



Orange County Registrar of Voters
COMMUNITY ELECTION WORKING GROUP
OCTOBER 22, 2020
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Present:

Theresa Bass, City Clerk, City of Anaheim
CEW Vice-Chair, Lucinda Williams, City Clerk, City of Fullerton
Mike Chen, Chairman, South Coast Chinese Cultural Association to the Asian Community
Tim Cheng, Co-President, Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center
CEW Chair, Ruben Alvarez, Jr., Publisher, Stay Connected OC
Marisol Ramirez, Community Engagement Lead, Regal Medical Group
Debra Marsteller, Executive Director, Project Independence
Paul Spencer, Attorney, Disability Rights California
Gabriel Taylor, Voting Rights Advocate
Judith Barnes, Senior Community Representative
Wanda Shaffer, Representative, League of Women Voters of OC
Alexander Williams, Youth Representative
Lyle Brakob, Veterans Affairs Representative
Justin Berardino, Operations Manager, Registrar of Voters
Jackie Wu, Community Outreach Manager, Registrar of Voters
Imelda Carrillo, Election Services Manager, Registrar of Voters
CEW Secretary, Marcia Nielsen, Candidate and Voter Services Manager,
Registrar of Voters
Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters

WELCOME, ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF JULY 16, 2020 CEW MEETING MINUTES; OTHER HOUSEKEEPING; RUBEN ALVAREZ, JR., CEW CHAIR

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He thanked everyone for attending. He also thanked Neal Kelley and the ROV staff for all their hard work in preparing for the Presidential General Election. He addressed some housekeeping items, such as Zoom protocols, using the mute function when not speaking, and using the “raise hand” feature if there are any questions. CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. will respond to questions during the meeting.

Neal Kelley introduced the Registrar of Voters’ team, starting with self-introductions by the managers. Other team members in attendance include Erica Yun, Karduz Nguyen, Kristy Chen, David Charobee, Enedina Chhim, Leah Fallon, Rosa Vizcarra, Adele Tagaloa, Espie Martinez, and Matt Eimers.

BRIEFING ON CURRENT STATUS OF “UNOFFICIAL” BALLOT DROP BOXES; BALLOT HARVESTING STATUS; REPORTS ON CURRENT TRENDS; SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDBACK; CALL AND CHAT FEEDBACK

Neal Kelley provided an update on unofficial ballot drop boxes, ballot harvesting and social media trends. He stated that currently he doesn't see an issue unless he receives reports otherwise, as ballots are being turned in properly. Neal Kelley explained that ballot harvesting is allowed under AB 1921, and that the real difference is when the box is unattended. The law is intended for voters to assign their ballots to someone else, if custody is maintained by the individual/group to which the ballots were assigned, and the ballots are returned to our office within 72 hours.

Our office receives a high volume of messages from social media. Neal Kelley said that there are approximately 20 top myths, to which our office has provided responses on our website. He shared results of a survey conducted by the PEW Research Center indicating that local elections offices are the number one entity trusted with election information over candidates and campaigns. We provide accurate information for voters. He stated that our office receives approximately a 1,000 calls per day. We have added additional staff and phone lines to respond to voters' calls and chats.

Neal Kelley next discussed ballot drop box security concerns. Recently, the news reported on a fire in a Los Angeles ballot drop box that fully consumed the box. We did extensive testing with the Fire Authority on fire suppression inside the ballot drop box, which most likely would have allowed our office to salvage the ballots. He added that 90% of the ballot drop boxes are under surveillance cameras and that the collection device is away from the floor.

Neal Kelley then discussed the daily collection of ballots from the ballot drop boxes. We are the only county in the State of California that collects ballots daily. The routes and times are randomized, and the ballot collection teams use radios and work in pairs. A photograph is taken when each box is opened and sealed. If there is an issue reported, we respond the very next day. Neal Kelley stated that Orange County voters are using the ballot drop boxes at a very high rate, with 25-28% of ballots coming from ballot drop boxes. CEW Vice-Chair Lucinda Williams and Theresa Bass asked Neal Kelley if voters are attempting to return ballots at Vote Centers prior to the scheduled dates. He responded affirmatively and stated that we will put up additional signage in the future.

Neal Kelley provided an update on statewide issues. He detailed that the conditional voter registration period allows voters to register and vote after the close of registration. As of October 19, 2020, approximately 4.3 million ballots have been returned in California, which is just short of 20%. Orange County has received almost 500,000 voted ballots.

Jackie Wu stated that we have increased our presence on Social Media, primarily active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with extensive voter engagement through comments and direct messages. She added that we also have sponsored ads to extend our outreach and target efforts in multiple languages. She stated that our high turnout is

also reflected in our record-breaking social media activity between October 10-16 as we received over 1,000 notifications. Jackie Wu stated that the messages express general voter concerns but noted that there has been a noticeable increase in aggressive behavior. Neal Kelley thanked our social media team and acknowledged that the public has been maintaining its composure. He added that we have a strong partnership with Homeland Security and other agencies if there is a need to escalate.

ELECTION SECURITY; ELECTION DAY FIELD RESPONSE PLANS; ISSUES RELATED TO VOTER INTIMIDATION, VOTING INTERFERENCE

Neal Kelley next reviewed Vote Center security. He stated that we have increased our partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and that our in-person plan is robust. The Registrar of Voters' office is the first responder in non-violent situations, such as electioneering complaints. If protests or actions become criminal, our Command Center is contacted. If needed, we will escalate to City Police Departments, Orange County Sheriff's Department, or the District Attorney. He stated that we will be positioned throughout the County, and that response time is five to seven minutes.

Neal Kelley anticipates an increase in poll watchers and poll guards for this election but stated that they can't interfere with the election process. Neal Kelley then described the in-person and remote observation system that will be in place throughout the canvass period. Reservations are necessary due to COVID-19 restrictions. He provided the number for the CEW members and City Clerks to report issues.

NOVEMBER 2020 COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH UPDATES; CURRENT METRICS AND REPORT ON REACH; CLICK RATES; ENGAGEMENT; RESPONSE, ETC.

Neal Kelley provided an update on our communication and outreach efforts. On cable and digital advertising, we are on all of the local cable systems in heavy rotation. To date, we have generated 9.8 million impressions and 12,000 click-throughs on streaming services. There have also been 320 outdoor transit ads on billboards and buses resulting in 73 million impressions. He added that there have been 3.9 million on Pandora Sound Cloud with 275,000 unique listeners. Our print advertising has run 26 print ads in English and in Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. There will be an additional 22 print ads scheduled between now and Election Day. On social media, there has been a heavy rotation in social media feeds in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese with 32,753 click-throughs. Neal Kelley is pleased that people are looking for accurate election information.

STATUS ON CURRENT VOTE CENTER EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT; TRAINING; VOTE CENTER SITE ISSUES; DELIVERY LOGISTICS; CONNECTIVITY TESTING

Kim Hosler spoke about Vote Center recruitment, anticipating a larger turnout and higher volume than the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election. She projected that we would need 1,486 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs), and that we have hired 1,641. Kim Hostler stated that we have extended written offers to approximately 2,000

individuals, but some have received permanent job offers, or didn't want to work in a COVID environment. She added that there will be 167 CSR Leads (one per Vote Center) and that we have hired 144. The estimated completion date of hiring is October 24, 2020. In addition, we have hired 36 CSR Supervisors, which is the projected number required. Kim Hostler stated that have exceeded the requirement of 136 bilingual positions, as we have hired 368 bilingual CSRs.

Rebecca Lee detailed the robust remote training program, which allows the CSRs to begin training before they come to our office for the hands-on training. This session is held in our Vote Center Lab, providing a Vote Center environment in a controlled setting. As of this morning, 1,337 employees have completed the online training. In addition, our office has hosted nearly 100 Zoom sessions to discuss specific Vote Center topics. In the hands-on training, CSRs processed fictitious voters; there are currently 1,143 fully trained employees with 1,400 to be trained by October 26, 2020.

Imelda Carrillo provided a Vote Center update indicating that all 168 sites have been secured. We are finalizing the process for delivery of equipment in a movable storage unit by our vendor. These devices make it easier to store the voting equipment and supplies prior to the one-day set-up. New to this election are Vote Center Leads which will help monitor operations and control the set-up at Vote Centers. They will work closely with the Vote Center Supervisors.

Imelda Carrillo stated that there will be 42 Vote Center Drive-Thru locations, which will be staffed. Voters can drive-through, without having to exit their vehicles. Staff will collect ballots directly from voters.

Neal Kelley discussed the issue of face masks at Vote Centers. We did not want an in-person component for this election; but if this was done, we wanted masks to be required. Neal Kelley added that a legal decision determined that we could not turn away a voter without a mask. Vote Center staff have been trained to provide masks if needed, physically distance, and to safely disinfect. Additionally, voters can cast their ballots in their cars outside. Several states have conducted early voting, and most voters are wearing face masks. Neal Kelley thanked Theresa Bass for her work with the Honda Center, which will be a Super Vote Center for the County. He is excited about this opportunity for voters.

David Goulding reviewed the voting equipment and supply logistics. He stated that we have loaded approximately 150 shipping containers of Vote Center equipment, triple checking for accuracy. He added that we pick up ballots from ballot drop boxes daily, which exceeds the regulations. He noted that we have received a high number of ballots back from the ballot drop boxes and pick up ballots daily from the United States Postal Service. We have two sorters running throughout the day to reduce the processing time to scan and perform signature verification.

Neal Kelley spoke about Vote Center connectivity. This has been a critical part of our election preparations. The hardware consists of Cradlepoint routers with 3 LTE providers.

Jose Macedo continued this discussion by stating that we have the three largest carriers to assist us in making this work. If a signal is lost by one provider, another provider takes over. He added that connection flexibility gives us assurance that there will be no connectivity issues. There is centralized management on a cloud-managed solution, which allows us to see all connections and all devices. If there are connectivity issues, they can be addressed. The challenge of infrastructure, such as a parking lot versus an inside facility reception is a known issue. We learned lessons from the March Primary and have worked to resolve these signal issues. To do this, we purchased extensibility docks, robust antennas, and signal enhancers. In addition, we dispatch Rapid Deployment Team members to resolve problems in the field within minutes.

POST-ELECTION BRIEFING; BALLOT PROCESSING; EXPECTATIONS; REPORTING SCHEDULES; CURRENT REPORT ON THROUGHPUT AND OPERATIONAL METRICS

Neal Kelley anticipates that there will be a great deal of focus on mailed ballots received before Election Day and ballots received with postmarks in the Post-Election period. The results posted at 8:05 pm will reflect the large number of ballots that we have received in-house through election morning. At 9:00 pm, we will start posting the in-person votes cast at Vote Centers from October 30, 2020 through November 3, 2020. The reporting will continue until 11:00 pm or midnight.

Neal Kelley discussed that the big change from the March Election will be picking up the voting equipment the day after the election. He noted that tearing down the equipment delayed getting the votes back to our office. For this election, we will only be receiving ballots and v-drives that contain the votes on Election Night. This will allow us to get results posted on Election Night. The only thing that we will have left to count are ballots voted on Election Day, ballots received in the mail on Election Day, ballots dropped off at Vote Centers and ballot drop boxes, and mailed ballots that are postmarked by Election Day and received by November 20, 2020. We will post results every day at 5:00 pm through certification. We should get through the new volume quickly. Most local races should be resolved quicker, but the state propositions and the presidential contest may take longer as the certification deadline is December 3, 2020. Neal Kelley admits that observers could slow this process down. Neal Kelley stated that he is targeting November 24, 2020 to certify the election results.

Justin Berardino discussed throughput, metrics, and reporting schedules. We are keeping up with the large volume of incoming ballots, which is only possible with the recent equipment acquisitions. He added that we can process approximately 50,000 ballots a day.

Justin Berardino added that we have improved our Election Night Reporting System. The reports are richer, more colorful with graphs, and can be customized by users. There are also XML files for the media. He stated that the time for receiving ballots to reporting on the website has improved, as we update every 30 minutes.

Lucinda Williams asked about foreign influences and attempts of foreign hacking into voting systems. Neal Kelley mentioned that we continue to have a strong relationship with Homeland Security, OCIAC, and the FBI from whom we get daily reports. Neal Kelley provided a quick overview for the group. He stated that there has been increased targeting on social media platforms, but that we have seen improvements from 2018.

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. called for review and approval of the meeting minutes from the July 16, 2020 meeting. Debra Marsteller made a MOTION to approve, which was seconded by Wanda Schaffer. The minutes were APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

CEW Chair Ruben Alvarez, Jr. proposed that our County create a newer version of the "I Voted" sticker. He suggested that we sponsor a contest for high school students to get them engaged in the voting process. Neal Kelley stated that there are no requirements that we use the current "I Voted" sticker, but added that the design is very well known, and appears on election materials and ballot drop boxes. Neal Kelley said that we could have a discussion after the first of the year.

Lyle Brakob asked about the UOCAVA voters. Neal Kelley responded that we have had a record turnout from this group and that our office is up to date on responding to UOCAVA emails and faxed ballots. Wanda Shaffer thanked the ROV and the staff. Neal Kelley stated that he appreciates the support of the League of Women Voters.

Wanda Shaffer made a MOTION to adjourn which was seconded by Debra Marsteller and APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Nielsen, CEW Secretary