lot of experience
23 dealing with the diverse clientage of the courts. And I
24 meet a lot of people in my everyday life. I have a lot of
25 colleagues, other interpreters of exotic language who I

1 interact with on a daily basis and know, you know, what
2 their issues are somewhat. And I think that's how I can be
3 beneficial to the Commission.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. You mentioned
5 communities of interest in your response just now and you
6 talked about it a little bit with Ms. Dickison, as well. I
7 wanted to expand on that topic a little bit. Now, with Ms.
8 Dickison you were talking about some of the difficulties
9 that the pandemic situation could pose to identifying
10 communities of interest.

11 And so, kind of in that vein, but slightly
12 different, my question is, yes, that certainly is going to
13 make things more complicated. But even if that wasn't
14 there, identifying communities of interest certainly isn't
15 an easy task and even sans any type of pandemic
16 restrictions some communities were going to be easier to
17 identify than others and some were going to be rather
18 difficult, or they're more hidden, or they're less engaged
19 for one reason or another.

20 But identifying as many communities as possible
21 is so important to the work of this Commission. So, how
22 can the Commission identify as many communities as possible
23 and avoid inadvertently kind of overlooking some of these
24 communities that are harder to find or are slightly more
25 hidden?

1 MR. AUJLA: See, fortunately, you know, as I was
2 preparing for the interview I came across a language access
3 metric support released by the California Judicial Council.
4 And we all know California is the most diverse state in the
5 country. We have over 200 languages spoken in the state
6 and approximately 44 percent of households speak language
7 other than English, and nearly 7 million Californians, like
8 19 percent report speak English, English less than very
9 well.

10 So, coming back to communities of interest,
11 something unusual about the California Redistricting
12 Initiative is that political subdivisions and community
13 preservation is a top priority. When the present
14 Commission designed California's new districts in 2011, the
15 Commission implemented the community of interest criteria
16 by soliciting extensive inputs from concerned individuals
17 and groups. It held dozens of hearings across the state at
18 which the oral and written comments were submitted in
19 thousands.

20 So, I think we need to carry on that tradition of
21 outreach and developing outreach materials, radios,
22 different pamphlets in different languages. And we will, I
23 think we can take the experiences of the Commission that's
24 now in place and follow suit, although, we have big shoes
25 to fill.

1 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you. Some
2 communities that you identify, even after identification
3 may feel less comfortable coming forward and sharing their
4 perspective with the Commission, and they may have concerns
5 that could be a variety of reasons that they are concerned
6 with engaging the Commission, or with engaging government
7 in general. But since getting as many perspectives as
8 possible and the information from those communities is so
9 important for the Commission to be able to do its job, how
10 could the Commission make those communities that feel a
11 little apprehensive coming forward and sharing their
12 perspective to feel welcome, and comfortable in coming
13 forward to share their perspectives to better inform the
14 Commission?

15 MR. AUJLA: Oh, I think, I know some communities
16 are very shy in coming out to the mainstream and we'll have
17 to have -- we'll have to reach the individuals through
18 advocacy groups, or people, or leaders of those communities
19 of interest through public outreach. And because those are
20 the people, the testimonies of those people are the best
21 way to get what their concerns are so that they can get
22 fair representation. So, I think public outreach is the
23 main stake in that. And you have to get to the people who
24 look like them, or talk like them. You might have to
25 engage them to get to those communities because people are

1 comfortable with their own people who talk like them, who
2 look like them. So, I think that's the best possible way
3 to reach these communities.

4 PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. If you were to be
5 appointed to the role of Commissioner, which aspects of
6 that role do you think that you would enjoy the most and,
7 conversely, what about being a Commissioner might you
8 struggle with?

9 MR. AUJLA: I think I will enjoy traveling. I
10 like to go places. I enjoy traveling. I can meet
11 deadlines. I can go deep into research. I like to
12 research things. I can handle large amounts of data. So,
13 travel, legal research, handling data I think I'll enjoy
14 these.

15 I think I might struggle with the political
16 limelight or spotlight you might get for your decisions and
17 opposition you have to encounter from outside political
18 world, you know, backlash, and allegations, and
19 controversies, like it has happened to people in other
20 states, for example Arizona Chairwoman Colleen Mathis, and
21 Carave, in Colorado.

22 So, because you are dealing with the livelihood
23 of politicians, so there might be a backlash, so I think
24 I'll have to struggle with that part.

25 PANEL MEMBER COE: Okay, thank you.

1 Madam Chair, I don't have any further questions.

2 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Coe.

3 I'm going to turn the time over now to Mr.

4 Dawson.

5 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 Mr. Aujla, once again thank you for being here.

7 I have a couple of questions I wanted to follow up with
8 you. I wanted to ask you a little bit more about your work
9 on the Advisory Committee on Access to Justice.

10 So, you're an interpreter. Were there different
11 seats for different members of the judicial system, like
12 lawyers, judges, interpreters?

13 MR. AUJLA: Yes, there are seats, but I wasn't
14 appointed to this Commission as an interpreter. I was
15 appointed as a public member.

16 MR. DAWSON: I see. Is that a volunteer
17 position, or do you get per diem, or are you salaried?

18 MR. AUJLA: You get a per diem for, you know, the
19 days you spend on that. You just get travel and any
20 expenditure you do for your hotel and travel. That's
21 pretty much it.

22 MR. DAWSON: Okay. It conducts public meetings
23 under the -- does it act under the Bagley-Keene Open
24 Meetings Act?

25 MR. AUJLA: Oh, yes. Most of the meetings are

1 open meetings and they're recorded. Even if you are doing
2 it remotely, they're all recorded and they're public
3 meetings.

4 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Do you have much experience
5 taking public comment as part of these meetings?

6 MR. AUJLA: Not much. I mean we do get comments
7 from unions, and court staff, and court users, but not
8 much.

9 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. Would you
10 consider -- so, the name of the committee, if I understand
11 it correctly, is the Committee on Providing Access and
12 Fairness. Would you consider a fair redistricting process
13 to be an aspect of providing access and fairness?

14 MR. AUJLA: Oh, yes, of course I would. No doubt
15 about it.

16 MR. DAWSON: Could you expand on that a bit?

17 MR. AUJLA: Because fairness, you know, because
18 of all the gimmicks that were being employed by
19 gerrymanderers, like vote dilution, and splitting
20 communities, and packing communities. So, these things has
21 no place in fair representation. So, I'm pretty sure
22 that's the things the Commission needs to eliminate for
23 fair representation.

24 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. So, you
25 talked a little bit about your history as an immigrant and

1 how that perspective could be valuable to the Commission.
2 I want to ask you about your perspective as someone from
3 the Central Valley. Have you always lived in Fresno when
4 you were in California?

5 MR. AUJLA: Yes, since 2006.

6 MR. DAWSON: Okay. Do you think that there is a
7 particular point of view that belongs to the Central Valley
8 that is important to be represented on the Commission?

9 MR. AUJLA: Yes. I mean this is basically most
10 of the Central Valley, the farming, you know, hub. So, we
11 have issues like water rights, farmers are struggling for
12 water here. And we have issues of farmworkers. So, we
13 have issues of like truckers. So, the Central Valley has
14 very, I think, different perspective. And we have other
15 areas here like a lot of immigrant population. You know, a
16 lot of minority communities. And so, I think Central
17 Valley has very peculiar needs that needs to be represented
18 in the state and federal, you know, lawmaking bodies.

19 MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So, when you were
20 describing your travels as a truck driver, you were listing
21 off so many places it reminded me of that old Johnny Cash
22 song. But have you actually been able to visit all 58
23 counties in California? It sounded like it.

24 MR. AUJLA: Yeah, I think most of it. I have
25 been all over California from San Diego, Calexico, Hammond,

1 Barstow, you know, Needles, as far as Needles, and then,
2 towards Shasta and the mountains of the Central Valley,
3 Sonora and those areas. And then, of course, Bay Area,
4 L.A. So, yeah, pretty much all over California, Santa Rosa
5 is one of them.

6 So, let me ask you, let me maybe flip the
7 question. If the Commission, which is partially randomly
8 chosen because of the way that it's set up, could the
9 Commission be successful if it did not include a member who
10 represented the Central Valley?

11 MR. AUJLA: I don't think so. Because as I
12 discussed before, because we have very, you know, peculiar
13 issues here of farming community, trucking and, you know, a
14 lot of immigrant communities we have in the Central Valley
15 because agriculture is the mainstay. So, there are a lot
16 of people involved in that industry as workers, as farmers,
17 or truckers.

18 So, I think we need to have someone from Central
19 Valley to have a perspective on the Commission.

20 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you. I have one
21 additional follow up.

22 Madam Secretary, how much time is left?

23 MS. PELLMAN: Twenty-four minutes, 17 seconds.

24 MR. DAWSON: Oh, okay, great. Thank you.

25 In your response to standard question three, you

1 mentioned the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. And
2 I thought I heard you say that one of the challenges might
3 be the effect of the timing of the Census data. Do you
4 also have concerns about the completeness of the Census
5 data and, if so, can you talk about that?

6 MR. AUJLA: Yes, I do have concerns about that
7 because I think we don't have people going knocking doors,
8 and most participants -- as far as my knowledge. There
9 might be, I don't know. And who are knocking doors to get
10 an accurate data. Most of it is by mail or online, you
11 know, forms you can fill.

12 So, I mean there are a lot of communities there
13 who don't know how to access these avenues and they might
14 be left, and we'll be totally blind about those, you know,
15 people and their existence.

16 MR. DAWSON: Any particular counties or
17 communities, rather, that you can think of that this would
18 disproportionately impact?

19 MR. AUJLA: I think I can say like Hmong
20 community, and the Sikh community that I belong to. The
21 people are very shy. And maybe people from Sudan. So,
22 these are the communities I can think of that would be left
23 out.

24 MR. DAWSON: These are recent immigrant groups,
25 then?

1 MR. AUJLA: Not all of them are recent. There
2 are some groups who have been here for a long time.

3 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

4 That's all the follow-up questions I have, Madam
5 Chair.

6 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

7 Mr. Belnap, do you have any follow-up questions?

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: I do not.

9 CHAIR DICKISON: Mr. Coe?

10 PANEL MEMBER COE: I have no follow-up questions.

11 CHAIR DICKISON: I have one. Can you tell us how
12 you will balance your professional and volunteer
13 commitments here in California and in India, and any
14 personal commitments you have with the time demands of the
15 Commission?

16 MR. AUJLA: See, first of all, the commitments in
17 India are -- they are just -- I just go -- I have a farm
18 there, so I'm basically belong to an agricultural family.
19 So, I just go there to help my father and while I'm there I
20 do my, you know, legal things to help my buddies who
21 practice law there. So, it's not something that's
22 mandatory, so I can totally stop going to India.

23 And with the other volunteer aspects of working
24 on the Judicial Council, you know, advisory bodies, they're
25 not so much time taking. The most of the work is done by

1 teleconference and we just have maybe one meeting in a
2 year. So, the -- and the best part is I have a very
3 flexible schedule. I mean, sometimes I just have to go to
4 the court for 15 minutes, or maybe two hours, and then I'm
5 free. So, I have a lot of flexibility. And I don't have
6 any commitments that are so binding on me that I -- I think
7 I have the luxury of time to serve on this Commission.

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you. Okay, I have no
9 further questions.

10 MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

11 Mr. Aujla, with the time remaining we'd like to
12 offer you the opportunity to make some closing remarks to
13 the Panel, if you wish.

14 MR. AUJLA: Yes. Apart from what I have
15 discussed already, I would like to share with the Panel
16 that I have been a student of economics and geography. So,
17 economic affects, you know, everyone's lives. Learning
18 about economic concepts can help you understand the
19 contemporary issues of society, shape public policy, and
20 see things in a new way. Economics helps us understand
21 historic trends and make predictions about the coming
22 years. It's the study of scarcity. It's the study of
23 decision making.

24 I believe my know how of the principles of
25 economics can be important as a Commissioner since it

1 enhances your ability to study trends, make predictions,
2 and use your resources wisely.

3 And I've been a student of geography. Geography
4 gives you a perspective to understand how the land forms
5 climate, natural sources, urban and rural living effects
6 human beings.

7 My background as a lawyer gives me the ability to
8 understand the legal parameters, interpret the legislative
9 intent behind laws, ability to handle large volumes of
10 data, enforce the legal challenges.

11 So, these abilities will be plus, along with
12 other attributes and skills I discussed previously while
13 answering the standard questions. My experience,
14 profession, talents and backgrounds make me an adept
15 candidate to serve on this Commission.

16 And I would like to thank the members of the
17 Panel and the court staff to put in this extra day here,
18 and all the tedious and excruciating work that you have to
19 go through to set up this Commission. That's really
20 applaudable. That's really remarkable. Thank you.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Aujla. And thank
22 you very much for meeting with us today.

23 Before we go into recess, I just want to remind
24 the public that we are taking public comments until one
25 o'clock today. We will reconvene at two o'clock to go

1 through our agenda items and also read those public
2 comments. So, again, we are taking public comments until
3 1:00 p.m. today.

4 So, we're going to go into recess now, until two
5 o'clock.

6 (Off the record at 11:57 a.m.)

7 (On the record at 1:00 p.m.)

8 CHAIR DICKISON: Good afternoon. The time being
9 2:00 p.m., I am calling the Application Review Panel
10 meeting back to order.

11 We've finished our interviews and the next agenda
12 item is discussion related to requests for additional
13 information from or about remaining applicants. The
14 remaining applicant selection phase is in process and the
15 schedule. So, I don't anticipate having any additional
16 requests for information.

17 But if we should have some additional questions,
18 Mr. Dawson, would we just funnel those through you, as we
19 have in the past?

20 MR. DAWSON: Yes, that's correct, Madam Chair.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Okay, thank you. So, the
22 remaining phases we have after the conclusion of today is
23 our next selection process where we -- we reduce the pool
24 down to the 60 of the most qualified applicants. And we
25 will -- for us to submit to the Legislature by May 15th.

1 We anticipate the meetings for that selection to
2 occur from May 6th to May 8th. And then, the Panel will
3 deliver the names to the Legislature by May 15th as
4 required in the Voters FIRST Act.

5 The next agenda item is public comment.

6 MR. DAWSON: Oh, I'm sorry, Madam Chair.

7 CHAIR DICKISON: Yes, Mr. Dawson.

8 MR. DAWSON: If I may, I would just like to
9 inform the Panel that we anticipate that we will post the
10 notice and agenda for that meeting no later than close of
11 business tomorrow. I am informed by CSA that they are
12 working on a means of allowing verbal public comment
13 remotely, probably telephonically. And as CSA continues to
14 work out those details, if need be we will update our
15 notice and agenda.

16 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

17 MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

18 CHAIR DICKISON: Our next agenda item is public
19 comment. And so, I'm going to turn the floor over to Mr.
20 Dawson for public comments.

21 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 The Applicant Review Panel has received 12 emails
23 and letters from the public not relating to any particular
24 applicant, since the adjournment of the last meeting. They
25 range from one line to several pages. I will read them

1 into the record in chronological order. I will identify
2 the sender, the time and the date. I believe this will
3 take about a half hour.

4 First, from Wicky Boyd, on Friday, February 21st.

5 "Subject 120: So, no one from Mendocino County?
6 What the heck?"

7 Second. From Marty McGrath, received Friday,
8 February 21st.

9 "Subject: I am surprised. No one from the
10 greater Santa Maria area? We are bigger than Santa
11 Barbara, but then they don't have anyone either. Just an
12 observation, no reply required."

13 Third. From Cathy Lydon, received February 22nd.

14 "Subject: 120. I just reviewed the final 120.
15 I am so disappointed that there is only one true Northern
16 Californian represented. That applicant is in Humboldt
17 County. Also, please be aware that Wagaman drew the
18 districts for the Town of Chico and it is being stated that
19 he gerrymandered the districts. Please choose another
20 person/company to lead the training for the state."

21 Fourth. From Henry Lawrence Serra, received
22 February 24th.

23 "Subject: Economic status of the 120 applicants
24 for interviews. Has it come to anyone's attention that of
25 the 120 applicants asked for a personal interview for

1 selection to the 2020 California Redistricting Commission
2 (40 no party, 40 Republican, 40 Democrat) that the economic
3 status of the groups breaks down this way. No party, zero
4 dollars to \$74,999, only seven of 40 equals 17.5 percent,
5 which means that 82.5 percent of the interviewing
6 applicants are in the \$75,000 to over \$250,000 categories.

7 Republican, zero dollars to \$74,999 only three of
8 40 equals 7.5 percent, which means 92.5 percent of the
9 interviewing applicants are in the \$75,000 to over \$250,000
10 categories.

11 Democrat, zero dollars to \$74,999, only five of
12 40 equals 12.5 percent, which means 87.5 percent of the
13 interviewing applicants are in the \$75,000 to over \$250,000
14 categories.

15 Question: Are these economic statistics of the
16 applicant groups to be interviewed heavily weighted toward
17 the high economic status end representative of the
18 California voting public? Regards, Henry Lawrence Serra.”

19 Fifth. From Steven A. David, received February
20 25, 2020.

21 “Dear staff, I am writing you today to make a
22 recommendation regarding safety. Background, in my 31-year
23 career with PG&E safety was always our top priority. This
24 was reflected in how we started each day by discussing
25 safety issues in the workgroups, operations, maintenance,

1 engineering, chemistry and radiation protection this was
2 related to the work being performed for the day with a
3 focus on industrial safety. But we also conducted many
4 meetings where employees from various departments met to
5 discuss a wide range of regulatory and administrative
6 topics in various auditoriums, conference rooms or
7 classrooms. In these settings, we also started our
8 meetings by discussing safety, but the items we discussed
9 were different than the ones discussed in the shops. This
10 is where my recommendation becomes applicable.

11 Observation, I watched the live stream of the
12 August 28th, 2019 meeting. Mr. Dawson started the meeting
13 as the acting chair until the Panel elected a chair and
14 vice chair. Mr. Belnap, as the Chair, stated the ground
15 rules for the current and future meetings, including
16 silencing phones, taking phone calls outside the room,
17 limiting public comments to two or three minutes, and when
18 the Panel would take breaks. It was at this point during
19 the first meeting that I realized there was no discussion
20 of safety. Subsequent meetings started in a similar manner
21 with the chair covering the ground rules. In looking at
22 all of the meeting agendas from November 2019 through and
23 including the agenda for the March 2nd through April 23rd,
24 2020 meeting, item one is the approval of the minutes from
25 the previous Panel meeting, item two is announcements, and

1 item three is staff reports. Safety is not a stated agenda
2 item.

3 Analysis, all Panel meetings were conducted at
4 621 Capitol Mall, 10th Floor, Sacramento, California. I
5 have been to Sacramento many times, but I have never been
6 in the building at this address. I think it is a
7 reasonable assumption that people attending the first four
8 meetings had never been there before, either. They were in
9 a new and unfamiliar environment. For the upcoming March
10 to April meeting that will include 120 interviews, most of
11 the applicants will be traveling from all over the state
12 and will have never been in the building. Once the eight
13 members of the Commission are identified, they will begin
14 having meetings to select the remaining six. As a full
15 Commission they will commence the process of selecting
16 staff and counsel to support their efforts. Wherever these
17 meetings are held, it is likely that the location will be
18 new to them. Then they will travel to towns and cities all
19 over the state" -- excuse me -- "all around the state to
20 meet with city councils, communities of interest,
21 homeowners associations and others. Many of these meetings
22 will be held in buildings that none of the Commissioners
23 have ever been in previously. Depending on the
24 circumstances this could become an issue of safety.

25 Recommendation, the first item of any agenda

1 should be safety. I am asking that this be adopted for the
2 upcoming Panel meeting and also by the Commission for their
3 meetings. Had I been invited for an interview, I would
4 have stated that I would make sure that the Commission
5 incorporates a safety agenda item for every meeting they
6 conduct, whether it is a meeting of just the Commission
7 members or a public event to address citizens' concerns.

8 Format, the safety agenda item can be called a
9 number of things. Safety, safety minute, take two for
10 safety, safety briefing, or any number of other titles.
11 The name is not important, but the message is. At PG&E it
12 varied based on the nature of the meeting, but we did have
13 a standard list of items to address. First, we would
14 identify the exits in the event that we needed to evacuate
15 the room or building in an emergency. If we were not on
16 the ground floor (the ARP meets on the 10th floor) we would
17 remind everyone that in the event of a fire or earthquake
18 not to use the elevators, but to take the stairs. We would
19 make sure everyone knew where the stairwells were located.
20 If we had someone in a wheelchair or with mobility issues,
21 we asked for volunteers to assist them down the stairs. If
22 the building was evacuated, we identified a location to
23 meet somewhere nearby and to assure we accounted for
24 everyone. Then, we assigned someone to call 9-1-1 in the
25 event of a medical emergency. We asked if anyone was

1 currently or previously trained in first aid and/or CPR.
2 We would identify the location of fire extinguishers, first
3 aid kits and, if applicable, defibrillators. Once a team
4 becomes well versed in the safety agenda item, all these
5 things can be covered in 90 seconds or less. While
6 unlikely to be needed or used, being prepared could save
7 someone's life.

8 My vision, a standard agenda is adopted for use
9 by the California 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission
10 that identifies a safety brief as the number one agenda
11 item.

12 Real life example. When I led a team of 16
13 talented individuals at the corporate headquarters in San
14 Francisco, I introduced the idea of a safety brief to my
15 team. While it was a required practice at the Diablo
16 Canyon Power Plant, this was not used in the corporate
17 environment. Our building was 32 stories and my team was
18 located on the 24th floor. I soon learned that no one on
19 the team was certified in CPR, so I contracted with a local
20 trainer to provide a half-day of training for my team. By
21 the time these arrangements were made, members of my team
22 had fully embraced the idea of a safety brief. On the day
23 of training, due to space limitations on our floor, we had
24 reserved a large conference room on the second floor. None
25 of us had ever been there before. One of my managers

1 checked out the area, located the stairwells and emergency
2 exits, identified which side of the building we would exit
3 on, briefed the team and identified where to meet up should
4 we have to evacuate. Less than 15 minutes into the
5 training a fire alarm went off on the fourth floor.
6 Building rules require everyone on the affected floor, plus
7 two stories below that floor and two stories above that
8 floor to evacuate. When we heard the PA announcement, we
9 realized we had to evacuate. Due to the safety brief and
10 in a very calm manner we all walked to the stairwell and
11 exited the building as planned. We crossed the street to
12 the previously determined safe location and were all
13 accounted for within two minutes of evacuating. After the
14 all clear was announced, we returned to the classroom and
15 conducted a quick debrief and lessons learned from the
16 event. It reinforced the importance of having a plan and
17 sticking to it. The safety brief enabled us to do both.

18 I encourage the members of the Applicant Review
19 Panel to incorporate some version of a safety brief into
20 their meeting routines and to pass this recommendation on
21 to the 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission. Thank you
22 for taking the time to read my recommendation, sincerely,
23 Steven A. David."

24 If you don't mind, I just need a second.

25 Sixth. From the League of Women Voters of

1 California and California Common Cause, Kathay Feng, Carol
2 Moon Goldberg. Received February 28th.

3 "Dear members of the Applicant Review Panel,
4 thank you for your work to narrow the Citizens
5 Redistricting Commission, CRC, applicant pool to 120
6 applicants slated for interviews and congratulations on
7 reaching this important milestone after months of
8 thoughtful review. We appreciate your commitment to
9 protecting the integrity of the selection process. With
10 that in mind, we write to reiterate our concern that legal
11 council is potentially usurping the Applicant Review
12 Panel's, ARP's, independent role by selectively reviewing
13 applicant's social media posts and making subjective
14 recommendations to the ARP regarding applicants' ability to
15 be impartial. We urge the ARP to independently and fairly
16 review social media posts for all applicants prior to the
17 commencement of the interview process and without the
18 improper influence of legal counsel or staff who are not
19 part of the ARP. As we indicated in our letter dated
20 February 14th, 2020, legal counsel's role should be limited
21 to making recommendations regarding objective criteria
22 related to applicants' qualification to serve on the CRC.
23 The ARP should ensure it avoids any process where legal
24 counsel inadvertently wades into the realm of evaluating
25 subjective selection criteria, which is the sole

1 responsibility of the ARP. As counsel explained at the
2 ARP's February 19th, 2020 meeting, his office did not
3 forward social media for all applicants. Instead, his
4 office forwarded social media posts to the ARP that counsel
5 deemed 'of note', and flagged concerns or made
6 recommendations about those applicants' ability to be
7 impartial. Counsel was reluctant to share the process his
8 office used to review social media. Thus, it was not at
9 all clear if counsel had reviewed social media for all
10 applicants with public social media accounts, what criteria
11 counsel used to decide to look at some applicants and not
12 others, and what criteria was applied to determine whose
13 social media should be forwarded to the ARP. We appreciate
14 your representations that you did not consider the social
15 media posts forwarded by counsel in making your decisions
16 about who to advance to the interview pool. We understand
17 you may, however, look at social media posts forwarded by
18 counsel as you prepare for the interview phase. Certainly,
19 if the ARP desires social media information or information
20 from other sources it can request that from staff,
21 including legal counsel. If it chooses to make that
22 request, however, we strongly urge the ARP to do the
23 following.

24 One, review available social media for all
25 applicants.

1 Two, advise counsel or whoever retrieves the
2 social media to refrain from flagging or making
3 recommendations related to the social media.

4 And three, disregard any previous flags or
5 recommendations from counsel regarding applicants' ability
6 to be impartial.

7 By contrast, the Panel determines 'relevant
8 analytical skills, ability to be impartial, and
9 appreciation for California's diverse demographics and
10 geography'. These are subjective determinations and as
11 noted by a Panel Member requires consideration of the
12 context of the applicants' lives. This role belongs to the
13 Panel and should not be outsourced to staff.

14 We thank you again for the important and
15 thoughtful work you have done thus far to ensure a
16 transparent, fair and independent selection and
17 redistricting process. We urge you to follow our
18 recommendations related to social media so that you
19 continue to abide by your statutory obligation to 'conduct
20 the work of the Panel in a manner that is impartial and
21 that reinforces public confidence in the integrity of the
22 Panel's work' (2 CCR Section 60833(e)).

23 If you have any questions or need any follow up,
24 please do not hesitate to contact" -- I am redacting this
25 for privacy -- "sincerely Kathay Feng, Interim Executive

1 Director of California Common Cause, and Carol Moon
2 Goldberg, President, League of Women Voters of California.”

3 Number seven. From Salamah Locks, received March
4 17, 2020. “Subject: Demographics of the 120 applicants
5 selected for interviews.

6 Dear Applicant Review Panel, thank you for your
7 continued, dedicated and focused responsibility with this
8 important selection task. I have repeatedly been inspired
9 by your efforts to have your selected applicants represent
10 California’s diverse geography and ethnic/racial
11 population. When I reviewed the 120 applicants selected
12 for interviews, I was surprised that there was a very right
13 skewed distribution of incomes. At least 59 percent of the
14 group falls in the two highest income ranges. I do believe
15 that the majority of Californians have incomes much less
16 than \$75,000 annually. I do hope that the 60 finalists’
17 demographics will be more representative of the rich and
18 diverse skills, talents, values, experiences, and
19 professions of our great Californians. Regards, Salamah
20 Locks.”

21 Number eight. From Leonard Gonzales, received
22 April 18th, 2020. “Subject: Applicant review process.

23 It would be helpful if individuals, both those
24 that were interested and those that are watching the
25 process for transparency knew what the selection criteria

1 is based upon. The subjective judgments of the Panel are
2 of no real use. As an HR professional with an EEO
3 background, it is always a problem when the criteria is
4 fluid and worse when the Panel members utilize their
5 personal bias to affect the outcome. That personal bias is
6 most often unconscious therefore" -- excuse me --
7 "therefore, without standard/objective criteria established
8 before the process begins, the ultimate decisions are
9 suspect. This should be more than a personality context
10 and/or a selection process that reflects the personal views
11 of a few. How will the State of California determine that
12 the best qualified are selected? How will the State of
13 California determine that the resulting redistricting
14 effort was fair to the community it serves? How will the
15 citizens of the State of California find acceptance of the
16 process given the lack of transparency in the criteria
17 used? This is not a criticism, as much as an observation
18 in the interest of fairness and transparency."

19 Number nine. From Maria Williams Slaughter,
20 received April 16th.

21 "Dear Chair Coe, Vice Chair Dickison, Member
22 Belnap and Counsel Dawson. It was a pleasure to virtually
23 meet all of you on Monday, April 13th, during my interview
24 for the Shape California 2020 Citizens Redistricting
25 Commission. I appreciate the opportunity to participate

1 remotely in order to ensure that we all remain healthy and
2 safe during these unprecedented times. In addition to the
3 standard questions, you posed some thought provoking
4 inquiries about my background and experiences and I hope
5 that I was able to successfully convey my qualifications
6 for and sincere interest in this tremendous opportunity to
7 ensure all Californians are appropriately represented.

8 Over the course of my technical and
9 administrative career, collaboration, stewardship, and a
10 steadfast focus on continuous improvement have been some of
11 my strong suits and I believe that these skills will prove
12 beneficial in this role.

13 I look forward to moving to the next phase of the
14 process and ultimately being selected to favorably
15 represent the charge of the Commission throughout the next
16 decade. Thank you for your time and consideration,
17 sincerely, Maria. P.S., I would like to recognize the
18 efforts of your staff and contractors as every single
19 person that I have had the occasion to interact with during
20 this process (for questions, clarifications, travel
21 arrangements, technical support, et cetera) has been
22 extremely helpful and friendly."

23 Number ten, from Istvan Gorog, received April
24 16th, 2020.

25 "Subject: Applicant Review" -- excuse me --

1 "Applicant interview meeting, opportunity for public
2 comment.

3 Hello Dave, I sampled several interviews of the
4 Panel today. Very disappointing. I have difficulty
5 understanding why you were not the number one candidate. I
6 am upset and I find the competence of the Panel highly
7 questionable. Keep safe. Best, Istvan."

8 Number 11, from Louise Gulartie, received April
9 19th.

10 "Subject: Public comment for Panel meeting.

11 Dear Ms. Dickison, Mr. Belnap, Mr. Coe and Mr.
12 Dawson, As a voting citizen of California and as an
13 applicant involved in the Redistricting Commission
14 application process, I want to take this opportunity to
15 thank each of you for the tremendous dedication, integrity,
16 and excellence with which you have discharged your
17 responsibilities during the application process. I have
18 watched the hearing process and realize the enormity of the
19 challenge involved in reading each application, making
20 decisions, and ultimately accomplishing 120 interviews
21 under circumstances which were very challenging. Each of
22 you is to be commended for the incredible amount of work
23 you have done on behalf of the State of California. At all
24 times, all of you conducted yourself with great courtesy,
25 kindness and respect for each other, as well as the

1 applicants whom you evaluated. You were always prepared,
2 always on task, always keeping proper perspective. I can't
3 think of anything that could have been done better than how
4 you actually did it. Thank you for all that you have done,
5 Louise Gulartie."

6 Finally, number 12. From James Woodson, and
7 Kristin Nimmers of the Black Census and Redistricting Hub,
8 received April 21st.

9 "Dear Applicant Review Panel, On behalf of the
10 Black Census and Redistricting Hub, a network of over 30
11 black led and black serving organizations across the State
12 of California, I want to express our deep appreciation for
13 the work of the Panel and Auditor staff in establishing the
14 Citizens Redistricting Commission, CRC. Thank you for
15 being flexible and nimble as you continue to navigate the
16 interview process during the COVID-19 pandemic.

17 We write to you today to underscore the
18 importance of your continued diligence and rigor in
19 considering the diversity of the applicant pool. Section
20 60860(b) of the California Code of Regulations directs the
21 first eight applicants selected to ensure the Commission
22 reflects California's diversity, and we were glad to see
23 that the ARP has also strongly considered diversity in its
24 deliberations of the applicant pool. In concluding your
25 work to narrow the applicant pool down to 60 candidates, we

1 encourage you to continue to take this approach.

2 In particular, we write to urge you to consider
3 two factors in particular. One, racial and ethnic
4 diversity. While people from traditionally
5 underrepresented communities, namely racial and ethnic
6 minority communities have historically been shut out of
7 civic engagement and public participation processes, fair
8 and equitable line drawing requires that these communities
9 are represented among key decision makers, including
10 members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission. A
11 failure to achieve inclusivity and fair representation on
12 the Commission means that the perspectives, experiences,
13 and lifestyles of all Californians will not be represented
14 in the redistricting process and ultimately increase the
15 chances of disenfranchising important communities in
16 California. Section 60805(a)(3) directs the ARP to
17 evaluate applications, recognition that California benefits
18 by having effective participation in the electoral process
19 by persons of all demographic characteristics, and residing
20 in all geographic locations including, but not limited to,
21 participation by those person who in the past, as a
22 consequence of sharing certain demographic characteristics,
23 such as race and ethnicity, have had less opportunity than
24 other members of the electorate to participate in the
25 electoral process. As such, significant and thoughtful

1 attention should be given to applicants with backgrounds
2 that demonstrate experience with and an understanding of
3 the ways in which these demographic characteristics connect
4 to civic participation or the lack thereof.

5 The CRC should recognize the contributions and
6 the insights of the key parts of the fabric of California's
7 civic participation by considering the importance of racial
8 and ethnic diversity in the applicant pool.

9 Two, equal representation. Our democracy and the
10 redistricting process is built on the principle of one
11 person, one vote. Political representation and districts
12 on all levels are rooted in this principle. As such, if
13 one area is more sparsely populated than another, our
14 democracy accounts for that dynamic by ensuring that the
15 people who live in each area have equal political
16 representation in Congress. The same is true of the State
17 Assembly, State Senate Districts, as well as local
18 political districts like county supervisorial districts,
19 city council districts, and school boards.

20 This principle of equal representation is
21 fundamental to our system of government. The same should
22 be true of the CRC. As such, while geographic diversity is
23 important and should be strongly considered, it should not
24 come at the expense of equal representation. Regions of
25 the state should be represented in the final applicant pool

1 in proportion to their population. No one region or county
2 should have more proportional representation than it ought.
3 Failure to consider these dynamic risks, giving" -- excuse
4 me -- "Failure to consider these dynamic risks, giving some
5 counties or regions a greater voice in the political
6 process than others. As such, we urge you to protect the
7 principle of equal representation as you consider
8 geographic diversity in narrowing the final applicant pool.

9 In closing, we know that the decision before you
10 will be a difficult one. Based on the applications
11 received and the interviews conducted, the CRC's selections
12 process has no doubt generated strong applicants. We do
13 not envy your position. That said, we hope that you
14 strongly consider the importance of racial and ethnic
15 diversity, and equal representation in your final decision
16 making process. Thank you in advance for your
17 consideration of these matters, sincerely, James Woodson
18 and Kristin Nimmers."

19 Madam Chair, that concludes the written public
20 comment that the Panel has received.

21 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Dawson.

22 That is all the items on our agenda today. I
23 would like to thank all the applicants that participated in
24 the process and appeared for interviews, either in person
25 or virtually. Thank you for your patience and your

1 flexibility as we adjusted to circumstances as they
2 changed.

3 I have to say that the decisions before us are
4 difficult ones. It's a very strong applicant pool.

5 If either one of the other members of the Panel
6 have anything to say, I'd like to give them the opportunity
7 to do so.

8 VICE CHAIR BELNAP: Yes, Madam Chair, I'll go
9 next since we -- that was the pattern we used in the
10 interviews. I want to thank the applicants as well. I
11 feel like I learned so much from the applicants. I came
12 away inspired from your stories, from your experiences,
13 inspired to want to be better myself and to serve. So,
14 that's one.

15 I also want to thank my fellow Panel Members.
16 I'm proud of the work that we did and perseverance that
17 both of you showed. And I'm also -- I want to thank Mr.
18 Dawson because I know that rearranging our whole structure,
19 and going online, and also just participating in the
20 interviews was a heavy load on his shoulders. And I knew
21 him before this process and it takes a lot for him to show
22 any stress whatsoever. And for him to show just a little
23 bit of stress means that was a heavy load. So, I really
24 want to thank him for his work.

25 And I know he couldn't do it alone. I want to

1 thank the technical staff, both here in the room, and the
2 safety staff, and also those behind the scenes that were
3 helping us did a remarkable job.

4 And Madam Secretary, I know you can hear us. I
5 think you did a great job explaining the process to
6 candidates and helping them feel at ease. I could hear you
7 at times doing that and I really appreciate it.

8 And finally, I know my assistant, Britani Keszler
9 is watching this interview right now and I want to thank
10 her. She's done as much work as I have. And thank her for
11 being a sounding board and keeping me organized.

12 So, those are the people I wanted to thank.

13 PANEL MEMBER COE: I want to echo a lot of -- or
14 all of the things that Mr. Belnap and Ms. Dickison said.
15 When we started this meeting on March 2nd, 2020, and on
16 that day I mean the National Basketball Association was
17 playing games across the street in Golden One Center. And
18 the National Hockey League and other professional sports
19 organizations were holding scheduled games in front of
20 thousands of fans. And my kids, and kids everywhere were
21 still going to school, and going to birthday parties. And
22 restaurants were full of people.

23 And we, the Applicant Review Panel, were holding
24 in-person interviews with candidates for the California
25 Citizens Redistricting Commission.

1 And as we all know, since that day the world and
2 many things about normal life have changed. The ongoing
3 COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us across the globe
4 in many unprecedented ways. And, you know, it's a dark and
5 difficult time for a lot of people.

6 But I think as we've seen throughout a lot of
7 history, in difficult times the human spirit has a way of
8 kind of rising up, and persevering, and shining in
9 difficult times. And a small microcosm of that I think is
10 here with this effort, with this organization, and with our
11 contractors, and with our applicants.

12 Every single person involved with this effort had
13 to adapt on the fly, in the middle of a meeting, operating
14 compliance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, and with
15 an unmovable statutory deadline looming in front of us on
16 the horizon. And these adaptations were not always ideal,
17 and some were difficult and time consuming. And yet, here
18 we are, about to close this meeting after 117 successful
19 applicant interviews.

20 So, I just wanted to -- I wanted to take a moment
21 to acknowledge what the world is going through and to thank
22 the people that made it possible to continue these
23 interviews in the face of such daunting events. As was
24 mentioned before, Kristian, and the team at VideoSSC has
25 been really fantastic. They scrambled to establish a way

1 for us to conduct these interviews in conjunction with Mr.
2 Dawson, as it was mentioned, to ensure that we could
3 conduct these interviews remotely, ensure the safety of
4 staff and of applicants.

5 And despite many of us, myself included,
6 conducting these interviews remotely, the VideoSSC staff
7 has been in this room each and every day keeping us up and
8 running, and ensuring that the citizens of California
9 continue to have access to this process. So, thank you to
10 them.

11 Dan Claypool and David King, everyone else from
12 the State Auditor's Office that's continued to provide
13 support to the applicants, as well as to the Panel, thank
14 you to them.

15 Shauna Pellman for stepping up and acting as our
16 remote secretary, prepping applicants for their interviews
17 and keeping all of us in line, and making sure that all of
18 the interviews proceeded within the right time frames.

19 Members of the California Highway Patrol, who
20 provided security for us at these meetings.

21 Of course, our Counsel, Mr. Dawson, my colleagues
22 Ms. Dickison and Mr. Belnap for their continued
23 professionalism and resilience. Like the folks at
24 VideoSSC, Mr. Dawson and Mr. Belnap have been here every
25 day, ensuring that the Panel has continued presence here at

1 headquarters during these interviews.

2 Lastly, I would like to thank our applicants.
3 The folks that answered the call to serve on this
4 Commission have proven their mettle many times throughout
5 this application process. And when they were asked to
6 prove it just one more time, they really stepped up.
7 Whether they traveled to us here in Sacramento, or they
8 were flexible in rescheduling interviews if necessary, or
9 completely altering the format of their interview from in
10 person to video conference, I've been extremely impressed
11 by everybody's -- everybody that we interviewed. I admire
12 your resilience and I thank you for your dedication to this
13 Commission and to the people of California. So, thank you
14 all.

15 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you, Mr. Belnap and Mr.
16 Coe for your comments.

17 I also want to thank the individuals from
18 VideoSSC, the interpreters, capturers, court reporter, Ms.
19 Pellman. And I'd also like to thank my assistant, Mary
20 Delaney, for all the work she has done in helping me out.

21 Mr. Dawson, did you have any additional comments?

22 MR. DAWSON: No, Madam Secretary.

23 CHAIR DICKISON: Thank you.

24 With that, I'd like to adjourn this meeting of
25 the Applicant Review Panel.

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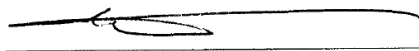
(Thereupon, the Applicant Review Panel meeting
adjourned at 2:39 p.m.)

REPORTER' S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of May, 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 4th day of May, 2020.



Barbara Little
Certified Transcriber
AAERT No. CET**D-520