

United States Election Assistance Commission

2020 Elections Summit

Held at

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VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

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The following is the verbatim transcript of the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) 2020 Elections Summit that was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

-- the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. The EAC is an independent bipartisan Federal commission established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002, or HAVA. Our mission is to help election officials administer elections and help eligible Americans participate in the voting process. As mandated by HAVA, a core part of our mission is to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for the compilation of information on election administration. Events such as today's summit help us meet our clearinghouse mandate by convening election officials, their Federal partners, and other election stakeholders to discuss and share election administration practices from around the country.

Thank you for joining us here today and to those who are watching on livestream. And let me offer a special note of appreciation to the election officials and other panelists and speakers who have joined us here today. We know that you are incredibly busy preparing for the 2020 elections, and we sincerely appreciate taking the time to be with us today. Let us begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. If you would, please stand.

[Chairwoman McCormick led all present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance]

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

So, welcome to the EAC's 2020 Election Summit. The 2020 elections are already upon us, and I want to point out also that this is the 100th year that women have been given the right to vote, so we celebrate that amazing achievement. The Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary are just a few short weeks away, with dozens of States' primaries and caucuses not far behind. Ballots for military and overseas voters have already been sent for the New Hampshire primary, which means that the first votes in the 2020 elections have already been cast.

Today, you will hear from elections officials and other key election stakeholders across the country who are working tirelessly to ensure that the 2020 elections are secure and accessible, foster high confidence in the integrity of the process and election results overcoming, excuse me, and support a smooth and efficient experience for all who are eligible and wish to participate.

Today's diverse group of speakers include election officials from all levels of government, both those who are elected and those who are appointed. Election officials from large, medium, and small jurisdictions who serve populations ranging from 7 million

to 70,000 registered voters, election officials who have been working in the fields since before the 2000 elections and those who are newer to their roles, as well as representatives from key Federal agencies who are supporting election officials as they prepare for and administer the 2020 elections.

The conversation today will focus on several different topics in the field of election administration. Election security and foreign interference in elections are, of course, top of mind for election officials this year. Many of our speakers today will discuss efforts at all levels of government to strengthen U.S. election infrastructure and protect against new and evolving threats to our elections.

We also want to highlight more nuts-and-bolts elections administration issues that election officials are facing in the runup to the 2020 elections. Three of our four panels focus on issues including preparing for expected high turnout in November, ensuring accessibility for voters with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency, and overcoming Election Day and poll worker challenges in an everchanging elections environment.

Before I introduce our first speakers, I want to run through a few housekeeping items. First, we all – I encourage you to all follow and contribute to today's conversation on social media. The hashtag that we are using for EAC activities this year, including today's summit, is #2020focus.

I would appreciate it if you would all please silence your cellphones.

There will be opportunities throughout the day for audience members to ask questions of our panelists, and when doing so, we politely ask you to do three things: speak into the microphone, state your name and affiliation, and importantly, please be brief and be sure to ask a question.

Lastly, if you need anything throughout the day, please feel free to ask one of our staff members for assistance. EAC staff in the room, could you please stand up? We're happy to help you in any way we can.

Let me once again say thank you to everyone who has joined us here today and a big thank you to our staff at the EAC for pulling this event together.

Today's event we have for you a bipartisan – to kick off today's event we have for you a bipartisan pair of Secretaries of State, Secretary Jim Condos of Vermont and Secretary Kyle Ardoin of Louisiana, the Champion Louisiana LSU Tigers. I'm sure he's very happy today, who, they will help set the stage for today's discussions. Both Secretaries serve alongside myself and EAC Vice Chair Ben Hovland on the Elections Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council, or GCC. The GCC was established following the Department of Homeland Security's

designation of elections infrastructure as critical infrastructure after the 2016 elections. The GCC allows local, State, and Federal governments to share information and collaborate on best practices to mitigate and counter threats to election infrastructure.

Secretaries Condos and Ardoin represent States that probably couldn't be more different in terms of how they run elections. But I know they share a common commitment to administering secure, accessible, and efficient elections. We've asked them here this morning to provide an overview of efforts in their States, and at the national level, to prepare for the 2020 elections.

First up, we have Secretary Jim Condos. Secretary Condos has served as Vermont's Secretary of State since 2010 and was President of the National Association of Secretaries of State during the 2018 midterm election. He also serves on the EAC's Board of Advisors. Secretary Condos.

SECRETARY CONDOS:

I hope my voice holds out. I just wanted to state one thing. The University of Vermont football team is undefeated since 1974. Of course, it was canceled in '74.

Good morning, and thank you, Chairwoman McCormick, for the introduction. The EAC has been a tremendous partner for all of us as we've entered this cycle. I am sure that I am not alone in

being grateful for the incredibly quick turnaround last year that we experienced when the EAC received the money from Congress to send – to distribute to the States. It's helping all of us to work better and smarter. I'd like to give at this point a nice round of applause to the EAC.

[Applause]

SECRETARY CONDOS:

Lately I hear – every time I hear someone say, as we prepare for the 2020 elections, I'd like to remind you all, as Chairwoman McCormick did, they're already here. At least one State has sent out its UOCAVA ballots. Vermont's actually start going out this Friday. We have -- in Vermont we also have no-excuse early absentee – early voting, no-excuse absentee voting that matches the UOCAVA deadline of 45 days.

So, folks, the election really is already here. Of course, as we all know, administering our elections and securing our election systems is a year-round job. I'm sure that many of us in this room never thought cybersecurity would be as front and center as – to our work as it is now. We now eat, sleep and breathe cybersecurity. And for many of the States, 2016 was a wakeup call.

I feel fortunate that in Vermont we started focusing on cybersecurity back in 2013. At the NASS conference in 2013 one

of our colleagues, now-Governor Kate Brown of Oregon, mentioned that her corporation system had been attacked. When I got back to Vermont, I checked with my IT Director to ask him how our posture was, and he told me he thought we were in pretty good shape, but it wouldn't be bad to get a third – second set of eyes on it. That's when we partnered with an independent vendor to do a risk vulnerability assessment along with a penetration test of all of our systems. We now work on cybersecurity every day of the week.

When we got the call from DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson informing us of the foreign nation attacks on our State election systems, our world changed. And even yesterday, we heard that Russia has now attacked in Ukraine, and we better all be on our toes. They're coming at us this year. To be honest, there was some hesitancy when he said that he was going to name or designate election systems as a critical infrastructure. We didn't know what that meant. And it took six months before we finally got the answer.

Well, folks, I'm happy to say we've come a long way. While it took some time and cooperation, we now have robust channels between our States and our Federal partners. Between the GCC, the ISAC, the CIS, and a whole bowl full of acronym soup, our country's cyber posture is actually stronger. We have opened up communication channels where our States, county, and local election officials to learn about emerging threats, improving

situational awareness for all of us. Our partners at DHS and FBI, among others, have provided additional resources which I am very grateful.

I'm proud of the work we've done in Vermont. We have State-mandated paper ballots. We have a State-mandated postelection audit. We do a daily backup of our voter election database. We have Election Day registration. Our tabulators are not connected to the internet in any way. We have two-factor authentication for access to our election management system. We have firewalls in front of every one of our doors. We do weekly DHS cyber scans and have been since 2016. And we also do human secure cyber training for our local town clerks who administer our elections in Vermont. Nationally, Secretaries of States are focused on protecting and securing the integrity of our elections.

The 2018 HAVA funding appropriated by Congress has been helpful in this critical work. And certainly the most recently funding will further allow States to make important decisions in investments in our election infrastructure. However, I must add one-time lump-sum funds every so often is not – is helpful, but we need more than that. We actually need to have some kind of annual, sustainable, and dedicated funding.

The mantra I've been repeating, which I coopted from my colleague, Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon, cybersecurity is race without a finish line. It's ongoing; it's our new normal. An anecdote that I like to share, because I remember talking with several Members of Congress about why we needed more money, and they said you haven't even spent the money we gave you last year. My only response was, well, you allowed us five years to spend that money. And, by the way, we submitted our plans to the EAC, which the EAC has up on their website for everyone to see.

The procurement process in every State is different. We don't want to foolishly be spending that money. We want to make sure that the money we spend is going to be useful and is going to be targeted. The concern that we have is that there was too much – because the money came to us late in 2018, people thought we were going to have time to spend all that money prior to the election. I bet you that not much of it was spent. In fact I think it was only about 15 percent by that time. You know, no jokes aside, but it's not like we could walk into Best Buy and say I'll take 200 of those off the shelf. We have to go through processes. In some cases we have to go to our legislatures and get statute changes in order to spend that money.

In Vermont we used our money to do additional risk vulnerability assessments, pen tests, we added two-factor authentication for anybody that accesses our EMS, and we added a fully ADA-compliant accessibility voting system that allows anybody with any disability to vote privately and independently. I think we were one of the first using this new system from Democracy Live. It better enables all voters, including voters with visual impairment, which is the Federal mandate, or with a physical disability or mobility restriction to vote, again, privately and independently. And it produces a ballot that is indistinguishable from the ballot that anyone else uses.

So, that's a quick snapshot of what we've done, and I want to thank you all for your time and the important work that you're doing. And with that I'm going to turn it back over.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thank you, Secretary Condos.

Now, let me welcome Secretary Ardoin. Secretary Ardoin was elected Louisiana's Secretary of State in December of 2018, serving as the first Assistant Secretary of State in that office since 2010. Secretary Ardoin is the Treasurer of the National Association of Secretaries of State.

So, thank you and welcome to Secretary Ardoin.

SECRETARY ARDOIN:

I know you're all waiting for this. Go Tigers!

I'm so pleased to be with you here with you all and tomorrow – yesterday was a very exciting day for all of Louisiana. Not only did our Tigers win the National Championship, but all of our Statewide officers were inaugurated yesterday as well. I left Louisiana from rain and came to D.C. in rain. So, I feel right at home.

Thank you all for having this summit. Let me start off by saying election security is not a Democratic ideal, it's not a Republican ideal, it's an American ideal and it's an issue that we all have to embrace and I'm proud to be part of an organization like NASS who embraces all opportunities to learn from one another, to find solutions to keep our elections secure.

I suppose if I was at this meeting in January of 2016, our conversations surrounding election security would be much more subdued and the threat of interference would be downplayed. Unfortunately, that is not the case. It took us all by surprise. And as Secretary Condos referred to, Secretary Johnson's creation of the election infrastructure was pretty quick and took us all aback because we weren't sure of what we were facing or where we were headed, or even what the details were.

But when you fast-forward to 2019, the year had highs and lows. It presented quite a few challenges for our agency, and we

were able to rise up and tackle those issues. And we're excited and looking forward to the challenges of 2020 to provide security to our elections but most of all the confidence of our system to the people of Louisiana, just as any Secretary around the country is trying to do for the people.

We just finished a successful election cycle for our gubernatorial election and all the way down the ballot, including my election. We saw early voting utilized more than ever before in the State of Louisiana. In 2016 we had 531,000-plus early votes cast. In its entirety in the 2019 gubernatorial election we saw over 890,000 early votes cast. People are voting. And that's a good thing.

Louisiana is facing an issue of which we have to replace our technology at the ballot box. We are focusing on a request-for-proposals process, which is not solely in the hands of the Secretary of State's office but also requires assistance from the Governor's Administration.

Louisiana is facing what other States are facing. Our local governments in the last two years have been attacked by ransomware attacks that were never seen before. Local governments are having difficulty facing these issues because of funding. That's no different than the Secretary of State's office in our elections issues. Prevention is most important in this process.

But prevention requires money. We are very thankful for the Congress to provide the last sum of money. Louisiana stands to gain \$6.6 million with a \$1.3 million match. However, Louisiana, just in this fiscal year alone faced \$1.3 million in new costs, unforeseen costs to protect our election registration systems and our voting systems. Elections are no longer a thing of small incremental increases in funding but is something that is going to be a constant need for new ways of funding elections.

Elections are no longer just a voting at the ballot box; it is about security, strong security. I'm pleased to say that the Governor of Louisiana saw fit to place the Secretary of State as a member, a primary member of the cybersecurity commission. It is in that role that I have been able to educate the Louisiana National Guard, our Cyber Innovation Center, and the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and other State partners and Federal partners of how we perform our elections. It is that educational process that has brought them to the table.

One of the most important things that I found in last year's election is the partnership that we can create with our local National Guard that brought National Guard officers into our system and shadowed my very own employees, including my Commissioner of Elections. They wanted to be prepared for 2020. And my message to them was you have to be prepared for 2019 before you can be

prepared for 2020, and you have to be prepared for 2020 before you can be prepared for 2021, and it's ongoing. It's never going to stop. When our local governing systems, our local towns, our cities, our parishes, your counties, when they are at risk, we are all at risk.

We spent \$1.3 million just helping to secure the Registrar of Voters offices and the Clerks of Court offices in the parishes of Louisiana to protect them, but most importantly to protect our system. If State Government is going to have to come up with more and more Federal – State dollars, unforeseen dollars, to buy equipment for locals to secure lines for locals, to train locals on the risk of cybersecurity intrusions, then we have a long way to go because that money does not grow on trees.

We are very grateful to Congress for the first \$5.8 million that we received two years ago, and now the \$6.6 million. All of those dollars are dedicated to upgrading our election infrastructure and bringing in new voting machines for our State. We are trying to replace machines that date back to 1995. Now, the good news about that 1995 equipment, it's so old nobody knows how to hack it.

But my message to Congress is, we appreciate it. We appreciate you not putting strings attached to those dollars because every State is different. The needs for us to secure our elections, to upgrade technology, and to continue to bring democracy to the

people of each and every State in this Nation is important. And when you allow us to innovate, we're going to do it the right way.

I'm asking for another \$1.5 million in identified issues in our State from our State Government, another \$1.5 million on top of the \$1.3 million we didn't have to spend this fiscal year.

I'm proud to be working with so many Secretaries across the State – across the country. I'm proud to be working with the Congressional Members in our delegation and in educating them in the issues, and more importantly, it is important to educate the members of the legislature of the intricacies of putting on an election. Until you stand in our shoes as election officials in this great country, you do not realize the depth and breadth it takes to put on an election.

And may I say to all in this audience and watching livestreaming, there is no safety net for a State election official. The election is either right or it's not. It's either fair or it's not. We don't have room for error, so we are constantly being vigilant on every aspect of election security, technological upgrades, and every opportunity to make certain systems are protected.

I appreciate everyone in this room who chooses to be a partner with each and every State official because that's what it takes. We have plenty of critics in our country, but it takes partners to build an election system that the American people can be proud

of and have confidence in. Each State is different. Each county or parish is different. But the bottom line is we have to have the confidence of the public in order for our elections and our democracy to continue.

I thank the EAC for being a strong partner with us, providing us with solutions, providing us with coordination of opportunities to educate both the public and other election officials on the local level. Without them, without this cooperation, we only stand to lose ground. As Secretary Condos said, it's a moving target every time we open our eyes. And we have to always hope that we are one step ahead.

And I'll end on this, this is how simple an issue can become. In this last gubernatorial election the Governor was in a runoff and I was in a runoff. There were 40,000 undervotes in my race. The Governor won his race by about 40,000 votes. Can you imagine what the conspiracy theorists were thinking? That wasn't the case because we promoted, day in and day out, how important our system was, all the steps we took to protect this election and every election we have. No other place in government is there so much transparency than in elections. And that's what we as Secretaries of State have to continue to fight for while we're fighting to protect our systems is transparent to the public so the public has confidence in our elections.

I am proud to be the Secretary of State of the State of Louisiana. I am proud to be a member of the National Association of Secretaries of State because we are all working for the common good and that is to protect our democracy.

Thank you, EAC, Christy, thank you for all of your hard work and the other members of the Commission. I look forward to the continued cooperation and coordination of all efforts to protect our democracy. God bless the great – I was going to say God bless the great State of Louisiana, and I mean that, God bless the Tigers, which he did, and God bless the United States.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thank you, Secretary Ardoin. And I want to thank both Secretaries Condos and Ardoin for being here with us today. We appreciate your remarks and your insight. It's very important for us to hear from you.

So, now we will transition to our first panel of the day moderated by EAC Vice Chair Ben Hovland, focused on preparing for high turnout in the 2020 elections.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Good morning. Thank you for being here. I'm very excited about this event. As Chairwoman McCormick said, I'd really like to thank the EAC staff. They did a great job getting this event together, and none of us would be here without that work. So, I

really just want to thank them again and say how much we appreciate their efforts. You know -- and I'm really excited about this panel.

You know, we've been hearing about the 2020 election for quite some time, and now it's finally here. I know a few of you were rooting for two 2019s and then a 2021, but that's not how it works. 2020 is here, and there's no turning back. As Chairwoman McCormick noted, UOCAVA ballots have already gone out the door in New Hampshire, and as Secretary Condos noted, more are headed out this week in States around the country.

Today, we're going to discuss much of the work that's been done and continues to prepare for the 2020 election year. As you know, each State administers their elections in a somewhat different way. Similarly, it seems like each election is unique with a different story and when -- when it's all said and done. 2000, it goes somewhat without saying at this point, was Florida. 2004, Ohio. 2008 was high enthusiasm and turnout and a little bit of a break from talking about Florida and Ohio. 2012 was long lines. 2016 was foreign interference and cybersecurity.

I would like to apologize for the nonpresidential years. I, like voters too often do, neglected them, but I will recognize 2018 because it had high turnout and enthusiasm among voters, and that's relevant to this panel and our discussion today. I think it

forecasts what we may see in 2020 and is certainly part of the story that will be told, but we don't know the full story of 2020 yet.

What we know, and as we heard from Secretary Condos and Ardoin, is that election officials around the country are preparing for all of the situations that I just mentioned and more. That is the nature of election administration and an element that I believe does not receive the attention or credit it deserves.

As you know, election administration is a 365-day-a-year job, and this year it found a way to be a 366-day job. It might be a cruel joke on election officials that leap year seems to fall on presidential election years, but maybe we need the time. The point is there is no break. There are just times for doing different work.

But now, again, 2020 is the presidential election year, and that's the time that most people pay attention and the most people show up. And for election administrators, the goal is to accommodate those voters and provide as smooth of an experience as possible, a positive Election Day that encourages future participation.

I often see election administration covered or portrayed as a horse race similar to politics, but that -- but it isn't, and it shouldn't be. Election administration done right is about good governance and customer service. This panel is here to talk about just that and all the work that goes into it. When it seems impossible to talk

about election -- while it seems impossible to talk about elections these days without discussing security, we'll try to leave most of that out until the panel later today.

There is an intersection that's important. All of the work that goes into security also should bolster Americans' confidence that their vote will be cast as counted and that participating is worthwhile. I know the Secretaries on this panel have been doing impressive work in this area in their States and will share some thoughts on these issues. But our primary focus on this panel is what can be done to ensure a positive experience for voters in a year with potentially record-breaking turnout.

I'm so pleased to moderate this panel that exemplifies the good governance and customer service I mentioned earlier. Ohio's Secretary of State Frank LaRose and Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson have been doing great work individually in their States, but they've also been working together to promote civility, bipartisan -- and bipartisan cooperation in this area. I'd like to thank them for that work and for being here today, and I look forward to hearing from each of them.

Tammy Patrick, really what can you say? Just when I think I'm pretty far down the elections rabbit hole, I see Tammy and she's got a flashlight and she says check this out. And I always learn something, you know. And so before -- currently, Tammy is a

senior advisor with -- at the Democracy Fund. Before that, she worked to help administer elections in Maricopa County, Arizona, and served on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration that investigated the line issues in 2012. I'm certain that Tammy's insights will allow us all to leave here today better informed and prepared.

And then finally, Meghan Kelly with the Federal Voting Assistance Program, or FVAP, is here. Just when you thought we were going to have a hard time squeezing all of this into an hour, Meghan's here to remind us that there are uniformed and overseas citizens all over the world who need ballots, too. I know the FVAP team is doing great work, and I look forward to discussing it. Thank you.

Secretary LaRose?

SECRETARY LAROSE:

Thank you, Commissioner. And I really appreciate the opportunity to be with you all. And, as you said, the 2020 election cycle is already upon us. Here in Ohio -- or in Ohio we're going to be sending out our overseas military ballots in 17 days. Our early voting begins in 36 days, and our March primary is in 63 days. And so for us we are fully focused on making sure that Ohio will be ready and is ready when the eyes of the world are on us, as we anticipate.

I've had the chance to travel to all 88 of our county Boards of Elections, and what I see actually gives me cause for great optimism. And that is that this bipartisan enterprise of elections administration is something that most Americans don't realize. Sometimes, it feels like, here in Washington, Republicans and Democrats can't agree what day of the week it is, but at every county Board of Elections in Ohio and in most jurisdictions around the country, every morning Republicans and Democrats come to work, unlock the door, turn on the lights, and do this really complex job of running elections. And so, to start from that basis of understanding, that this is something that we as Americans still do together in a bipartisan way, that's something that we all should be, you know, happy about and something that in which we should take to heart.

Also, we anticipate it's going to be high turnout. We know that, in Ohio anyway, 2016 was our highest turnout election in our State's history. We followed that up in 2018 with the highest turnout in the gubernatorial election in our State's history. And so, I fully anticipate that that trend will continue, and I hope it will continue. I've got a little wager with my friend from Michigan we'll talk about later, but I hope that voter participation in Ohio is at an all-time high, and I hope that we have record-breaking turnout once again in the State of Ohio in 2020.

Some of the things that we're doing to make sure that we're ready for that, as you mentioned, the focus of today's panel is not security, but obviously that's part of the paradigm. Everything that we talk about in elections and everything that we focus on in elections has a security component to it, and it all should be aimed, as you mentioned, Commissioner, at reinforcing the confidence that voters have in our elections. And that's where our focus has been.

But I directed all 88 of our county Boards of Elections to complete an exhaustive 34-point checklist. I gave them until the end of this month. This is something I tasked them with about seven months ago. And so, we're on the sort of final days of implementing this -- the security checklist that I've given to all 88 of our county Boards of Elections.

I'm also happy that Ohio voted in our State legislature two years ago to fund \$114.5 million in State money to field all new voting equipment, the most secure, state-of-the-art, and efficient equipment for the whole State. Of course, in Ohio we require that every ballot have a paper backup. That's why we're able to do a full postelection audit, which I require of each of our Boards of Elections after each election, and in some cases in Ohio, we've been doing risk-limiting audits, which we're excited about.

And then, of course part of the work that we do to make sure that we're ready for 2020's election cycle and the high turnout is

poll worker recruitment. We have focused in Ohio a lot on this and helping our Boards of Elections do this. We have a few innovative programs that we've been really trying to take full use of. One of those is Youth at the Booth. We have 17-year-olds that work as poll workers, and we've gone out to a lot of high schools. In fact, I went out to one this fall and we helped them run their election for homecoming king and queen using real voting machines. It was a mock election that we ran. And then we signed up a bunch of them to be poll workers and got a lot of them register to vote. So, that's a lot of the work that we're doing, and I look forward to talking more about that with you and with the other panelists.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Secretary LaRose.

Secretary Benson.

SECRETARY BENSON:

Thanks. Well, hi, everyone. And, as you can see, I'm very fortunate to be overseeing our elections in Michigan because I've -- in no small part because I've got a great partner next door in Ohio, and we've been able to leverage our competitive friendship to -- can I just talk about the bet? Because you already brought it up.

SECRETARY LAROSE:

You might as well.

SECRETARY BENSON:

Okay. To have a wager and being a Michigan fan and Ohio State fan, to whoever -- whichever State has higher turnout in 2020, the loser will have to sing the fight song for the opposing team at the Michigan-Ohio State football game, which, incidentally is in Columbus, in November, a few weeks after the election, so I feel like there's a lot more at stake for someone who's going to be singing the Michigan fight song in Columbus in November as opposed to -- I mean, no one's going to care if I show up in red and sing, so -- but anyway.

SECRETARY LAROSE:

Scarlet.

[Laughter]

SECRETARY BENSON:

Okay. So, we have -- but -- so we're having fun with it, and -
- but it reflects the partnerships that are so critical to ensuring that we all are prepared for 2020 and not just prepared for the high turnout but incentivizing high turnout and engagement of all citizens across the State. And so I want to talk just briefly about what we're doing in Michigan on that, but I want to emphasize the importance of those partnerships at the Federal level, at the -- among my colleagues, other Secretaries of State, and at the local level. Michigan has over 1,500 local jurisdictions, all of which are run -- running elections through independently elected clerks.

We have Tina Barton here today, who is a -- both a national leader and a local clerk in Michigan, and I'm fortunate to have great partnerships with our clerks like Tina and others around the State because the rubber really meets the road at that local level, and those partnerships are critical.

In addition to partnerships, though, what we found this year alone is how critical voter education is. And let me give you some examples of that. So, the other aspect of Michigan that's very unique this year in 2020 is that this is the first year our State will be implementing a number of new constitutional protections, State constitutional protections that voters enacted last November in 2018, I guess now a little over a year ago. And those protections included both modernizing our election ability to register to vote for eligible citizens and enabling eligible citizens to register to vote up to and on Election Day.

And then, secondly, allowing for automatic voter registration whenever a citizen who's eligible to register to vote comes into one of our branch offices. I also oversee all our licenses and essentially the DMV in the State of Michigan. They are automatically registered to vote if they're eligible to register, and ensuring that process was rolled out, I'm very proud that our new Director of Elections Jonathan Brater in Michigan oversaw the process last year, in just five months got us up to speed and securely

implementing automatic voter registration. We also have online voter registration for the first time, so a number of new opportunities for individuals to register to vote.

Secondly, we're now a vote-by-mail State, a no-reason absentee State. Every citizen has the right to be able to vote absentee or by mail, and so implementing that is key. And then, also, we have new security protections as well, including a mandate for meaningful postelection audits, and we've begun piloting throughout the past year and a half risk-limiting audits throughout the State of Michigan.

But to focus on voter education and its critical -- the critical importance of that, I want to emphasize a couple of statistics but also what I -- what voter education really means to us in Michigan, which is more than the traditional ways but really being proactive, meeting voters where they are, meeting citizens and new voters where they are, and engaging them in their homes, in their neighborhoods, educating them about the importance of civic engagement and their new rights in order to cast their ballots.

For example, we've had three local elections in 2019 already in Michigan. What we saw in those elections were that when people heard about these new rights, they took advantage of them, and turnout increased. In a local May election, for example, in May 2019 over 400 people who were eligible to vote registered on

Election Day and voted. Of those 400, over 300 were 18 and 19 years old. Fascinating, right? We saw those numbers in every single local election and can expect that next year, but -- or this year if they know about it, if the -- if young voters, if new citizens, if eligible citizens know about these protections. In addition to that, we saw turnout double in local precincts where they got mailings indicating they can now vote by mail. So, voter education is key.

And finally, collaboration. The importance of collaborating not just with other election officials but also with our nonprofit partners, with community partners is key, and I'll talk a little bit more and maybe in the Q&A about what we're doing there. But really, at the heart of collaboration is, as my colleague mentioned, the importance of bipartisanship and approaching how we administer elections, recognizing that we're all in this together. We all deserve to be focused on what's best for voters, all voters, and we -- in everything that we do make decisions in line with service, customer service, and ensuring our democracy is accessible and secure for everyone.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Secretary Benson.

Tammy Patrick.

MS. PATRICK:

Well, good morning, everyone. And thank you, Commissioner, for your kind words. I'm never quite sure what you're going to say, so I'm always on edge. And it's wonderful. Thank you so much for inviting me to participate on this panel along with my esteemed colleagues. And it's great to see so many of you.

I'm riffing a little bit while they pull up my slides. Can you imagine that I, in fact, have a handful of slides? There we go. So, if you're guessing the over-under, we'll address that later on, but this is one of the shorter presentations. It's only about five minutes.

But I wanted to really share with you some of my favorite things, right? So, here we are. We're preparing for basically now. We're in the throes of it, as everyone has already mentioned. And I wanted to talk a little bit about some of the data and some of the tools that are available for election officials at the State and local level for your planning.

The esteemed Charles Stewart at MIT came up with this great chart that I have totaled -- have titled the Elections Snow Globe or Snow Globe Elections. And what we're looking at here is the options in which voters have selected to vote, what voting method did they use. At the apex of this triangle is Tuesday Election Day. On the lower side, stage right, left, on one side is vote-by-mail and one side is early in-person voting.

And so, what I wanted to show you is this slide deck very quickly because it demonstrates that in fact when voters are given options, they choose not to vote entirely on Tuesday, Election Day. Over time, voters make other options in casting their ballot. So, I love to go back and forth on this and just click back and forth and see the voters still participating in our elections but choosing the options in which they're given. I moved back to 2016 and then to 2018 because you'll notice there's a little bit of a shift. In '16 in the presidential year voters were really trickling down in selecting a variety of ways.

I do want to point out that right there smack dab in the middle is Florida. You all, your -- a third of your voters do like to go on Tuesday, a third of them like to vote my mail, and a third of them like to vote early in person. And you're running three parallel elections is what that basically says.

What this is, though, is that we know we had an increase in turnout, so how do we contemplate how we service these voters as we move into the rest of the elections for this year? This is the other piece I wanted to share with you. So, for years CNN has done a survey of the electorate starting 600 days out. So, what we're seeing here on the bottom is starting 600 days out leading all the way up to Election Day. And they're asking voters how enthusiastic are you for this election cycle? So, at the very end in

all of those other elections, the highest point was Election Day, and it was less than 30 percent up to right about 40 percent for some of the elections, so 2008, 2012. It was just under 40 percent of the voters said I'm extremely enthusiastic. That circle part is now, now. Six hundred days out, voters -- 400 days out, 500 days out, voters are more enthusiastic than they were on Election Day in those other elections.

So, we talk about, perhaps anecdotally, we're hearing voters are coming. They are coming, and we're going to finally -- any election official that had a single-digit turnout election, that is devastating. You put on the election and nobody shows up your party. They're coming this time. So, consider, how do we translate this enthusiasm into effectively cast ballots? How do we make sure that people who are interested in it are in fact participating effectively and that we're keeping the lines moving?

So, I want to provide you with a couple of quick tools that are available out on the website for election officials and others.

Caltech MIT provides three resource allocation tools that you can use, and it allows you to do things like plug in how many check-in sites you have, so look at the yellow here. And this is contemplating like a 90-second check in, and you've got a handful of check-in sites. If anything changed in your election procedures or policies at the check-in, maybe you have a new electronic poll

book, maybe you have a new ID procedure. Just a change of 30 seconds takes a seven-minute check-in to more than an hour-long wait. And the tools allow you to look and see how many positions you would need in order to reduce that wait time.

Also, the Center for Technology and Civic Life also provides those resource allocation tools and two different applications that you can use. One is a free app that you can measure an estimated amount of time it will be for a voter to vote a ballot, so you have X number of questions, X number of candidates. It allows you to do that. And there's also an app that allows you how many to kind of estimate and capture how long it takes your voting process, so that's a good thing to do when you're having that poll worker training.

And then, the two last ones is University of Rhode Island has a new project that was just published, the University -- URI Votes Project, and there's additional tools available to help with the streamlining of your polling places to most effectively service your voters.

And then, lastly, for tens of millions of Americans, their ballots are handed to them not by a poll worker but by their postal carrier. And so, for those States that are seeing that increase in voters moving to the vote-at-home, vote-by-mail channel, you can sign up for the Postal Service Informed Visibility. It will help track

the information coming to you so you know how many ballots you should expect on any given day.

So, let's think about, as we talk today and as we move into this planning, have there been policy changes that are going to affect the formula you've used in the past, the formula you've always used to say I need this many poll workers, this many check-ins? Consider if your policies have changed that, and then how are these additional options -- how will the voters know? Oftentimes, the resources are -- have to be spent to accommodate the technological needs, but how are you going to explain to voters that they now have no excuse voting in Michigan? For places that move to no excuse from excuse, it's oftentimes about a third of an uptick in voters choosing that option. So, contemplate how these changes are going to affect the way in which voters have in fact -- that was -- you held up wrap up just as I hit it.

So, those are some tools that are out there. There are many, many more, and you can find out more about them on ElectionLine.org.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Tammy. And we will -- we are live streaming this, recording it, and we will have the PowerPoint slides on our website for those of you who want access to those great materials. Again, thank you, Tammy.

And now, Meghan Kelly.

MS. KELLY:

Last, but not least, and not that Meghan Kelly just for the record, obviously. I guess I should say that in this room.

But I am Meghan. I am with the Federal Voting Assistance Program within the Department of Defense. Thank you to the EAC for having us. I'm humbled to be on this panel with some of these people that I've looked up to for several years now in the elections process.

For those of you who aren't familiar with our program, I work and our team works with military and overseas voters, so those are the voters that aren't going to show up on Election Day. They're going to start the process now, as we've already heard this morning. They are away from their jurisdiction. They're in other countries that are located around the world.

Our job within the Federal Voting Assistance Program is to administer the UOCAVA Federal law. That is the Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, a long acronym. We love our acronyms in the Federal Government. But it's a great job. And what I usually like to talk to about election officials when it comes to high voter turnout is they're coming now.

We have three major pushes when you talk about UOCAVA voters or those military and overseas voters. And the first one is

upon us. As several of the people have noted this morning, there is a 45-day requirement that those UOCAVA ballots must go out to our voters. So, that's upon us. If you start talking about primary elections, that's here. Many of our military and overseas voters have already started requesting their ballots or registering to vote to get them good to go for this 2020 election year.

So, we see a huge influx of military and overseas voters come at this first of the year. That means for you election officials in the room they're going to be calling you, they're going to be emailing you. They're going to have questions. There's going to be -- they're going to call at a weird time because they're 9, 10, 12 hours ahead of us. They're going to need a lot of help.

We have found that our UOCAVA voters, they don't have a huge network of support. If they're military, they can often go to their military installation voting office for support, or if they're just an overseas civilian, they can go to their embassy, but that's it. So, a lot of times they either have to call our program, the Federal Voting Assistance Program, or call a local election official.

The good news is, though, if they can ask the question and they ask you for help, 93 percent of them will then go on to request their ballot and return it. So, once they get to a place where they can get some help, we see huge numbers of people actually then

participating in the voting process and returning their ballots. So, the first push is upon us. Here we go.

Now, we'll see a lull in the summertime. It will die off, and then come August and September, we start our major marketing pushes to say, hey, UOCAVA voters, you've got to start now to allow for all of that mail time that goes into the process of absentee voting. So, we do another major push in August to say get registered. If you want to participate in the presidential election, now is the time to request your ballot so it gets to you in enough time.

I do want to note that the Federal Voting Assistance Program isn't a get-out-the-vote. We are not measured -- Congress does not ask us how many military overseas voters that we registered to vote. We are simply a resource for them that if they choose to do so, they know that they have a program they can go to for support. And that's kind of just an introduction, so we have three major pushes, spring, and then late in the fall, and then the 45-day deadline. And then happy to take any questions.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Meghan.

So, while Chairwoman McCormick mentioned a desire for folks to ask questions, I will take this moderator's privilege to mention that Secretary LaRose talked about poll workers and poll

worker recruitment. I do want to give a plug for those of you in the audience or watching the livestream who don't have to work on Election Day because you're an election administrator, please really consider being a poll worker. I've done it in multiple -- in Missouri when I lived there and then in Maryland, unbelievably rewarding experience. And now is a great time to look into it because working -- one, election officials would love for you to participate as a poll worker in the primaries before the general, so please, if you've ever thought about being a poll worker, consider that.

That's my plug for poll working, and now I'll get to a couple questions, one specifically that I wanted to ask for the Secretaries. Seeing Tammy's slides and the snow globe if you will, do you all anticipate -- I know, Secretary Benson, you mentioned no-excuse absentee isn't new to Michigan. And, Secretary LaRose, we know that you've always -- or Ohio for quite some time has had a lengthy early voting period. But if you could both talk about how you anticipate seeing that sort of lessen the challenge of Election Day, that would be great.

SECRETARY BENSON:

Well, I'll say two things on that, but preface it by saying, with the poll worker piece, we are actually trying to, in Michigan, partner with law firms, local businesses, large corporations to give their employees the day off to serve as poll workers. So, if there's

anyone watching who has that idea or anyone who has a number -- we're actually even talking with professional sports teams about giving their employees the day off to service poll workers. We see it as a workforce development challenge, a talent challenge, and we've been proactively working to partner with organizations to -- that have talented individuals to -- and schools and universities as well as course to partner with us in providing that talent to serve our citizens on Election Day.

But on the -- on voting by mail and absentee voting, it's both -- it is a wonderful thing to Michigan. I was going to say it's a blessing and a curse, but it's not. It's a wonderful thing because we've already seen in the three local elections that we've had citizens from young voters to old voters, older voters taking advantage of this opportunity in many local jurisdictions. I mentioned Clerk Barton is here. I know in her local jurisdiction she saw 80 percent of people in a local election in August and November returning or choosing to vote by mail, so it's a wonderful thing.

We're also seeing precincts. We have an Ottawa County Clerk Justin Roebuck who actually did a mailing to every single voter registered to vote in one of the precincts in a local election, giving them information on how to request their absentee ballot or vote from home. And we saw turnout double, go from 12 percent to

25 percent in a local school board election where that one piece of voter education happened. So, we're seeing voter education is critical.

We're also seeing colleges step up. We want to have drop boxes on every college campus in Michigan, so that's -- that young -- or that students can get their absentee ballot, vote, drop it off. And then we can partner with the local clerk to ensure those ballots get where they're supposed to be and are counted. We're also looking at ballot tracking mechanisms as well to ensure that voter confidence piece is key.

But I want to emphasize one of our biggest challenges and then I -- and I know keeps many of us up at night is that many of Michigan's statutes have not yet updated to match this new right that voters have in Michigan to be able to vote absentee without having to state a reason. Essentially, what I mean by that is that in Michigan you cannot start counting absentee ballots or mailed-in ballot until the polls close on Election Day. So, that works if a third of the citizens or a third of the voters are casting ballots. That way -- and two-thirds are voting -- and having their ballots counted at precinct.

It doesn't work if those numbers flip and you have two-thirds, which I'm anticipating, of citizens voting from home this year, having those ballots sent to a centralized location, and having

absentee voting, county boards in many situations, counting those ballots. If they're not able to begin even processing those ballots, as the law currently says in Michigan, until late on Election Day, we are going to have a situation where our election results are not ready when they typically are.

And what that means, and what I am determined to ensure does not happen, but we're recognizing that this is a perfect storm that could create it, is we don't want Michigan to be the last State reporting on Election Day in 2020, and we certainly don't want to be the Florida or the Ohio of 2020.

[Laughter]

SECRETARY BENSON:

So, that's what's at stake. And we -- we're hoping that the State legislature makes a simple change to the law. We know the Governor will support it to ensure that our clerks, our hardworking clerks can process ballots sooner and more effectively and efficiently and securely, as opposing to have to wait under the current laws.

But that's certainly one of my biggest concerns about this year's elections in Michigan and why I would say it's a tremendous thing that citizens can now and they will be voting by mail, be voting absentee more than ever. And we just want to make sure the infrastructure is ready for that.

SECRETARY LAROSE:

Thank you. So, if I may start also on the poll worker recruitment thing, and a little shameless plug for any Ohioans that are interested in doing so, not only do we do that Youth at the Booth program -- and what a cool thing to have on a college application that you were an elections official at 17 years old -- but also that -- we call it Day for Democracy, where we're encouraging companies to give -- and State entities, county, local government entities to give their folks a day off to work the polls. We have a website set up for that, OhioSOS.gov/DefendDemocracy, where people can sign up to be a poll worker.

And then, also I've been working to try to encourage veterans groups. I'm a veteran, and so I remind -- every time I get the chance to speak at a veterans group, I remind them that they took an oath, maybe a few years ago, maybe a few decades ago, but they took an oath to preserve and protect the Constitution and to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic. And one way that they can continue to keep that lifelong commitment is by working as a poll worker.

Making sure that we have ample opportunities for Ohioans to cast their ballot has always been a focus of ours in the State, and we're really proud of the fact that we've been a leader in the Nation with 28 days of early voting with vote-by-mail, with in-person voting

before the elections, also for 28 days, and including weekend and evening hours. We have Sunday afternoon voting. We're one of only, I think, six States in the Nation that offer Sunday afternoon early voting. I think we're one of only 20 States that have Saturday in-person early voting. And so, these are things that we pride ourselves on in Ohio.

But one of the things that I'm going to be doing this year and has been done in the past is I'm going to be sending an absentee ballot request to every registered voter in Ohio. We want to see people take advantage of that convenience. As we all know, it helps reduce the pressure on our polling locations on Election Day, so that we don't have long lines and that kind of thing.

But also -- and I remind people of this -- this is when I'm -- when I'm pitching people on why they should vote by mail, I tell them it's like being able to cheat on the test. You always run into those folks that say, you know, I just don't know all these candidates for judge and I just don't know all of these sort of down-ticket candidates. And I tell them do what my grandmother does. She gets her laptop out and she sits there with her vote-by-mail ballot and she researches every last one of them. And if one of them doesn't have a website, she calls me up and says, Frankie, tell me about Judge so-and-so because she wants to be a very informed voter.

So, if you're worried about not having all of that committed to memory before you walk into the voting booth, being able to vote by mail is a great way to be a very informed voter, and it only takes you, you know, maybe a half hour to sit at your kitchen table and get that done. So, that's something that we're making sure that -- and the numbers show that in Ohio we've been, you know, enjoying that opportunity to cast early ballots. And in 2018, it was 1.4 million. 2016, we had 1.9 million. I anticipate that number will go higher. I certainly hope that number will go higher this year, and that's -- it's something that we're working to encourage every way we can.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Great. Thank you. And for those of you that want to hear more about poll workers, stay tuned. This afternoon Commissioner Palmer is leading a panel that I'm sure we'll get into that more. But for now we'll move on.

Tammy Patrick, I had wanted to ask you. I know that -- so Tammy was on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration, which you may remember from their awesome report. I think that is widely accepted at this point that it was great. But really, that whole commission started around lines. And one of the things that I remember was that, as they went into the process,

what they really discovered that most of those line issues were really downstream issues.

And so, before I get there, I'll give another shameless plug. Those issues had to do with voter registration. And so, if people at home, or here, if you have not updated your registration or registered, great idea to do that. I recently moved counties and needed to update my registration. I did so at the DMV, but, you know, there's a lot of choices out there. So, again, update your registration. Make sure it's current. That will resolve a lot of problems on Election Day and help the poll workers that we just mentioned.

But anyway, so, Tammy, if you could talk a little bit more about what you saw on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration and some of these issues that may be relevant to the high turnout that we are anticipating for 2020.

MS. PATRICK:

Absolutely. And thank you for the kind words about the report. We worked very hard on it.

Part of what was interesting about the Presidential Commission on Election Administration is that it was very different from other commissions in that we had six months to -- as then-President Obama said, to fix that, the long lines that occurred. And what we found as we traveled around the country and held

hearings everywhere from Miami to Anchorage, San Francisco to Philadelphia, we had meetings all across the country, was that at that time we really didn't have anyone doing sound data collection on how long are the lines? Where are the lines forming?

And here we are in the National Press Club, and any election official in the room has received the call from the local elections beat reporter that says where are the lines? I want to go get a picture of the lines. Where is it happening?

And I think that one of the challenges that we have created this understanding that a line is a bad thing, when in fact, a line that does not move is a bad thing. I moved from Arizona to Maryland, and the first time I went to vote early in person because we don't have a permanent early voting list for me to get on, which is how I voted in Arizona, I got there, and there was this big long line and I thought, oh, here we go. Wow, we didn't fix anything. It took me less than 20 minutes to vote, to get in line, huge line of people, but it was moving quickly, it was well-processed. I cast my ballot and was done in 20 minutes.

So, as we move into this year, I think we need to think about the whole question of lines and -- because we probably will see lines with that kind of turnout. The question will be, if a person is standing in line for an hour, two hours, three hours, four hours, 12 hours, that is unconscionable in the United States of America.

So, one of the things that has happened since the Commission's report came out is we did a comprehensive review of the entire kind of elections systems, things like voter registration. We've seen huge advances in the number of States that have joined ERIC, so we have more accurate voter lists, we have more States that are doing online voter registration, automated voter registration. So, we know that there are -- there is -- a lot of the systemic challenges that have created lines in the past have been addressed.

And that's not to say that there isn't going to be a machine that jams. In the midterms we had situations where election officials know that it's always something. In Florida they know that humidity can affect paper. When we had the hurricanes hitting the eastern seaboard, there were a lot of machines jamming all the way up New Jersey, Connecticut, New York because it was so humid from the hurricanes, that paper was swelling and it was jamming as it was going through the machines.

So, think about when we hear issues that arise on Election Day, or at early voting centers, or in vote centers on Election Day. Ballot malfunction, immediately everyone is in this environment going to think, oh, we've been hacked, there's some problem. It could be that the paper has swollen slightly because it's humid. It

could be human error. We have to make sure that we all keep very level heads moving into this cycle.

And I'm really fortunate, as we were talking today, I heard from both the Secretaries this morning and the Secretaries on this panel. Many of the things that they're articulating, like the poll worker programs, advances in offering additional options to voters in how they engage in the franchise, many of those things were part of our very practical recommendations in the report.

So, I think that it's -- we need to kind of rethink how we think about lines moving forward, how we talk about lines. I've had -- conducted elections where there were no lines at all because there were no voters and we had 3 percent turnout, you know, at the polls themselves. And so, I think that that's something to really think about the language that we're using, the language we use in our news reports, how we articulate things to our voters to make sure that we're setting them up for the right expectations, and then, also giving them the tools they need to effectively participate.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Tammy.

Meghan, I had wanted to ask. I know that in -- after the MOVE Act, election officials have gotten much better at getting ballots out the door because they have to, but also, because they're doing a great job. And one of the things I feel like I've been hearing

more about is the challenge of having voters return those in a timely fashion. Maybe they're receiving the ballot with plenty of time, but they're, like many of us, procrastinating. And so, have you heard of any techniques that some election officials are using to sort of encourage that quick return to make sure it does get back in time?

MS. KELLY:

Yeah. So, I think -- I've heard the buzzword a couple of times this morning, customer service. I think we all brush it off, but with our voters, when we start talking about the voters that we deal with, those UOCAVA voters, right, they may get their ballot early, and then it sits on the dining table for three weeks, and then, all of a sudden, it gets buried under a pile of mail and they realize, oh, whatever, I need to vote and hurry up and get this in the mail, and some of that human kind of habit we can't correct.

But customer service kicks in from the election official. If the election official knows who they sent their UOCAVA ballots to 45 days in advance, even just sending a simple email, don't forget to return your UOCAVA ballot, this is the deadline, please get it in the mail by X date, you have the buffer after the Election Day. Many States have three, four, even sometimes up to 10 days after the Election Day to receive those overseas ballots. Simply sending an email out, we already have their emails.

One of the great things that the MOVE Act did is allowed election officials to send that blank ballot to a UOCAVA voter by email. So, now it's populating into their Gmail or Hotmail account, and they may see it a little bit more faster than if they received a paper ballot, and it sits on the dining table for three weeks.

So, I think just that customer service when it comes to UOCAVA voters, it is really essential in that, so just pushing them along, sending them a reminder email, don't forget to get your UOCAVA ballot back, these are your allowances, these are your benefits. States differ on how they can send their UOCAVA ballots back, so just -- and election officials just doing that extra step, going that extra mile in customer service really makes a difference in getting those military and overseas ballots back.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you very much.

We have a little bit of time for audience questions. We've got some EAC staff with microphones. I will say I'm a big fan of keeping on time, so we're going to try to do that. But if there's anyone that has a question for the audience, I think we've got time for a few.

And if people want to continue to think about -- oh, we've got one.

MALE SPEAKER:

Good morning. I was wondering about this concept of customer service. I actually was a campaign staffer in 2012, in Miami, when we saw the lines being 8 and 12 hours long under the humidity and -- so you can imagine, Florida's kind of hot. So, while we had the folks waiting, we did our best to feed the folks on the line, give them music, you know, just try to make it a little bit more upbeat than, you know, just waiting under the sun. I was wondering, do you folks see that aspect of that customer service of helping the folks on the lines as more of an election administration space, where maybe the elections officials can do a better job helping those folks? Or do you see that more of a nonprofit partners and campaign space where they can take over that particular aspect of customer service?

SECRETARY BENSON:

I think it's 100 percent about collaboration. I think everyone has a responsibility in this space to ensure that we're moving the lines quickly and that voters are having a good experience. And where we've had the most success in Michigan, it's where we've been able to partner with community organizations that many -- and I'm talking -- I would emphasize nonpartisan community organizations that have credibility in communities that a State Government official may not. And so -- which is also important to

ensuring that -- that you don't have the force of State Government coming in and being too heavy-handed.

But, at the same time, that collaboration is important, and those partnerships are important to build now, so that when that comes, we can identify the best way of responding to a particular challenge, be it a long line or something else, in that locality.

And I'll just underscore that by saying, prior to becoming Secretary of State, one of the things I did was work with many nonpartisan organizations running voter protection efforts throughout Michigan. And now we're going to, in the Michigan Secretary of State's office, have our own voter protection effort partnering with nonpartisan voter protection efforts, so that we're in collaboration and coordination, but utilizing our office in a way that's helpful to either move along the lines or solve other problems that happen on Election Day. But that partnership is key.

SECRETARY LAROSE:

The partnership is key, and obviously, the focus is on making sure that we don't have long lines or that the lines move as quickly as we can.

As far as, you know, giving folks the opportunity to get in and out of the sun or get under a shade area or whatever else, that's the kind of coordination that those local Boards of Elections should be doing to plan for that kind of thing, especially with the early

voting lines. And that's what we see. In the weekend before the election, you know, folks had 28 days of early voting in Ohio, but oftentimes, they'd wait until the last two or three days to actually go to the Board of Elections or their early voting site to do that.

One of the best things that can be happening as they're standing in line is to have the elections officials circulating with the clipboards to get them, you know, ready to go, so that when they get up there, everything's all filled out and they just go straight through the process. And so, obviously, our focus is on making sure that we manage that process in a way that's a good experience for the voters and that we keep those lines moving.

MS. PATRICK:

And if I could just add to that real quickly, I think that that's spot on. And another reason why it has to be a collaboration is because of the electioneering line limits where you can't be, you know, past that. So, I think election officials are legislators that are thinking about limiting cell phone use while voters are standing in line to vote. It's one thing once you get into a polling place, there's a lot of them that have that, but I've seen legislation where it prevents someone from using their telephone while they're standing in line. And that just makes everyone irritable when you can't have your phone at the end of your arm all day long, right? So, I think --

and some of them are going to be looking up information on candidates.

And one of the things that we saw when the PCEA was at Disney is that if you give people things to do like having the local high school marching band come, or you have these other things, having a selfie station that they can take their picture on their way into vote, so that it's not being done in the polling place for those places that prevent that sort of thing, there are a lot of things that can be done to make the -- to really celebrate the act of voting.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

That's great. One thing I'd add, again, if you can mention your name and affiliation if it's relevant, we'd appreciate that.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Hello.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Tina. Oh, sorry.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Good morning. Honored to see my Secretary of State here, so thank you.

But one of the most critical partners that I think in this whole thing is the Postal Service. And, as we're seeing this year as we go along, the increased turnout that we're expecting in 2020, I'd like to hear the ideas. I know we've done some things in Michigan.

Maybe Secretary Benson wants to talk about our envelope, something along those lines, but what are we doing to make sure -- excuse me -- across the country, that we have partnered with the Postal Service to make sure that the ballots are getting to us in time? If you're not -- if your ballot is not to me by 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday night, I can't count your ballot on Wednesday in Michigan.

And so, I'd like to hear -- we're doing lots of things and lots of partnerships with other groups. They have to be a strong partner with us in order for this election to be fair for everyone and to know that their ballots have been counted. And I'd like to talk about that.

SECRETARY LAROSE:

So, we partner very closely with our postmasters and our Postal Service personnel. They're always invited to our elections officials conferences that happen twice annually. And then, we do things like ballot tracking where we have that opportunity for Ohioans to track that their ballot has been received. This is the world that we're all accustomed to. We all track when our packages are coming from our favorite online retailer. We should be able to track our ballots, too. We have that in Ohio.

And I've proposed -- and I think that it's time that the State pays the postage on the return ballot. It -- that dollar's worth of postage is not going to be the deciding factor probably for somebody voting or not voting. But what often happens is there's

confusion, is it a single stamp, is it two or three stamps? How many do I need to put on their?

And then, every Board of Elections that I've visited, they have their wall of shame, or somebody has, like, you know, put 100 one-cent stamps on the envelope, just because they're angry, or somebody even taped four quarters to an envelope and put it in the mail once. So, we can just eliminate that and have the State pay the cost of that postage as a, you know, bulk rate that we would do.

One other thing that I'm proposing and want to see get done is for that online -- for that absentee ballot request to be online. Right now, you have to print out a piece of paper, fold it up, mail it in to request your absentee ballot. I would like to see that process put online in Ohio, and we're proposing -- we have proposed that in the legislature.

MS. PATRICK:

So, I could talk about this all day long, but I'll keep it very brief. The Postal Service has committed designated staff specifically for election mail. So, we have Dan Bentley, who is your election mail coordinator globally, nationally. The Deputy Postmaster General is committed to this. But for any election official, you want to do a couple of things. One, if you just Google "election mail at USPS," you'll get an entire election mail page, that, included in it, is a map. You can click on your State and it'll tell you

who your election mail coordinator is for the Postal Service, who is your regional supervisor for the Postal Service, and it'll also provide you all the information on the design requirements and parameters for the envelopes that you're using for your ballots, both outbound and return. You want to make sure that you're having those envelopes reviewed by the Postal Service so that, as it goes through the mail stream, it doesn't cause any problems.

In addition to that, it was great to hear that ballot tracking is something that we are really moving forward in a lot of places across the country. Every voter in this -- in the country, pretty much can subscribe to something called informed delivery. And basically, what happens is you get an email that every morning tells you what's going to be in your mailbox. So, they'll see, if in fact their ballot is supposed to arrive that day, and that gives an -- a new level of security when they know that it's supposed to be in their mailbox. And then, if it isn't, they're going to call you, right, as an election official.

And then, also, things that election officials can do is for those of you who are in-hand States, meaning you have to have the ballot in your possession at the close of the polls on Election Day, talk to your local postmasters, and talk to them about something called caller service. Caller service allows for you to go to the

Postal Service and pick up your ballots without them having to be delivered to you, because then they might be too late.

So, there are things. There's a report that was done in 2016 called The New Realities of Voting by Mail, and it lays out some of these things, both for election officials to think about, for voters to think about, legislators to think about, in terms of aligning those deadlines so that you have time to process the ballots coming in, as well as for the Postal Service.

And the Postal Service has made changes and implemented some things for us. So, you want to make sure you're using the tracking in the intelligent mail barcode, including something that they did new this time, and that is a ballot tracking piece to it. So, for -- it's called a service type ID, and you want to make sure that you're using that, so in the event of any sort of catastrophe or disaster, a plane is impacted, a truck is impacted, we'll be able to know exactly how many ballots are part of that situation.

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Tammy. And I'd really like to thank the audience for that question, because there's literally nothing like a postal question that can prove my introduction to Tammy as being completely right.

[Laughter]

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

So, anyway, I would like to thank our panel and ask you to join me in thanking them.

[Applause]

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

We're going to take a short break now. We'll be back at 11:10. There is coffee and water in the lobby. And at 11:10 we will resume with remarks from Shelby Pierson, who is the Election Threats Executive for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. We will see you at 11:10. Thank you.

[Recess]

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

So, in my remarks earlier I mentioned how every election is different, and 2016 of course, brought to the forefront the importance of election security. Nothing signifies this more than the fact that gatherings of election officials such as this, we now regularly hear from representatives from the national security, law enforcement, and intelligence communities. Throughout today, you're hearing from representatives on the Elections Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council, which is a mouthful, but also very important. And later, you'll hear from the head of the election security team at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency at DHS.

But our next speaker actually holds a position that did not even exist before 2016. Shelby Pierson is the Intelligence Community Election Threats Executive and Principal Advisor to the Director of National Intelligence on all election security-related matters. Ms. Pierson is responsible for leading and aligning all relevant ODNI election security efforts, including integrating support to election -- to intelligence operations, collections, analysis, and partner engagement.

Ms. Pierson was the National Intelligence Crisis Manager for the 2018 midterm elections, where she managed critical election security issues and increased information-sharing operations across the intelligence community.

We are pleased to have Shelby Pierson with us, and I welcome her for remarks. Thank you all.

[Applause]

MS. PIERSON:

I appreciate it. Thank you so much. I appreciate the warm welcome from two very important constituencies for me in the intelligence community, one of course working very closely, as you've heard a moment ago, with all of the myriad of organizations that help State and local election officials successfully execute one of the most core components of our democracy, and that's the act of participating in voting and the elections that are coming up.

Also, the press, I'm delighted to be here among my colleagues who serve in the press, which is also an equally important component of election security, because our collective responsibility is not only securing the infrastructure, but also, explaining to the American people how this work is done so that they understand the threats and that that transparency -- and you'll hear me conclude on this comment in a few minutes -- that this transparency should not deter participation in elections, but should empower the electorate to know the threats and know the resources that are available to individual voters to support an educated and effective vote as we go into, not only November, but frankly, all elections, as we go forward.

So, I wanted to share with you a few comments about where we're at as an intelligence community, a bit about my work and what I hope to bring in service of the intelligence community and the government, and then, a bit about the threats and going forward.

So, as was mentioned, 2016 I think has been characterized as a watershed moment for the intelligence community. And I think that's true in terms of its recognition and a moment in time in which the intelligence community had very valuable information about the threats that we were facing and the activity that was being undertaken as we lead into the 2016 elections.

However, the intelligence community didn't simply begin working those threats in 2016. I always like to point out to colleagues that we have long had a commitment to the comprising disciplines of counterintelligence, that which is foreign intelligence services behavior here in the United States; cyber, which of course threatens our critical infrastructure; as well as bringing regional expertise, and frankly the very elegant and important accesses.

A future voter is already complaining about where we're going. I'll do it better; I promise.

But, as I was saying, cyber and counterintelligence and regional expertise did not begin in 2016. And so, I do think we have very much a many decades-long momentum in these disciplines that has further focused our effort in 2016 and has propelled us to dedicate additional resources, integrate further as we go into, as we said, in 2018, and further into 2020.

So, let me talk a bit about how we came to where we're at today, at least structurally. So, for us, as an intelligence community, as I said, I think we had momentum across the disciplines that are so critical to this topic, and yet we recognize that having individuals like myself across the intelligence community, who are held accountable for integrating those disciplines that I just mentioned, would be yet another opportunity and step forward.

So, I'm delighted that I don't stand in the position as the ODNI's Election Threat Executive alone. In fact, most of the relevant intelligence organizations -- DHS, FBI, NSA, and CIA, as well as the ODNI -- have all designated executive leads and have teams that work this topic. So, what I appreciate about that is that we've had a very deliberate evolution of the resources and bureaucracy.

I'm keenly cognizant of where we've come from, in terms of the judiciousness we need to have as Federal leaders, to not simply respond by creating a new bureaucracy to address a new threat, rather be very scoped and very deliberate in how we do this. And I think the Election Threat Executive position is one gesture and one push in that direction, but it's probably not done. We certainly recognize that election security is but a moment in time across a pretty consistent threat of malign influence that might focus on the particular election event, but that there are many, many other activities and vectors that our adversaries use to pursue us when it's not Election Day. And we'll talk a bit about that as well.

So, former Director Coats, who I think, as everyone recognizes, had a unique vantage point as an elected official, really understood, I think, both in his experience as the ODNI, as well as his experience participating in the legislature, really appreciated the

opportunity and intersection of not only working this as an intelligence topic, but frankly, also the commitment that I and my colleagues must have to exposing our work to the public, to exposing our work to Congress, because public confidence, as I mentioned a minute ago, is so critical to this topic.

Director Coats created the Election Threat Executive coming out of 2018, and identifying the position in 2019. And the support for this endeavor and this position only continues and is strengthened under the leadership of acting-DNI Maguire as we go into 2020 and, of course, by the White House and the National Security Council, as we continue to work policies to improve our support to election security.

So, as was said in the introductory remarks, I'm responsible for bringing the full force of the IC to this critical topic. And for me that includes everything from developing new accesses, analysis to inform policy, as well as enabling operations to stop this activity.

What's important to point out particularly for the public is that we don't do this independently. We recognize that, again, the rightful mission areas and authorities of the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are critical partnerships and inroads to organizations working with the States, and again, in partnership with organizations like the EAC. So, again, the intelligence community hasn't taken over this topic.

Rather, we have grown in our partnership on this topic to bring and expose intelligence information to the fight and responsibilities of those that are responsible for securing our elections.

My office's most recent work across the intelligence community has included improving the clearances of individuals into some of our most sensitive information so that I have a cadre of officers that have the most up-to-date, the most accurate, and the most inclusive perspective on the threats going into 2020. That doesn't sound like necessarily a big deal, but it can be, I think as some of you know from reflections that we've had in other galvanizing moments, that clearances and access to information remains an area that we have to personally shepherd through for the improvement of good government.

Second, we've also enabled and enacted -- if I can make that word up -- the President's signed notification framework. I know we did a couple of sync sessions with the press, as well as the States, on how we can better engage and share information with victims who are not necessarily -- of threats that are not potentially rolled up into the very well-understood cyber threat architecture. So, for example, this has been very important when we have information of malign influence campaigns, which I think, as you can see, are on the rise. That wouldn't necessarily be enacted or enabled under the existing cyber victim frameworks.

And so, now you have another policy opportunity where we can share information, and we already have done so, whether that be with a specific individual -- and that could be a candidate or civilian, a campaign, a party, a particular constituency, all the way to a State, or a specific county in a State, where we have, again, additional information that we can add to the body of threat cognizance that we're already sharing in other venues.

I want to move and talk a bit about how we see the threats. As we have communicated already, Russia, China, and Iran all have capabilities and all have interests in the opportunity presented to them in 2020. We are committed to sharing that information as we can with all relevant stakeholders as we go forward into 2020. This is a balancing act, and I recognize it's one that inevitably will leave certain parties unsatisfied. And it is a persistent one that's not unique to election security but frankly is the challenge of balancing our national security information with sharing with the public. And I certainly want to amplify and recognize that in election security we recognize that sharing this information as broadly as possible is a unique condition of this topic that we must meet that commitment, too.

In addition to that, downgrading technical information, particularly to those who are administering State infrastructure, is also critical. I face the criticism that sometimes that's -- there's

some latency built into that process, that there is potentially a lack of context and specificity to that information, and those are all criticisms and challenges that I take fully on board and work with the National Security Agency and other parts of the intelligence and defense community to try to work and do that better than we have done before.

We have a full suite of tools, however, available to the intelligence community that doesn't solely rest on the downgrading of classified information. And so, I wanted to spend just a few minutes reminding us all that it doesn't rest on just that one behavior. Even before we get to the moment of downgrading intelligence information, we have to develop the exquisite accesses that are so critical to the intelligence enterprise. I think you can all recognize that that can be a very long endeavor. It takes the patience of intelligence practitioners and technical collectors across the globe many, many years in fact to develop these inroads to provide the warning, so it's not just reacting to threats. It's developing accesses and inroads that allow us to anticipate the threats to enable our decision-makers. That's a hard task.

Second, I think everyone here is already familiar with the areas of expertise that we have in providing synthesized analysis and intelligence to a very broad swath of customer base. That can inform policy decisions that evolve from everything of deterrence all

the way to effects of cyber operations, as well as enabling sanctions. So, even the analysis that we do is not just characterizing the threat but is really here to inform policy and to inform a full suite of decision-makers the highest quality information he or she needs with which to address the threat.

And then we conduct operations. I think everyone is also familiar with some of the successes that we've had in this area.

And again, even before you get to the moment of downgrading information, we would love to engage in operations that stops this activity before it even gets to U.S. shores, so to speak.

And so please, again, I wanted to take a moment that, as much as I work with organizations like the Election Assistance Commission, it's in concert with and against a very large backdrop of other tools and capabilities that the intelligence community can bring to bear, in addition to the concert of opportunities across the United States Government.

In addition, as I mentioned in the opening part of my statement, this is a partnership. And it's not a partnership that stops within the Federal Government. I am keenly aware of the pressure that my State and local colleagues face every day as those that are responsible for securing the elections. The exposure of the intelligence community to my State and local partners, again, through DHS and FBI, has been remarkable. To really understand,

mutually understand one another I think has been a critical step forward since 2016.

But it can't stop there because we also have constituencies among social media firms and among tech firms who also have cognizance and information and opportunity that the intelligence community or the U.S. Government doesn't have. And again, I think you've seen and have read about the opportunities that we are pursuing to continue to integrate that relationship with the constituencies, again, in Silicon Valley and in our private firms to make sure that even that seam and gap is stitched.

But it also doesn't stop there, and it gets back to my opening comment that civil society is also a key player here. Whether you're part of the press or you're part of academia or you're part of special interest groups or you're part of NGOs, there is an entire body of expertise that also informs the voting population. So, you can't simply have the Feds tackling this. You can't simply have the States tackling this. You can't simply have tech firms and social media firms tackling this. We need an entire whole-of-society seamless opportunity working together to understand the threats that come with election security and countering malign influence. That is a synergy that is still in work. It's still in work not for lack of trying or for lack of effort, but it's frankly evolving.

And there's also another critical balancing act that we recognize we are supporting a democratic process and that that is also equally critical to how we help our citizens, both enable their decision-making by sharing information but also protecting their right to discourse and engagement. So, that I -- my colleagues know that I've called that sort of the iron triangle, and I think we're going to continue to work on how we create a really well-understood engagement so that voters understand exactly how they receive information and who's doing what to empower them at the polling place.

The threats as we go into 2020, are frankly more sophisticated. They've learned from the volume of information that we have shared. They have learned certainly based upon red teaming the result of some of our operations, and they have sharpened their own capabilities. It's more diverse. As I remind people routinely, this is not a Russia-only problem. Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, nonstate hackers all have opportunity, means, and potentially motive to come after the United States in the 2020 election to accomplish their goals.

But please know that when I talk about 2020 that we don't see this merely as a tactical problem that starts and stops within this calendar year. This is a horizon of a persistent topic, as I said a minute ago, against the backdrop of countering malign influence.

And so, you should understand that what we are trying to do is take the focus that was galvanized in 2016 and move it and evolve it to a posture that is more integrated, more understood going into 2020 and beyond.

In conclusion, I want to make two points. First, let me assure everyone in this room and your colleagues, your constituencies, your viewers, your readers that this is a top national security priority. In the midst of all the other challenges that we are facing at this time, I have confidence that we are bringing all of the resources, expertise, and information to this problem as we go through this year together.

Second -- and I was humbled by some feedback I received from colleagues in the Senate last week -- we are uniquely cognizant that, as we share information on election threats, that we don't want to undermine American confidence in our democratic process. And I recall one of the Senators saying to me last week that we need to be even more communicative about these threats. And I really take those comments to heart because what I want for the American voting public is that they understand these threats, that they've heard about it so frequently that they have availed themselves of the resources to them that they can know where to vote, know how to vote if they're not on the voter rolls, know where to seek authoritative information on the candidates and ballot

measures. And so, that it is with the confidence of knowing these threats that they are empowered to participate in the process.

And so, I welcome this opportunity to work with you to share with you the challenges that we face going to 2020, and that it is those threats and the cognizance of those threats that I think will strengthen the foundation upon which every voter will undertake when they go to the ballot box for the primaries and when they go in November 2020.

So, with that I will turn it back over to my colleagues. And I really appreciate the partnership, and let's continue. Thank you.

[Applause]

VICE CHAIR HOVLAND:

Thank you, Ms. Pierson. It was really a great reminder of the work that's been done not only at the Federal level, but it also reminded me one of the great privileges I have as a Commissioner on the EAC is getting to travel around the country and see election officials in their offices and at their conferences, and really all of the work that they've been doing since 2016 to really embrace this security challenge and make our elections more secure than they've ever been.

I see colleagues here from the Government Coordinating Council, and many State and local election officials who I've seen in their States and seen the real change that they've made. And so, I

applaud them for that and thank them for that work and certainly our other Federal partners who have been working in this space to make this election secure.

We are going to transition now to our next panel.

Commissioner Tom Hicks is going to lead a panel on accessibility, and so we would welcome them to the stage. Thank you all.

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Okay. All right. All set then. Hello, everyone. Let me try again. Hello, everyone.

AUDIENCE:

Hello.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Thank you. I'm pleased to be with you here today to talk about -- I'm Tom Hicks, the Commissioner at the Election Assistance Commission. I'm pleased to be with you here today to talk about the important topic of accessibility in elections.

According to census data, people with disabilities account for approximately one-sixth of all eligible voters in the 2016 elections, totaling 36 million people. In the 2018 midterms people with disabilities voted at a rate that was 5 percent lower than the national average than those without disabilities. At the State level, this turnout gap was as high as 20 percent. Reducing the turnout

gap, complying with Federal disability voting right laws, and effectively serving voters with disabilities is an ongoing challenge for election officials in many jurisdictions.

Additionally, there are nearly 26 million people in the U.S. with limited English proficiency and roughly 67 million people who speak a language other than English at home. Two hundred and sixty-three local election jurisdictions across the country are currently required under the Voting Rights Act to provide language assistance for their voters, and many other jurisdictions provide such assistance voluntarily.

A vital part of the EAC's mission and the work the election officials do is to support voters in their accessibility needs. For the first time in Federal law, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 afforded voters with disabilities the right to cast their ballots privately and independently in a manner that provides the same opportunity for accessibility and participation as for other voters. HAVA requires that election jurisdictions use voting systems in all polling places that ensures such access.

In the early years of the EAC, the agency distributed HAVA funds to the States to help election offices purchase voting equipment that meets this mandate to support additional efforts to strengthen the accessibility at the polls. Today, we continue to support election officials and voters with disabilities through many

EAC initiatives, including research and resource development, our efforts to modernize the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines, and facilitating discussions on important accessibility topics like accessibility workshops the EAC will be hosting next month on February 20th.

Again, the EC will be hosting a -- because it looks like you folks are falling asleep for me. So, the EAC will be hosting a disability workshop on?

AUDIENCE:

February 20th.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

February 20th. This is going to be interactive, folks.

So, we at the EAC also have a long history of supporting language accessibility in elections. On our website you will find glossaries and phrase books and election terminology in Spanish and eight Asian languages, a translation of the National Voter Registration application form in 14 languages, recordings of sessions from our three recent language summits, and other resources.

Examples of such additional resources in this field, our disability rights pamphlet. See, interactive. And I keep a copy of our smaller one in my wallet, and those are available out in the

lobby. We recently also published an issue brief on language accessibility in elections.

With me today to discuss these issues and related topics is a distinguished panel of election officials and a voting right accessibility specialist. From my right to your -- to my left, Michelle Bishop is a Voting Rights Specialist from the National Disability Rights Network where she coordinates voter access initiatives nationwide and works with voting rights policy.

Barry Stephenson is the Chairman of the Board in Jefferson County, Alabama. He has more than two decades of experience in elections.

Terrica Jennings is an attorney and ADA Coordinator for the D.C. Board of Elections, where she leads efforts to serve voters with disabilities, senior citizens, and those with limited English proficiencies.

Patty Hansen has served as the Recorder of Coconino County, Arizona, since first being elected in 2012. She has worked in elections and voter registration for more than three decades.

As each of our panelists today, our panelists will first share some of their initial thoughts and take questions from me, and if we have time, maybe one or two from the audience. Again, interactive.

So, with that, Michelle, if you would like to start speaking.

MS. BISHOP:

Absolutely. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having me. My name is Michelle Bishop, and I am the Voting Rights Specialist at the National Disability Rights Network. I've spoken at many events like these over the last few years where I've shared some really important data from the U.S. Government Accountability Office about what voter access looks like in the United States. So, I'm not going to do that again today. I recognize a lot of the faces in the audience, and you've heard those numbers. You've heard me recite those numbers ad nauseam, over and over again.

So, what I'm going to do today, it's like New Year's resolution time, right? Still safely because we're still in January, I know I'm a little late. I'm not a resolutions person. But I have my three resolutions for Election 2020. They're essentially the three lies I want us to stop telling about voter access going into the 2020 elections, okay? Is everybody ready? You all look a little nervous. All right. Interactive, that was good. We did it. You all look a little nervous. That's because you all know me. It's going to be okay.

All right. So, the first lie we're going to stop telling in 2020 is that everyone really cares about access for voters with disabilities because we've seen the numbers. Now, we've come a really long way. Those GAO numbers I referenced in 2000, we were starting at 16 percent accessibility architectural access to polling places.

That's 1-6 percent, like less than 20. Now, in 2016 we'd push that number all the way up to 40 percent. That means we've made a lot of progress, mostly because some of you guys in the room and on the stage with me here today who have worked tremendously hard to make that happen. Thank you for those of you, your perseverance and your creativity and your making your polling places accessible never ceases to amaze me.

Please tell your friends and colleagues to do the same because I happen to believe that if every single one of our elections personnel in the United States cared as much as I do about access to the vote, we'd be at much better than 40 percent right now, right? That's 16 years' worth of work to have less than 50 percent of our polling places fully accessible.

So, let's talk about it. That's going to lead me nicely into lie number two that we're going to stop telling going into the 2020 elections, and that's that somehow making our polling places and our voting systems ADA-compliant is difficult and costly, that it is somehow so burdensomely expensive that we either can't do it or we simply have to shut those polling places down. This is a lie that I really -- I can't do again in 2020. We're going to stop doing that, y'all. All right?

What we're going to stop doing is contracting one private contractor to tell us exactly how expensive we can possibly make it

to make all of our polling places accessible. This is like the equivalent of going to the car dealership when you need a minor repair on your car and they're going to order you a brand-new part from another country, and they're going to charge you their top labor rates and they're going to make it phenomenally expensive when you know for a fact that there were 10 mechanics you passed on the way to the dealership who could get you a used part that works just as well and they charge a lower labor rate or, quite frankly, if you're my dad, you could have paid a couple bucks to get it out of a junkyard, the same part, right, and put it in yourself. Let's all be a little bit more like my dad in 2020.

We're looking at top-dollar cost estimates for, you know, pouring cement to make permanent ramps and things like that that the ADA in no way requires. So, let's stop telling lies about the ADA and what it requires when low-cost and temporary fixes are perfectly allowable. They make polling places accessible, and they keep them open, right? So, let's use that car dealership model, and let's start thinking about how we can bring our polling places into compliance in a way that really respects the work that we're doing and respects people with disabilities.

And the third and the final lie that I want us to stop telling going into the 2020 elections is that we can somehow meet the demands, all the demands of every election security alarmist --

now, not election security expert, not election security advocate, but election security alarmist -- there is a difference -- while preserving access to the vote for everyone because those GAO numbers that we're looking at tell the story of polling places that are very -- and I emphasize very -- slowly becoming more accessible while also telling the story of voting systems, voting stations, ballots themselves that are becoming less accessible.

In 2008, 54 percent of them were considered accessible to people with disabilities. In 2016 that number actually goes down to 35 percent, 35 percent of voting stations themselves were fully accessible to people with disabilities in 2016. Why? Because we're moving very rapidly back towards paper-based systems without fully thinking through what that means in terms of access for all voters.

Let's not pretend that we have a lot of systems in place right now that will secure our elections while also respecting the privacy and the independence of voters with disabilities. We have to start coming up with better solutions. This is not to say that election security is not important. Of course it's important. Election security is how we make sure that our elections are accurate and fair and represent the will of the voters.

But you know how else we make sure our elections are accurate and fair and represent the will of the voters? By letting

them vote, by letting them vote a ballot that is private and independent so that they can secure their own ballots or at least have a fighting chance at verifying and securing their own ballots.

So, those are my three lies, my New Year's resolution that I'm hoping we will leave it back in 2019, and in 2020 we'll move forward making sure our polling places are fully accessible in ways that are, quite frankly, cost-effective and quite achievable. We're keeping those polling places open, and we're making our ballots both accessible and secure because if we want to have a real democracy, we have to be able to do both. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Thank you, Michelle.

[Applause]

MR. STEPHENSON:

I love Michelle because she uses "y'all."

[Laughter]

MR. STEPHENSON:

So -- and Mr. Secretary from Louisiana is a University of Alabama graduate. Congratulations last night, keeping it in the SEC West.

But thank you for the invitation. Thank you for all that the EAC does. I again, mention, I'm Barry Stevenson from Jefferson County, Alabama. I'm going to tell you a little about Jefferson

County. It's the most populous county in the State of Alabama. It contains the largest city in the State, the city of Birmingham. Not only do we have a large urban center, we have several large suburban areas and also a large swaths of rural area and small towns. You can drive 20, 25 miles outside from the city's center and you'll find farms, cattle ranches. So, we have a broad spectrum that represents the urban, the suburban, and the rural and small-town voting. So, that all comes together.

My office is responsible for all the voter registration. We prepare all the voting materials that go to the polls. I'm responsible for the precinct selection and also responsible for the training of all the poll workers and all the voting aspects A-to-Z as we prepare for our elections. Our next -- we're early in the process. Presidential preference primary for Alabama is March 3rd, so we're -- we've been busy in 2019 preparing for that and continue to do that. As soon as I get back, we have a huge meeting on Thursday preparing for that.

But we do take accessibility very seriously. It's very important to us in Jefferson County, and we've implemented several measures that have helped in our county. One we -- in the last few election cycles we have greatly increased the number of poll workers. Now, poll workers has been mentioned repeatedly this morning. And the average age of our poll workers would skew

to the AARP category, and that's not uncommon across the country. But we've greatly increased the number of poll workers in the last few election cycles. We have poll workers in the parking lot, so if they see someone that may need assistance, they could be on a cane, a walker, or just having some difficulty, they can assist them. We have poll workers at the doors so they can help them there. All our doors, you know, where that -- they're supposed to be compliant, but still, we want people there at the doors not only to greet them but to help anyone that may need that assistance.

We have extra poll workers inside the facility in the room that voting is actually taking place. If they see someone that is having a little difficulty or has a disability, we'll take them to the front of the line. And people are -- they're pretty courteous in Alabama, and they understand that. So, they don't mind people being taken to the front of the line. So, we've greatly increased the number of poll workers.

And we very rarely get compliments. We all -- people are quick to complain, but we have actually received compliments about just taking that measure alone, increasing the poll workers because it does help people from the parking lot all the way through the voting process.

Another thing we've done in the 2018 election cycle, we went to e-poll books. E-poll books helps not only those with maybe a disability issue but it helps all voters. It has greatly reduced the time in line. So, we've seen that reduction, so that's helping all the voters. And in the 2020 we're very glad to be moving toward this improvement.

We have purchased new voter disability assistance equipment. We're replacing our old equipment that's several years old. We're bringing in the new technology. It's smaller, it's more user-friendly, and it's the latest technology. We've had some demonstrations run at our courthouse, and the feedback has been 100 percent positive, so we're very excited as we roll into the 2020 election cycle implementing those new -- that new equipment and that new technology. But, again, thank you for the invitation, glad to be here today.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. Thank you, Barry.

Next up, Terrica.

MS. JENNINGS:

Hi. Good morning, everyone. My name is Terrica Jennings, and I'm an attorney with the D.C. Board of Elections. Any local D.C. folks here? Oh, hi. I have poll worker applications for everyone. I saw you.

At the board my job is to ensure that people with disabilities, senior citizens, and limited-English-proficient voters are able to access the voting process just like everyone else, so equally and independently. We do have, you know, a hard time, for example, getting people to come out to be poll workers, and I guess, like he said, it's that AARP crowd, and we do want everyone to participate. So, that's one of the things that we're focused on this year.

I just want to go about -- talking about some of the things that we're doing at the board. And one of the things that we focus on is ensuring that our poll workers are vastly prepared to assist people with disabilities and our LEP folks. So, we spend a bunch of time training. Not do -- not only do they have to do their mandatory four-hour training, I spend a significant amount of time with our trainers crafting training material for them to know how to interact people -- interact with people with disabilities, disability etiquette in terms of how we speak to folks, people's first language. We also spent a bunch of time with polling place accessibility.

And, as Michelle mentioned, across the country is about a 46 percent accessibility. Right in D.C. and, no lie, because we have independent organizations who assess our polling places, we're at about 98 percent accessibility right now.

And so, we pride ourselves on working with other local groups such as -- well, government organizations like the

Department of General Services, as well as DDOT, which is Department of Transportation, to make our sites accessible on Election Day, so things like portable ramps if you can't afford to put in or cannot put in permanent ramps, having our ADA compliance team on staff and, you know, just doing things that we may not have throughout the year but that we can use on Election Day to make our sites accessible.

One of the big things that the board does that I think also makes us successful in this arena is that we have an ADA compliance team. So, outside of our poll worker team we have a group of folks that are only concerned with making our sites accessible, so their only job -- and if you're local, you may see them running around on Election Day -- is to keep our sites accessible, moving chairs, keeping doors open, assisting folks from the parking lot.

You know, in D.C. every single polling site on Election Day, we have curbside voting, so if you don't want to or if you cannot come into our polling site on Election Day, you can vote from the comfort of your car if you have a disability or if you are a senior citizen over 65.

We also have no-excuse absentee voting, so if you just want to vote from home in your pajamas or because of your disability or age, you choose not to come out, you don't have to give us a big

reason, your dog died, you know, you have to go to work, et cetera, you can just vote from the comfort of your home. You know, I have personally driven to people's homes to deliver their ballots because we want to ensure that everyone has access to the voting process. It's a pretty crucial deal to us.

A lot of things that we do here also focus -- focuses on our people with -- not just people with disabilities but our limited-English-proficient voters. So, we have, you know, interpreters or translators at each polling site in D.C. where we have a large majority of folks. We also have, at every single polling site, translated voting material, as well as interpreters available by phone. And one of the things that we're going to be focusing on for 2020 is having folks that are not just interpreters but also poll workers, so we have more people in our polling places that can assist us.

We also pride ourselves on having materials that are also accessible in -- I'm sorry, translated. In D.C. we're required to have six languages, or accessible within six languages. And we have our brochures, our voting applications, and other materials translated for our D.C. demographic, as well as we provide assistance to folks in all other languages if it's requested from us.

So, again, it's a big deal to us here in D.C. to ensure that everyone has access to the polls. We're looking for folks to come

out to assist us on Election Day, so sign up to be poll workers or sign up to be a part of our ADA compliance team. And our goal, again, is just to ensure that everyone has access to the polls and no lines for 2020. So, that's where we are right now.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. Thank you.

[Applause]

MS. HANSEN:

Okay. Good morning, everyone. I want to thank the EAC for inviting me here today. I'm from Coconino County, Arizona, and I just want to start by showing you a little bit of what Coconino County is like. It's a little different than -- okay. So, I'm having trouble of course. It helps to turn it on. Thank you. Okay. Okay.

Coconino County is the second-largest county geographically in the U.S., and we are larger than nine States. We have a portion of the Navajo Nation, which goes into the State of Utah and also into New Mexico. And the portion of the Navajo Nation that we have is larger than the State of Connecticut.

Okay. We also are home to four Native American tribes, as I mentioned, the Navajo Nation. We have a village of the Hopi Tribe, and we also have a village of the Havasupai people, which is located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. And we have a band of the San Juan Paiute Tribe.

Just to give you an example of what it looks like, this is one of our polling places, the Coppermine Chapter House, which is a community center on the Navajo Nation. And you may notice we don't have a lot of options for locations to put a polling place. There's just nothing else around. Let me see.

This is what the village looks like in Moenkopi. It is a -- on the Hopi Reservation. And then, finally, this is Supai Village at the bottom of the Grand Canyon for the Havasupai Tribe. You may notice for Havasupai there are no roads, so the only way to get to Havasupai is to take a nine-mile hike, ride a horse, a donkey, or there is a helicopter that goes down on Thursdays and Sundays.

So, we have a few challenges when it comes to accessibility with voters in Coconino County. In 2016 the Department of Justice came out and did an evaluation of some of our polling places, including several on the reservations. And, unfortunately, they found us lacking in almost all of the locations. Our biggest problem was the lack of paved parking. And you may have noticed we don't even have paved roads, let alone paved parking.

And so what we have been able to do is -- Michelle's organization and the National Disability Rights Network came out this summer, and we've also worked with Arizona Center for Disability Law. And it was suggested that we look at a process which is soil stabilizing, which you can spray on a biodegradable

product that will make the surface firm for about two inches down. And so we're looking at that to create our accessible parking locations.

We're also under the Voting Rights Act for the Navajo language, and the Navajo language is not a written language, it's an oral language and it's very descriptive. So, we have two Native American outreach workers that work for us full-time. And in fact Alta Edison is here today. She's our coordinator of this program. She's been with the office for 30 years. And she worked with the three counties in Arizona, plus the counties in Utah and then New Mexico and the Navajo Election Administration. And they've created an election glossary so that the terminology for elections is uniform across the three States and the three counties. She also provides a booklet and does the training for our Navajo interpreters at the polling places and works closely with the Hopi Tribe to also provide language assistance.

So, that just kind of gives you an overview of what it's like a little bit of administering elections in a rural area. I should say we have 87,000 registered voters, so we're big and mighty geographically, but we're kind of small with numbers. But it's a beautiful place. I invite you to come anytime.

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Thank you, Patty. So, both Patty and Barry, you both mentioned having to deal with DOJ in terms of monitoring and enforcement actions within your jurisdictions. What sort of advice would you give election officials on how they can avoid any sort of lawsuits with DOJ?

MR. STEPHENSON:

Well, the first rule would be document, document, document. A quick story. We had the Department of Justice show up at our courthouse. They only had to walk across the street. The Federal courthouse is across the street. And in the summer of 2016, and unbeknownst to us, several Assistant U.S. Attorneys had gone out and looked at dozens and dozens and dozens of our polling precincts. And they had come back with a list of items that needed to be addressed.

Now, when I came into the office in 2008 I did a complete survey of every single precinct. And as -- and we had all that documented. And as complaints arose over the years, either facility didn't meet standards or our facility needed to be split, we would go out, complete a new survey, take new pictures, and we would address the complaint or we would address an issue such as a precinct needed to be split. So, we had all that documented.

But what the DOJ presented to us -- some of it was easily fixable. Like I said, we had been operating on the complaint

system. Perhaps a parking lot had been paved and they had not restriped properly. That's easily fixable. Perhaps a renovation had taken place at a facility and they had not placed the handicap signs properly. The biggest thing they had is about 25 of our precincts was that there was no van-accessible sign. They had the parking stripes, they had the parking signs. I get on -- I get a purchase order, I go to Granger.com, I order 50 van accessible signs. I go out, I tack them all on. So, it was real easy to get a lot of their checklist done.

But there were some that had developed problems. So, we agreed to do a complete resurvey of all our precincts. It was 175 at the time. We completed the survey. I took pictures of everything. I got a digital level so when we looked at the curb cut and we looked at the ramp, I took a picture. It was under 5 percent. I sent it to them on this date. I know it was in compliance, and that's all placed in a file. And in -- and they were easy to work with because we tried to be -- we were proactive. We tried to address everything as quick as possible. They did give us some time in 2017 to complete that.

And then we agreed to a program that if there was any change or a precinct needed to be split, that through the 2020 cycle -- so we go all the way through this calendar year -- we would send

them the survey, send them the pictures so they could have a record of that also.

So, it wasn't -- it's never good when the DOJ just shows up, you'd think, but it wasn't adversarial because we had documentation, and we promised to continue extra documentation. So, the program for us has been a good thing because we have accessibility and we have it documented, and in going forward we're going to have it documented.

So, that's our story at Jefferson County.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. Great. Patty.

MS. HANSEN:

I guess advice I would give, the first thing is don't freak out. Excuse me. It is intimidating to have the Department of Justice come, and they kind of threaten you with a lawsuit if you're not going to comply. But it's an opportunity to really look at how you can improve on what you're currently doing. We, too, have done our accessibility surveys for many, many years. We thought we were doing a good job, but having a different set of eyes coming in really helped us.

And you can collaborate, collaborate with the organizations such as Michelle's and with the -- our Arizona Center for Disability Law. And also, you have to start thinking outside the box. And the

people that -- your voters will be able to help you, too, say what -- they live there. They know what is needed. And so, I think you can really take it as an opportunity to improve on what you're doing and not be intimidated.

Also, share with each other. We have to do our postelection surveys on Election Day and send them to the Department of Justice, and we would be happy to share those surveys with any other counties, in that, so you can gauge on what you're doing and whether there are other areas where you can help. So --

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Following up on what you just mentioned a little earlier, you said that the road was -- you could spray something on it, and it would be solid for two inches down. Is that permanent?

MS. HANSEN:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

It is?

MS. HANSEN:

It's a dust-abatement kind of process, and it was actually suggested by an attorney with the Arizona Center for Disability Law.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great.

MS. HANSEN:

And we're trying it in 2020. I'm hoping it's going to work. It says that it will last up to six months. And the good news about that is this would benefit the people that live in our county in between elections. We need to look at things that are going to help day-to-day. On the Navajo Nation, there's a much higher percentage of people with mobility issues than there is off the reservation, so just makes sense that us from the counties need to look at ways to help our citizens in between election time.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great.

MS. BISHOP:

Can I add to that quickly?

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Please do.

MS. BISHOP:

Arizona Center for Disability Law, who are amazing, are actually part of NDRN's national work. We're a membership association. Our network is federally mandated, so we exist in every State, district, and territory in the U.S., and we're actually mandated by HAVA to work on access to the vote. So, it's not just Arizona Center for Disability Law. Wherever you are, one of our

affiliate organizations exists and they want to work with you on these issues.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. Some of you -- and this is a great transition. Some of you mentioned working with nongovernmental organizations in your jurisdictions to support efforts to better serve voters with accessibility needs. Michelle, you represent the NDRN. What advice would you have for election officials who are looking to improve public engagement efforts on those issues?

MS. BISHOP:

Open your doors and let those organizations come in and work with you. I know sometimes that's a scary thing for elections officials. Elections officials are going to come up in the media if things go wrong on Election Day. They're going to get those threats of a lawsuit that have already come up, so I know it's a scary thing. But being collaborative in that process I think is where you want to end up.

No matter how things happen on Election Day, if I, as an elections official, had a choice of taking all that heat by myself and saying I made all these decisions on my own and did the best I could and this is where we landed, that's not the position I want to be in. I would much rather get up on election night or the day after Election Day and say here are all the stakeholders who worked on

this together, and this is where we landed. And we're going to keep trying to do better and better going forward. Here are my cybersecurity experts that we work with. Here's our disability access experts that we work with. Here's our language access folks that we work with, and we're all trying to do this together and this is where we're at.

And I would much rather, in terms of disability access, have those disability rights organizations and people with disabilities next to me saying really, we're trying very hard. This is how difficult it is to make all of our polling places 100 percent accessible, all of those things, rather than having to say on my own I tried my best and I'm not an expert in the ADA and here we are. So, I think you end up in a much better position.

It's also going to just generate better solutions. You know, that's a great suggestion that came from Arizona Center for Disability Law that how many folks would have known about that just on their own if they were out somewhere trying to solve this problem independently? So, it's going to generate better solutions. It's going to push the ball further down the field. And for all those things that we can't fully achieve by November 2020 because we still have a long way to go, then we have those partners standing with us and saying we're all working on this together.

MS. JENNINGS:

Commissioner Hicks, may I add to that?

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Please do.

MS. JENNINGS:

So, hearing -- at the D.C. Board of Elections we have our annual voter access forum where we invite stakeholders from all the disability rights organizations in D.C., as well as our language access stakeholders to come into the board, and we have pretty much like a roundtable discussion with everyone who shows up about what we can do to improve our services, get feedback, get suggestions.

Every time we think about, I guess, relocating a polling site or changing a polling site, we invite members of the public to weigh in for 30 days before we actually pick that site. And even last year when we had our last voter access forum, which was in October -- and we'll have another one before the next election -- you know, we asked folks to come in and give us suggestions about sites, as well as come up with us when we do our surveys because sometimes you have folks from the disability rights organizations that they are like don't pick that site, we don't like that site, why would you pick that site, and it's what you mentioned. Sometimes there's no other options. And so, when they come out with us into the field and they see in a particular precinct, we have nothing else to pick, then they

kind of understand why we have to pick a site and then make it accessible using temporary measures.

So, for us ,we've found it very beneficial to work with the different organizations, and we continue to invite folks to come out to work with us and to give us feedback. And it's more of a collaborative thing because the goal is to make sure that everyone votes. It's not combative. We don't want it to be us against them. You know, and so it has worked for us where we get lots of good feedback and people can understand why we made the decisions that we do, so the partnership works.

MS. HANSEN:

If I could add something, when we saw that we were failing in so many different areas, the one thing we made clear is -- and made this a strong decision of we are not going to close any polling places. We are not going to make it more difficult for our voters, especially on -- out in our rural area to be able to vote. So, that really pushed us to come up with alternatives solutions to make it accessible. So, that's one thing I think is important. You have to, like I said, think outside the box and how can you keep this location and make it accessible.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Right. Right. Sticking with my last two speakers, the next round of the Voting Rights Act Section 203 determinations are right

around the corner for 2021. This process would tell us what States and localities would be required to provide for language accessibility folks. So, Terrica, what advice will you have for election officials who are considering adopting voluntary language assistance?

And then, Patty, what advice would you have for election officials who soon may be covered? So, Terrica, if you want to start.

MS. JENNINGS:

Start with me?

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Yeah.

MS. JENNINGS:

Again, the big advice I think is the first thing we spoke about just now. which is to interact with stakeholders from the language access community, advocates, have them come in and tell us what we can do to really engage members of the -- I'm sorry, the language access community because we can have all these practices in place, we can have all these services in place, but if members of the community don't know that we have them, then it really isn't beneficial. So, first of all, just getting that information out there and having those stakeholders come in to tell us how we can really make these programs beneficial for the community.

Also having folks that are part of these different communities actively work with us. And so, for us we have a bunch of folks that come out and they sign up to be poll workers. One of the things that we have tried to do is have our poll workers also be people of the different communities, and so, the language access community. That way when they're at the polling site, they're not just helping folks, you know, sign in or register to vote -- or not register to vote, but just to be a part of the voting process, they can also communicate in that person's language so they feel more at ease in getting the process done. So, it's a two-part thing, one, engaging the community when you decide to do those optional things or rather improve your service, and also having folks that are part of those communities really be a part of your program.

And the big thing with that is when you have folks that look like you and sound like you, you want to engage more. So -- and that goes for -- not just for language access when you have folks in your polling site that speak your language and make you feel more at ease. When you have people in your polling sites that look like you and you are a person who uses a wheelchair, a person who's blind, person who's deaf, and you have folks in your polling place that look like you and have the same disabilities as you, you feel more at ease and you feel more welcomed in that process. So,

those are the things that we do, you know, for us to make this just more inclusive.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

That's one of the things the EAC has been advocating for, whether or not that's our men and women who are overseas or coming back who have a sense of duty to our Nation to serve as poll workers or those who have disabilities, to have like-minded people doing that or folks who have different language skills as well. So, this is where I would, you know, advocate for folks to serve as poll workers.

Again, as a recent member of AARP, I think that that would be -- that's a joke, folks. It's like --

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Which, I am now a member of AARP -- it -- I think that that's -- even though it's looked at as the age is so high that we need to bring that down, but I think that the EAC and others are doing a great job of looking towards schools and other aspects as well. Secretary LaRose talked about that a little bit earlier as well. So -- but I don't want to take too much more.

So, Patty, if you want to talk about the issue as well, the concerns of --

MS. HANSEN:

Well, I just would like to echo what you said. It is very important to have -- hire people and have people involved from the communities and that know. I'm very pleased that our county has been able to have two full-time Native American outreach workers and also that we have somebody like Alta that grew up there and knows the culture and people. And you do have to build that trust, especially with Native American, I would say, voters. And so, yeah, I think the collaboration, also our poll workers, we hire local people to be our poll workers, and they do the interpretation. And so that's also important I think so --

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great.

MS. HANSEN:

Yeah, just reflect what your community is. That's what you want.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. So, before we open it up for audience participation -- so this is a chance for you to think of your questions that you want to ask -- we know from EAVS data, which is the Election Administrating Voting Survey, that we have out on the counter there, from the EAC and other sources for vote-by-mail, we know that vote-by-mail is becoming increasingly popular across the country. Michelle, what sense do you have that this is impacting

disability or disabled voters? And then, I want the rest of you to answer, as well, if possible.

MS. BISHOP:

That's an excellent question. I think, in general, we like to see a menu of options for all voters, particularly when it comes to voters with disabilities because access is a very complicated issue. Every type of disability has different barriers, different access needs, and every person who even has the same type of disability doesn't experience it the same way. So, the more we're able to write various options for marking, verifying, and casting your ballot, the better I think we're going to be able to accommodate all those access needs and really make the system work for everyone. So, in general, I think we're really interested in mail voting and the increase in that.

I think the thing that I always caution is that we talk a lot about access to the vote in very traditional terms of your local polling place, and so, sometimes there's this thought that if we switch to mail voting and we eliminate the need for polling places, then we don't have any more access problems. And I want to caution that's very much not the case. If we, in the traditional sense, mail everyone a piece of paper that is their ballot and expect them all to be able to read it and mark it and fold it and put it in an envelope and send it back, people with disabilities who can't do that

at their polling place, can't do that from their kitchen table either. A blind person can't magically read that ballot just because they're at home.

So, we still have to think about how we're going to make our vote-by-mail fully accessible. Our polling place voting should be fully accessible to everyone, but so should our vote-by-mail, so should any of our other methods of accessing your ballot.

So, I like some of the things that we're seeing. I like electronic delivery of blank ballots that allow someone to receive that ballot electronically, and then, if I need to fill it out on my computer or my tablet or however makes it accessible to me, I'm able to do that.

I think that those systems also, they're not internet voting, so they, at some point, require being able to print out and return that piece of paper, so they're not a full solution. They're not completely accessible. We've got to figure out what we're going to do about that. Mobile phone voting is on the rise. That actually eliminates the paper completely. As controversial as it is, it is significantly more accessible. But even either of those options rely on the voters themselves having the tech that they need. Do I have a mobile phone, a tablet, a computer, and having access to reliable cellular data or internet service, which not everyone has. I bet you Patty's got a bunch of folks in her jurisdiction who don't have

reliable internet access. So, they're not full solutions. We haven't completely solved those problems yet. I would want to keep seeing innovation in that direction.

And the one last thing I'll say about that, because I realize I've been talking for a minute, is that I don't think mail voting is ever going to completely replace the need for some form of in-person voting. It's very difficult to make sure that that vote-by-mail ballot is going to be fully accessible to everyone. There's going to need to be some type of vote center model for people for whom in-person voting is just going to be more accessible or other options for returning your ballot in person if you're not able to put that ballot in the mail.

So, I don't know if we'll ever get completely away from having some version of in-person voting, and it's really critical that we make sure that all of those options that we're opening up for our voters have equal access for every type of voter.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Barry, did you want to add?

MR. STEPHENSON:

Well, I would echo on that point and just say the word federalism, because all States are not monolithic, so you have States that -- Oregon, Colorado, all by mail. Alabama, the legislature says we really like voting on Election Day, that day. And

we're not in the -- my office is not in the policy-making arena; we're in the policy-following arena. So, we did, in the last cycle, go to no-excuse absentee. We did see a spike up in those that voted absentee. And that also includes those with any disability issues.

One thing you can never control on Election Day, and that's the weather. And November in Alabama, it can be 70, it can be 30, it can be thunderstorm, it could be raining, it could be sunny. So, as I'm talking to groups leading up to the election, I encourage those, if you have a concern even about getting out on Election Day because of a weather-related issue, you may love your polling place, you may be -- love seeing people, but you may be worried about the weather and how you can navigate a parking lot or whatever if it is inclement weather. Go ahead and vote absentee.

So, there's things that come in to play, but we have seen an increase in absentee voting since we went to no-excuse. I expect other reforms to come from our legislature, but I don't expect it to come quickly from our particular legislature.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Okay. Terrica, did you want to --

MS. JENNINGS:

So, in 2018 there was about 49.3 percent -- the number for people with disabilities who voted was 49.3 percent, which is about 14.3 million people. That was a significant number. And that was a

significant increase from prior years. And it is projected that that number will continue to rise in 2020 and in additional elections as we proceed, which means that we have to have a very inclusive process. We have to have a very dynamic process.

And I know, at the Board of Elections, our Executive Director and our General Counsel, they are always cognizant of that, so we're continuously thinking about doing things like that, which is to have, you know, vote-by-mail but having processes where people with disabilities are equally a part of the process.

And one of the things that we're currently looking at is like an audio-enabled balloting process and just having vote centers. You still can't get rid of those because there are people who still have to come in because they can't read or they have -- the person is blind, et cetera. But while we embrace those changes, we're constantly thinking about how that will impact our senior citizens, people with disabilities, our LEP folks. So, we're open to everything, but at the forefront of that is how we can be appealing to everyone that's a part of the voting process.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Go ahead.

MS. HANSEN:

There's always a challenge when you have a large number of people that don't read and write, so voting by mail was very

difficult. But I'm a firm believer and supporter of ballot-by-mail in that it delivers the ballot to you. And I agree that we would have to have voting assistant sites on Election Day.

And we've conducted three elections now, I believe it is, a portion of the Navajo Nation, and we have voter-assistant sites open from the normal hours that a polling place would be open. Also, we're so large geographically, to get to our office from parts of our county may be a three-and-a-half-hour drive. So, with the other areas even off the reservation you're going to need voter-assistant sites. So, it's I think something that's coming.

Arizonans overall have embraced it. Our neighboring county Yavapai County has 87 percent of their voters in 2018 cast their ballot by mail. Our county, it's a little bit lower because of having so many Native American voters. Native Americans really had to struggle to even get the right to vote, and so, on Election Day it is a huge celebration in the community, and it's really very exciting that the people want to come out, and they want to vote with each other. So, I think the combination of voting by mail for people who want the convenience, along with voter-assistant sites, does a very good job at meeting -- with meeting all of our voters' needs.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Great. Great. And I think we have time for one, maybe two questions. So, again, the EAC folks are walking around, so --

MS. TUDAN:

Hi. Can you hear me? I'm Beth Tudan with the League of Women Voters in Fairfax County, Virginia. And a couple of years ago there was a testimony, I would say, in the *Washington Post*, about a sister who had a brother who had a disability. And in it she -- they -- she said they always watched the news together, they always talked about things, and at one point he said, you know, I wish I could vote. And she looked at him and she realized he wasn't registered, they never talked about it.

And we run a high school voter registration program, so it's easy for us to get into the AP classes, the IB classes, but we have to ask to go to the special education, the self-contained classes. And so, I just wanted to ask you what -- so in order to be a voter, you need to register, so what do you do, what do you recommend to reach out to the -- to people so that those who are in the disability community can get actually registered so they can then vote?

MS. BISHOP:

That's a great question. I suppose -- I had not heard from many colleagues at League of Women Voters before that there's some extra hoops to jump through to get to some of those --

MS. TUDAN:

Just the idea of -- not everyone realizes or even thinks about.

MS. BISHOP:

Yes. Yes, accurate. And what you're tapping into honestly is centuries' worth of some stigma against people with disabilities that I definitely wish I could solve for you right now and just completely work myself out of a job. But I think it starts with the type of work that you're doing through League of Women Voters that a lot of other organizations are doing as well. We have to be doing that outreach, but we have to be doing that education. We talk to a lot of voters who have disabilities who say I want to vote and I can't vote because I have a legal guardian. And we, first of all, work with those folks. So, if you come across anyone who has that issue, get in touch with our affiliate in your State, and they will help that person advocate to get their right to vote back.

But, interestingly enough, what we see in a lot of cases is we say, well, let's look at this paperwork, because what -- how guardianship interacts with your voting rights is different in every State. And sometimes there is no paperwork because that person doesn't have a legal guardian. They have a parent who calls themselves the guardian. They never had guardianship established, which means legally you're your own guardian. You could have been voting this whole time.

And we have a registration form right now. Let's fix that. But in some cases someone -- many, many cases someone who believes they've lost the right to vote hasn't or just no one's ever approached them and talked to them about voting as politically informed and as active as that person may be.

So, I think it starts with having those conversations. Let's get into all of those classrooms. Let's find people where -- I love getting people before they leave high school, right, because we lose a lot of folks. We do a lot of campus work, but not everyone goes to a college campus after they leave high school. I love getting folks in high school and getting them engaged and getting them registered, preregistered, whatever the options may be in your State.

But we also do a lot of campus organizing for folks who go to a traditional college campus. One, there are student disability services offices on those campuses who we could be engaging in these efforts. But two, let's catch people the other places they're going. Let's find them at work. Let's find people with disabilities who are just going to like sheltered workshops or day programs who aren't fully integrated into the community. Let's find them where they're at and let's be the first people to ask them if they want to register and if they've ever thought about voting.

I think it's really -- as inconvenient as this answer may be, probably going to take a pretty strong ground game on our part to start to turn that tide. But thank you for the work you're clearly doing on that.

MS. JENNINGS:

And I can -- one of the things --

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Go ahead.

MS. JENNINGS:

Can I answer real quick?

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

Go ahead.

MS. JENNINGS:

One of the things that my agency does, is we have, for our voter -- we have a voter outreach team, and so, they go into different organizations, different events to register folks. We have one person that is dedicated to students, and so we catch our students early. We go into different high schools and those that can be registered are registered, and those that can't at that time, they get the education. And they also get to work with us on Election Day to get them thinking about the process. And it doesn't matter if you have a disability or not.

But as far as people with disabilities are concerned, our outreach team goes into nursing home facilities. We partner with the National Federation of the Blind, the local one as well as the main office, and different organizations here that deal with people with disabilities, and we register folks to vote.

And a big part of it is education, letting folks know that unless you are considered by the courts to not, you know, be -- to have -- not have the capacity to vote, you can participate in the process, and so having that conversation. And unless the court deems you incompetent, you can register to vote and you can vote. And having folks that -- onsite, to help them to register to vote, so our staff actually goes out and helps them to fill out the form, as well as on Election Day we have folks that are inside our precincts, our voter assistant clerks that are trained specifically to assist people with disabilities. So, it's a two-part thing.

But having our folks -- having folks literally going to the schools, going to the nursing home facilities and different organizations I think is key. So, as Michelle said, it's about the ground game. You have to have that commitment.

MS. BISHOP:

And we love to partner with organizations like yours and bring what we know about the disability community to the work that you're doing, because it's important to know those types of laws.

Not every State has those laws. So, we love to partner with organizations like yours and make sure the folks that you have doing this work on the ground are really well-versed in what laws exist where they are, and what they may be and how to work with those. So, that's something we can offer as well to elections officials, but also to those folks who are out there just doing that voter engagement work.

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

That is a great segue to -- what's happening on February 20th?

[Laughter]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

We are having a -- the EAC will be hosting a workshop for folks with disabilities, and I hope that all of you folks who are looking down at your phones are actually entering that date in there right now.

[Laughter]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

So, with that, I want you to join with me in thanking our panelists.

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER HICKS:

And we will now take a break for lunch. It's on your own.
And the program will resume promptly at 1:30 with a panel on
election security moderated by EAC Chairwoman Christy
McCormick. Thank you.

[Luncheon Recess]

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Welcome back, everyone. Please take your seats.

Hello again. I'm Christy McCormick. And it's my pleasure to
moderate our next panel, securing the 2020 elections.

Following the 2016 elections, election security has become a
front-and-center issue in the minds of election administrators,
lawmakers, national security, and intelligence officials and the
public at large. The heightened focus on election security following
the 2016 election has brought new actors to the election space.

This includes the Department of Homeland Security, intelligence
and law enforcement officials, State and National Guard units, and
dozens of cybersecurity-focused companies and nongovernmental
organizations.

We like to joke in the office that there are now more election
cybersecurity beat reporters than there are staff at the EAC. I
suspect many of them are here in the audience today.

You can hardly open a newspaper or watch a newscast
these days without seeing reference to foreign interference in

elections, election disinformation, and cybersecurity threats to the various election systems. Navigating this new environment has presented challenges for election officials, but we've come a long way since 2016. And let me assure you that election officials and their partners are working tirelessly to strengthen U.S. election infrastructure, protect election systems from cybersecurity threats, and bolster public confidence in the election process.

Alongside our Federal partners, we at the EAC are proud to support these efforts and assist State and local election officials as they work to address these critical issues.

I also want to say that we are heartened by last month's passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which included \$425 million in new HAVA funds for the States. The EAC is doing everything in its power to make this funding available to States as quickly as possible, just as we did with the \$380 million in HAVA funds appropriated in 2018. The EAC Grants Office expects to send award packets to State grant recipients later this month.

Additionally, the EAC is continuing to actively participate in the Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council, advance the next generation of Voluntary Voting Systems Guidelines for voting system testing and certification known as VVSG 2.0, conduct research that is relevant to the election security problem set.

I am pleased to be joined today by an esteemed panel of election security experts, including two election officials who serve with me on the GCC Executive Committee. To my left here, to your right is Geoff Hale, the Director of Election Security Initiative at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within DHS. Geoff also serves on the EAC Technical Guidelines Development Committee.

Next to him is Keith Ingram, the Director of Elections -- Director for the Elections Division of the Office of the Texas Secretary of State. Keith is the current President of the National Association of State Election Directors. He also serves on the EAC Standards Board.

Next to Keith is David Stafford, who has served as the Supervisor of Elections in Escambia County, Florida, since 2004. He is the past President of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections and the current Legislative Chair of the National Association of State -- of Election Officials.

And at the end there is Ron Bushar, the Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for Government Solutions at FireEye.

Each of our panelists will offer some initial remarks, followed by some questions from me and then from you, the audience. So, we'll start off with Geoff. Welcome, Geoff.

MR. HALE:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thanks for being here.

MR. HALE:

Thank you. It's an honor to be here, especially with several members of the GCC. For those of you that don't know, the Government Coordinating Council is a byproduct of the critical infrastructure designation, and it is the executive group that helps us at DHS understand the sector with more granularity, more detail. We turn to experts like the EAC, like State Election Directors, like local Election Directors to help us understand their needs and risk posture, and then understand where we, as DHS, can add value.

So, as you referenced, in 2016 we were the new player to the community, and we were certainly caught kind of flatfooted by the incidents of 2016. We didn't necessarily communicate well. We were looking in a very reactive manner to try and add value by the -- in the manner that we support other critical infrastructure sectors. So, we focused on things like vulnerability scanning or penetration testing. But really, it was maintaining situational awareness of what was going on with respect to Russia in 2016.

We've learned so much more from that time, from the critical infrastructure designation in January of 2017. We have leaned on the expertise on the Government Coordinating Council and its

partner panel the Sector Coordinating Council, which is made up of the vendor community, to help educate us on where DHS can really add value.

We kind of break that down into three areas. In the pre-election space we go around and perform hundreds of assessments. If you don't know, we have a catalog out on the table out there of the type of assessments that we've provided. These are no-cost, voluntary for election officials, for the vendor community. They help to inform the trends around election -- around the election sector and prioritize our future activities.

So, with this data set what we do is we take the emerging trends, start to work them into trainings, start to work them into exercises, which would go around and host -- we've had more than 40 -- or we do this -- the last national tabletop exercise in this space had 47 States and more than 1,000 local election officials. This is really laying the groundwork for a -- for communication that hadn't existed in 2016.

Building off of the broader data set that we -- that emerged from all of this assessment work, we start to put that into practice in prioritizing the capabilities we can bring to bear. We helped to establish the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center. That is the body that monitors intrusion detection centers and net flow across election infrastructure in all 50 States

and has more than 2,400 local election officials as part of its membership. It -- they also host a situational awareness room on Election Day, which really has the effect of bringing election officials from their location, virtually, to our operations center, so that anything that we know on Election Day, anything that is impacting elections across the country can be shared and disseminated in near real-time.

The last element that we've done to help prioritize risk is we've seen that auditability is a key tenant of information security, and really, one of the best controls and countermeasures for this sector. So, in order to support effective and efficient audits, we funded a postelection -- the development of a postelection audit tool to -- which is hosted on GitHub, in an open source and free environment.

With that, I look forward to your questions.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Keith?

MR. INGRAM:

So, I wanted to take a minute to talk about what we've done in Texas since 2016. As you might know, our legislature meets every odd-numbered year, and -- for about 150 days, and good luck trying to get a bill passed. But in 2017 there was a general cybersecurity bill that they put a section in there for our office to

assess election infrastructure in Texas, to make a report to the legislature by December 1st of 2018 regarding vulnerabilities and our recommendations for helping to shore up some of those vulnerabilities.

We, throughout the year, the rest of 2017 and 2018, did that assessment. It was purely a product of our office. But we talked to a lot of county election officials. We went out and did site visits at county election offices to try to figure out, you know, what are some things that we could tell the legislature that would help secure the process of elections in Texas.

So, we made our report December 1st, 2018. There was a member of the House Elections Committee in Texas, Celia Israel. She wanted to meet with us to discuss the report, to discuss our recommendations. So, we had a pretty good long and productive meeting with her. And she again said, you know, happy to help any way I can except, you know, trying to pass a law because that's difficult.

But she did file a bill, H.B. 1421, and it did in fact pass the legislative session in 2019. And H.B. 1421 basically implements our office's recommendations to improve election security in Texas. It does several things. Number one, it allows us to require users of our voter registration database, the Statewide voter registration database and election management system, to have cyber hygiene

training every year, so that was a big step. We now have the requirement that in order to access our system, you have to be trained at least at a minimum level with regard to cyber hygiene.

The other thing it did was it requires our office to implement election security best practices. Our first iteration of that document is going to be published probably later this week, maybe early next week. And it is a comprehensive data classification, you know, soup-to-nuts election security best practices that we are going to turn into an administrative rule eventually, but we want to roll it out, get buy-in from the counties and implement -- and the first round of implementation before we make a rule out of it.

The other thing that it did is it requires counties to undergo an election security assessment. So, we used our 2018 HAVA dollars to put in place a comprehensive assessment for every county in Texas of their election security posture, both cybersecurity, as well as protective physical security. And so far we've got -- almost 70 counties have undergone the assessments. You -- the things that we're finding are the things that you would expect to find, and so we haven't been surprised with regard to the issues that we thought were out there.

And we have money for remediation. So, by the end of the summer we expect to have about 245 of our 254 counties assessed, and we are well underway with our remediation process.

The other thing that the legislature did in 2019 that's very important is they passed another bill, H.B. 4130, which gave us the ability, our office, the Secretary of State's office to certify electronic poll books. Before that bill, it was the wild, wild West in Texas with regard to poll books. Any vendor could sell anybody anything, and so, we very much appreciate the added level of scrutiny and security that we're giving our counties by certifying the electronic poll books.

And I think that's my time.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

David.

MR. STAFFORD:

Well, good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to be here with my colleague Keith and Geoff from the Government Coordinating Council. Again, my name is David Stafford. I run elections in Escambia County, Florida. That's Pensacola, the northwestern most part of the State. We've got about 215,000 registered voters. We're considered a medium-size county among Florida's 67 counties.

And so, let me first talk a little bit about the Government Coordinating Council. I think sometimes we assume that people -- there's some level of understanding of exactly what GCC is and what it does. It was about three years ago this -- well, it wasn't

about. It was three years ago this month across the river there in Pentagon City where we had an official from the Department of Homeland Security who was tasked with talking to a room full of election officials, State, local election officials about basically telegraphing the fact that we were about to become part of the Nation's critical infrastructure.

My colleague and friend Secretary Condos there, who spoke earlier, I think he was being a little bit diplomatic when he said when that announcement first came that there was some concern.

I can tell you it was more than a little concern. I think by all accounts nobody really knew what that meant from the elections side, as well as from the Federal side. I think in those early days when we were trying to get the GCC established, it became very evident I think to a lot of our election officials when we would be sitting in a room with, whether it was FBI or DHS officials, that there was some education -- there was I think some level of understanding of how elections are actually run, particularly at the local level, that needed to happen.

The good news is between that time and October of that year, which, in my opinion and being an observer for some years of the Federal Government, is lightning fast, we had the Government Coordinating Council impaneled with a charter, and we were on our way.

I can tell you this, that from my perspective sitting as a member of the Executive Committee of the Government Coordinating Council, and as a local election official in the State of Florida that we -- the difference between where we were four years ago today, than where we are today, is like night and day, particularly as -- when it comes to cybersecurity and elections.

Now, it's not -- doesn't mean that we're all -- we're sitting back and resting on our laurels because we also understand the threat has evolved. And has the threat risen commensurate with our level of preparation? I don't know. I hope not. But we certainly are continuing to do everything we can to raise our level of preparation in anticipation of the 2020 elections.

I think a good example of that is the recent activity as it relates to what's going on in the Middle East with Iran. What has happened with Secretary Krebs, I have to give him a heck of a lot of -- not Secretary Krebs. The -- Director Krebs from CISA who is doing, I think, a yeoman's job in communicating empaneling groups of election officials and being very transparent and sharing a ton of information about the increased threat and activity that they were seeing as a result of some of the activities that were going on internationally. And that mechanism simply didn't exist four years ago. That would not have happened four years ago if this same incident -- this same set of circumstances. So, I think that that is

proof that we are making significant progress. We still have a long ways to go.

For us here in the State of Florida -- or in the State of Florida, we've undertaken a lot, not only through the Federal initiatives, but also on our own. We've had two secretaries of State now. The current Secretary, Secretary Lee, as well as her predecessor, have taken this issue of security very seriously. We've augmented the Federal money and activities along with State activities. We're in the midst of completion of a joint election security initiative.

So, we're working very hard to understand the threats evolving, but certainly I think our -- I don't think it's -- you can look at it and say we're not in a better situation and -- from preparedness than we were four years ago.

MALE SPEAKER:

Amen.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thank you, David.

Ron?

MR. BUSHAR:

Thank you. And thanks for the time and the opportunity to be here on this panel today.

From our perspective and what I heard from other panelists -- and I would echo this from what we do as a global cybersecurity company -- I heard focus and I heard diligence. And I -- and that's a consistent theme we see, not only in the U.S. but also globally, against an ever-evolving cyber threat landscape.

The challenge, of course, in elections and these types of democratic institutions that we're trying to protect is they are critical, and that's been recognized. It is critical infrastructure. And it actually behaves much more like what you would consider other traditional critical infrastructure in the -- from the perspective of data privacy is not necessarily the top concern, which is not the -- you know, from most cybersecurity issues in the commercial space, privacy, protection of data is the utmost focus. In elections, it's actually the integrity first and the availability, right? The systems have to be available for voting, and you -- the integrity of the system and integrity of the results is sacrosanct.

And so, protecting that requires, you know, a different type of focus. It requires a different type of investment in, not just technology, so I think we've seen a lot of focus in certain verticals within the cybersecurity space around elections. But as we put up here on this infographic, there's really kind of a rich ecosystem here that attackers will attempt to and have attempted to exploit and sometimes successfully.

And the technology piece of it at the very core of it, the actual election systems themselves is only one component. And its not necessarily the most vulnerable or the most visible to attack. And, as we've seen in examples of hacks -- hack -- email hacking and leaking, or strategic information operations, which my colleagues alluded to from certain adversaries out there that want to manipulate, but not necessarily, you know, stop an election or prevent an election from occurring, but just manipulate the overall perception of what's happening there, or even the results of it, it tends to be a much more complicated environment to try to secure from start to finish.

Certainly, speaking to the global threat landscape, we do see an evolving nature. I think the awareness, the overall focus and intensity and scrutiny, both from the public side as well as from the government, you know, caretakers of these systems is raising the bar. It's -- no question it's making it more difficult for adversaries to undertake the exact same types of tactics that were used successfully in 2016 and some of the other elections that we've seen around the world since then. It doesn't mean that there isn't still an opportunity there that our adversaries would like to take advantage of if they could.

And we're seeing, as is common in other cybersecurity threats, a -- kind of a copy-and-paste effect as well. Other regimes

and other adversaries around the world are starting to see the opportunity space and focusing on election systems, and we're seeing more sophisticated attacks against election activities in Southeast Asia, in Eastern Europe, which can help inform, obviously, the protection of our own systems, but it also paints a broader picture of the adversary and the threats aren't going away. We're certainly raising the bar against them, but we have to maintain that diligence and those long-term investments beyond the technology component that enhance our people, our process, our capabilities to detect and protect these systems from attack.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thank you, panel. I'm going to ask a few questions myself, and then we'll move to the audience. So, a question to all.

It has now been three years since the critical infrastructure designation. Election officials are more familiar with DHS now and other new actors to the election space and vice versa, as you've mentioned. We've also experienced the 2018 midterm elections together during this time. What would you say your biggest lesson learned or takeaway from the last three years is informing your efforts in 2020? And we'll start with you, Geoff.

MR. HALE:

Thank you. Mine has to begin with communications. As has been alluded to, we didn't know who to reach or how to reach them

in 2016, and we had not met the Election Assistance Commission. We made calls to the Federal Election Commission. We were misguided in where we were -- well-intended, but misguided.

[Laughter]

MR. HALE:

When we rolled out the critical infrastructure designation, we had not sufficiently explained what it meant to stakeholders, what it meant down to the local jurisdiction, what it meant for Election Directors, what it meant for Secretaries of State, and that it wasn't a Federal takeover of elections. We dug our own hole, and so from that point we have been committed to attempting to communicate what our intent here is, how we can add value, how, both operationally and strategically, engage with this sector for the security of elections.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Did anybody else want to jump in on that?

MR. INGRAM:

I shared Geoff's statement that it is the communications that have drastically improved between us and the Federal Government since 2016. Case in point, Texas had a fairly widespread ransomware attack last year, and within hours of that attack -- it was mainly directed toward law enforcement agencies, but within hours, DHS was on the phone with me asking if elections were

impacted, could they be of service, you know, what could they do to help. And so that -- again, that's just something that didn't exist in 2016. That rapid response and willingness to partner is something that is going to be very useful as we go into 2020.

MR. STAFFORD:

I mean, I talked a little bit about it in my opening remarks, but we certainly have come a long way. The communications aspect, the information-sharing, particularly with, you know, Florida was the first State. And to toot our own horn here a little bit, we were the first State to become -- all local election officials in our State were the first State to have all of them become members of the EI ISAC, the Elections Infrastructure ISAC.

And so, that level of information-sharing, and then, again, I think just the educational efforts among the -- our Federal partners, and then, even among States, because States -- you know, we have a decentralized system of conducting elections here in the United States, and so, from State to State, even sometimes within States, people do things significantly differently, so trying to understand that landscape I think informs everybody's efforts.

But, again, as I mentioned previously, just the level of information that's being pushed out, sometimes it, quite frankly, can be a little overwhelming because you have to know what to do with that information that's getting pushed out and be able to discern

what's really important, and I think that's one of the challenges that we all have in being able to discern from that information what do we do about it because, you know, you could just keep pushing, pushing information, pushing information out, and at some point you just kind of throw your hands up and say, you know, I can't handle anymore.

So, the idea of being able to structure it in such a way that it becomes something that you -- can be useful to myself as a local election official or Keith as a State Election Director or Secretary Condos as a Secretary of State or, you know, election vendors being able to do something with that information. So, that -- like I said, that information-sharing is probably the single most important improvement I've seen over the course, but we still have a long ways to go.

MR. BUSHAR:

To borrow from the press colleagues here, democracy dies in darkness. So does cybersecurity. We were in a lot of darkness in 2016, in terms of awareness, communications, and information-sharing. I think I agree with the panelists here, that has improved tremendously in the past three or four years across the board.

But I think, as was hinted at, it's not enough to just share information. It's not enough to just provide threat information. It's not enough to be aware of weaknesses in these systems. You

have to be able to action it. You have to operate these systems as critical infrastructure. And so, that takes a certain amount of investment and discipline in, again, process, in operations, in functionality that takes that information flow, applies it in your environment, takes that threat information, makes sure, you know, it's reasonable, and it's applied against a risk framework that makes sense, right? And these systems have to operate. We can't make them so secure that no one can vote, right? We have to be aware of that access need.

But we have to have a good risk analysis to put against that data, and then the States, the localities, and the Federal Government altogether have to really have good playbooks and practice those playbooks, which you heard a little bit about earlier, to really get that muscle memory honed in so that when something real is happening, you've practiced it, you understand the process, you understand the communications flow, you understand how to escalate and where to get help from and who you can reach out to in the private sector, in the government sector, and you can respond in a way that minimizes or mitigates the potential impact of an attack.

We know that there's going to be attempts, right? We know that's going to happen. The question is how do you detect them and respond to them in the most effective way possible while also

ensuring and communicating to all your stakeholders what you've done, again, to ensure the integrity of the systems that are important for the voters and the trust of the system.

So, I think that is the next step that we've seen as a global vendor, you know, from our perspective that will -- that, taking that information flow, applying it into the infrastructure and the ecosystem that you're responsible for and operating it as securely as possible as a natural function, just as you would a -- running an election, all the mechanics that go into it. We just have to build that muscle memory, and we have to keep working on it. It'll take some more time, but we've made tremendous strides I think in the past couple years.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Great. Another question to all. We know that election offices vary tremendously in terms of budget, staffing, the number of voters served, and other factors. What is being done in your States and organizations to reach smaller-sized election offices and those with scarce IT resources, and what advice would you have for such election offices? Sure, go ahead.

MR. HALE:

Thank you. So, we start by trying to share our understanding of risk. It's no secret that anything that touches the internet faces cyber threats, so we want to get that message out as

promptly as possible. But we begin by working with State Election Directors to understand how elections in their State are implemented. Each one has their own series of controls and countermeasures that help to manage and mitigate risk in that State according to their own policies, their own decisions.

We try to document that and then work with the State Election Director to identify some free and no-cost resources that DHS, that CISA can push out to those communities to advance their security. It could be our free trainings, it could be exercises, our vulnerabilities that we start, but we often like to start with vulnerability scanning and beginning with our Information Sharing and Analysis Center. Both are no cost to the individual. Both provide immediate benefit in terms of the information that can be shared to, A, argue for more resources or help to manage your systems directly.

Right now, we're working with 35 States that represent nearly 6,000 jurisdictions, and we've provided tailored products to those jurisdictions based on the inputs from their State Election Director.

MR. INGRAM:

So, the -- this is the most challenging area that we have to deal with. You heard earlier that there are 2,400 members of the EI ISAC. We got about 6,000 more to go. So, it's reaching that local

election official. I mentioned that Texas has 254 counties. We've got 113 of those have fewer than 15,000 people, so they do not have the resources that they need to face the threat that we face, and so, that's where the Federal money has come in very handy. The 2018 money is enabling us to assess the counties, figure out what their particular weaknesses are, and also help them fund remediation efforts so that they're not in this alone and we're not requiring them to do it all.

In addition, our office has hired a couple of what we call election security trainers, and their job is to go to those counties that don't have IT support and be the IT support for that county to help them implement remediation measures on the ground in their counties, so that's some of the things that we're trying to do to bridge that gap with the local election officials.

Part of what we're having to overcome, at least in Texas, is the belief on the part of the local election officials that this whole cybersecurity thing in elections doesn't involve them, you know, it's -- they're who's going to come after me in Armstrong County, for instance? And so, making sure that they understand that they're on the frontlines, that they are very much a part of this is something that we've been working diligently to inculcate into their brains.

And we've done that in a number of ways. Homeland Security came to Texas and did an all-day tabletop exercise for

county election officials. And I think that that went a long way toward helping them realize that this does involve them. This matters to them. And that has had beneficial effects on making sure that they take us up on the election security assessments in a timely manner and reach out to us if anything happens.

There was one other thing that H.B. 1421 did, and that is for the first time it requires them to report if they do have any sort of election security incident. And so, that reporting and information-sharing, not just between the State and the Feds, but between my counties and myself is something that's different in 2016 that we hope to build upon.

MR. STAFFORD:

Well, one of the things that the State of Florida has implemented in addition to our joint election security initiative is the Cyber Navigators. And this was an idea -- I think the first time I heard about it was my former colleague Noah Praetz from -- used to be in Cook County, Illinois, a local election official here. He now works with DHS. But Noah had this idea of hiring these Cyber Navigators, and Florida did the same thing. We divided the State up into regions and have these folks that were funded at the State -- by the State, but they were there as a resource for local election officials.

And so, you have -- like I said, we've got 67 counties, largest is -- a couple of them that are over a million voters, and we've got several that are, you know, fewer than 15,000 voters. And so, the level of capabilities and resources, you know, is dramatically different within the State, and so, how do you balance all of that out? Well, part of that is through the Cyber Navigator program, in conjunction with the Joint Election Security Initiative to make sure everybody is at a certain baseline and then helping them mitigate that -- you know, get up to that baseline if they're falling short in some form or fashion.

The other way is that there's tremendous amount of resources. Sometimes it's -- can be overwhelming. You know, you have a lot of well-intentioned folks out there that are offering ideas and resources and playbooks and best practices and trying to be able to sift through all of those and what are these things that we can borrow at little or no cost, you know, procedurally or what are some of the things we can do without having to write a big check to some third party to be able to, you know, help increase your baseline?

One of the challenges there is personnel. I mean, you can have these resources that are available to you, but you have to people to be able to implement them as well. So, it can become a challenge, but one of the ways I think that -- one of -- I think a

proven way is the Cyber Navigators that can act as a resource for a grouping of counties or a region to where the -- if a county can't afford to have somebody on their staff to do the stuff, you know, 40 hours a week when needed, they can rely on them for some of their expertise.

MR. BUSHAR:

Yeah, we have to talk about something we term the cybersecurity poverty line, and that's not only talking about, you know, budget and funding, but it's also expertise and experience. And it's a real challenge obviously in systems and locations where, you know, very temporary need and very small staff. You can't expect that you're going to have, you know, fully capable cybersecurity functionality at every single location.

So, I do see -- and we've -- we endorse kind of this model of how can the State centralize or at least, you know, to the extent possible, help guide the resourcing and a lot of the information-sharing components, as well as that information flow -- somebody said it -- which I think is really smart is, you know, not just down but up. What are you seeing, and how do we help you manage the information you're seeing in your systems, and how do we help you monitor those -- that equipment and test them for security vulnerabilities on a regular basis so that you're adding that capability down to the local level without expecting them -- which is

a frankly unrealistic -- to -- again, to be able to fund and resource at every single one of those locations the full suite of functionality.

It's a common theme and trend in cybersecurity in general, as you concentrate the visibility and you centralize a lot of that visibility wherever you can. And then you take advantage of a concentrated focus and expertise, and you focus your resources and dollars as well. And I do think that pays a lot of dividends, and it really helps to, again, manage that risk at a State level so you can understand what your threat picture looks like and your exposure looks like across the State and you can apply resources intelligently to where it's most needed.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Keith, you mentioned the HAVA funds. So, Keith and David, do you have a sense at this point how your States might choose to spend the newly appropriated 2020 HAVA funds?

MR. INGRAM:

So, we're working through that process right now trying to think about what's possible. For Texas, it's about \$26 million in Federal money with about a \$5 million State match, so that sounds like a lot of money, but it's really not. That's about how much it would cost for Harris County alone to replace their voting machines.

So, we have to be smart about how we use it so that we can get the biggest bang for our buck. Some of the things that we

considered using the first round of HAVA dollars for with regard to securing our endpoints for our voter registration database users, are some of the things that are back on the table now, so we've got some ideas, but we'll have to go through all of the process internally before we can talk about it.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Okay. David?

MR. STAFFORD:

We don't know yet. We're getting upwards of \$20 million. I don't know the exact dollar amount in Florida. You know, we had a good -- we had an interesting process that followed the initial \$380 million. Initially, the State said, you know, we're not going to have time to implement this, and then there was such an outcry that said, hey, look, there's this Federal money available, and you can't just let it sit there. And so they're like, okay, well, then we're going to pull it now, but then you're going to have to spend every dollar of it prior to the 2018 general election.

And, you know, that's a good problem to have from the local level, but it's a problem nonetheless, you know, because there's these practical considerations about, you know, how can you go out and spend, for me, just for my own standpoint, is about a quarter of a million dollars in my county alone, and what are the things -- because there's multiyear efforts that we could've employed but the

guidelines that the State put on us at that time was use -- basically use it or lose it, so we had to get, you know, creative in how we looked at what to invest in.

I think it's safe to say we've had a -- you know, we learned from that experience; the State I think has learned from that experience. We've got a different administration, different Secretary of State, different Governor. As I mentioned a couple of times, we're in the midst of completing this Joint Election Security Initiative.

And so, one of the things that we were fortunate, though -- and I know that didn't happen in a lot of States, was that the funds did get pushed down to the local level where, you know -- and, again, a lot of that has to do with how elections are run in that particular State. If they're very State-concentrated, then, you know, there's a -- I think there's a greater argument to be made to hold some of those funds at the State level. For us, we're -- it's -- the elections are run at the local level, so that's where the money went. And I know some of the other States had challenges -- some of the other localities had challenges getting some of those funds from the State. That just simply didn't happen, and I don't expect that to happen again in Florida.

So, I think it's sort of a wait-and-see approach, but I think it probably is going to be incorporated into this Joint Election Security Initiative.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Ron, you mentioned this in your opening remarks. Your firm works on election cybersecurity both in the U.S. and internationally. Are there any particular lessons from the international environment that you think might be applicable to us here at home?

MR. BUSHAR:

Yeah, a couple come to mind. So, you know, again, we focus on, rightly so, a lot of the activity that we saw and it was widely reported in 2016. Again, a lot of it was both email hacking and leaking, strategic timing on that type of activity, as well as, you know, attempts to gain access, it looks like, to certain election systems throughout the country. You know, so there's a combination of open information, operation-style activity, and strategic leaking of sensitive information from a campaign or from candidates, combined with directed attacks at election systems.

What we've seen internationally is a continuation, certainly, of the first part of that, the information operations domain of the media manipulation components, the ability to stand up these systems on social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook to amplify messaging, to create false narratives and then -- and false

personas and then get them out into the public domain. We see a lot of that activity continuing in Eastern Europe. We tracked a lot of focused information operations activity in the Ukrainian election that happen in January through March of this -- or, sorry, 2019.

What I -- what would -- I would say trend-wise is if you look at the full lifecycle and the forensic analysis, so to speak, of what happened in 2016, it was a fairly drawn-out process from the time some of these things were stood up to the time the activity was -- they were used to actually take action. You know, there was a fairly drawn-out lifecycle.

I think what we've seen is a -- especially in Russia's case, they're getting better or more sophisticated about the timing of these attacks, so they're not necessarily showing their cards or standing up these capabilities ahead of time because they know people are watching. They're aware of the fact that there's going to be directed, focused attention if somebody detects those types of preliminary activities.

So, in the Ukraine's example, one example from that election was that some of these fake media sites that were pretty -- you know, fairly obvious when you look at them, they were actually only stood up during the runoff election two or three days prior to the final runoff election, so they weren't present, they weren't kind of built and out there for any length of time for anybody to react to.

So, the timing of these attacks we are anticipating are going to be much more narrowly focused if they're going to happen in this cycle. So, we have to be, again, more diligent, but also much more cognizant of the reaction times to how we, you know, again, partner at the government and private-sector level to -- you know, to get that information out there, to take action against it, and to thwart those activities.

The other action that I would say is new or fairly new in this space that we've observed in kind of the Southeast Asia region is not directed manipulation or it doesn't appear to be, you know, attempts to actually change outcomes of elections, but just straightforward espionage, so, in other words, you know, breaking into, again, campaigns and candidates and just tracking the likelihood of who's going to win, we think for purposes of longer-term strategic analysis of, you know, who those candidates and those -- eventually those elected officials will be that they'll have to deal with from a bilateral or a multilateral perspective on the world stage.

And that's mostly -- we attribute a lot of that activity currently to Chinese espionage activity. Regionally based, we're not -- we don't really think that that's necessarily going to have a big play in U.S. elections, but it's something to look out for and to be considerate of, which is, again, not just active measures or active

activity, which is the very -- you know, the -- obviously the things that are going to get a lot of attention, but, you know, the long and persistent, you know, access and attacks into systems for purposes of just collecting information over a long period of time that we have to be diligent about as well.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

So, David, you played a big role in helping the GCC draft its communications and information-sharing protocols. And, Keith and Geoff, feel free to jump in on this as well. Could you tell us more about those protocols and help our audience understand how information is shared among election officials and Federal partners and how it's communicated to the general public?

MR. STAFFORD:

Well, I'll start by saying that the communications protocols are currently being updated. And when the GCC meets later this month here in D.C. I think the updated version will be presented to the full GCC for their adoption. The idea was -- is trying to take us -- and remember, these are voluntary protocols that the GCC adopted. Certainly, the Federal agencies have their own internal protocols about how information is shared, but the idea was -- is how do you look at this from all levels and put some -- you know, some parameters around when information should and should not be shared. So, it's evolving.

You know, coming from the State of Florida, you all may have noticed that there was some activity that was -- after the Mueller report was released, was published, there was some reference -- there was a line or two that referenced Florida, and I think the -- what happened as a result of all that certainly shined a light on how it shouldn't work because I think all people involved agreed that the way the information was or was not shared, that's not the way it should be.

So, the idea is for -- when something happens at the Federal level, getting that information, first of all, as much information as is possible to be shared without revealing classified information to people that aren't cleared to have classified information should be shared as quickly as possible, and it should be actionable, and it should be released through the normal channels as quickly as possible.

I think you heard from the ODNI earlier that they have a big commitment to try to get as much of that information downgraded so it can be shared widely, and I think we've made great progress on that.

And then the other aspect is -- again, as you -- as we all mentioned is on the way up. What -- if something happens at a local level, what is the -- what are the communication-sharing protocols to get that information shared within your State, to the

Federal Government, and then broadly beyond that. And I think that's part of where this -- some of this conversation is, this relationship between the State and the localities and the localities in the State and what are the parameters that says, okay, if an incident happens at the State level, what -- when is that then -- when is it incumbent upon the State to share that information with the locals and then vice versa?

I think there's broad agreement, and I think what you'll see coming out of these communication-sharing protocols, these updated versions is that when an incident does happen within a State and a locality, that that information is shared with the State entity that certifies elections, whether it's the Secretary of State or the equivalent.

So, you know, that's something that's continuing to be looked at, but it's trying to get as much information shared within the community, State, Federal, even the private-sector partners as possible we think will increase the resilience of the subsector in its -- in whole.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Do you all have anything --

MR. HALE:

So --

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Do you want to add something, Geoff? Okay.

MR. HALE:

For us it was to -- the communications protocols were to help clarify the expectations that DHS was committed to sharing information in certain capacities. Victim notification is actually fairly easy. You go to the victim, you tell the victim, you tell those that are accountable for that. It -- but this has such a broad gray area of information that we've made the determination that for us it's best in the hands of the network operators. So, we're trying to push down as much as possible. Scanning activity, things that aren't -- that -- things that fall short of victim information should still be shared as much as possible to the community. That's where we tried to document this in our communications protocols and commit ourselves to that as much as possible.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thanks. So, we'll take some questions from the audience now. If anybody has a question, just raise your hand. Remember to speak into the microphone. Give us your name and affiliation and be brief and actually ask a question. Go ahead.

MR. LINDEMAN:

Hi. I'm Mark Lindeman from Verified Voting.

Geoff, you mentioned risk-limiting audits, a topic I think about now and then. Could you or others talk about how

postelection audits and maybe other procedures can help to secure election infrastructure, but also, possibly to counter social media disinformation?

MR. HALE:

Thank you. I appreciate the question. We view post -- efficient and effective postelection audits as a risk countermeasure, the ability to detect any type of manipulation of votes. So, we think the horizon for election security is improving auditability first, and then, the conduct of postelection audits.

And obviously, the ability to go back and reference statistically valid findings for postelection audits that suggests that there is no tampering or no manipulation of the vote should have a confidence-building effect.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Other questions?

MALE SPEAKER:

Along those same lines, the new technology for scanners requires that a digital image be taken of each ballot that's inserted into the scanner, and those -- it's from that digital image that the ballot tally is taken so that digital image then becomes a very important part of the public record and is fully auditable because you can take those images and line them up and count them. It could be done at the kitchen table if your uncle was running for

sheriff, for example, and you wanted to audit that election. So, that's a new -- risk-limiting audits have been in the news for quite a few years now, but the ballot image audits are equally valid.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Do you have a question?

MALE SPEAKER:

I just wanted to make that point --

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Okay.

MALE SPEAKER:

-- because it hasn't been publicized very extensively yet.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Other questions for our panelists? Right here.

MR. GELLER:

Hi. Is this on? Eric Geller from POLITICO.

So, Keith, a lot of counties in Texas continue to use paperless voting machines. A lot of them actually bought new ones a couple of years ago. What are you doing to communicate to them about the risk of those machines and then maybe, Geoff, if you could also weigh in on how nationwide you try to make these points, given that there are a lot of reasons why officials still like them and still continue to buy them?

MR. INGRAM:

So, all of the voting systems that are certified for use in Texas can produce a secure election if they're used in accordance with the certification and our advisory with regard to use of electronic voting systems. We have told counties who have purchased DREs since the last legislative session -- there have been a couple of them -- and we're putting in our approval letter. We have to approve every contract that the county purchases voting system equipment to make sure it's certified equipment. And we're putting in our letter a reminder to them that the legislator -- legislation almost passed requiring paper audit trails and that probably it will pass next time, and so they could be wasting their money and have to spend it again, so we put in that paragraph in our approval letters these days for folks who buy DREs.

But the majority of counties are buying some sort of ballot-marking device with a paper trail. We have the majority of voters in Texas that are going to vote with a paper system this March primary.

MR. HALE:

Our understanding is that for the 2020 election, between 90 and 92 percent are likely to have an auditable record for their vote. That's progress for -- and so, we'll continue to communicate with the sector our view of risk and work, not just for 2020, but for 2022

and 2024 and beyond, how we can improve the security posture across the sector.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Other questions about security? Somebody up here?

MR. BUTLER:

Clator Butler from Akamai Technologies, a security specialist consultant for the hemisphere.

The government has a particularly long tail in software lifecycle management, remediation of vulnerabilities from the point that they are identified to when they're actually remediated. And that can get in the way of incident response and especially if you've got a -- you know, days before an election you find that there's a critical vulnerability in a system or, you know, heaven forbid, there's an actual attack on infrastructure during the election.

My question is what is being done to shorten that time?

What best practices can you share to shorten that remediation time between identification and remediation so that problems aren't fixed after it's too late?

MR. HALE:

So, I'll begin by saying that there are tools in place for broad situational awareness of threats occurring during operational voting windows, like our cyber situational awareness room last time had -- last election cycle had more than 600 election officials in there

sharing scanning activity, sharing anything that they wanted to validate from our Federal partners, whether there was anything malicious behind the activity seen. So, that is a mechanism for rapid, just operations floor, watch floor-type information.

But you're talking more about the ability to share and disseminate vulnerability information, and this is where I'd have to actually lean on a lot of election officials and their planning and preparedness to -- they can pull systems out of service, they have previously been able to conduct elections when the power goes out, when all these other continuity of operations takes place. So, as long as we can share the information, I have confidence that they are able to run the election with integrity.

MR. BUSHAR:

From our perspective, it's, of course, a laudable goal to shrink the time, especially for critical vulnerabilities from time of detection or awareness to time of remediation, but we have to learn -- I mean, frankly speaking -- and this is the advice we give to all of our customers -- you have to learn to live in an environment that will have vulnerabilities, either known or unknown, that you can't action by definition.

So, therefore, we go back to the premise that we talked about earlier, which is, you have to have systems and mechanisms

in place to monitor those systems to validate the integrity of those systems and to react to anomalous activity on those systems.

We advocate and we actually implement at both State and local levels for many of our customers this concept of pre-election hygiene activity, so there are certain -- I mean, it is critical infrastructure. There are certain periods of time where you can't touch them because they are in a window of integrity prior to and after an election and during an audit. But certainly there are windows of opportunity where we prepare for the next cycle, especially the higher visibility ones where we have a series of activities. One of those activities is high-value asset scanning, vulnerability assessment, but you have to prioritize because you're likely to come back with thousands of problems that you have to focus on and you can't get them all fixed in the window you have.

And there's a -- probably going to be a lot of new ones every time around, and you rely on the election system vendors to in many cases patch them, and they might not be -- you might not be able to in that cycle. So, you have to live with some limitations.

So, what else do we do in that cycle? We also encourage system operators to not just look for vulnerabilities, but look for evidence that there has been unauthorized activity in the environment. Look for evidence of compromise. Look for evidence of targeting, right, so that you can combine not just the potential

with the vulnerability, but the actual threat. Are we seeing an intersection? That raises the concern much higher than just simply saying we have a vulnerability, but maybe it's not visible to the outside world. Maybe they're not targeting that type of vulnerability. Maybe there's no capability against it. You know, maybe they're just not interested, right?

So, being able to have that risk analysis that says intent combined with -- or intent combined with the ability to action that intent is important. And being able to do that on a cyclical basis and be able to bring that up to an election official level and give them, you know, a red, yellow, green, and give them a confidence level going into each election is critically important. So, we like to look at it as a combined effort that doesn't simply focus on the technical vulnerabilities but how that ecosystem is operating and where to prioritize your risk reduction each cycle and prepare for the next one.

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

So, with that, we'll need to conclude our panel. I'm sorry. I know there's probably more questions out there, but I think our panelists will be around if you want to ask a question. Let's give a round of applause for our panelists.

[Applause]

CHAIRWOMAN MCCORMICK:

Thank you all.

We'll now take a 20-minute break, is that right, 20 minutes, and resume with our final panel moderated by EAC Commissioner Don Palmer at 2:50 p.m. Thank you. Thank you so much.

[Recess]

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Welcome back, everybody. My name is Don Palmer. I want to thank you for attending this final session. Our final panel today will focus on change in the polling place and those unique challenges faced by different localities across the country and what the local election officials are doing to successfully manage that process to meet the needs of voters, to make the voter experience a positive one, and to increase voter confidence.

Now, we know from the EAC's Election Administration Survey -- Voting Survey and other sources that the policy and administrative challenges we have are constantly changing, and they're changing in different ways, in different parts of the country, at different times, yet we all come to meet on Election Day in November. And we'll do that in 2020, as well.

Whether we're implementing a new law on early voting or ballot translation, deploying poll books, electronic poll books or new voting systems, or simply a policy change, it's the responsibility of local election officials to implement those changes, to train the poll

workers at the polling place to facilitate voters in implementing those laws and, lastly, to inform the voters of how those changes may impact the voting experience.

So, local election officials must also adjust to changes in how voters themselves are choosing to participate in the process, and voters have many options. So, election administrators are in the business of preparing for that method of voting. It may be vote-by-mail, it may be early voting, in-person or some other means, or Election Day. So, as early in-person voting spreads across the country, for example, many voters are taking care -- advantage of that option.

Traditional in-person Election Day voters accounted for 50 percent -- 56 percent of all voters in the 2018 midterm elections. That seems significant but is actually lower from 80 percent in 2004. Including in this shift you saw a shift away from Election Day voting. There was a big jump in in-person early voting from 2014 to the 2018 midterms. So, election administrators need to recruit and train our fellow citizens and poll workers. And they will interact and serve the voters who arrive to cast a ballot.

So, to discuss this changing landscape of election administration in 2020 and how some of our top election officials are managing this change, we've assembled an esteemed panel of local election officials from across the country. To my immediate

left -- and I'll go right down the aisle here -- is Dean Logan, who is a Registrar Recorder, County Clerk for Los Angeles County, California, the Nation's largest election jurisdiction in terms of registered voters. He is responsible for serving over 4 million voters and a plethora of new laws and procedures, voting equipment, et cetera, et cetera. I'm sure he'll tell you about it -- all starting in the primary, the March primary just around the corner.

Doris Clark is the Recorder for Navajo County, Arizona, a large geographic locality and home for multiple Indian reservations. She has served in this role since being elected in 2016.

Ron Turner was elected as Supervisor of Elections for Sarasota County, Florida, White Sands, in 2016. However, he has served in Florida elections for over a decade. In fact, he was the Supervisor of another county in Florida. So, he has the full on-the-ground perspective of the diverse nature of elections in the Sunshine State. Currently, he serves as the Treasurer of the Florida State Association of Supervisor of Elections.

Karen Yarbrough was elected Clerk for County -- for Cook County, Illinois, in 2018. Prior to serving as Clerk, she served as Cook County Recorder of Deeds and in the Illinois State Legislature as Assistant Majority Leader in the House. Also, this is always helpful, this -- this background legislative -- legislatures, particularly when election officials are requesting necessary election funds.

So, continuing on, Gary Scott is the General Registrar and Director of Elections in Fairfax County, the largest county in the Commonwealth. And prior to assuming this role in 2018, Gary served as Deputy General Registrar of the county for more than two decades. And I had a chance to bond with Gary over the years, particularly with late nights of tabulating results and election recounts.

So, our panelists are now going to share some initial thoughts and then take some questions from me and the audience. And I'll start with Dean. Why don't you go ahead and start and talk about what's going on in Los Angeles County?

MR. LOGAN:

Great. Thank you, Commissioner Palmer, and thank you to the EAC for hosting this summit. It's great to be here today, and it's been a great program. I think it's appropriate that it comes full circle to this particular panel because so much of what we've talked about today ultimately depends on how things operate at the voting locations on Election Day or, in our case, during the voting period.

So, we were asked to talk about how we're approaching Election Day challenges and election worker challenges. In Los Angeles County we are embarking on a whole new era of a new voting experience, so the voting experience in Los Angeles County up to this time has been the same from a voter perspective as it

was in 1968 when they first introduced punch-card voting. And a lot, of course, has changed since 1968 in terms of the way we function and the way we interact with public processes. And we have spent nearly a decade in L.A. County gathering data and designing around that type of behavior and preference of our voters to introduce a new voting experience.

So, the first thing I would say is that the approach we're taking to dealing with Election Day challenges in a jurisdiction with 5.4 million registered voters that really represents every aspect of diversity that you can think of is to move away from that single-day, single-location voting model. So, starting with the March election in Los Angeles County, voters will have the option to vote over the course of 11 days. We will begin opening vote centers, community vote centers 10 days before the election. Four days before the election, so that final weekend leading up to Tuesday, we'll increase the number of those locations. And voters in L.A. County can choose to go to any vote center in the county, so they are no longer assigned to a specific polling location. They can go to any vote center in the county and get their local ballot.

They'll also be using a new voting system that allows for them to customize that voting experience to a large degree, in terms of language selection, accessibility features, and even the

option to use an interactive sample ballot that will allow them to prepare in advance and expedite their voting experience.

So, it's a whole new ballgame in Los Angeles County. We've been working very hard on this for a long time. In the midst of that project, they moved our primary from June to March, and so, we are accelerating that effort. But it really is based on -- and what you heard from the first panel today in Secretary Benson's comment is this philosophy of meeting people where they are, of moving away from a system where the voters need to seek out the voting experience and actually approaching it from the standpoint of being visible in the community over the course of that 11 days so that when voters have that intrinsic movement, desire to have their voice heard, whether that's motivated by listening to a debate, talking to a friend, or whatever that may be, that somewhere in the course of their day-to-day lives during that voting period they're going to see that there's a place that they can go in and cast their ballot and have their voice heard.

So, augment that to then what does that mean with election workers, and that obviously changes the staffing model, too. So, we will be using more traditional county temporary employees and actual county employees from all of the county departments to serve as the lead workers of these vote centers to oversee those

activities, and that will be augmented by community election workers and student workers.

I think what's -- from an administration standpoint what is exciting about this is it really addresses a lot of the challenges that we've faced on Election Day in the past. One, it gives us that full 10-day period to begin to predict and see what's happening out there, and it gives us an opportunity to react to that other than on a single day. It also allows us to move workers who can work in the early vote centers to actually be trained on the job, and then they become the lead workers at the vote centers later in the day. And ultimately, it reduces provisional ballots and confusion for voters, especially in a presidential primary where, in California, your party preference is going to dictate which ballot you get.

So, just to kind of wrap that up as a way to illustrate that, that the two most significant reasons that we issued provisional ballots in L.A. County, in major elections, are that voters went to the wrong polling place or they're listed as having been sent a vote-by-mail ballot and they didn't have it with them to surrender in order to vote a regular ballot. Both of those things go away in this model. There is no wrong location. Every location is the right election. And if you don't have that vote-by-mail ballot with you, we can clear that and issue you a regular ballot on site.

So, it really does give both of us as administrators the ability to resolve some of those issues, but it also empowers voters to resolve any issues that they may have that would be considered barriers to their voting experience.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Outstanding. Doris?

MS. CLARK:

Okay. Thank you for the invitation to be here. I'm glad to be here. I've never been this far from home this way East, really interesting. I enjoyed my visit and seeing all the sites yesterday.

We in Navajo County -- we -- Navajo County is one of the 14 -- 15 counties in Arizona, and we have about 76,000 registered voters that's active, inactive put together. And we -- I came on as an election worker in 1990, and we have come a long way since then. When I first came on, we were under a Federal consent decree. The county had been sued, and instead of the lawsuit, they decided we will do these things. And a lot of it was election requirements, terminology requirements.

And so, being so spread out, we have -- in Arizona, there's over 20 recognized Native American tribes, and I think all the counties have -- we have similar situations with recruiting and training poll workers, interpreters. And so, we had this consent decree, and we needed to go by it, and we needed to get out and

do the voter education. And in Navajo County we have the Hopi reservation, the White Mountain Apache reservation, and we also have the Navajo reservation.

And to this day, as hard as it may be to believe, there are still people out there that do not have electricity and running water. And so, we thought, you know -- and so, we can't advertise TV, you know, maybe not newspaper. But in Indian country every home has a radio. If they don't have electricity, they have a battery-operated radio in every home. And so, we start getting our voter education out there, and we're using different terms, terminology. We're saying the same thing, but we're saying it differently. And so, we decided, okay, we need to get together because these voters are not going to learn anything if it's said this way in this county, in this way in this county. And so, the Navajo, and then along with a few of the other tribes, they sent representatives. And while we're working on our Navajo glossary, they started -- starting to figure out how they could come up with their own election terms.

So, we compiled this booklet from the first day that we met until the finished product. I would say it was probably about two years. We had the booklet, and I didn't think to bring it, but it was basically -- if I could take you to -- a lot of you may have seen that movie Nicholas Cage and the windtalkers about the World War II veterans, how they had to use the Navajo language. So, you know,

like tank, you know, in the Navajo culture we wouldn't just say, hey, there's a word for tank, you know, or artillery. So, we had to come up -- and it's the same with election terms. We don't have early ballot or, you know, that's just not part of our language, so we had to sit and think, okay, how are we going to come up with this term?

And it took a lot of work, but what it ended up being is an effective method, a way to -- a tool to use to educate the voters throughout all the different counties. We used one radio station, and so whatever we were talking about, they were all understanding it. And we're still using it to this day. And new requirements come up, new equipment come up. So, to this day they still meet and update the terms and the glossary that go into that book.

So -- and I have a passion for translation, interpreting, letting people know that maybe they couldn't understand. My mom was uneducated. She didn't go to school, so she doesn't read and write. So -- and we have a Spanish -- Hispanic employee in our office, José -- I get all excited when somebody comes to the counter and can't speak English and I run and get him and it just thrills me to know that he can help these people that can't speak and help them understand. And so, I really have had that passion over the years to be able to make sure that all the voters get the information that they need.

So, I guess that's about it.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

That's great. That's great.

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

So, Ron?

MR. TURNER:

Well, thanks to the EAC for having us here. Thanks to Commissioner Palmer. Commissioner Palmer was the State Elections Director in the Sunshine State in the great State of Florida, so thanks for your service there. And so, it's great to be with you and hear about how other jurisdictions are handling Election Day challenges coming up.

Florida has its Presidential Preference Primary on March 17th. I believe -- and I was talking to my Chicago colleague, Cook County colleague here, the same day, St. Patrick's Day, so we'll all be wearing our shamrocks or green "I voted" stickers maybe.

But one of the things that was shared in the panels this -- one of the panels this morning -- and I think it was Tammy Patrick's slide -- in Florida, you would notice that we have three ways to vote, and we have vote-by-mail, early voting, which takes place a minimum of eight days, eight hours a day prior to an election, vote-by-mail, which is no-excuse vote-by-mail. Anyone can request a

vote-by-mail ballot through two general election cycles. And then, we have the traditional Election Day model. If you notice from that slide we have about a third, third, and a third of our voters choosing those different methods in Florida, so we end up administering essentially three different election models in Florida.

Our UOCAVA ballots go to military and overseas voters for this March election beginning January 31st. Then our domestic vote-by-mail ballots are now being mailed in Florida 40 days prior to an election. That's the earliest date that we can mail them under a new Florida statute that took effect in this last legislative cycle.

So, the challenges there, we had to have the staff not only for Election Day but for that early voting period and to augment our permanent staff and our office that we have in the weeks and the months leading up to an election.

I will say for poll workers, and in particular, we have a number of poll workers that -- and I'm sure that this is the case with other elections jurisdictions, that stay with us through numerous election cycles because they like what they do. I don't think it's -- that they're necessarily enjoying the 15- or 16-hour days and the large pay that we give them, but I do think that they feel a sense of civic pride and a sense of civic duty, as we all do in carrying out our jobs as elections administrators in the United States.

To -- but to help recruit poll workers that we need for Election Day, one of the things that we have been doing in our county is doing this recruitment all year round every year, not just during -- or prior to an election cycle, that this is something that is a continual process of recruitment using, hopefully, poll workers who have had a good experience as word-of-mouth-type customers but also traditional media, social media, community groups. Another panel today talked about kind of collaboration and collaborative governance, and that certainly takes place to a great degree in what we're doing.

Certainly a challenge with poll workers, however, are the -- these are people that are working a few days every couple of years. I know in our case in Florida we have a minimal amount of training under Florida statutes that's required. However, in our county, we give them much more than that, either in person and augment some of the routine-type matters for training, to an online platform for them, and try to spend more time with them in hands-on exercises and real-world-type exercises and challenges and things that they might have, face with voters or with equipment, and try to focus on the areas that are the highest priority for them when you're opening up polls, what type of challenges you're going to face during the day or what types of things that you need to know when you're closing the polls, when the polls are closed in the evening

and what events and processes are a particular priority for us, for our office, for the voters of our county in particular.

With that, I'll wrap up.

MS. YARBROUGH:

Okay. I didn't even have to give you a minute.

Actually --

MR. TURNER:

Thank you, Karen.

MS. YARBROUGH:

-- I, too --

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Thank you.

MS. YARBROUGH:

-- am grateful for this opportunity to talk about some of the challenges that we anticipate and challenges we've had in the past. I only have a year under my belt as an election authority. You read my bio, so you know where I've been. 2020 is going to be a big year for us, though. Not only do I have to get through this election cycle, but by the end of the year we will be absorbing the Recorder of Deeds office, which -- and we have to have that done by December. So, while March 17th starts something, the end of the year will be something else.

We oversee elections, taxes, vitals, and then everything else that comes in between. So, life happens, and it usually happens in the clerk's office. We're responsible for that.

When I looked at -- in listening to my colleagues, it certainly put some things in perspective for me. While we're a big municipality, our county is large but not as large as L.A. County. We have about 1.5 million voters. But we have new election equipment for this year, and we piloted it last year. And I tell you, the experience for our three areas was a good experience, so good that one of the people who voted in that election said, you know, I love the machines. I -- I just love them. I want to marry the machine.

[Laughter]

MS. YARBROUGH:

I said, well, I think we're going a little too far there. But, needless to say, they had a good experience in these townships that we piloted the program. And we're looking forward to rolling it out. So, what's happening in my office right now is the disassembling of the old equipment and, you know, bringing in the new equipment.

Over the course of -- now, we -- oh, let me just say that we embrace trying to get everybody who wants to vote. So, we have same-day voting. And another first for Cook County is we're

actually going to be going into the prison and have polling places in the prison. We're doing that because those people haven't been adjudicated. They're there waiting for their day in court. And while we do have -- they could vote if they wanted to by, you know, early voting, but we decided to take it a step further. And so, that'll be something new for us. I'm looking forward to it. I plan to be there on that day. I want to see how it rolls out, not that I'm interested in being in jail, but that's where we're going to help people to vote that day.

And I think I'm going to close for now. I'm sure we'll get into some other things later.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Thank you.

Gary?

MR. SCOTT:

You know, in the great scheme of things, Fairfax County is not that huge a locality, but one voter out of seven in the Commonwealth of Virginia is in Fairfax County, which creates some, to our perspective, unique situations, but we've been blessed with a local governing authority, which has always supported us and always ponied up the resources that we've needed.

But even with those resources, like everyone else, we have a problem recruiting and maintaining -- retaining election offices. I

went to a conference one year where the -- it was a local governments conference, and one of the -- my fellow registrars -- I was an assistant at that time -- said -- we were talking about recruiting election officers, and they said the average age of their election officers was deceased.

[Laughter]

MR. SCOTT:

And we -- I was thinking how lucky. Ours have generally been dead for about three years.

[Laughter]

MR. SCOTT:

But it's keeping that pool going and reaching out to that into our -- we go out into the high schools to try to recruit election officers. We go into the local universities. We try to use -- recruit election officers, but trying to bring younger people into that election officer pool is a big challenge.

Fairfax County is unique in Virginia, as well as being the only locality that is mandated to provide voting materials in languages other than English. So, that created a unique problem because we had to create all of those materials. I'm fortunate that on our staff we have native speakers in all of the mandated languages, so we were able to create that and proof everything in-house, including the election-officer recruiting materials.

And we've traditionally reached out through the local communities, the Spanish-language community, the Vietnamese-language community, and the Korean-language community to recruit fluent speakers to put in our polling places to assist the voters, but in the last year we've also been reaching out to our non-mandated language groups. We have a large Indian community, so we've been looking for speakers of Hindi and Urdu. We have a large Kurdish community, so I happen to have a Kurdish native speaker on my staff, so we've been reaching out into them.

But it's a difficult sell for us to go into those communities because their cultural background is different than ours. And many of them, being from the government is an item of suspicion, rather than, I'm from the government, I'm here to help you. We're all familiar with that program, but trying to reach out and using those associations, the language associations, the ethnic associations to help us recruit election officers. And that has been a huge challenge.

We -- Virginia has -- unlike most States, has a general election every single year, State elections in odd-numbered years, Federal elections in even-numbered years. So, this gives us a unique challenge. Unlike most States who have two years to prepare for every general election, we've got one year. This year I've got to face three countywide elections, two countywide

primaries, and the general election, plus town elections in May, and then preparing for redistricting next year.

So, it's coming up with the resources, coming up with the staffing, coming up with the personnel to do all of these things that has created a unique challenge for us. And I say a unique challenge. It's probably not unique. Every locality in here has the same issues that we do as far as recruiting and retaining staff. And to the extent that we've even had members of our legislature come to us asking about legislation that would allow us to choose election officers the same way they choose jury pools, which we oppose. We don't want any non-volunteers working in our election offices.

But, you know, we get by. We get by. Again, we're blessed with the local governing authority that gives us all the resources we need to conduct our elections and will even go a bit further. That's pretty much where we stand.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Well, thank you, Gary. So, this first question is for all. So, each of you -- I believe each of you discussed a policy change or a unique challenge, a change in law in your locality that will impact the voting process for jurisdictions. I think we heard about early voting, we heard early voting, new systems, same-day registration, the law change in Florida. What strategies are you adopting in your jurisdiction to sort of have your poll workers -- make sure that

they're equipped to handle these changes to maintain a positive voting experience for your voters? Anyone of you can start.

MR. SCOTT:

Well, our situation -- this is the first year that Virginia is going to offer absentee voting without requiring an excuse. And under the current law, it's for a very limited period of time, only for roughly an eight-day period prior to the election. And it would only apply to in-person voters. The General Assembly is currently in session, and there are many bills which would extend that out for the entire absentee voting period, and let it apply to vote by mail as well.

Now, I've heard -- like Florida has a 40-day period. We start voting absentee in person 46 days out from the election. And this would extend that out further. But the change we look at is going to be a matter of scale. As it stands now, just under a quarter of our voters vote absentee for general -- a large general election. And this year I'm looking at perhaps that going up to a third.

We have 11 locations around the county where people can vote in person absentee. We're adding two additional ones this year. And I hope to add two additional ones the year after because I see, as we go to no-excuse absentee voting, the shift, like everyone else is seeing, is going to be moving from Election Day voting to pre-Election Day voting.

And that the only thing that we could look forward to in the absentee process is growth. We have to be careful about managing that. 2008 we really pushed -- or absentee voting, you know, vote early, you won't have to stand in line on Election Day, and all of this, so people were standing in line waiting to vote early, and there were no lines on Election Day. And then two -- four years later, everybody aha, I remember I had to stand in line to vote absentee, so I'm going back to Election Day, and we had no absentee voters and everybody was showing up for Election Day.

But I think with the General Assembly moving this to no-excuse for the entire period, that's going to permanently change the environment in which we vote.

MS. YARBROUGH:

I'll go next. Having new voting equipment we're having to train all of our folks, so we've got about 8,000 people that we've reached out to already for Election Day. But for any of it we have to train all of these folks. We've rolled out what we call a PPT, which is a polling place technician. So, that person is responsible for anything that may go wrong with the voting equipment. In prior years we had one per precinct. This year we're going to have one per polling place. So, training, training, training is what we're in the midst of doing now.

As my colleague here mentioned about older folks who have done these jobs over the years, they're not dead. Ours aren't dead, but they're --

[Laughter]

MS. YARBROUGH:

They feel like this is now the time for some young people to step up. So, we are in the schools and in the colleges and talking to people all the time that this is a year-round process for us to talk about being a part of the solution. Elections have consequences and all of those kinds of things to get their attention to come in, get trained. And although we can't pay them what they're really, really worth because I think the outside dollar amount is about \$325 for the day, and that's not a lot, but they're -- you know, in prior years, maybe they got less.

But we don't put an emphasis on the dollar amount. We put the emphasis on, be a part of this. This is your government. You should be involved. You should be engaged. And I've even begged some of the older workers when they see the new equipment and they see how easy it is, maybe they'll come back.

MR. TURNER:

So, we've heard from Fairfax and Cook County, and he mentioned the age of their poll workers. Their poll workers actually retired in Sarasota County --

MS. YARBROUGH:

That's true. That's true.

MR. TURNER:

And we love them, everyone. Keep coming.

One of the challenges for us in this Presidential Preference Primary that's coming up that I know my colleague David Stafford in Escambia County spoke earlier, and there are 32 counties in Florida that have a Federal court order to provide language assistance under a Section 4(e) provision of the Federal Voting Rights Act, not the 203 provision. So, we've all been learning about that in Florida quite rapidly. We have to have these language assistance, Spanish and English provisions in place for the Presidential Preference Primary. So, we've all been kind of racing against the clock to get the baseline that we need for this language assistance. So, when we have this established, I know, as the colleague from Fairfax talked about, then hopefully, this will be a little easier from a management perspective for future elections.

But from a poll worker standpoint in the polling location and being on the frontlines dealing with voters who are seeing these changes is just trying to embrace this in a positive way, that we're helping voters, we're helping those with limited language ability, those who have language assistance needs, and that this is a positive change for us and that, again, we are in the customer

service business. That's how we have to look at this and embrace this, not from a purely bureaucratic function of serving voters and the public but that we are -- these are our customers, and we are providing a service, and we want to provide the best service that we can. And we want repeat customers that want to come back and vote in our county.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

So, Gary, offline, you mentioned to a number of us that Fairfax County was preparing for 90 percent turnout in November, and as well as implementing the no-excuse early voting. For everybody, or for who wants to address the issue, including Gary, how are you -- what factors are driving that, your turnout projections, and what are your strategies to deal with it so we can mitigate long lines -- potential long lines and sort of facilitate the turnout?

MR. SCOTT:

Well, we're -- again, once the General Assembly finishes their session -- and hopefully they will change the no-excuse absentee voting requirements, then we're going to be making a dedicated effort to encourage people to utilize the no-excuse and not -- you know, avoid Election Day.

In 2016, we had almost 85 percent turnout in Fairfax County, and so we're basing our projection on the fact that it's politically a

very active community and that this is going to be a very contentious election, and that's going to drive people to the polls. And that's why we are projecting -- I mean, I am planning on ordering enough ballots to cover 110 percent of our registered voters, just to cover that with provisional ballots and everything else.

But, again, it's a matter of scale. It's not going to be that much of a jump from 84 percent or 85 percent to 90 percent. And if we can drive those individuals to our, at this time, 13 satellite locations for absentee voting, that will greatly cut our problems down on Election Day.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Anybody else on the panel like to address the issue?

MR. LOGAN:

I'll just mention that I -- I mean, I think that that -- as we heard on the panel this morning, I think that it's -- I think there's no doubt that we're going to have unprecedented turnout in November. I think in California, we're looking at a fairly unusual circumstance in our March 3rd primary, in that, California is still in play in the presidential nomination process, and we're expecting really high turnout in that election, too.

I think that for us the themes we're dealing with across all of these issues are change management and capacity. And we're

really focused right now on the fact that we've developed a model with and for the voters of Los Angeles County, but we're also all creatures of habit. So, having an 11-day voting period is great if voters distribute themselves across those 11 days of voting. And there's not a lot of data out there --

MS. CLARK:

We should be so lucky.

MR. LOGAN:

-- and actually, what data is out there in jurisdictions that have done this still shows a frontload on Tuesday, on Election Day.

So, we are -- we're really committing resources to a public outreach and education campaign, mass media campaign, even looking at creative options of within that 11-day voting period, while anybody can vote on any of those days, maybe we'll have some theme days where we have one day where we really focus on building a sense of community around people who are voting for the first time, or particular demographics in the community as a way to do that, and also advertising pretty broadly each day where we're at with turnout, sort of this concept that the longer you wait to vote, the longer you may wait to vote if you wait till Election Day.

So, I think a lot of it is that commitment of time and resources, that recognizing what we know based on what we heard this morning, that the turnout is going to be high, that we have to

prepare for the fact that when you're implementing a new model, that that initial upfront investment includes investing in the change management and the outreach and education that goes along with it.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

So, Ron, do you see any changes in Florida just looking back at '16, I really do think it was a third, a third, a third on the method of voting, and it was just utilized so much by both parties and very active, competitive race. Do you see any changes in '20, or do you think it'll pretty much be very active using all the forms of voting, the vote-by-mail, early voting on Election Day?

MR. TURNER:

I think it'll be very active. In 2016, during the presidential general election, then early voting, so in-person early voting was the most popular way to vote in our county, then vote-by-mail, then Election Day. We're seeing fewer people vote on Election Day. We will be kind of undertaking a -- to some degree what Dean was just talking about, which is encouraging voters that -- to be fully aware of the different methodologies that they have to vote and possibly to vote before Election Day so we don't have everyone showing up to the polls on Election Day. But I suspect that we will continue to have the three ways to vote.

But I will say this, that I think that just looking at past historic norms can help inform our decision-making, but I don't think we should base our decision-making --

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Right.

MR. TURNER:

-- in this business on those anymore. And we saw that in Florida to some degree, taking the 2018 midterm election and comparing it to 2014. There wasn't any comparison.

MS. YARBROUGH:

No. No.

MR. TURNER:

So, to use those past kind of trends and numbers, again, they can help somewhat inform your decision-making, but you can't completely rely on that. So, to answer your question, we're going to look for historic highs in every method of voting and use every resource that we have available to communicate with our voters and provide the best service that we can to them.

MS. YARBROUGH:

Yeah, we've set up selfie stations at the polling places, and the people love it. They just absolutely love it. And so, we're going to roll all those out, you know, for this year, as well in the primary

and in the general election. Something about seeing their picture does something for them, so --

[Laughter]

MS. YARBROUGH:

The other thing for us, we're rolling out two new languages, Korean and Tagalog. And I remember when I was in the legislature we had a Korean group to come and ask us, when can we finally see our language, you know? And, I mean, I'm a State legislator and I'm like, oh, you want that, you know? So, when I was Recorder of Deeds, they came to my office and they said, we're following you. I said okay, check with me on the next place. And so we're really excited about them, and they are really excited about being able to vote. So, we know in that particular -- they're concentrated in a particular area, so we're going to be looking at those numbers there, too.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Well, thanks for bringing up that issue, the issue of language assistance. What strategies -- each of you have sort of touched on it, but there are specific strategies for recruiting not just poll workers, but bilingual poll workers in all of the plethora of languages that many of you have in your jurisdiction. Can you just talk a little bit about those strategies and what has worked for you in recruiting poll workers and bilingual poll workers?

MS. YARBROUGH:

Or, if I could --

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Go ahead, yes.

MS. YARBROUGH:

-- just continue, with the Koreans, as I said, they had already come to me. They were looking for this -- you know, they care and they wanted me to care. And so, when the opportunity came, I just, you know, jumped right into it. But since they're there, we're also recruiting them to be our language experts. And we've done that with all of our languages. We usually hire folks on staff, or we have them on staff already, because we want people to feel comfortable wherever they are with whatever language that they have. In -- I think in the general election we're going to roll out seven more languages, so that -- it's -- it'll be exciting. 2020 is our year.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Go ahead.

MR. LOGAN:

I would just say similar. I mean, so in L.A. we have 13 languages, and now that you can -- you know, traditionally, the bilingual poll workers were targeted based on geographical location and census data, and now with a model where you can go anywhere to vote, that means we need to have language

assistance in all languages at all locations. And part of that was built into the design of the voting equipment and the voting experience.

But I think it all comes down to what we heard earlier today is those partnerships that -- talking to the people in the community and having them help us recruit, but also review our materials. I think for too long language access and accessibility access has just been a checkbox of compliance in elections administration, and I think that we're seeing a shift towards a focus of not just meeting the minimum requirements of the law, but how do we do that in a meaningful way, so that when somebody needs language assistance, they don't feel intimidated about it, they don't feel embarrassed to ask for that assistance, and that we provide that in a way that helps them to access the system immediately.

And you can't do that without partnerships. You have to go spend time in the community with the organizations, get feedback from them about their voting experience in the past and what their expectations are.

MS. CLARK:

And in Navajo County, we've got also a change. We're moving our primary up like about three weeks. It used to be the end of August and now it's going to be the beginning of August. And the Navajo Tribe will coincide their Election Day with our

Election Day. So, we are always having to compete with poll workers, and they'd go with the tribal elections because they paid more than we would. So, this year the county is talking right now about raising the interpreters' pay, so it is going to be competitive. And we're also expecting a large number of voters coming out -- always in the 2016 election, only because they coincide -- it's a big day because it's a tribal Election Day, and also a county, Federal.

Unlike Recorder Hansen in Coconino, she mentioned this morning that it's like -- this -- and it's a social event, you know? Even though you promote ballot-by-mail and -- it's going up, but I -- we will never get a high percentage of it because a lot of them like to go to the polling place. And we always -- as much as we do need the moisture down in our area on Election Day, we always pray for dry rain because there is still a lot of dirt roads out there and people have to commute to their polling place. But that's what they're doing.

And the -- Rayleen Richards and our Elections Director in our county, she's anticipating this voter higher turnout also, and she's going to order more of the express-vote machines to help with that.

But it is hard to recruit, and we're reaching more now into different organizations, tribal departments, and seeing if we can get these qualified people on board.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Well, it is very important. Really serving as a poll worker is like serving your neighbor, and it's -- your registration is important, voting is important, but if you have the extra time to assist your fellow citizens by actually being a poll worker, training and being a poll worker, you're doing a lot for your country and for your neighbors. That's a great issue to talk about. I wish we had more time.

There is one more question from me to everyone on this panel, and then, great to open it up to the audience. So, the last question is, throughout the day, several of the speakers have spoken about misinformation, influence campaigns, how do we deal with that, and the importance of election officials serving as trusted information sources. So, in each of your jurisdictions -- maybe you can highlight what is that one urban myth that you would like to bust? And now is your opportunity to talk about what is that little bit of misinformation that you wish voters across the country would know is not true, that you should look to your election official for, the correct information? I'll start with Dean and we'll just go down the line.

MR. LOGAN:

I think that after doing this for 30 years I think the one that still surprises me is every election when people ask if vote-by-mail

ballots and provisional ballots are only counted if there's a close contest. And if we could eliminate that, that would be great. But I think even beyond that is just the sense of -- and, unfortunately, it's perpetuated by some of the campaigns, that there's any tossing of ballots, that just because a ballot is not counted on election night doesn't mean that it's not counted, and that it's not included in the final certified results, and that even if the margin of victory is 90 percent to 10 percent, we still count every ballot vote before we certify the election.

MS. CLARK:

And that would be the same with Navajo County. I think it's -- we've been also told, you know, we heard that they don't really count. And one voter came in and she told me that and reluctantly kind of just threw us her ballot and I said, no, if you have time, come with me up to the warehouse. We're doing the early board right now. I want you to see what they're doing. So, they -- she had two other people with her, and we went up to the warehouse and we showed them the process, the board, how it gets verified and how it gets tabulated. So, I think that would probably be one of ours, too, is that it does count.

MR. TURNER:

We have the same. I mean, you know, I started in elections in 1994, so I don't think that one's any different, as Dean said. I

always tell voters that if you vote by mail in Florida, you're the first one to get to vote. You get to -- you get your ballot first, you get to return it first, your votes are tabulated first, and then on election night, the first results that are released after the polls close are the vote-by-mail and early votes. So, you get the first, the best of everything as far as that's concerned.

But I will say, just generally, I think with a more active news cycle and social media, and just platforms for sharing information, which are wonderful and helpful to us, I would just caution people to check with their Secretaries of States or local elections administrators to be that trusted source of information in elections if they have any questions. And that's what we are here for. Again, we talked about that customer service model and that we want to help the voters and answer their questions if they're not sure about something, so maybe not take something that they're seeing on social media platform at face value all the time.

MS. YARBROUGH:

I think I'm going to come from a different perspective. This is something that is just simply not true, but for the voter that says my vote doesn't count. And how many election cycles have we seen where that one vote made the difference? I just wish that the voters would understand that each and every vote does in fact

count. And you could be the linchpin. You could be the person who kicked it over the edge and made somebody very, very happy.

MR. SCOTT:

Well, leave me for last. Everybody's covered all of the good stuff. I would echo what everyone else says. Getting people to understand that election officers or election officials have been doing this for many years. They are there to facilitate people getting registered, getting them the ability to vote, and setting it up so they can vote in the most convenient, most expeditious manner possible. And that regardless of what you -- if you see on social media a question, and if you have any doubts, ask your local election officials. They're there to serve you. I mean, that's the biggest part.

On Election Day, we will have two or three people set up in our public information office who do nothing but counterfactuals against social media all day, and most of which would have been unnecessary if people just said, really? That doesn't make any sense. Why would that be happening?

[Laughter]

MR. SCOTT:

But that would be our big issue. You know, just because somebody has a fancy letterhead doesn't mean they know what they're talking about.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Thank you all for that question. Now, we'd open it up to audience Q&A if we have time. Yes, ma'am.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Good afternoon. I'm an elections officer in Virginia, and, as Mr. Scott knows, Virginia actually had that situation where one vote actually shifted the General Assembly majority in terms of which party was in control.

I -- my question has to do with a personal experience, not of me, but of a colleague who is the Chief Elections Officer, who said that there is a Korean senior citizens living facility that brings busloads of their members to her polling place. They do not speak English by and large, but the person who accompanies them is bilingual and actually ends up, she believes, filling out their ballots for them. And as an elections officer, she wants to know how to deal with that, because she's not certain that the voters are voting for the candidates they choose or whether their assistant is voting for the candidate the assistant chooses. Thank you.

MR. LOGAN:

I think that's a very interesting question, and I guess my initial reaction to that is that it's something that ought to be first looked at in terms of the legal framework, in terms of what's permissible in a particular State. That shouldn't be something that's

discretionary to a particular jurisdiction or a particular polling location.

I think you have to be careful with that, that there's a difference between allowing a qualified elector to self-select to have who they want to assist them in the voting process, and then there's a fine line between that and coercion or disrupting the voting process. And for me, that's where the line would be in terms of what's happening in the actual voting center, which is what's under our jurisdiction, is what's appropriate in that sense.

Having one person marking multiple ballots I think would be concerning. That would definitely raise red flags. I think that there are ways that procedurally you can -- that you can make that less of an occurrence, and I think that's part of what we've been trying to achieve with the voting equipment and making the voting equipment accessible in all languages for all voters so that we limit the need for a voter to have to have assistance in the voting process. On the other hand, getting them there and boosting participation, I think it'd be great if every community was doing that.

MS. CLARK:

I just was thinking about that. And I think I would probably, you know, offer our assistance from our office, and then, even maybe volunteer to go to the center, so they don't have to get

bused in and see if -- you know, offer to provide the translation and hire translators from our office and offer that service.

MR. TURNER:

Yeah, Florida has a supervised voting program where we actually go into certain types of centers or facilities to offer assistance with bipartisan teams of individuals that help kind of facilitate that. It's not necessarily a language assistance, although it could be now in our new environment, with providing language assistance in my county, but it is a Statewide law and something we do. I know we do a lot of that leading up to the general election in Florida to assist voters in my county.

MS. YARBROUGH:

Something along the same line is in nursing homes where you have sometimes people who are frail and not maybe quite -- you know, not really knowing exactly what they want to do, or maybe they do and you may have somebody there, so we usually have someone from our office there at the site to help anybody who needs help.

MR. SCOTT:

And we have had the situation arise, although it's only -- mainly at our satellite in-person absentee voting. There are a couple of facilities that will send busloads. We know what satellites to go to, so we make sure there is a Korean speaker at that

satellite. And they actually insert themselves between the assistant and the people who are voting because we did find that -- we did inform -- in one case this young lady, we asked to see -- Virginia requires that each voter fill out a request-for-assistance form where they do specify that they request assistance in voting. And she didn't have any of them, so we said, okay, you're out of the process. You step over here. We will provide all the language assistance. And we provide the ballot in Korean, so that -- the assistance really was in getting the form -- the request form filled out.

But, yeah, we've had that, and we address it by having, where we can, someone interject between the individual, one, to listen to what they're saying to the voters. In one case we found the voters had no idea they were going to go absentee voting. They were -- thought they were on a day out from the retirement facility.

[Laughter]

MR. SCOTT:

And so, once we got that cleared up and, again, got the assistant out of the way, everything went quite smoothly.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

So, while we look for the next question, it just stresses the importance of highly trained -- in this case, it would be the chief of a

polling place with the other officers. They're all trained to deal with situations that might occur that out of the blue you have a situation. And the higher -- the more trained they are, the better they can handle the situation, as just talked about by the panel.

Next question.

MS. TUDAN:

Hi. I'm Beth Tudan. I'm one of the deceased Fairfax County election officers, didn't know it. It explains a lot.

[Laughter]

MS. TUDAN:

We have -- we use iPads now to check in, which is going really well. I was just curious what other places are using for the check-in process. And Gary, you might want to speak about Fairfax County. Thank you.

MR. LOGAN:

So, that's part of the new model in Los Angeles County, of enabling people to go to any location, is that we will use electronic poll books, tablet-based electronic poll books that have the full database of all voters. We're also implementing same-day or conditional voter registration, so you can actually register or change your registration on site at that time, as well.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Just one more thing, and then we'll wrap it up.

MR. SCOTT:

As Beth said, we use iPads, but we have scanners for the --
Virginia requires photo IDs for voting, and most people use their
driver's license or DMV-issued identification, which --

MALE SPEAKER:

Can you take the mic up to him, please?

MR. SCOTT:

We use the scanners that will scan the DMV barcode, and
that speeds up the check-in process incredibly. So, we don't see a
delay in checking in. Now, where we see the delay is people filling
out their ballots and voting. And that's where the backup comes.
We can process the people checking in several times faster than
the people can actually vote and get out of the polling place.

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

Well, this concludes our final panel of the day. Please join
me in thanking our panelists.

[Applause]

COMMISSIONER PALMER:

So, now we're going to hear from EAC Acting Executive
Director Mona Harrington, who will offer some closing remarks.

MS. HARRINGTON:

Good afternoon. My name is Mona Harrington. I'm the
EAC's Acting Executive Director and Chief Information and Security

Officer. I'd like to close today's event with a few reflections on the day's discussions and by offering my thanks to everyone who made this event possible. I like to say in the office that our agency is small but mighty, and I think today's summit is a testament to that fact.

We, at the EAC, serve our clearinghouse function in a number of ways, including through events like today's, by offering a platform to election officials to share practices from their jurisdictions with their peers and public at large. Today, you heard from election officials from Alabama, Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia. And I know, in the audience today, we have election officials from nearby States, as well as folks who made the trip all the way from Georgia, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah. I even saw on the registration list a representative from Guam.

I'd like to offer my sincere appreciation to all these election officials, especially our speakers and panelists, who took the time out of their busy day and schedules to join us here today. And thank you to the election officials watching online. It is the EAC's mission to serve you and your voters. We hope that we have done so by facilitating interesting and informative discussions and offering a platform for our speakers to share ideas and resources

that you can use to improve election administration in your jurisdictions in 2020 and beyond.

On behalf of the Commissioners, I wanted to take a minute to thank the staff who worked tirelessly to make this a success, including the staff of the National Press Club.

EAC staff, please stand up. Please join me in recognizing them for their hard work.

[Applause]

MS. HARRINGTON:

Thank you all again for joining us here today. We look forward to seeing you at future EAC events. Thank you.

[Applause]

[The U.S. Election Assistance Commission 2020 Elections Summit adjourned at 4:00 p.m. on January 14, 2020.]

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