

BEFORE THE
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, 4th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2010
1:00 P.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Kerri Spano, Panel Member

Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

Steven B. Russo, Chief of Investigations

Candidates

Leilani A. Kimmel-Dagostino

Evelyn M. Volpa

Gabriel Amaro Morales

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's 12:59, let's go back on record. I wanted to let the Panel and the public know that due to a family commitment I will not be here for the 4:30 interview. I will ask Mr. Russo to serve as counsel for that interview with Mr. Morales. But I'll be back bright and early tomorrow morning.

Our next applicant here is Leilani Kimmel-Dagostino.

Ms. Kimmel-Dagostino, are you ready to begin?

MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: You bet.

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do you possess? Which do you not possess and how will you compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a Commissioner?

MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, a Commissioner must uphold and operate by a code of conduct and a code of ethics. And before you become a commissioner in the City of Torrance, we have to attend a commissioner training class. And during the training class it's explained to us how the city operates, what's expected of us, and the code of ethics and the Brown Act.

1 And after that initial course you'll decide
2 whether you want to become a commissioner because the
3 standards are pretty high.

4 And some of the things that I think make a good
5 Commissioner are that you should act always with honesty
6 and integrity. And that is speaking the truth, being
7 sincere and keeping confidences.

8 You have to make decisions based solely on the
9 best interests of your city and government, and you have
10 to excuse yourself if there's any potential conflict.

11 The next thing is I believe you need to treat
12 people with respect and that includes your fellow city
13 officials, or government officials, your staff, your
14 public, the Commission you're working with, and even if
15 you disagree you still have to have respect.

16 You have to listen actively, you have to ask
17 questions and seek diverse opinions. And in seeking
18 diverse opinions, that's for consensus building. You've
19 got to respect that all people must be treated fairly and
20 have equal opportunity. They must be free from
21 discrimination or harassment.

22 You have to accept individual differences without
23 prejudice and you have to gain personal knowledge by
24 respecting others' ideas, diversity, skills and knowledge.

25 The next thing is you need to start taking

1 responsibility for your actions regardless of the outcome.
2 You've got to be a steward of public resources and
3 consider the impact of your decisions on the community and
4 the government.

5 You've got to prepare for meetings, read up on
6 material, do research and make informed decisions. You've
7 got to act responsibly and set an example for others. You
8 can never excuse or ignore inappropriate activities.

9 You must act with transparency as you do the
10 government's work. You've got to be open in all
11 activities and keep the public aware. You're not going to
12 maintain or support a hidden agenda and make decisions
13 based on the merits of the matters before you.

14 Public perception is important and you've got to
15 be ethically bound to do more than what's required of you
16 and less that is allowed by the law.

17 You've got to view your conduct through the eyes
18 of those watching your actions to build and maintain the
19 public's confidence.

20 And, finally, you've got to uphold the public
21 trust and you've got to make sure your communications,
22 your interactions and your transactions are open, and
23 honest, and accurate and have the best interests of the
24 government and the residents in mind.

25 You've got to be fair and impartial, and equitable

1 in making your decisions, avoid the temptation to favor
2 those who have supported you and disfavor those who have
3 not.

4 And you've got to uphold the public trust by never
5 using city or government assets, or information, or
6 relationships for personal gain.

7 I believe I could adhere to all these standards
8 and I don't see any conflict.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance
10 from your personal experience where you had to work with
11 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion?
12 Please describe the issue, and explain your role in
13 addressing and resolving the conflict? If you are
14 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting
15 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that
16 may arise among the Commissioners?

17 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, in 2001 I was
18 involved in the American Airlines/TWA merger, and I was
19 working in aircraft maintenance at the time, as an office
20 manager, and I had gone through two other airline mergers,
21 previously. And I knew that a lot of times you have to
22 study the culture of the airline before you do a merger
23 because if you don't understand the culture of each
24 airline it's very hard to merge the different groups
25 together.

1 For example, when I worked with Texas
2 International Airlines and they combined with Continental
3 Airlines that was a very bitter conflict because Frank
4 Lorenzo was involved, it was a hostile takeover, and the
5 president of Continental Airlines committed suicide.

6 I was involved in the merger with U.S. Air and
7 PSA, when they had two very different cultures. That
8 ended pretty dramatically when U.S. Air came in and said
9 wipe those smiles off your aircraft to the PSA employees.
10 Right then that was a very bad start.

11 So, I had to find some kind of a way to discover
12 what the culture and work ethic of TWA was, as opposed to
13 American Airlines, because if you know the culture of the
14 way people work, the procedures are going to be easy.

15 So, I started to go over to the TWA hanger, there
16 were two hangers, actually at LAX, one for TWA and one for
17 American. The people never really did interact. The
18 hangars were on opposite sides of the airport and American
19 Airlines was not very happy in purchasing TWA because they
20 had gone bankrupt and they considered them a poor cousin,
21 and a poor match.

22 The TWA people had been browbeaten because they
23 had been -- they had gone bankrupt, they had been robbed
24 of their assets by their former owner and they were just
25 desperate to keep their jobs.

1 So, what I started to do was to actually go over
2 the hangar of the TWA employees, where they had a
3 cafeteria. And the cafeteria was set up kind of like a
4 school cafeteria, with individual little tables.

5 And I noticed there were a couple of groups of
6 people with tables pushed together, that always sat
7 together at the same time for lunch.

8 And I asked the secretary for TWA and I said, you
9 know, what's with this group of employees that all sits
10 together for lunch and they said that's the Hawaiian
11 group, and you can't sit at their table unless you're
12 invited.

13 And I said really? And they said, yeah, that's
14 our most senior, most efficient group, but they're very
15 cliquish.

16 And I thought, hmmm, I'm from Hawaii, I wonder if
17 I would be welcome if I introduced myself.

18 So, I started to wave, you know, and they invited
19 me over, and I explained who I was and what I was doing.

20 And I said, you know, at American Airlines we have
21 a Hawaiian group, too, and a lot of the aircraft
22 maintenance people are in it. And I didn't know if you
23 knew that or not but, you know, you guys might have
24 something in common. Maybe I could invite some of the
25 aircraft maintenance people from American over and you

1 might find something in common.

2 So, I started to invite the aircraft maintenance
3 people from American over and once you start exchanging
4 information it's a small world. And I realized right then
5 that that would be some type of a uniting factor in the
6 culture of how we would get these two groups together,
7 these two divergent groups.

8 And shortly afterwards, I would say about a month
9 later, it was Asian heritage month and we arranged a joint
10 celebration with the employee groups and I think that kind
11 of like broke the ice so that they were willing to talk to
12 us after that particular situation happened.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's
14 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will
15 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for
16 the Commission's work to harm the State and, if so, in
17 what ways?

18 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, for example, I've
19 been meeting with some of the different mayors of my
20 district and also the surrounding districts, because I've
21 been studying the maps, the way they're drawn in Southern
22 California and, to me, they didn't have a lot of logic and
23 I wanted to kind of find out a little bit of history of
24 why the maps were drawn a certain way.

25 And I think if you know the history of why the

1 maps were drawn a certain way, maybe you're not doomed to
2 repeat history.

3 So, I believe the mayors have a lot of input that
4 they could give on the redistricting.

5 Probably how the State or the particular districts
6 might be harmed is maybe that you'll -- you're going to
7 have a representative that is not living in the area
8 that's redistricted and you're going to have to figure out
9 how they're going to represent their district, if they're
10 not even living in their district anymore.

11 For example, in the 53rd Congressional District,
12 which is where I am from, in Torrance, our district starts
13 all the way up in Santa Monica, Venice, and goes all the
14 way down to Torrance, but it doesn't include Rancho Palos
15 Verdes.

16 And I asked about that, I said why are we starting
17 all the way up in Venice and Santa Monica, we don't have
18 anything really in common with them?

19 And they said that was because many years ago the
20 representative lived up there and he wanted to include
21 where he lived in his district, so that's why it starts up
22 there. They said, we don't have anything to do with that
23 particular area.

24 So, that would be a good thing, to look at areas
25 that maybe have more in common.

1 And the harm would be, of course, that maybe the
2 people in the redistricted areas won't know their
3 representative anymore, so the representatives are going
4 to have to get out there and try harder.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where
6 you have had to work as part of a group to achieve a
7 common goal? Tell us about the goal; describe your role
8 within the group and tell us how the group worked or did
9 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal? If you are
10 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting
11 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster
12 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the
13 Commission meets its legal deadlines?

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I had the pleasure of
15 serving on the Torrance 2010 Census Complete Count
16 Committee, and that was a committee, it's an ad hoc group
17 that was formulate so that we could get the work out about
18 the Census and set up partnerships with different
19 merchants and community groups to make sure that people
20 filled out the Census form, because it was very different
21 this year, there were only ten questions.

22 And we knew the money was so important to our city
23 that we had to count every single person that we could,
24 hard to reach groups, all types of citizens.

25 So, we were kind of lucky that our mayor, when he

1 appointed our commission, was very desperate for the
2 money, also, and he appointed a pretty diverse group of
3 people. In other words, we had people from church
4 organizations, school boards, senior groups, the electric
5 company, teachers, all types of people so that we could
6 utilize our resources and our contacts to get the word out
7 about the Census.

8 And when you have such a diverse group of people,
9 and especially people representing like the Japanese
10 community, the Korean community and the Chinese community,
11 which is our three major groups of citizens in Torrance,
12 20 percent of our population as a matter of fact, you will
13 have a bigger outreach to those people, who might be a
14 little bit suspicious about filling out the Census form.

15 Then, of course, senior citizens have their own
16 fears so I had to go out and visit all the different
17 senior homes, and communities, and assure them that the
18 information was confidential and to answer the door or to
19 fill out that form, and nobody was going to be doing
20 anything fraudulent to them.

21 So, that's how we worked in our group, we had
22 targets, we had a timeline. We met once a month. We had
23 an early start, way back in August of last year. We made
24 sure somebody from the Census group was with us all the
25 time so that we could have questions answered because we

1 were the ones that were having to answer the questions and
2 we wanted to make sure our information was correct.

3 We appeared at different fairs, health fairs,
4 community events, farmer's markets. We set up tables, we
5 had all the information in the different languages, we
6 made announcements at the city council meetings, at
7 homeowners' meetings, at school board meetings, every
8 chance that we could get to get the word out about the
9 Census.

10 In fact, we even got the Goodyear Blimp to fly
11 over Torrance -- of course, they're headquartered in
12 Carson, so it wasn't really that far of a stretch. But we
13 got them to broadcast a message on the Census.

14 And since we had no budget, we had to work with
15 very little resources.

16 So, I believe we're going to find out when those
17 returns come in that we did a heck of a job. The early
18 returns are showing that California only had a 71 percent
19 response rate, which is pretty much what they had about
20 ten years ago.

21 In Torrance, we're averaging about 82 percent so
22 far, so I think we're doing pretty good.

23 L.A. County is averaging about 74 to 75 percent.
24 So, so far we're beating our State and we're beating our
25 County.

1 As long as we can make that hundred thousand mark,
2 which I'm sure we're going to make because that's the line
3 where you get more money, although we want to get as much
4 as we can for our City, we'll find out if we were
5 successful when those numbers come in.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of
7 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people
8 from all over California who come from very different
9 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you were
10 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the
11 specific skills you possess that will make you effective
12 in interacting with the public?

13 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I have no fear. I'm
14 out in the community as a representative for the
15 Commission on aging, going on senior trips, sitting around
16 attending hot lunch programs for the seniors, all types of
17 events for the City of Torrance. So, I have no fear
18 interacting with all types of people.

19 And because, you know, I'm a half Japanese, half
20 white person, people can't seem to figure out what
21 nationality I'm in, so I can blend in any population.
22 I've been thought of as an Arab, as an American Indian,
23 Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, so I just blend.

24 And not only that, since I was raised in Chicago,
25 in a Polish, Italian, German neighborhood, the Croatian

1 community accepts me, the German community accepts me
2 because I know all about their cultures and their
3 interests. So, I have no fear.

4 And, of course, I've traveled all over the world
5 by myself, as a matter of fact, and had a lot of
6 experiences. My husband and I travel all over California,
7 we get into the city and blend in with the population, we
8 take the public transit, we talk to people. I talked to
9 people on the bus on the way here from the airport.

10 So, I'm not afraid to talk to anybody, so I think
11 that's going to be helpful in the outreach.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi?

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Good afternoon.

14 I have a few follow-up questions, to make sure
15 that I understood correctly your responses to standard
16 questions.

17 In response to question number one, if I heard you
18 correctly, you mentioned something about the importance,
19 the importance of the interests of the city or
20 government's interests. Could you elaborate on that, what
21 do you mean by that?

22 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, we have to make sure
23 that we're following the interests of the city or the
24 government, not our interests, not our personal interests,
25 so those don't enter into that.

1 And also, when I'm talking about interests, I'm
2 also talking about that triangle of time, money and
3 manpower that you have to balance out. Because I know
4 there's a budget for this Commission and there's so many
5 people, and so much time, so you've got to be cognizant of
6 keeping that triangle balanced. Because once one side of
7 it goes off, the other two sides have to compensate, so
8 I'm very much aware of keeping track. When I say
9 interests, it's all three interests.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: So, you mean by the interest of the
11 city, you mean the interests of the residents in a city or
12 --

13 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

15 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: The interests of the
16 residents in the city and also, you know, whatever
17 regulations or codes are set up by the city, too.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: By the city?

19 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yeah, or the government.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I'm still confused and I'd
21 like to make sure that I understood this correctly.

22 So, you're discussing this as part of the Citizens
23 Redistricting Commission's work?

24 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So, let's say that you're one of

1 the Commissioners and you're going to the City of Fremont,
2 for example, what would be your goal in going to that
3 region, what would you be looking for?

4 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I'd be looking to see
5 where the population segments are and trying to target
6 meetings to match that population target so that I'm
7 getting to see if maybe there's a community of interest in
8 there that needs to be, you know, carved out.

9 But I'm also following the standards that the
10 Commission has set up, too.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

12 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: So, like I said, there's a
13 certain amount of money and time that we can spend and
14 everything's got to be balanced out.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so you mentioned communities
16 of interest. What determines a community of interest?

17 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, let me just tell you
18 about an example here --

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Please.

20 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: -- about a community of
21 interest and something that happened about ten years ago.
22 You know, Torrance, we have a pretty, you know, large
23 Asian population, mainly Japanese.

24 And about ten years ago, when they were doing the
25 redistricting, the population had doubled from 10 to 20

1 percent in the Japanese community. And the way they drew
2 the line was to cut Torrance in half, which would have
3 meant that that whole Japanese community would have lost
4 their voice.

5 So, a group sued the government to make sure that
6 Torrance was kept whole and that community of interest,
7 the Japanese people, were kept together.

8 And because of that, the very next year we elected
9 George Nakano, who was our first Japanese American
10 Assemblyman from Southern California, and only the second
11 person that was in the California Assembly that was an
12 Asian American.

13 So, it could fall along racial lines, that's just
14 one example.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

16 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: But it could also fall
17 along other types of lines. For example, you know, water,
18 talking about where we are in Southern California, we're
19 always worried about how much water they're going to
20 allocate us, so we're very interested in desalinization
21 plants.

22 So, there are several of our beach communities
23 that are trying to work together on desalinization plants
24 because they're very expensive to build, and if you have a
25 coalition together then you can contact your Assemblyman

1 and, you know, get some more of their time and their
2 interest about the desalinization plant.

3 So, it could be that. That's not a racial thing,
4 that's just, you know, another interest for the South Bay.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: So, how would you approach to gain
6 an understanding of these interests?

7 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, like I said, you not
8 only have to have the meetings with the people that live
9 there, but I think it's really a good idea for you to meet
10 the mayors in the different cities that are in your
11 district, to find out what they think.

12 Because let me tell you, the mayors that I visited
13 in my district, they have everything all mapped out, they
14 know where people live, they know where people vote, they
15 know everything about their city.

16 So, they're a very good resource right there, so
17 that you don't have to reinvent the wheel. And they have
18 the best interests of their citizens in mind, I believe in
19 the South Bay, anyway, from the mayors that I've spoken
20 with.

21 So, you've got to see, you know, not just from one
22 course, but you've got to check a lot of different
23 sources. And, of course, a lot of data's going to be
24 rolling in from the Census and it's going to pinpoint some
25 more information about the different groups that are

1 there.

2 But I think not only checking with the citizens
3 and maybe other groups that might have an interest, or
4 church organizations, health organizations because there
5 might be a need for, perhaps, translations, language
6 problems.

7 I know in L.A. County we have a lot of different
8 languages spoken and it's of concern to the hospitals that
9 they have people there that speak that language that can
10 translate in case somebody comes into the emergency room.

11 So, you're not going to know that until you get
12 that Census data back or perhaps you get the feedback back
13 from certain groups.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. You actually, partially
15 responded to another follow-up question that I have, which
16 is about, you know, your use of mayors as a resource,
17 which, of course, as you know the Commission has to come
18 up with different approaches to reach out to these people
19 or residents of the State.

20 But just a follow-up question to make sure, again,
21 that I understood, would your approach be similar or
22 different for a large city versus a small city and why?

23 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, a large city's got a
24 lot more concerns, obviously, because of the population
25 than a smaller city. Maybe they need an alliance, you

1 know, with a neighboring city to get some representation.

2 Now, for example, we have a city next to us called
3 Gardena. And Gardena is very similar to Torrance and I
4 don't know why they're not in our district because the
5 Japanese Community Center, which is a focal point of the
6 whole South Bay is located in Gardena. And we had a
7 housing development, a low-cost housing development for
8 seniors built right across the street in the Torrance
9 part.

10 So, to me it seems logical that those two should
11 be together and poor Gardena is grouped in with a whole
12 bunch of other little cities and they don't have much
13 representation.

14 So, smaller cities, you've got to look to see if
15 there's some kind of alliance that they can make with
16 another city so that they can get some representation.

17 Whereas a large city, they already have such a
18 diverse group the approach is going to be different.
19 You're not going to have to look for alliances with a
20 large city as much as you are with a smaller city.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: What other methods would you use to
22 reach out to these communities?

23 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I believe that you
24 could just go among -- not only hold the public meetings,
25 of course, but go on into the community and ride the

1 busses, you know, hang out with the people, go to senior
2 lunches, go to festivals, fairs and just start talking to
3 people and see what they have to say.

4 I've found that just disappearing into a community
5 you can learn a lot, so that would be one way.

6 And, of course, the outreach programs that,
7 perhaps, different nationalities have. I know we have an
8 Asian/Pacific outreach program, the African American
9 groups do, the Hispanic groups do, and contacting people
10 through their organization, also.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

12 In response to question number four you should
13 your success story about the City of Torrance response to
14 the Census data gathering. What are some of the lessons
15 that you learned that will help you as a Commissioner,
16 should you be selected, from that practice?

17 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, we learned that --
18 our first meeting we talked about what could we really
19 bring to the table that was unique in solving the problem
20 of getting the word out to the Census, so it was kind of
21 like an ice-breaker type of a situation.

22 And we learned how people think, which probably
23 wouldn't be a bad idea for the first Commission meeting to
24 maybe do a Myers-Briggs personality test so you know, you
25 know, if people are right side of the brain, left side of

1 the brain and, you know, how they process information.

2 But working with the different types of groups of
3 people like that, that we had, we had one guy from the
4 electric company and he said my goal is to have the
5 Torrance Census information in every single statement that
6 goes out when your electric bill hits you.

7 And my goal was, you know, to hit all the senior
8 centers and make sure that they have the information.

9 Another guy was a preacher in his Korean church
10 and he said he wanted to make sure in all of his church
11 bulletins that there was something about the Census.

12 There was another person who was in charge of a
13 homeowner association and they said at every homeowner's
14 association meeting we're going to be doing this.

15 And for every pledge that we made, the following
16 month we would come back and say, okay, let's go back to
17 our pledges and see how we've progressed, you know, what
18 have we done that we said we were going to do, and we keep
19 a record going of all the different accomplishments.

20 So, every single month we added to our list of
21 things that we did that we said initially we were going to
22 try and accomplish.

23 And we also worked in teams on a lot of these
24 different efforts, like appearing at the different fairs,
25 and the farmer's markets, and we tried to work with a

1 person that was opposite of us because if you work with a
2 person who thinks like you, oftentimes you're like group
3 think. But if you can work with a person who's completely
4 opposite of you, they come up with some other ideas that
5 you never thought of, or we'd play devil's advocate
6 against each other to come up with some more ideas.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you think diversity of the
8 Commissioners, itself, the diversity within the Commission
9 would be a challenge for consensus building purposes?

10 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Not really, because the
11 more ideas that you have from the different viewpoints the
12 better it is, because then you'd known you've explored
13 every single possibility.

14 You know, the problem is when you get a group of
15 people and they all think alike then you don't make much
16 progress. You've got to keep questioning, you know, have
17 we thought of anything else? And, usually, a diverse
18 group of people has thought of some other ideas.

19 And if not, you've got to like have somebody play
20 a devil's advocate and say, hey, well, what if this
21 happened, you know, come up with some more solutions.

22 So, you've got to have as many people as possible,
23 even if they have divergent viewpoints, speaking up at
24 these different meetings. And, eventually, you do reach a
25 consensus because you get to the point of like what do we

1 agree on, and what do we not agree on? So, this is very
2 good to air these viewpoints of different people, it's
3 very healthy.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thanks again.

5 I had a few questions from your application
6 material.

7 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Sure.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: The first one I wanted to ask was
9 at the time that you completed your application you
10 indicated that you're working on your city's, you know,
11 this is the City of Torrance, and I partially asked you
12 about, you know, the lessons learned from that experience.
13 And, you know, when you apply it to the statewide issues,
14 you know, the statewide preferences or interests, where do
15 you see the Commissioners may be challenged in terms of
16 reaching out to all these communities and trying to base
17 their decisions on different aspects of these differences?

18 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, hopefully, you get a
19 Commission that's not only ethnically diverse, but
20 geographically diverse, and you get people from all
21 different areas.

22 Because I know about Southern California but maybe
23 I don't know so much about Northern California. So,
24 hopefully, you'll have people on Northern California,
25 those are the subject matter experts that are going to

1 come up with some ways of approaching the problem from the
2 northern perspective as opposed to the southern
3 perspective.

4 So, between that and then, also, people have, I
5 know, certain interests. Like, for example, mine is the
6 seniors and the language problems because I face those all
7 the time, you know, in my community and also in the
8 different groups that I belong to.

9 So, making sure that, you know, everybody has
10 access, everyone can understand, that when we have
11 meetings that you have translators so that people can
12 participate. That's always on my mind is the
13 communication.

14 But other people might have different areas that
15 interest them.

16 Also, I'm very interested in statistics and my
17 background is in quantitative analysis. So, I like to
18 take a lot of data, I like to get out there and research,
19 and ask questions, and blend into the community and
20 accumulate a whole lot of data, and graph it out and
21 explain it in such a way that it's understandable to other
22 people, because that helps me. But I'm very data driven.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

24 Going back to part of your response, when you
25 stated that the Commission may be using the input from the

1 mayors from different cities as one way of getting
2 information from the local areas, looking at your
3 application I came across the statement that says looking
4 at government officials, it does not appear that they
5 reflect the need of the people. And, of course, I'm
6 paraphrasing, but that's the message that I got.

7 How do you reconcile the two, I'm a little
8 confused?

9 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I made that statement
10 because of the fact that you see all these problems that
11 are coming out in small cities, like Bell, that the people
12 don't know what their mayor or city council are doing, or
13 how much money they make. So, with the lack of
14 transparency in certain cities, it's very discouraging to
15 people who live there.

16 And some people are afraid to ask. You know,
17 we're not afraid to ask, you know, where's that money
18 going to, how much money do you make? Because we feel the
19 city officials work for us. But a lot of the cities or
20 the population don't -- are afraid, they're afraid to ask
21 the questions, maybe.

22 And I see this especially in people who may be
23 coming from other countries where, like for example
24 Koreans and Chinese, their government that they came from,
25 or the country that they immigrated from, maybe the

1 government wasn't that sincere, maybe it was corrupt, so
2 they're kind of afraid to ask the questions because
3 something might happen to them.

4 Whereas in the United States, you know, we should
5 be free to be able to ask that because those people work
6 for us.

7 So, that's what I meant that there are some city
8 officials out there in certain cities that don't seem to
9 care about the people and will take it to the extreme
10 knowing that their population base isn't going to question
11 them, so they're going to take advantage of them.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Would you still seek input from
13 them?

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, what I would do in a
15 way is still seek input, but maybe find out a little bit
16 more history of why things are the way they are. So, and
17 perhaps, if there was some corruption in that city, maybe
18 not weighting what they said as much as I would what the
19 citizens say.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: What would help you to make that
21 determination where you need to seek some additional
22 information, learn the background versus what some mayors,
23 I'm using your example, that you'd probably be convinced
24 that they're telling you the truth?

25 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, that's because you

1 can't believe everything that everyone says, and that's
2 why you have to come get your data from diverse sources.
3 And I think every single one of these districts needs to
4 be researched and the history of how it started and why it
5 is that way today. And perhaps certain mayors have ideas
6 like maybe they have mutual agreements with other cities
7 that would work better if a certain city was included in
8 their area, perhaps, you know, or maybe that a certain
9 area shouldn't be in there, their particular district
10 because they don't have anything in common with them.

11 So, I would want to have the entire history from
12 every single district, how it came to be and why it is.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. No more questions
14 at this point.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello.

17 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Hi.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In your application you say
19 or you stated that you helped establish the L.A. Chapter
20 of the Asian/Pacific Islander Employee Resource Group.
21 Who were the participants in this group?

22 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Okay, this was an American
23 Airlines group when I was there. And I noticed, because
24 we had a lot of Asians working for American Airlines, and
25 we were trying to expand to Asia, to China and Japan, that

1 it might be beneficial to have a group of people together
2 to help the airline and also to help us understand each
3 other more.

4 So, there was a chapter already established at our
5 headquarters in Dallas, and I asked what it would take for
6 us to establish a chapter in Los Angeles. And the chapter
7 in Dallas was called the Asian Employee Resource Group,
8 but our group, being so diverse, with so many people from
9 Fiji, and Samoa, and Hawaii, and a lot of people from
10 Japan and China, who identified themselves as Hawaiians
11 because Hawaii, in itself, is its own little culture.
12 Even though you're not a native Hawaiian you can still be
13 Hawaiian because it's a culture thing. I mean, it sounds
14 crazy but that's just the way it is.

15 And so, we asked if we could form a group, but
16 call it the Asian/Pacific Islander Employee Resource
17 Group, so that the Pacific Islanders wouldn't be left out.
18 And they approved our charter and we had a lot of visitors
19 come in, like from ANA, that's all Nippon Airways, or
20 Japan Airlines, where we would do maintenance work for
21 them, they would contract with us.

22 And the people would come out from Japan and they
23 have very different customs, you know, the business card
24 exchange, when you exchange the business card you're
25 expected to receive it, you know, reverently, and examine

1 it, and look at it. You know, it's a great thing to
2 receive somebody's business card.

3 Whereas a lot of Americans, they just hand out
4 cards like they don't even look at the information, even
5 when they receive it. I said, oh, that's a no-no, you
6 know, and you're going to lose face with the people if you
7 do that.

8 And I said, you know, the Japanese people, when
9 they came in to visit our organization, the first thing
10 they asked for was an org chart. They want that org
11 chart. So, I said you have to have an organization chart
12 because that's what these people expect.

13 So, we were able to educate the upper management
14 in how to deal with people from ANA, and even China
15 Airlines, they have their own set of customs in dealing
16 with them. So, it made a much smoother meeting.

17 And then when we were looking at routes to Japan
18 and China, you know, we were noticing we've got to have
19 some bilingual people and how do they check in people?
20 It's a little bit different on how they check in the
21 people. What about the menu service?

22 So, they had to come to us to figure out what to
23 do on these particular circumstances.

24 So, we were also teaching other people within
25 American Airlines some of the customs that the

1 Asian/Pacific Islanders, our celebrations, what we do.
2 And we decided to do fund-raising for the community, too.
3 Why not? For Little Tokyo Service Center, for the Go For
4 Broke Organization, they're headquartered in Southern
5 California.

6 So, we not only served just like a cultural
7 interchange and plus a benefit to the airlines, but a
8 benefit to the community.

9 And the last big thing, gala that we had, before
10 9/11 that is, we held a big gala out at the Queen Mary
11 where we raised \$10,000 for Little Tokyo Center, Service
12 Center.

13 So, I mean, you know, you can do great things when
14 a group of people get together and you have a common
15 purpose. And, of course, the airline, they got the
16 publicity from it, and the use of the fact that, you know,
17 we were able to help them in different circumstances that
18 would help their business.

19 And the employees were happy that they were able
20 to give back and show that they could dance, and sing, and
21 share the foods that were from their particular community.
22 So, that's what the Asian/Pacific Islander -- and they're
23 still in existence, as a matter of fact.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With this organization and
25 what it brought to the airline, were there other diverse

1 groups in there so they could understand these cultural
2 differences, or was this just information that was
3 provided to upper management?

4 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Oh, no, the -- we had
5 people that belonged to this organization from all levels.
6 And as a matter of fact there was an African American
7 Employee Resource Group, too, and a Hispanic Employee
8 Resource Group. So, we did a lot of functions together
9 and worked together in trying to understand the customs,
10 and the festivals, and the foods, and helping each other
11 that way. So, it wasn't just one specific group.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, the groups interacted
13 together and then they also functioned together, if
14 needed?

15 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes, exactly. And we had a
16 lot of white people that belonged to the Asian/Pacific
17 Islander group, too, because maybe they had some ties to
18 Hawaii, so they considered themselves Hawaiians.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, it was open to anyone who
20 wanted to participate?

21 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: It was open to anybody who
22 wanted to come.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. When you moved to
24 California in 1987, you said you were amazed by the
25 cultural diversity. What did you find and how did it

1 amaze you?

2 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, you know, I was
3 raised in Chicago and where I lived, I was the only Asian
4 person in my grammar school and high school, so I had
5 absolutely no interaction with another Asian person, nor
6 another African American person.

7 And the only Hispanic person that I ever had an
8 interaction with was Puerto Rican, so that was just, you
9 know, the way it was in where I lived in Chicago.

10 And, of course, when I went to college I was
11 exposed more to the different nationalities and that's
12 probably why I joined the airlines because I wanted to
13 learn more about the culture. But I was stationed in
14 Texas, in Dallas, Texas, and there wasn't that much of a
15 cultural diversity, although there was a lot of a Hispanic
16 population, there wasn't really much of the Asian culture
17 or anything else.

18 So, when my husband decided, after he retired from
19 the military, to come to California, I couldn't believe
20 it. You know, and we were looking at -- house hunting and
21 I said, oh, my God, look at all the Asian people that are
22 out here and the Hawaiian people, especially. I said,
23 there's more Hawaiians out here in Southern California
24 than there is in Hawaii.

25 So, that's what kind of grabbed me, I didn't feel

1 like an oddball anymore, because people would look at me
2 and they really didn't see a lot of Asians, so you're kind
3 of like stereotyped and people would say, oh, what great
4 English you speak, you know. And, you know, is Hawaii a
5 state? And your birth certificate says Territory of
6 Hawaii, you know, does that mean you're not a citizen?

7 I mean, you people had a lot of weird ideas, you
8 know. And that was just because where I lived, you know,
9 they didn't have the exposure.

10 Now, nowadays more and more people are moving
11 around, and there's more Vietnamese coming into Texas so,
12 you know, they're exposed to more Asians.

13 I felt the same way when I lived in Virginia,
14 where we lived there were only three Asian families in the
15 entire area, where we lived in Alexandria, Virginia. And
16 you want to talk about a weird perspective, people would
17 ask us, oh, do you know this Choy family that lives over
18 about five blocks away, and I think there's another
19 Japanese family that lives -- you know, what makes you
20 think I would know them, you know. They think all the
21 Asians knew each other. There were just three of us, you
22 know, so people have some peculiar ideas.

23 But I don't find that in California, that
24 everywhere I go it's, you know, comfort.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, from your experience of

1 living in all these different areas and going through all
2 these experiences and being a part of the airlines and
3 interacting with the various ethnic groups within the
4 airlines, how -- what did you learn that you could bring
5 to the Commission from those experiences?

6 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, we have to respect
7 the customs of people from different cultures. For
8 example, I have a lot of clients, I'm a financial analyst,
9 that are Japanese and when I go visit them I'm expected to
10 take my shoes off. So, that's just -- when I visit their
11 house.

12 So, a lot of these -- and certain groups, you
13 know, in order to do business with them, you can't just
14 sit down and do business with them, they got to meet with
15 you two or three times, and maybe talk about family, or
16 talk about other things and get to know you before they'll
17 actually do business with you.

18 And if you know that ahead of time, that that's
19 just a characteristic of that particular culture, it's a
20 whole lot easier to understand why they're doing things.

21 Because a lot of times Americans, you know, are
22 bang, bang, bang, you know, we want action, we want
23 something to happen right now.

24 Well, a lot of the cultures, they don't work that
25 way, so it's given me more of an understanding of a

1 culture.

2 Like a lot of my Vietnamese friends, they don't
3 think anything of like when you're walking together
4 grabbing your hand and walking hand in hand. I mean, I
5 didn't do that since I was in grammar school. But, you
6 know, that's just part of their friendship thing, they
7 hold your hand, you know, all age groups. So, I had to
8 accept that. So, now it doesn't bother me like, you know,
9 when I'm talking with someone and we're walking along and
10 they grab my hand. It's like, okay, that's their measure
11 of friendship to me.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: As you know, there's a
13 limited amount of time that the Commission has to complete
14 all these functions. When you were saying some of these
15 various cultures are on a different pace than Americans,
16 how would you be able to engage these individuals with
17 this short time frame?

18 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, that's where you have
19 to get these coalition groups involved, and the churches,
20 because certain groups, the Vietnamese for example, and
21 the Korean, they're very church oriented. And if you can
22 get their pastor to work with them, in their little
23 communities, I think you're going to have an easier time
24 because they look to their pastor for the reference and
25 the understanding.

1 So, I think that's going to be the way you're
2 going to have to do it without a direct outreach, because
3 otherwise you might have to go three times, but the pastor
4 would have an easier time.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. In your application
6 you stated that you provided oral reports to the Torrance
7 City Council meetings, at those meetings. How would this
8 experience assist you on the Commission?

9 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I know that our city
10 council, when you make a report to them, they're very data
11 driven. So, whenever you give a report, it helps to have
12 a handout that's understandable. And they like graphs.
13 So, whenever I did a report I had a certain amount of
14 time, and I had a certain amount of handouts, and it had
15 to be easy to understand.

16 So, knowing that, being concise, having the report
17 easy to understand and read made a great deal of
18 difference. Because they have a lot of things on the
19 agenda so you have to capture their attention right away
20 with what you're trying to say and provide the backup for
21 it.

22 So, I think in our meetings, whatever
23 presentations we're going to have, you're going to have to
24 do that, you're going to have to condense it down to make
25 it easily understandable and have the backup. And, of

1 course, you're going to have to make sure that you stay
2 within the legal limitations of whatever it is that you're
3 doing so you don't get sued.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you elaborate on legal
5 limitations so you're not sued? What situations do you
6 think would --

7 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, that example that I
8 gave about Torrance, you know, when they divided the city
9 in half and tried to split the vote, yeah, the Legislature
10 was sued because of the fact they tried to split that.

11 So, whatever lines you're going to draw, you got
12 to make sure that you've got the backup to prove that this
13 is going to be in the best interest of the people so you
14 don't invite any lawsuits for the State, because lawsuits
15 are expensive.

16 And even if you think you're not sure about
17 something, it's always good to check ahead of time with
18 legal counsel and say, you know, this is, you know, the
19 way it's sounding, what do you think? It's always good to
20 bounce things off people ahead of time before we actually
21 do it.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last
23 question.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano?

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

1 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Hi.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Hi. You mentioned earlier,
3 when you lived all in Chicago, and Virginia, and Dallas
4 and you prefer California, particularly the Torrance area,
5 and I assume it's because there's a lot of people that
6 share your culture and your political preferences, and
7 your identity.

8 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, actually, the reason
9 I've moved around was my first job was in Dallas, Texas,
10 and that was with Braniff Airlines, so I had to physically
11 move from Chicago. And then, of course, when Braniff went
12 under then I went to work with Texas International and
13 they were located in Dallas, and then they moved over to
14 Longview, Texas.

15 And then I went to work with Continental Airlines,
16 well, of course, after the merger, and their headquarters
17 was in Houston, so I had to move to Houston. I would have
18 stayed in Houston because I liked Houston, except my
19 husband wanted to move back to California. And that's why
20 we ended up on California.

21 And the reason we wound up in Virginia is he had
22 an assignment, a government assignment for three years, so
23 we had to pick up and physically move for three years to
24 Virginia. But after three years an extension was offered
25 and we didn't want to stay. We missed California and so

1 we came back.

2 So, that's kind of why we moved around so much.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why was it so appealing to
4 move back, fairly easy that decision?

5 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: I think because the farther
6 you get away from Washington DC, or get away from the
7 Capitol, the beltway, the less they care about you.

8 And when I would be introduced at different
9 functions, at the company that I was doing some work for,
10 they'd say, well, this is Leilani and she's from
11 California, but don't pay any attention to her, like I was
12 some kind of a kook or something because I was from
13 California. So, they thought we were all crazy out here
14 in California. So, they were pretty rigid in their
15 viewpoints.

16 And I didn't see a lot of ethnic diversity in
17 regards to, you know, I missed the Asian/Pacific heritage,
18 so that's --

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you try to convince them
20 of who you were and --

21 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Oh, yeah.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: -- why it's important?

23 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yeah, I did, I tried. But,
24 you know, people have a set notion and that's just the way
25 it is, you know.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

2 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: But mainly because I -- and
3 I couldn't find an Asian/Pacific Islander community that I
4 really felt comfortable into, the foods that I like, you
5 know, the celebrations, things like that, so I missed
6 that.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I know you mentioned earlier
8 about your reaction when people tell you, oh, you go to
9 these places and they think, oh, do you know so and so,
10 because you may be the only Asian person in the room and
11 they think you know every Asian in the community.

12 But when you go to -- say, I don't know if you've
13 been up north, it sounds like you haven't been up north,
14 you've primarily been in Southern California, you know the
15 area fairly well, if you were a Commissioner and they
16 said, hey, Leilani, we want you to go to Modoc or Butte
17 County and conduct some outreach, get those people to
18 really understand redistricting, people may not look like
19 you, people may not share the same values or culture as
20 you; are you going to feel comfortable being among people,
21 non-Asians, in particular?

22 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, my husband and I have
23 traveled throughout Northern California pretty much. And
24 what we like to do is we like to pick places where we can
25 kind of blend in with the community, even if we are kind

1 of oddball people, and ride the transit system and just
2 start talking to people, and it doesn't make any
3 difference what nationality they are, that's how we find
4 out about the community.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

6 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: And so, we research the
7 cities we're going to visit ahead of time to find out, you
8 know, what is there to do? And we don't rent a car, we
9 get around, we'll walk, and like I said take the public
10 transit. And that's how you meet all the people, hang out
11 in the local restaurants and find out really what they're
12 all about.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: And it's always a rewarding
15 experience and it doesn't make any difference what
16 nationality, you know, you are. People will ask us where
17 we're from, of course, and I'll say, you know, we're from
18 Torrance, California. And, surprisingly, a lot of people
19 have heard of Torrance, California. Even when I go back
20 to Hawaii people have heard of Torrance, California.

21 So, that kind of like bridges the bond, and
22 they'll say, well, you're not really from Torrance, where
23 are you really from. And it's I'm from Hawaii. Oh,
24 Hawaii, I was there ten years ago, you know, on vacation.
25 There's still some kind of an opening there where you can

1 bond with people, it's really amazing. I don't care what
2 nationality they are.

3 There's something about, like I said, Hawaii, that
4 brings a lot of people together. They've either visited
5 it, or heard of it, or they have the Hawaiian spirit,
6 which is that you do things for people, but you don't
7 expect anything in return, that's the Aloha Spirit.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: When you decide, when you and
9 your husband decide where to go what places do you select?

10 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, we just kind of go on
11 the internet and, you know, pick a place out of nowhere,
12 and we just research it on the internet.

13 Like, for example, this February I said, you know,
14 we've never really been to San Jose, you know. We've been
15 to San Francisco and the surrounding areas, you know, I
16 wonder what there is to do in San Jose? So, we researched
17 the area and everything like that. And, of course, you
18 have to go to the Winchester Museum and that sort of
19 thing.

20 But what I noticed was what a great transit they
21 had, the electric trains and the busses. So, we had a
22 blast just riding the busses and see where they went to,
23 and the electric trains.

24 Because we have a good bus service in Torrance,
25 but the electric trains are somewhat limited in Southern

1 California. And I grew up taking busses and electric
2 trains and my husband hasn't, so it's always an adventure
3 for him to take all the transit.

4 And that's really when you get to meet the people,
5 so that's how we learned a lot about San Jose is just
6 getting on a bus or a train and finding out where it took
7 us.

8 And, of course, we visited the Rosicrucian
9 Egyptian Museum, which was kind of interesting. And we
10 visited a lot of places that people who lived in San Jose
11 didn't even know about.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What do you think the most
13 challenging aspects of the Commission's work's going to be
14 for you?

15 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, once again, I'm very
16 conscious of the fact that California is in a deficit and
17 we don't have a budget. So, I think the most challenging
18 thing is to try to stay within that budget because I think
19 the focus is not only going to be on the work that you're
20 doing, the outreach, but how much money are you spending,
21 how much is it costing? And with all the State programs
22 being cut and everything like that, you've got to make a
23 justification that you're spending money wisely. So, I
24 think that's really going to be difficult staying within,
25 you know, the budget to make sure that you accomplish

1 everything that you want to accomplish and not spend the
2 money needlessly in the State.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How difficult do you think it
4 is, realistically, for citizens to draw boundaries?

5 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: For citizens to --

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: To draw State boundaries?

7 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I would believe that
8 you would probably have some kind of a training,
9 initially, before you even started to go through the
10 processes. And, of course, there's probably some homework
11 you could do ahead of time, some research that other
12 cities, you know, have done. And I noticed there are a
13 lot of people that have applied for the Commission that
14 have done redistricting, too, so you might be relying on
15 some of those people to help you along.

16 What I think I could bring to the Commission is
17 the fact that, you know, like I said, I'm data driven and
18 I like to analyze information.

19 And I think, you know, when you're redrawing maps
20 or doing CAD, computer aided display, and you have people,
21 you know, focusing in on different groups, you can
22 manipulate data any way you want to, so you've got to have
23 people on the Commission that know how to interpret data
24 correctly, that they're just not going by what comes out.
25 That you have to question, well, why did you get to this

1 result? How did you get to this result? Is this even
2 logical?

3 Because and a lot of people really aren't into
4 that, into the numbers portion of it.

5 But if you can get enough people that understand
6 the process and could really justify the data, because
7 you're going to have to explain this to somebody in the
8 Legislature, too, and justify why you redrew a district a
9 certain way and the data behind it, and how you came to
10 those conclusions.

11 And if you don't understand it, you're going to
12 have a hard time convincing the people in Sacramento.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Have you thought about the
14 complications with using Census data, knowing that there
15 isn't a hundred percent return rate on that information?

16 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yeah, I'd thought about
17 that because we only have a 71 percent response rate. And
18 the Census data doesn't necessarily reflect all the people
19 that have voted. Because in collecting the Census data we
20 have undocumented people and voters.

21 But I think it was important to capture that data
22 simply because of the fact that money for the cities is
23 going towards human services, like healthcare and
24 education, so you've got to really incorporate those
25 numbers in.

1 And, plus, those people will eventually become
2 assimilated into a community and eventually become voters.
3 And I've found the younger you can get them, the better
4 off you are.

5 And I noticed this when I served on the Youth
6 Council, recently, for Torrance, and these are high school
7 students in Torrance, from various schools, that want to
8 serve on a council that makes recommendations to the city
9 council on programs for the youth.

10 And 95 percent of the candidates that applied were
11 Asian American, only five percent were white or other
12 nationalities.

13 And I thought this is a group of people that are
14 really interested, and they were talking about getting
15 into government, into politics, into doing things for
16 their community. And I thought, at this very young age
17 they're already developing, they can't even -- they're not
18 even old enough to vote and, yet, they're so interested in
19 their city, and their government, and their processes that
20 they're going to be some great citizens some day, if you
21 can get them young.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

23 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: The older ones, it's very
24 hard to reach. I've run into some people that maybe were
25 in the Japanese internment camps in California and they'll

1 never vote because they still hold a grudge against the
2 United States. Then other people that won't vote because
3 their country, the leaders were corrupt, so they don't
4 trust the government. Because in their country they
5 didn't trust the people.

6 But on the other hand, you know, it always gives
7 me hope when I see working, you know, as an election
8 supervisor in a precinct, new voters, the first time
9 they've ever voted, they're so excited, and especially if
10 they've just become citizens they will tell you that they
11 just became a citizen and they are so excited to vote.

12 And then I have first time voters, young sons and
13 daughters, with their moms and dads, and cameras, they
14 want to take a picture of casting their very first ballot.

15 So, that kind of gives me hope that, you know, the
16 youth is going to propel the population and the -- how
17 California's going to go in the future.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Where do you serve as an
19 election inspector?

20 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: I have a precinct in
21 Torrance. And they kind of move me around in Torrance, so
22 sometimes I'm at different precincts. But I usually have
23 about three or four poll workers, they're different all
24 the time. And I always get a student who volunteers to
25 help, and they're always an Asian student because they

1 want to learn about the voting process.

2 And my -- I'm very much into setting up my
3 precinct perfect, with all the signage, and all the
4 language, and the multi-lingual booth, and having people
5 that speak the languages, and trained up and everything
6 like that. So, whenever the coordinator comes around to
7 rate us, I always get an A, so I'm very excited about
8 that, making a very comfortable process for the election.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What if you make it on the
10 Commission and a Commissioner says to you, yeah, Leilani,
11 it sounds like you've got a good handle on the Asian
12 perspective, but I don't think you have it on the other
13 minorities, what do you say to that person?

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, like I said, being of
15 mixed heritage, you know, I do kind of favor the Asian
16 because I didn't have that growing up, so I'm kind of
17 making up for it since I didn't have the background
18 growing up, so I'm still learning new things about the
19 Asian community.

20 So, most of my backgrounds really in, you know,
21 the Italians, the Germans, the Croatians, you know, the
22 Irish, you know, that community because that's what I grew
23 up in.

24 So, I feel that, you know, it's not just the Asian
25 group, but I do have some respect for the other parts of

1 the culture.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How much time do I have?

3 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Five minutes?

5 MS. HAMEL: And ten seconds.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Five minutes ten seconds,
7 ten, nine, eight --

8 MS. HAMEL: Exactly.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Let's see, what inspired you
10 to apply for the work of the Commission?

11 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I felt this was going
12 to be important. And working on the Census Complete
13 County Committee made me realize how important the Census
14 was and how they were going to use that data. And knowing
15 that the Commission's going to be using that data for
16 redistricting was very exciting because I understood, you
17 know, what it took to put that Census together and how
18 hard it was to collect the information from people.

19 It's almost like the Commission work in trying to
20 get people to give their views, try and get people to fill
21 out the Census so that you can get a count for the
22 services in your city.

23 So, I kind of wanted to take it a step further and
24 see what -- how they're going to use that data.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

1 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: And also, since I've been
2 involved in the election process, you know, I'm very much
3 into, you know, making sure that people have a comfortable
4 voting experience and that no matter what -- what language
5 they speak, or anything like that, that we don't deny
6 people their right to vote. If they're not on the list,
7 we let them vote provisionally, we give people a pleasant
8 experience every time they come in the door and make them
9 feel like we're glad they came.

10 So, this was just another step where I feel like I
11 could give back to California, utilizing all the different
12 skills and background that I had. And, plus, this is a
13 historic situation that they've never done this in a
14 citizens group, so I guess I want to be part of history.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum. Do you think it
16 would be difficult for you to set aside any strong
17 opinions or interests that you may have in making
18 decisions as a Commissioner?

19 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Not really because I have
20 to do that now, as a commissioner.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

22 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: So, that's part of our
23 standard that we have to --

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Other than being required to
25 do it and having been trained on the law, is it hard for

1 you to practice it or is it very natural for you?

2 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: I think it's a natural
3 thing. You know, if you do the right thing, you know, you
4 just know you're doing the right thing. And so, I've
5 always tried to follow the rules and regulations to the
6 best of my ability and to try and be impartial.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And knowing that you have
8 kind of plugged in with your community, met a lot of
9 people, talked to officials, what would you do if they
10 were to approach you outside a public meeting, in your
11 capacity as, say, a Commissioner, and approach you on
12 their thoughts on how the redistricting lines should be
13 drawn to their favor; what would you do in that instance?

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, you know, you've got
15 to follow the Brown Act and we've been counseled on that.
16 And in all of these meetings you can't talk about anything
17 unless it's already on the agenda.

18 So, there's one thing about like finding out
19 some -- what people think about certain topics, you know,
20 with the mayors, you asking them for their personal
21 opinion. But then telling you, look, you need to redraw
22 it this was because, you know, I want to have more
23 Republicans or Democrats in my area here for our
24 Assemblyman, you know, that's not right at all.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

1 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Something I would say,
2 look, you know, this is not the way we operate. We have a
3 transparency, here, situation, and I would recuse myself
4 from anything like that, that even remotely was not above
5 board.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. How many minutes do I
7 have?

8 MS. HAMEL: One.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: One, okay. That was my last
10 question for you. Thank you.

11 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Okay, thank you.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Follow-up questions,
13 Panelists?

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: None.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'm going to wait, I've not
17 decided yet.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, let's see, I was
19 looking through your application materials and I noticed
20 that you appear to currently hold a position appointed by
21 the Torrance City Council --

22 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: -- to the Torrance
24 Commission on Aging?

25 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What does the Commission
2 do?

3 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, actually, what we do,
4 we're the eyes and ears of the community of seniors, and
5 we bring to the attention, to our city council, any needs
6 that the seniors might have.

7 For example, affordable rental housing is always a
8 big topic of discussion. And the bus transportation,
9 making sure that people are able to get around when they
10 can't drive anymore.

11 And the taxi ride programs that we offer for
12 people, that also need to get around, maybe they need to
13 buy groceries, that type of thing.

14 Legal assistance, any problems with fraud, we make
15 sure that the police department will set up seminars to
16 train the seniors on fraud prevention. So, we bring to
17 them, you know, any particular concerns we might have.

18 For example, like last month what I had to do is
19 we had a joint meeting with city council and the main
20 topic of discussion was the affordable rental housing.
21 And, of course, in Torrance we don't have much space that
22 we can build anymore housing on. And the city council
23 advised me that within -- they're working on projects,
24 now, but they're about three years down the road, but they
25 need an acre of land and a hundred units, and they don't

1 want HUD involved, they want to do the financing
2 themselves.

3 So, that was a clarification of something that I
4 didn't know of.

5 And then, also, we had started a program that we
6 recommended to the city council last year on rental
7 subsidies for people in mobile homes, low-income residents
8 that own their mobile home. And a program was set up last
9 year for a hundred participants and they get a hundred
10 dollars off on their space rental.

11 And I wanted to know, since it was a two-year
12 program, and they had budgeted for a hundred with, you
13 know, the current budget situation, even though we're in a
14 balanced budget right now, how much longer the program
15 could go on because I had concerns from people that were
16 in the program how long it was going to be.

17 And we find out there were 45 people currently
18 enrolled. And so, since they had budgeted for a hundred
19 for two years, if nobody else enrolled, the program could
20 go until they run out of money.

21 And I said, well, what if you get a big influx of
22 people and, you know, you do run out of money, you know,
23 what are you going to do then, are you going to stop the
24 program?

25 And they said, well, we'd just have to see, you

1 know, a year at a time how it goes.

2 And then we proposed a program on maybe a roommate
3 matching service that we're working on.

4 So, these are some things that we've brought to
5 the attention of the city council so they know that we're
6 really doing something.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you have decision making
8 authority or do you simply --

9 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: We do have decision making
10 authority, yes. As a matter of fact every May it's Older
11 Americans month in Torrance, and I think nationwide, and
12 we nominate three people that have done a great deal of
13 work for Torrance that year, and we present their names to
14 city council and they give them a plaque.

15 And one person, the top person goes to Don Knabe's
16 little celebration in L.A. County, so that's a big thing
17 for them.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't know if you're
19 aware that the Bureau's in the process of promulgating
20 some new regulations that will interpret provisions of the
21 Voters First Act that prohibit seated Commissioners from
22 holding certain elected and appointed positions for a
23 period of years, depending upon whether it's elected or
24 after they assume the position of Commissioners.

25 And I don't know and wouldn't try to digest on the

1 record whether or not that would impact you. But what we
2 would need to know is if you were seated, chosen to be on
3 the Commission and informed by the Bureau that, in fact,
4 this was a conflict, are you willing to give up your
5 position, your appointed position for the Torrance
6 Commission on Aging?

7 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I had spoken to our
8 city attorney already about this, before I even applied
9 for the Commission, you know, because I didn't want to
10 apply for a Commission and then it would conflict with
11 Torrance, you know, and he said he couldn't see a conflict
12 from what he could read on the material.

13 But if push came to shove, you know, and you did
14 institute that, I would have to step down from the
15 Commission on Aging because I believe this is an important
16 Commission.

17 And I can always apply later for another
18 commission or the Commission on Aging. We recertify every
19 two years to keep your certification up to be eligible for
20 appointment.

21 So, I'm sure that somewhere down the line, you
22 know, I would wind up on another commission. It might not
23 be the same one, but I know that I would be able to give
24 service. But this would take top priority.

25 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: And your counsel may not

1 have been incorrect, but the new regs are being
2 promulgated very soon, so he or she may not have had all
3 the information.

4 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Sure.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And I don't know, again,
6 whether it's an issue for you, but it's a question we
7 needed to get the answer to.

8 I noticed also in your materials that at one point
9 in time you received a certificate of appreciation from
10 Assembly Member Nakano?

11 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Right. That was for that
12 big gala that we did at the Queen Mary to raise money for
13 the Little Tokyo Service Center, and the work that we had
14 been doing in the Asian/Pacific Employee Resource Group.

15 So, Assemblyman Nakano was in office at that time
16 and he was very active in all the different Asian/Pacific
17 activities that were going on, so he awarded us a
18 certificate of appreciation, which is hanging in our
19 headquarters in Dallas, Texas.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It begs the question from
21 our perspective, I guess, as to whether or not you have
22 any relationships with current or former members of the
23 Legislature, members of the Board of Equalization, or
24 Governors or their staff?

25 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: I don't know anybody in the

1 Governor's Office or the Board of Equalization. And the
2 only time I've seen George Nakano or Ted Lieu, who are
3 both Torrance residents, by the way, would be at different
4 events. Like the Armed Forces Day Parade, they ride in
5 the parade back and forth, but that's really it. I don't
6 have a clue where they live or have any social interaction
7 with them, whatsoever.

8 Since neither -- I mean, George Nakano's not in
9 office anymore and Ted Lieu is up here most of the time
10 and I don't have an interaction with them.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I'm guessing watching them
12 go by in a parade won't be held against you.

13 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yeah.

14 (Laughter.)

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit
16 about the budget. So, I wonder, what do you think is more
17 important to the Commission's overall success, staying
18 within allocated budget resources or successfully
19 outreaching to various communities?

20 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I think they're both
21 important, but I'm just saying I'm placing a heavy
22 emphasis on the budget because of the fact that California
23 is broke. And the focus is going to be on how much money
24 this Commission is spending. So, that's why, I mean,
25 you've got to have that time/money/manpower triangle

1 always in mind when you're working, and you've got to work
2 efficiently, which means that probably you're going to be
3 spending a whole lot more time than you ever really
4 anticipated working on this Commission.

5 Originally, I think they said all, some weekends
6 or whatever. I think you're going to have to put forth a
7 full time effort. I'm willing to do that, you know, to
8 get the job done, because I want to do the best possible
9 job that I can.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: If you get into a position
11 where you've sort of stretched the Commission's budget and
12 you recognize that there's further outreach that needs to
13 take place, are you willing to go to the Legislature and
14 request additional funds?

15 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Of course. If you have the
16 data and the backup behind you, because probably they're
17 data driven just like our city council, I'd be willing to
18 ask for the resources. If you could justify them, yes.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I notice that your letters
20 of recommendation are all from folks who are currently
21 employed by the City of Torrance or working for the City
22 of Torrance?

23 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Yes.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What are your personal
25 relationships with the writers of those letters?

1 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, actually, I don't
2 have any personal relationships with them. The reason I
3 chose these people to write letters is because we've
4 worked on projects together and I felt that they would
5 best be able to give you an indication of what kind of a
6 person I was working on a project.

7 For example, I had somebody who worked on the 2010
8 Census Complete County Committee write me a letter because
9 she coordinated the outreach for the 2010 Census and she
10 knows how I worked, you know, the collaborative effort.

11 The person who wrote me a letter from the
12 Community Services is our liaison officer with city
13 council, Susie Wand. And she knows, she sits in on the
14 meetings and really doesn't say anything unless there's
15 like a point of order that I need to bound something off
16 of. But she knows how I handle the meetings.

17 And, you know, if I allow everybody to talk and,
18 you know, we move along and make process -- progress, you
19 know.

20 And the person from the Transit Board, we worked
21 on the Strategic Plan for Key Performance Indicators
22 together and he knew, you know, what I contributed. So,
23 that's why I chose the people so they could give you
24 definitive, data-driven examples of how I would work on a
25 Commission and how I would interact with other types of

1 people, that's why I chose them.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't have additional
3 questions.

4 Panelists? Ms. Spano, I know you were chewing on
5 a couple?

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You know, I changed my mind.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho, Mr. Ahmadi?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have about nine minutes
12 remaining on the clock if you'd like to make a closing
13 statement?

14 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Well, I appreciate all your
15 time and energy, you know, going through these interviews,
16 and I know there's a lot of people that you've interviewed
17 that had redistricting background, and that were lawyers,
18 and held a lot more positions than me. I'm just an
19 ordinary person who wants to do outreach and help the
20 State of California. And if you appoint me to this
21 Commission, I'm going to give it my -- the best possible
22 effort that I can, my best shot, and I guess that's all
23 you can ever ask of anybody.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much, Ms.
25 Kimmel-Dagostino, for coming to see us.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

2 MS. KIMMEL-DAGOSTINO: Thank you.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We'll recess until 2:44.

4 (Off the record at 1:21 p.m.)

5 (Back on the record at 2:44 p.m.)

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's 2:44, let's go ahead
7 and go on record. We have a quorum present.

8 Our next Applicant is Evelyn Volpa. Good
9 afternoon, Ms. Volpa. Are you ready to begin?

10 MS. VOLPA: I am.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

12 What specific skills do you believe a good
13 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills which do you
14 possess? Which do you not possess and how will you
15 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that
16 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of
17 the duties of a Commissioner?

18 MS. VOLPA: First of all I'd like to say thank you
19 for having me here, it's quite an honor.

20 There's three basic skills that are listed in
21 Prop. 11, analytical, the ability to be impartial and the
22 appreciation for the diversity of California.

23 Above and beyond that there are so many different
24 aspects to this Commission and what's required. I
25 actually sat down and started writing a list, and I got to

1 two and a half pages and I stopped.

2 I did condense it down into -- I won't take two
3 and a half pages worth.

4 Communication, listening, writing, public speaking
5 and working with translators, working with the media, goal
6 setting, leadership, teamwork, conflict management,
7 project management and human resources skills,
8 flexibility, the ability to keep on task and able to
9 follow processes and procedures, the ability to learn and
10 process information quickly, the willingness to work with
11 and take advice from staff and consultants, the ability to
12 set aside your own ideas and professional knowledge in
13 order to listen to others, who may not have same the
14 knowledge, but they might have better ideas, the ability
15 to sit through some very long meetings and sort through
16 conflicting information, the ability to see both the big
17 picture, which is the State of California, and the little
18 picture, which is each individual little county, city,
19 town, whatever it is, and the ability to keep an open mind
20 to new ideas, the understanding of the requirements for
21 redistricting in Prop. 11, governance and the familiarity
22 with Robert's Rules of Order.

23 And then there's a couple more that I really
24 wanted to stress, a core value system of honesty,
25 integrity and respect and last, but very not least, stress

1 management, thick skin, and the ability to laugh.

2 And which skills do I possess? To a varying
3 degree I possess all the above-mentioned skills necessary
4 to be a good Commissioner.

5 I've experience holding public hearings where
6 crown dynamics threatened to overshadow individual voices.
7 I've had to explain both the legal and personal rationales
8 for my decisions.

9 I've had experience working with the press and
10 have had experience working under hard deadlines.

11 I've worked on a board where strong debate was
12 common and difficult decisions were made.

13 I've experience researching, gathering
14 information, developing questionnaires and compiling that
15 information into reports and proposals.

16 I've done boundary changes on a much smaller
17 scale, but when you're talking about the passion with
18 parents and where their children go to school, it's big.

19 Areas of growth for me would be human resources,
20 mapping software and the legal arena, since I'm not an
21 attorney.

22 And I would compensate by that by following the
23 lead of others with more experience in those areas. And
24 there's nothing that would prevent me from performing my
25 duties.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance
2 from your personal experience where you had to work with
3 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion?
4 Please describe the issue and explain your role in
5 addressing and resolving the conflict? If you are
6 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting
7 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that
8 may arise among the Commissioners?

9 MS. VOLPA: A little over three years ago I was
10 hired by Hayward Unified School District as a consultant
11 to work on some internal communications and to help them
12 redesign a website.

13 Negotiations at that time with their teachers'
14 union was stalled and after a while it became pretty
15 apparent that there was going to be a teacher strike.

16 I was asked if I would help with communications
17 both before and during the strike.

18 We had many, many daily meetings regarding
19 communication. The stress level of staff and the board
20 was incredibly high, people were working 14-hour days and
21 it was a tough situation. There were very differing
22 opinions on what the message should be, when and how the
23 message should go out, and who the message should be
24 geared toward.

25 My goal was to make sure that the administration

1 and the board were speaking with one voice, that all
2 communications were clear, concise and timely, and that
3 the media was kept informed.

4 And my approach to that was that I listened to
5 everyone to find commonalities in order to create messages
6 that best represented the district and were agreeable to
7 all.

8 I developed a fluid communication plan and I never
9 overstepped my boundaries.

10 How would I handle conflicts between
11 Commissioners? It would depend on the type of conflict,
12 as well as the Commissioners involved. Can it be handled
13 privately or is it a matter that must be handled in a
14 public meeting?

15 I would ensure that the Commissioners were
16 listening to each other, being respectful. I would remind
17 everyone what the overall goal of the Commission is and
18 the need to be focused and stay on deadline.

19 Sometimes conflicts can be diffused quickly by
20 rephrasing the issue. Sometimes issues can be
21 depersonalized and find common ground, and that's a good
22 starting point. And sometimes parties need to agree to
23 disagree and move on.

24 I believe that conflict management should be part
25 of the operating principles that the Commission initially

1 establishes.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's
3 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will
4 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for
5 the Commission's work to harm the State and, if so, in
6 what ways?

7 MS. VOLPA: I think potentially there are many,
8 many ways that it could impact the State and most of them
9 probably unforeseeable. I decided to just focus on three.

10 First, by removing redistricting from the
11 political arena and running a transparent process,
12 Californians will have an opportunity to play an
13 interactive role in determining their voting districts.

14 That process will engage diverse groups of people,
15 including those in areas with traditionally low voter
16 turnout.

17 And it will also provide areas, like my own, that
18 were caught up in the politics of 2000 redistricting, an
19 opportunity to address concerns.

20 The second, four of the 14 members of the
21 Commission will be independent voters or unaffiliated
22 voters. This is a group that is growing in number and
23 recognizing these voters, I believe, is an important and
24 positive step for California.

25 And number three, the Commission is tasked with

1 writing a report explaining the rationale for achieving
2 compliance with Prop. 11, including defining terms and
3 standards for drawing the maps and this, in itself, sets a
4 precedent.

5 How could it harm the State? Again, there's many
6 unforeseeable ways. I chose three to talk about.

7 If the Commission fails to develop maps that are
8 in full compliance with all parts of Prop. 11, if the
9 Commission as a whole moves away from impartiality and
10 becomes partisan or agenda driven and, three, if it
11 appears the Commission has used public input as simply
12 window dressing and is not truly listening to the public.

13 And to me this would include the failure to fully
14 utilize all modes of communication, internet, mail,
15 telephone, translators.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where
17 you've had to work as part of a group to achieve a common
18 goal? Tell us about the goal, describe your role within
19 the group and tell us how the group worked or did not work
20 collaboratively to achieve this goal? If you are selected
21 to serve on the Citizens Redistricting Commission, tell us
22 what you would do to foster collaboration among the
23 Commissioners and ensure that the Commission meets its
24 legal deadlines?

25 MS. VOLPA: Well, I decided to choose a very

1 short-term goal that I was involved in a little while ago,
2 and it might not be as meaty as some of the other ones
3 you've heard.

4 I was in a training session a while back and we
5 were split up into groups of six, and we had three groups
6 of six, and we were tasked with building the tallest
7 tower. We had four minutes to do it in and no talking.
8 And we were supplied with paperclips, marshmallows, paper,
9 straw and tape. Straws, I'm sorry.

10 And the six members of the group that I was in,
11 four of us started working together right away. One sat
12 back, crossed her arms, and chose not to participate at
13 all. And one was working on her own and kept making
14 changes to everything we were doing and setting us
15 backwards.

16 Our group came in second out of the three groups.
17 After that, all the three teams got together and we talked
18 about the results. The most successful team had been able
19 to integrate all the skills and concepts of all six
20 members.

21 The least successful team had six generals and
22 their tower fell over.

23 What would I do to foster collaboration? You
24 know, I've thought about this a lot because the first
25 eight Commissioners are going to have a very strong bond

1 that they've developed during their choosing of the next
2 six Commissioners, and those six Commissioners are going
3 to have to be integrated back into the team. That's going
4 to take some type of team building.

5 The Commission doesn't have the luxury to do a lot
6 of team building, unfortunately, so I think it is
7 important that every Commissioner have experience working
8 on a team.

9 I would advocate for a mission statement and an
10 operating framework for the Commission, and I would also
11 advocate for establishing an ongoing self-evaluation
12 process.

13 I would watch for signs of communication breakdown
14 and power struggles. I would encourage open and honest
15 discussions focused on finding common ground and
16 solutions.

17 And in order to meet deadlines I would break into
18 committees as much as allowed by law, and that would also
19 help foster team building.

20 I would set benchmarks, calendars, and deadlines,
21 and I would fully utilize the expertise of staff.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of
23 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people
24 from all over California who come from very different
25 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are

1 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the
2 specific skills you possess that will make you effective
3 in interacting with the public?

4 MS. VOLPA: Well, I've been in the people business
5 most of my life. I've owned my own business since 1987
6 and I work with individuals in small business --
7 businesses. They come to me, I don't choose them, and
8 they come from all walks of life.

9 I now work part-time for an international student
10 exchange program, and I work with people from different
11 backgrounds, cultures, and different countries.

12 Basically, I enjoy listening to and learning about
13 people and their experiences.

14 And rather than sit and list a whole bunch of
15 skills, I thought I would tell you two stories that might
16 give you an idea of who I am.

17 Prior to my election to the school board in 1998,
18 I was a parent activist. I was the only new trustee on a
19 board of seven and I immediately was voted in as vice
20 president per the board bylaws.

21 I had an extremely poor relationship with the
22 board president. We didn't talk at all, actually. After
23 a time of working together we both realized that our
24 purpose for being on the board and our core value systems
25 were really, really similar and we started working

1 together to bridge not only a relationship between the two
2 of us, but a relationship between our two communities,
3 which were quite different.

4 Twelve years later this same gentleman, that I
5 refused to talk to, wrote one of my letters of
6 recommendation.

7 What I learned is that generally speaking our
8 differences are not as big as we might believe and if we
9 focus on our differences, we lose out on the opportunity
10 to learn and grow.

11 My second story. Last spring I worked for the
12 Census Bureau as an enumerator, and that was one of the
13 people that went knocking on the doors if you didn't turn
14 in your Census form. It was an incredible experience.

15 My area was predominantly non-English speaking and
16 low income. The first day out of training, went knocking
17 on a door with my training partner, and it was a husband
18 and wife who answered the door and they were not happy to
19 see us. They didn't trust the government, they refused to
20 participate and didn't want anything to do with it.

21 My partner picked up his bag and turned around to
22 hightail it out of there and I started talking. I
23 explained, again, our role for being there, our reason for
24 being there, what we were trying to do, and that all of
25 the information was confidential, it stayed within the

1 Census Bureau. And they kind of calmed down a little bit.
2 We were actually standing next to a lemon tree and I
3 didn't have any lemons on it and I commented that, you
4 know, are you using up a lot of their lemons? And they
5 said, no, it wasn't producing lemons and that was a little
6 bone of contention because the husband liked homemade
7 lemonade.

8 So, anyhow, after me babbling a little while
9 longer, they let us in, we sat at the kitchen table, they
10 filled out the Census forms, we learned about their kids
11 in Fresno and they liked to visit the grandkids once a
12 month.

13 And on the way I out I realized that my lemon tree
14 was sitting at home with lemons dropping off of it because
15 I didn't use a lot of lemons, so I asked them if I could
16 bring them lemons and the next day I brought them a bag of
17 lemons. That's the kind of person I am.

18 You know, sometimes when you just reach out to
19 people and give a little piece of yourself, first, they
20 will open up to you and they will start talking to you,
21 and it will open barriers of communication.

22 All of us in life have different experiences that
23 shape who we are. I might look more like one of you, but
24 I might have experiences like Mr. Ahmadi, that are more
25 similar. And it's just that's what makes us who we are.

1 One of my abilities is to seek out commonalities,
2 while respecting differences and respecting uniqueness,
3 and that's when you can begin to have a dialogue with
4 people. Thank you.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi?

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Good afternoon, Ms.
7 Volpa.

8 MS. VOLPA: Good afternoon.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Let me start off with, you know,
10 interesting story about your sharing the example in
11 response to question number four where, you know, in the
12 training you were tasked to build the tallest building,
13 and there were six people in each team and they were not
14 allowed to talk. That must be a tough situation?

15 MS. VOLPA: Yeah.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, if you're selected on the
17 Commission you will be allowed to talk. But what
18 was -- kind of like, you know, using that example to get
19 to know you better, what was your role in that -- did
20 everybody have equal role?

21 MS. VOLPA: Actually, the piece of the story that
22 I didn't tell, which I'm glad you asked, was of the four
23 of us that worked together three of us had been in
24 training for three days before that period of time.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

1 MS. VOLPA: So, the only person -- the fourth
2 person that stepped in was actually the only man in the
3 group and he stepped in to work with us.

4 So, the three of us already had a dynamic going
5 and the fourth person was able to bring in -- bring
6 himself in and go with it.

7 So, there was a lot of equality between the four
8 of us at that point.

9 The other two, it didn't work. And that's when I
10 was talking about the first eight Commissioners and how
11 important it is to --

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I was going to get there.

13 MS. VOLPA: Right.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: But go ahead.

15 MS. VOLPA: To make sure you integrate.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, yes.

17 MS. VOLPA: And, unfortunately for us, we were at
18 a -- in a very short time frame of four minutes, and the
19 minute somebody leans back and says I'm not doing this,
20 you know, that's some red flags. We couldn't talk, so we
21 couldn't understand what was going on and we did talk it
22 out later.

23 But it was tough, it was very difficult. And then
24 the one person that was on her own, kind of doing her own
25 thing and changing what we were doing --

1 CHAIR AHMADI: So, did you guys attempt to or try
2 to get them involved?

3 MS. VOLPA: Yeah, we did. We would hand them
4 things and, you know, try to motion -- excuse me -- try to
5 motion, you know, come on, come and help and there as a
6 no, didn't want to participate.

7 And ultimately what turned out, after we talked to
8 her, was she thought it was a dumb thing to do, she didn't
9 want to participate at all.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: So, had you not been prevented from
11 talking to them, what approach you think you might have
12 taken in that situation?

13 MS. VOLPA: Try to encourage just, you know, can
14 you hold the tape, would you be willing to hand me some
15 straws, that type of thing. You know, some real simple
16 things. Can you hold the marshmallows so they don't roll
17 off the table, just some level of involvement would have
18 been an initial way to get somebody involved.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Let me put it this way, do you
20 think there is some resemblance between, for example, if
21 you put it on broader perspective, California voters for
22 example --

23 MS. VOLPA: Right.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: -- or residents. Some
25 people -- I mean, people have different level of

1 activities and networking, and being involved in the
2 process. Should you be selected as a Commissioner what
3 did you learn from that experience that you can apply to
4 get people involved and share their piece of the story, so
5 that you can make the best decision?

6 MS. VOLPA: You can reach out as much as humanly
7 possible, some people just simply are not going to get
8 involved. And I found that as a parent, on the school
9 board, you can reach out until you're blue in the face and
10 they're just, you know, too busy, not interested, it
11 doesn't pertain to me.

12 So, I think there's a level of acceptance that you
13 have to have that you're not going to be reaching
14 everybody because everybody doesn't want to be reached.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Why do you think that is?

16 MS. VOLPA: They're too busy, it doesn't matter to
17 them. A lot of people don't get involved in things until
18 it matters to them, until it personally affects them. And
19 what my view is the Commission needs to, as much as
20 humanly possible, try to figure out how to make this
21 matter to people.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So, as you know, the
23 Commission has a very short, limited kind of window of
24 time to redraw the lines and produce the maps.

25 MS. VOLPA: Yeah.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: What do you think might be the best
2 approach to get people to -- to get the input from all the
3 residents of the State?

4 MS. VOLPA: Well, one of the things that I look at
5 and I know that there's also a budget involved, when I was
6 working with the Census Bureau I knocked on a door and
7 this young man answered the door, and he looked at me and
8 he really had a shock on his face and he said, oh, so the
9 commercials are right, you really do knock on doors.

10 (Laughter.)

11 MS. VOLPA: And, you know, I was thinking about
12 that as something that, you know, getting the word out --
13 I mean there's a lot of talk radio shows, there's so many
14 different cultural newspapers and TV stations out there
15 that there's so many different ways that you can reach out
16 to people.

17 And because of budget, obviously, you have to be
18 very picky and choosy about where you do that. But I
19 think that a really broad-based communication plan is
20 absolutely critical.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

22 MS. VOLPA: Uh-hum.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Another follow-up question I have
24 on your response to question number two, when you were
25 discussing what approaches or how would you resolve

1 conflict among the Commissioners, if I heard you
2 correctly, you mentioned something about it depends on the
3 nature of the conflict, itself, and some conflicts may be
4 handled or better handled privately.

5 Can you give us an example, within the context of
6 the Commission's work, in terms of, you know, I know
7 nobody has done it before --

8 MS. VOLPA: Right.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: -- but if you can share an example
10 of the type of conflict that you would probably be going
11 about, you know, handling it privately?

12 MS. VOLPA: Sometimes two people just don't get
13 along. I mean they just don't like each other for
14 whatever reason. And, you know, to me that's something
15 that can be handled privately. If it's just a matter of,
16 you know, I don't like you, I don't get along with you,
17 there's just something about our makeup and our mix that
18 just isn't gelling. Yeah, you can handle those things
19 privately and you can --

20 CHAIR AHMADI: So, it sounds more like --

21 MS. VOLPA: I'm sorry?

22 CHAIR AHMADI: I'm sorry, go ahead.

23 MS. VOLPA: No, no, go ahead, finish your
24 question.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: I didn't mean to cut you off. But

1 it sounds more like personnel kind of issues?

2 MS. VOLPA: Personal, yeah, and personalities,
3 that type of thing can be handled publicly.

4 I'm not -- with the Bagley-Keene Act, I'm not sure
5 about any issues, other than that, I'm not sure how much
6 they need to be done in public, I'd have to learn more
7 about that.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Have you ever worked in a public
9 setting where the law prohibits or limits contact outside
10 of the public meeting?

11 MS. VOLPA: Well, I was on a school board for
12 eight years.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, you were.

14 MS. VOLPA: So, yes, I have.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, on which I have another
16 question.

17 MS. VOLPA: Right.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: So, I believe there will
19 be -- you know, I'm not a legal person, but Bagley-Keene
20 is similar to the Brown Act, you know --

21 MS. VOLPA: Right. Yeah, I think so, too.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: -- it limits, if not prohibits
23 contacts.

24 You have -- you're a self-employed consultant,
25 based on your application, since 1987?

1 MS. VOLPA: Uh-hum.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: What kind of work do you do?

3 MS. VOLPA: Right now very little. I do graphics,
4 desktop publishing, help with different kinds of
5 communication. I've helped people with writing projects.
6 I just helped a gentleman finish a book on World War II,
7 with some editing and that type of thing.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: In what way do you think your
9 current experience will help the Commission?

10 MS. VOLPA: When you're editing and when you're
11 working with clients you listen to what they want. You
12 might have your own idea of what's a better way of doing
13 it and you can -- you can, you know, nudge them over that
14 way, you can give them suggestions, you can do that type
15 of thing but, ultimately, when a client is paying your
16 bill you do follow what the client wants.

17 And, you know, with the Commission there's going
18 to be 14 people and it's the same kind of concept. You
19 can nudge things along and you can say this is -- you
20 know, this is how I'd like to do something or this is the
21 way I feel but, ultimately, you know, you have to go -- if
22 the Commission is going a different way and you're sitting
23 there alone, with your own opinion, you go with the
24 Commission.

25 Does that answer your question?

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes. Yes, it does.

2 MS. VOLPA: Okay.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: And thank you.

4 But I'd kind of like to follow up to make sure
5 that I got it correctly.

6 So, in situations where there are options to take
7 in terms of, you know, if you test it from a legal
8 perspective option A versus option B both may be legal, or
9 acceptable, in compliance with the requirements, but in
10 your personal opinion you may not agree with, for example,
11 option A, if you have option B.

12 What do you think is the best way to approach that
13 to resolve it?

14 MS. VOLPA: Rational, logical explanations and
15 breaking it down and --

16 CHAIR AHMADI: So if --

17 MS. VOLPA: Breaking it down, explaining your
18 reasons, your rationales, the whys and the wherefores of
19 why you feel it's the best, and then listening to why
20 people don't feel it's the best. And then kind of going
21 back and forth and saying, oh, okay, well, I can see your
22 point as well or, gee, I don't see your point, and working
23 through it that way.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Trying to come to consensus.

25 MS. VOLPA: Trying to come to consensus.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. I was planning to ask a
2 question based on your experience working on the school
3 board, you were the trustee for the school board; correct?

4 MS. VOLPA: Correct, yeah.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Can you give us a description of
6 the process that you employed when you were redrawing the
7 borders?

8 MS. VOLPA: The school boundaries or --

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, the school boundaries, yes.

10 MS. VOLPA: The school boundaries, okay. Well, we
11 did I several times and we opened, I think it was six or
12 seven schools. So, there were some small boundary changes
13 that we did and then there were some real major boundary
14 changes that we did.

15 In each case we would sit down and -- and I
16 don't -- I don't say we, I'd say staff would sit down and
17 come up with some concepts, come up with four or five
18 ideas.

19 And then we, as a board, would look at them
20 independently and, you know, what do we think, what do we
21 not think?

22 Sometimes I would go out and I'd actually drive to
23 see, you know, what these boundaries are we're talking
24 about.

25 And I think I mentioned in my application that at

1 one pint they had pins on a map that they were indicating
2 where the students were, and where the students would be
3 moving. And there were these four pins sitting over there
4 and they kept talking about moving these pins.

5 And finally I said, um, these are children, these
6 aren't pins. And it kind of brought everything back to,
7 you know, what we were supposed to be doing is, you know,
8 there's four kids here that we're going to tell have to go
9 to a different school and these are the only four kids
10 we're going to tell. Is that the right thing to do?

11 And so it's asking sometimes those questions, and
12 pointing out things, and bringing things back onto a more
13 human nature.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Did the board take any input from
15 the parents --

16 MS. VOLPA: Absolutely.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: -- or community, or neighbors?

18 MS. VOLPA: Absolutely. Yeah, that's a huge piece
19 of it is you put those -- you put those maps out first,
20 and you put the boundaries out first, and you let parents
21 come and look at them, you let them talk about them, you
22 hold community meetings.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

24 MS. VOLPA: A lot of times what would happen is we
25 would be looking at doing something and parents would come

1 in and say, well, you know, all of our kids walk down to
2 this daycare after school and if you do this, you're going
3 to eliminate the chance for our kids to have a daycare if
4 you move our kids to a different school.

5 And so, you know, we'd sit back and say, well,
6 okay, we need to rethink this because that's an important
7 aspect to where the boundaries go.

8 So, absolutely, parents had to have input.

9 Unfortunately, when you're doing boundaries not
10 everyone gets their way and you do sometimes have to make
11 decisions, and that's the hard part of it.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. And I'm sure that
13 you're probably -- if you put it in perspective, you know,
14 for the Commission's work, do you see any similarities or
15 differences and, if yes, what are they?

16 MS. VOLPA: Actually, I do, I see a couple. First
17 of all, not everybody's going to get their way.

18 Secondly, putting out the maps, I know that
19 there's some regulations on when the maps have to be put
20 out.

21 And from my own experience, not everybody's
22 comfortable coming to public meetings, and not everybody's
23 comfortable getting up to a microphone and speaking, and
24 not everybody will even leave their house to come to a
25 meeting and we still have to reach out to those people.

1 And that's what we did as a district is we would
2 go to the schools and post the information so the parents
3 could get them at the schools. We would send information
4 home, we would put it out there so there were other modes
5 and ways that the parents could get the information.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

7 Another question I had based on your application
8 material, you mentioned that prior to the 2000
9 redistricting of the State, the current district lines,
10 your own Senate and Assembly representatives were readily
11 available and knowledgeable of the issues of your
12 community, but this is no longer the case.

13 MS. VOLPA: Right.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: What has specifically change for
15 you and are there concerns or issues that you feel are not
16 heard?

17 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

19 MS. VOLPA: Absolutely. When you have a school
20 district, and I'm going to go off of the school district
21 because that's what I can relate it to. When you have a
22 school district that's actually split between Assembly
23 Districts, Senate Districts and so there's actually four
24 representatives, you know, working with it, and none of
25 whom live anywhere near you, they don't understand the

1 needs, they don't understand what's going on in that
2 community. And that's huge to have someone that actually
3 can sense what's going on and can understand it.

4 I'm going to back up to 2000, or 1999, when we
5 were negotiating a site to build a new high school and we
6 were having a lot of conflicts, there were a lot of
7 different groups who wanted to have their input on it,
8 including the Coastal Commission.

9 Fred Keeley was our Assemblyman at the time and he
10 sat us down, he sat all these six different groups down
11 together and hammered out a deal. And it was an
12 incredible -- I don't want to say a deal, an agreement.
13 And it was an incredible experience.

14 And I don't think that if we had someone that
15 didn't know our community, didn't know all the people
16 involved in that, I don't think it could have been done.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I believe I'm running out of
18 time; correct? Okay, no more questions, thank you.

19 MS. VOLPA: Thank you.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Ms. Volpa.

22 MS. VOLPA: Hi.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In your application you
24 indicated, regarding school district budget actions, that
25 "some trustees are willing to accept staff

1 recommendations, but you were not."

2 Please elaborate.

3 MS. VOLPA: Sometimes a trustee would simply take
4 the budget and -- our budget was, I don't know, five
5 inches, four inches high, it was \$170 million budget, so
6 it was a big one. And some trustees would take it, look
7 at it and say, okay, that sounds good.

8 And I wasn't willing to do that. I wanted to
9 understand, you know, how did this number here and this
10 number here add up, because when I do the math they don't
11 add up.

12 And sometimes it would be, oh, well, that should
13 go over there, in a different column.

14 And so, by asking those questions we were able to
15 clarify that something might be in the wrong column.

16 Transportation was one of the things, one time,
17 that I can recall that it just didn't add up and, yeah,
18 they had put it in the wrong column.

19 And so, if you accept it just on face value
20 without looking and asking questions, then you don't make
21 corrections and you don't get it right.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Now, with that experience,
23 what role do you expect staff to play in the Commission's
24 work?

25 MS. VOLPA: A huge role. There are so many things

1 to do and so much work in such a little amount of time,
2 and I think staff is just going to be an integral part of
3 the whole thing.

4 I can't sit here right now and say exactly what
5 staff will do, but I know there's so many background
6 things, and so much information, and so much preparation
7 and all the background things that need to get done to
8 keep everything running and moving forward.

9 Again, I can relate back to my eight years on the
10 board, that staff held it together. I mean, obviously,
11 the board can't do all those things, anyhow, but you have
12 a role and a function as a board or as a commission to
13 move ahead and you have your certain guidelines.

14 Staff has their roles, and the Commission can't be
15 micromanaging every single thing that staff is doing. You
16 have to trust staff to say, okay, we need a schedule done
17 for three weeks out and, you know, can you help us do
18 that?

19 We can't be sitting there telling, you know,
20 sitting over their shoulder watching them do that
21 schedule, there has to be a huge level of trust there.
22 So, I think staff is going to be absolutely critical. It
23 won't get done without staff.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How do you think staff should
25 be managed, that are going to be working on this project?

1 MS. VOLPA: That's a tough question. You could
2 build a layer of management into staff, I think that
3 would -- that could be one way to do it. You could also,
4 potentially, have a subcommittee of several Commissioners.
5 And I don't know if that's allowed by Bagley-Keene or not,
6 you know, I'd have to find out, but that might be another
7 way to do it.

8 Having reports, status reports, that type of thing
9 coming forward to the Commission.

10 Potentially, the chair and the vice chair, again
11 depending on the rules and regulations, might have a
12 little bit more input and oversight into that.

13 But again, I just -- I think there needs to be a
14 little bit of a wall and respect there with the staff,
15 that they can do their job. So, yeah, I think some kind
16 of a hierarchy within the staff, as well, maybe a project
17 manager.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Describe the college-
19 based tutoring program in which you participated and the
20 outcomes of your efforts?

21 MS. VOLPA: I was there for just a little -- well,
22 about a year. The outcome of my efforts in the sense of
23 the children?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

25 MS. VOLPA: What we did? I think we reached a lot

1 of kids. We worked with the schools and we matched the --
2 and you're talking 30 some odd years ago, so forgive me if
3 I'm a little dry on this. We matched students with kids
4 in the schools.

5 We were in Hayward and at that point Hayward was
6 very, very diverse. It had, I think -- I think I remember
7 something like 40 some odd languages that were spoken in
8 the schools at that point, and a lot of cultures that went
9 with that. So, we relied a lot on the schools to help us
10 pick and choose which tutors would best, you know, work
11 with a student.

12 Some cultures we would not be putting a male
13 student with -- a male tutor with a female student. Some
14 cultures we could only use a male.

15 So, it really was a lot of work with the school,
16 as well.

17 And the college kids were great, they bonded with
18 the kids and it was a really good experience I think for
19 everybody around, and the focus was to get the children
20 back up to speed in class.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What was the mix of students
22 that were being tutored, do you remember?

23 MS. VOLPA: Like I said, 47 languages in Hayward.
24 I mean, it was huge, it was a broad mix.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Each Commissioner will bring

1 to the Commission his or her own unique set of skills. As
2 you look across the Commission what unique skills would
3 you hope the other Commissioners possess that would
4 complement yours?

5 MS. VOLPA: Well, I've had the opportunity to
6 watch some of the interviews and there are people who've
7 actually done some redistricting on a large level. There
8 are some who have just incredible communication skills
9 which, you know, I do also, but I think that you need to
10 rely on more than one person.

11 There's some attorneys that have an understanding
12 of the laws and the legalities of the whole thing, so
13 those are some of the things that I look at, potentially
14 analytical skills that somebody has -- not analytical, I'm
15 sorry, map-making skills that someone might have more
16 experience doing.

17 Someone, hopefully, will have a broad base of the
18 geography of California.

19 I don't know what's going on in San Diego County
20 today. Hopefully, somebody on the Commission will have an
21 idea on what the needs and what's going on in different
22 parts of the county -- in different parts of the State.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With that in mind, you're one
24 of the eight Commissioners selected, you need to select
25 those six additional individuals --

1 MS. VOLPA: Right.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: -- you've kind of already
3 stated the skills that you'd like to have these
4 individuals possess, what other factors would you look at
5 for selecting these six Commissioners?

6 MS. VOLPA: Geographical diversity, race and
7 ethnicity diversity, age diversity, maybe.

8 Employment diversity. I would try to complement
9 California as much as humanly possible with those other
10 six.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last
12 question.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano?

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. Good afternoon.

15 MS. VOLPA: Hi.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Along those lines, how
17 important to you is diversity on the Commission, among the
18 members?

19 MS. VOLPA: It's huge, it's everything.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In what way?

21 MS. VOLPA: Well, when I talked about it earlier,
22 everyone comes with their own perspective and everyone
23 comes from a different point of view.

24 And I know a gentleman who -- that I met, he was a
25 teacher in our district, he was interned in World War II,

1 in a Japanese camp. His life is very different from mine.
2 He's a very dear friend, he's someone I respect and
3 admire, but his experiences are so different from mine.
4 Someone -- when you bring people together that have those
5 differences you have a different perspective and you have
6 a different outlook and a different approach to doing
7 things, and I think that is critical on the Commission.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What can you share with us
9 about his perspective that enriched yours?

10 MS. VOLPA: You can read about the internment, but
11 to hear about it firsthand is very, very different. And,
12 I mean, it's life changing to actually hear the stories
13 and rather than just reading a book.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How deep of an understanding
15 of your fellow Commissioners do you want to know about
16 them that would give you enough sense to understand what
17 their perspective is and what they can bring to the
18 Commission in sharing ideas and --

19 MS. VOLPA: As much as possible, with as little
20 time as possible, because I know there's as little time as
21 possible.

22 You know, the other piece of it, though, that you
23 have to be careful of is that you don't start getting into
24 too much of the personality issues up front. I think that
25 knowing a person -- you can never know a person really,

1 really well.

2 But you want to know and get a sense of what type
3 of person they are. And that's just real important to me.
4 You know, I envision sitting down and watching the
5 interviews, possibly bringing people in, re-interviewing
6 them, getting a sense -- body language says a whole lot,
7 as well, and that's -- so, there's a lot of different ways
8 you can look at somebody and get a sense of what they're
9 about.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are there particular
11 personalities that you work well with and those that you
12 don't?

13 MS. VOLPA: Oh, I'd love -- I'd love to say I work
14 well with everybody.

15 (Laughter.)

16 MS. VOLPA: Actually, I think I do. I think, for
17 me, the shy, quiet type is always difficult for anybody to
18 work with, especially if you're more outgoing. And, you
19 know, that can be difficult.

20 I guess on the other hand and, you know, I
21 mentioned this earlier that the Commissioner needs to be
22 able to laugh and have a sense of humor. Someone so
23 serious that they can't smile, they can't laugh, those are
24 tough people to work with. They're necessary people to
25 work with, they have very good points of view, but they

1 can be more difficult to work with.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you manage that?

3 MS. VOLPA: You respect their boundaries and
4 respect who they are.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you pick up on that?

6 MS. VOLPA: Generally, after the first or second
7 joke when they're still sitting there not --

8 (Laughter.)

9 MS. VOLPA: -- it's pretty easy.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you distinguish that
11 personality different from maybe an ability to not
12 understand the communications, maybe the person comes from
13 a background where English isn't their first language or
14 there's a cultural difference?

15 MS. VOLPA: Understanding the culture. Some
16 cultures, you know, eye contact is not something that is
17 readily done and it's hard for some cultures to do eye
18 contact. You know, some cultures are just naturally more
19 quiet, just it's the way you're raised and it's the
20 culture you're raised in.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I found it interesting how
22 you told us the story about your letter of recommendation
23 that you got from somebody that you didn't get along with
24 at first. And I was curious to know a little bit more
25 about that and how you developed this relationship in a

1 positive manner?

2 MS. VOLPA: You know, it was really hard at first.
3 I mean, I'm not going to pull punches on that. We
4 absolutely did not like each other.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Was it a personality thing
6 or --

7 MS. VOLPA: It was a personality thing, there had
8 been some community issues that had gone on and we did not
9 see eye to eye. They'd done some budget cuts that I
10 didn't agree with. And so there was some history there
11 that went on.

12 When you're forced to work with somebody and you
13 let those guards down and you start realizing that, you
14 know, gee, we do have things in common and, gee, we can
15 build on these, and we started talking and we started just
16 learning bits and pieces about each other. And, you know,
17 he had a project going and I'd ask him to tell me about
18 it, and I've have a project going and vice-versa.

19 So, it was a slow process in one sense that it
20 took a while, but it was a quick process in the other
21 sense because we really realized -- I think we fought it
22 at first, but we really realized that we really do have a
23 lot in common and this is crazy to be doing this.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Just counter productive to
25 the goals?

1 MS. VOLPA: Absolutely counter productive. And I
2 think it also created a lot of tension on the board.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Among the other members?

4 MS. VOLPA: Uh-hum.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: It was obvious you guys
6 didn't get along or --

7 MS. VOLPA: Oh, yeah. Yes, very obvious.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'm curious, initially, did
9 you try to avoid each other?

10 MS. VOLPA: We did, actually. And one of the
11 first things that happened, I think it was my third board
12 meeting, he didn't show up and so I had to run the
13 meeting, and I had no idea what I was doing. I was -- you
14 know, being in the audience on a board and sitting there
15 watching it, and then actually try and run a meeting are
16 two very, very different things.

17 And after the meeting I sat there and I thought,
18 wow, I really appreciate what he's done. I mean, it gave
19 me a whole new perspective on, you know, what he had been
20 doing. And so, I mentioned to him that, you know, wow,
21 that was a tough meeting I had, and we kind of joked, and
22 because there was a controversy that we were dealing with
23 at the meeting. I don't even remember what the
24 controversy was.

25 And so, I teased him that he was there for a

1 reason because he wanted me to handle the controversy.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Was he chair and you were
3 vice chair, is that --

4 MS. VOLPA: Yeah.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. And at that point, was
6 that like the ice breaker for you?

7 MS. VOLPA: I think it was one of them. I don't
8 think there was one particular ice breaker, I think it was
9 just a series of working together and learning to respect
10 each other. And, I mean, it was a huge lesson for me in
11 life. I was, yeah, 12 years younger than I am now and it
12 was a really big blessing for me in life that you waste a
13 lot of time disagreeing with someone, when you can move
14 beyond that and find the commonalities that you have.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How long did it, you may have
16 mentioned it earlier, how long did it take you to form
17 that, realize that, to have such a relationship?

18 MS. VOLPA: You know, it was a few months when we
19 really started getting together. You know, we only met
20 every two weeks and so, you know, a few months is
21 compacted down.

22 But, really, after the first year I would say we
23 were starting to grow together.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Knowing that the Commission's
25 only going to be formed for eight and a half months --

1 MS. VOLPA: Right, I knew you were going to ask
2 that.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, I know, you saw that
4 coming.

5 How do you -- what if you find, as a Commissioner,
6 that there is just absolutely one person who's got this
7 personality that, you know, you cannot deal with and how
8 do you get -- how are you going to get past that quickly?

9 MS. VOLPA: Well, I'll first go back to the lesson
10 I learned 12 years ago, which is don't waste time on that
11 kind of stuff, it's totally unnecessary.

12 And secondly, you know, the Commission is going to
13 be meeting, I would think, more regularly than every two
14 weeks, so you will have the opportunity to get to know
15 people on a different level.

16 And, yeah, there's always going to be people --
17 out of 14 people, you cannot expect everybody to like each
18 other.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

20 MS. VOLPA: That's why I talked about having a
21 mission statement, a set of operating principles, some
22 goals, so you can drop back onto that and you can say,
23 okay, you know, I'm frustrated right now at this person
24 but I need to let it go because we have this other
25 mission, we have this goal that we have to achieve, and

1 it's not worth it. And I think every Commissioner needs
2 to be able to agree to that.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You were involved in two
4 redistricting efforts, right, one was school boundaries
5 and one was the trustee areas.

6 MS. VOLPA: Right.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And I don't believe we
8 touched on the trustee areas, yet?

9 MS. VOLPA: Right, no.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, what was your role in
11 2002?

12 MS. VOLPA: Yeah, I think it was 2002. And it's
13 funny because I actually got a call on this from --

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Recently?

15 MS. VOLPA: From somebody in your office, asking
16 about that.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay.

18 MS. VOLPA: And so I called our district
19 administrative assistant and I said what was my role?
20 She's been digging through papers trying to figure it out.

21 I do remember that I had input on the maps before
22 they were brought forward.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

24 MS. VOLPA: Because we talked about -- my trustee
25 area changed quite a bit and so we talked about how that

1 would look.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The boundaries?

3 MS. VOLPA: The boundaries, yeah.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

5 MS. VOLPA: And so I do remember that. But
6 whether I was on the committee or not, I honestly can't
7 claim that I was because I don't remember.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, really?

9 MS. VOLPA: I don't. This is terrible.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: But you remember having input
11 on the maps?

12 MS. VOLPA: I do. I remember the maps being in a
13 room and looking and, you know, working through the
14 different things, yeah.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. So, you remember
16 participating in the work and the --

17 MS. VOLPA: In the work end of it, the discussions
18 and all that, the work end of it, outside of board
19 meetings.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Outside board meetings?

21 MS. VOLPA: Yes.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. So, they didn't make
23 decisions in the board meetings or anything?

24 MS. VOLPA: No, this was when each of us could go
25 in and just look at the maps and, you know, provide some

1 input to the people doing the maps. We hired a consultant
2 to do the maps and we could provide input of saying, gee,
3 I think -- you're helping me remember this, this is good.

4 I think this boundary would work, I'm not sure
5 could you explain this boundary when you bring the maps
6 forward, that type of thing.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay. And do you
8 remember what the -- you said the school boundaries -- I
9 mean the trustee boundaries changed in this effort.

10 MS. VOLPA: Uh-hum.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What were the issues creating
12 the changes?

13 MS. VOLPA: You mean --

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In the trustee boundaries?

15 MS. VOLPA: We had to change them with the Census.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Okay. They were
17 driven by that?

18 MS. VOLPA: Right, they were driven by the Census.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: By the Census. Do you
20 remember the types of discussions that occurred?

21 MS. VOLPA: The types of discussions were really
22 looking at communities. And one trustee actually wanted
23 to do what we call ribbons along, straight up and down to
24 kind of merge all the communities. And the rest of the
25 trustees were really feeling that we wanted to keep

1 communities of interest.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

3 MS. VOLPA: Our board had decided that we were
4 going to have neighborhood schools and we felt that
5 trustees would be better if we could encircle those
6 neighborhood schools and, you know, have those
7 neighborhood schools within our boundaries.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: To better serve the schools.

9 MS. VOLPA: To better serve the students in the
10 area, right.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did you incorporate your
12 needs and communicate them to the consultant, because you
13 said the consultant was primarily drawing the lines?

14 MS. VOLPA: There was a committee.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A committee.

16 MS. VOLPA: And whether I was on the committee, I
17 know it sounds terrible but --

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Okay. Okay.

19 MS. VOLPA: Yeah, okay.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me about this
21 effort in terms of how it's going to benefit you for State
22 redistricting?

23 MS. VOLPA: For one, understanding that it's not
24 voters, but it's actually residents. They don't have to
25 have any legal status that does not matter, that does not

1 come into play, it's simply residents.

2 We happen to have a county jail in our area and
3 those are residents, and so you take those into account.
4 And I think that as far as the redistricting, and I know I
5 read an article about some prisons that were kind of used
6 as pawns in the 2000 redistricting, which I thought was
7 kind of interesting.

8 So, that kind of knowledge and looking at what's
9 out there really does -- and understanding that there is
10 wiggle room, you know, there is a little bit of wiggle
11 room.

12 And then explaining to people that, yes, this
13 trustee area here or this area here has, you know, 40,000
14 voters and this area here as 2,000 voters, but they're
15 equal and that's a hard concept for some people to
16 understand.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum. Uh-hum. Can you --
18 do you have any experience in analyzing large sets of data
19 and applying complex law to the analysis in making
20 decisions?

21 MS. VOLPA: \$170 million budget, yes.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Okay.

23 MS. VOLPA: Yeah, and with a lot of categorical
24 funds.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And when you're looking at

1 the budget how often do you incorporate the qualitative
2 aspect in your decision making, when you're determining
3 who gets cut, who gets this kind of funding, who doesn't?

4 MS. VOLPA: That's a really tough one. I mean,
5 especially if you're talking about funding versus having
6 to make budget cuts, it's a very, very difficult decision
7 because you -- for a school district, anyhow, you want to
8 keep it as far away from the classroom as you can.

9 There's certain things that you can cut, there's
10 certain things you can't cut and understanding what you
11 can and can't cut, and understanding ratios that you need
12 to keep.

13 And you can't cut a piece from part of a district
14 but not another part that maybe doesn't need that.

15 So, there's a lot of balancing that you have to do
16 when you're doing those types of things.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What got you interested in
18 speech pathology and audiology?

19 MS. VOLPA: I was 18 and I didn't know what I was
20 doing and it sounded really great, and my aunt was a
21 speech pathologist, and so I went for it.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay. Do you find it's
23 led you to your career working in print and graphics?

24 MS. VOLPA: I'm not sure it really did. You know,
25 it was something that at the time sounded like a really

1 great idea. I've always been interested in education and
2 educating, I used to have my little summer blackboard out
3 on my front porch, where I'd teach the little kids in the
4 neighborhood, and I think that that was a big piece of it
5 then.

6 But my graphics and where I am now was a result of
7 my going into sales.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you feel like having that
9 background is really going to help you read people and
10 just communicate better?

11 MS. VOLPA: I do think so on a number of levels
12 because, again, when -- when you're working with clients
13 sometimes you're sitting around the table and you've got,
14 you know, three or four people providing you with input.
15 And when one person leans back you know that they're, you
16 know, removing themselves a little bit and they're saying,
17 okay, I'm not really sure I like this.

18 And so, you know, you can involve them back in and
19 say what is your opinion about this? So, working on that
20 level, most definitely.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I don't know if we've asked
22 this already, but forgive me if we have, do you have -- do
23 your public relations clients include any elected
24 officials, political causes, lobbyists or politicians?

25 MS. VOLPA: No.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No?

2 MS. VOLPA: No, no. Let me back that up.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

4 MS. VOLPA: As far as political causes, no. I
5 help people with local school district elections, that's
6 it.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. VOLPA: Sure.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I was leaning back because
10 my back hurt.

11 (Laughter.)

12 MS. VOLPA: Oh, that was good.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, do you have
14 follow-up questions?

15 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I just have a couple. The
18 Panel has, once again, stolen many of my questions.

19 Given the minimal amount of time that the
20 Commissioners have to get up and running, as you've
21 acknowledged a couple times, what specifically would you
22 try to do or suggest to build relationships and trust
23 before the work takes -- goes too far down the road?

24 MS. VOLPA: A four-minute tower. No, I think -- I
25 think that there really needs to be some type of team

1 building though, I do. And, you know, that may be the
2 expertise of staff coming in and helping with that, and
3 say, you know, what can we do on short order to make us a
4 functioning team of 14, not a team of eight and six.

5 Just another quick story, when I was training for
6 the Census Bureau we had two separate trainings and when
7 all of us got together, the group I was in sat at one side
8 of the table and the group that trained together sat at
9 the other side of the table, and we did that the whole
10 week. And it wasn't until we started going out in the
11 field that we really started bonding.

12 I mean, it's that simple, it can happen that fast,
13 where you just bond with the people that you've been with.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How do you think
15 California's minority communities will be affected by the
16 Commission's work?

17 MS. VOLPA: I hope very positively. I hope, and
18 this is only a hope because it's -- we can't -- we can
19 only do what we can do to get people interested and
20 involved. But I think reaching out, talking, explaining
21 what we're doing, I'm hoping that they will step up, the
22 different communities will step up and become more
23 involved.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't have additional
25 questions.

1 Panelists?

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Neither do I.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, thank you so much,
5 Ms. Volpa, for coming to see us. You've got some time
6 left on the clock if you'd like to make a closing
7 statements, it's about 30 minutes.

8 MS. VOLPA: I won't talk for 30 minutes.

9 (Laughter.)

10 MS. VOLPA: This has been an incredible experience
11 for me and I've mentioned that I've watched some of the
12 interviews and you do have some absolutely incredible
13 candidates that you're going to have to choose from. And
14 I'm not sure that I'd want to be in your shoes because you
15 do have some people that are just incredible.

16 And I hope those that don't get chosen, some of
17 them I've seen have just an absolutely incredible amount
18 of experience, that would be hired as staff to help with
19 some of this.

20 I just hope that the Commission does what it needs
21 to do in the timeframe it needs to be done. I know that
22 Prop. 20 is coming up and Prop. 27 is coming up.

23 I know that there's -- I've actually read some
24 things written about you in Prop. -- the proponents of
25 Prop. 27 that say you can't pick a fair and impartial

1 board, and I believe you can. And, hopefully, I've shown
2 that I can be one of those people.

3 So, thank you so much for having me and it was
4 very nice to be here.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you, Ms. Volpa.

9 Let's recess until -- well, actually, before we
10 recess, since we have some time, I'll make an
11 announcement. Bureau staff has heard from Gregory
12 Francis, he's our applicant who was unable to appear for
13 his interview last Friday, at 4:30. Apparently, he was,
14 as reported, delayed by unanticipated traffic and I have
15 offered him and he has accepted, the vacant interview
16 spot, the spot that was vacated -- or vacated, I'm sorry,
17 on Friday, at 11:00 o'clock, with the withdrawal of
18 another applicant.

19 So, Mr. Francis will be interviewing on Friday,
20 September 3rd, at 11:00 a.m.

21 And with that, we should recess and we'll recess
22 until 4:29, whereupon Mr. Russo will cover the rest of the
23 day.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

25 (Off the record at 3:46 p.m.)

1 (Back on the record at 4:30 p.m.)

2 MR. RUSSO: It is 4:30 in the afternoon, a quorum
3 is present and so I believe we are ready to reconvene.

4 I'm Steven Russo, I'm Senior Staff Counsel with
5 the Bureau of State Audits and I will be filling in for
6 Ms. Ramirez-Ridgeway for the final interview of the day.

7 And that interview is with Mr. Gabriel Morales.
8 Welcome, sir.

9 MR. MORALES: Hello. Thank you, honor to be here.

10 MR. RUSSO: Are you ready to proceed?

11 MR. MORALES: Yes, I am.

12 MR. RUSSO: And let's put an hour and a half on
13 the clock and we can begin.

14 The first standard question: What specific skills
15 do you believe a good Commissioner should possess? Of
16 those skills which do you possess? Which do you not
17 possess and how will you compensate for it? And is there
18 anything in your life that would prohibit or impair your
19 ability to perform all of the duties of a Commissioner?

20 MR. MORALES: A Commissioner should possess proven
21 leadership and public speaking skills and appreciate --
22 I'm sorry, and one's -- not only one's career, but also
23 within one's community, neighborhood, family and as a
24 volunteer.

25 A Commissioner should have social skills that

1 enhance his or her listening skills, an appreciation and
2 sensitivity towards cultures and diverse communities.

3 Additionally, have a balance of analytical and
4 creative skills to enhance one's ability in regards to
5 mapping skills and trouble shooting under time
6 constraints.

7 There is nothing that will impair my ability to
8 perform all of the duties of a Commissioner. I've spent
9 most of my time aligning my life and career for such an
10 opportunity as this.

11 Skills I do not possess; I do not have mapping
12 skills.

13 Skills that I do possess, if that was one of the
14 questions, are social skills, leadership experience in the
15 community, working with the community at large, small
16 groups. Obviously, in running a nonprofit educational
17 center leadership is very important in what I do, and how
18 I do it, and with the diverse community that I work with,
19 including the staff, and the parents, and the community
20 that pretty much is my boss, my supervisors because we're
21 a big part -- we're a community organization and so the
22 success of that center has to do with the community's buy-
23 in to what we do there as a school and community agency.

24 To offset the skills I do not have in regards to
25 the mapping skills, I would work closely and cooperatively

1 with Commissioners who have what I lack, and would hope
2 and expect Commissioners to seek my expertise, also. On
3 any team we bring weaknesses and strengths.

4 MR. RUSSO: Okay. And a part of the question was,
5 is there anything in your life that you think would
6 prohibit or impair your ability to perform the duties of a
7 Commissioner?

8 MR. MORALES: No, there is none.

9 MR. RUSSO: Okay. The second question: Describe
10 a circumstance from your personal experience where you had
11 to work with others to resolve a conflict or different of
12 opinion? Please describe the issue and explain your role
13 in addressing and resolving the conflict? If you are
14 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting
15 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that
16 may arise among the Commissioners?

17 MR. MORALES: I will talk about specific
18 situations, but for the years working with kids and
19 families in the community, I spent a lot of time dealing
20 with conflict issues, whether they're gangs or community
21 issues with civic leaders, and grass roots organizations.

22 But, specifically, this past year I was selected
23 as a juror and voted as a jury foreman by 12 other jurors.
24 this was one of the most influential experiences in my
25 life to both influence and impact my ability to be

1 impartial.

2 I was cross examined by court attorneys on issue
3 of bias and one's ability to be impartial towards either
4 side of trial witnesses and to keep our focus on the law
5 and evidence.

6 The judge and attorneys constantly instructed us,
7 as jurors, to set aside our personal views and to be
8 willing to evaluate, and consider, and weigh the
9 information and make a shared decision, with an open mind,
10 with all 12 jurors.

11 We determined -- we will be determining an
12 individual's life. They said all jurors draw on our
13 integrity, our fairness, trust and leadership, and also to
14 remind us that the integrity of our government is still
15 held by its citizens when we choose to be involved.

16 The conflict arose when jurors started to dominate
17 the discussion and to inject biases and personal opinions,
18 which eventually created an emotional and heated dialogue.

19 As jury foreman I interjected by asking all jurors
20 to base our deliberation comments on the judge's
21 instructions for us to focus on the law and evidence and
22 not assumptions.

23 I then set ground rules for discussion, which we
24 all agreed to, then implemented a simple time system for
25 jurors to deliberate and vote, and lean heavily on

1 leadership at the table, of the jurors.

2 As we became weary, and time, and stressed we
3 could not come up with a verdict and we had to -- I had to
4 share that information with the judge.

5 He asked, because we had three jurors that were
6 not in agreement with the other nine for a guilty verdict
7 and the judge asked us to go back into the deliberation
8 room.

9 And so, we went back in and from what was supposed
10 to be a three-day trial, it was going on over two weeks,
11 and so people were getting pretty stressed because of
12 their livelihood, their families, and their jobs.

13 What happened is we all agreed, the three of us
14 that did not agree, that we were not going to be moved by
15 the other nine and we agreed that there was not going to
16 be a verdict agreed upon, and we took it back to the judge
17 and to the attorneys and it was a hung jury.

18 And that was a short moment that was a big part of
19 my life and to work with 12 other citizens in a very
20 stressful situation, especially when you're dealing with
21 potential biases, and the fact that we were getting off
22 track and not dealing with the instructions from the
23 judge. It was my job to bring it back to the process.

24 And that was an experience, I think, for all of
25 us, but what I really appreciated is the fact that we all

1 respected the law and respected the title of a jury
2 foreman, which I appreciated.

3 I believe as far as conflict among Commissioners,
4 appointing a strong chair and vice chair for balance and
5 skill for knowing when to intervene at times. The best
6 way to also resolve conflict is to allow boundaries for
7 it, as suppressing it could cause deeper strife in the
8 Commission.

9 The Commission must maintain respect for all,
10 quickly address biases, ignorance, or emotions that are
11 unchecked. Develop time for Commissioners to know and
12 understand each Commissioner's perspective is key.

13 At times writing sensitive, well-thought-out notes
14 or letters of concern, breaking into small groups or one-
15 on-one discussions, seek a consensus on the environment
16 created by Commissioners is also an added strategy.

17 MR. RUSSO: Okay, thank you. And now the third
18 question: How will the Commission's work impact the
19 State? Which of these impacts will improve the State the
20 most? And is there any potential for the Commission's
21 work to harm the State and, if so, in what ways?

22 MR. MORALES: I believe there's a lot of variables
23 with both the negative and the positive, but what I wanted
24 to share was on the positive, California will finally
25 attempt to have true diversity representation and opinions

1 at the State level, representing the diverse needs of its
2 population.

3 If the Panel does its job correctly, the
4 Commission will hear from every community and neighborhood
5 in the State on major interest of need, I think that's the
6 most impact, where you will draw the people back into the
7 system to be a part of the government.

8 Harm to the State, potentially, if the Panel does
9 not select Commissioners with the right intent, diversity,
10 with diverse experiences, if this Commission, itself, does
11 not bring hope to each community we meet or hold forums on
12 this could be a negative impact, if we're not bringing
13 hope to the communities, especially during the forums that
14 are set up in the communities we'll be reaching out to, I
15 think not leaving them with a sense of hope could be a
16 negative impact.

17 MR. RUSSO: Question four: Describe a situation
18 where you have had to work as part of a group to achieve a
19 common goal? Tell us about the goal, describe your role
20 within the group and tell us how the group worked or did
21 not work collaboratively to achieve the goal? If you are
22 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting
23 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster
24 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the
25 Commission meets its legal duties and legal deadlines?

1 MR. MORALES: As Chair for the Santa Barbara
2 County Youth Advisory Council, the past five years we have
3 seen a rise in youth violence and gangs. In 2008, our
4 goal was to address this issue by developing a community-
5 wide collaboration, specifically in North County Santa
6 Barbara.

7 My role was to gather community leadership and
8 develop -- to review and research national data, and
9 local, and pursue best practices, make public
10 presentations on reported research, then gather and
11 recruit civic officials and grass roots leaders for
12 support and buy-in, developing a leadership committee that
13 would develop a strategic plan.

14 As chair, I would finally initiate funding
15 opportunities with county staff for agencies to serve
16 populations of youth.

17 The cooperative worked successfully enough to,
18 one, initiate two funding grants for anti-gang programs in
19 our county. Two, successfully coordinated a three-day
20 conference for over 130 stakeholders, which has developed
21 into seven community leadership teams addressing youth
22 concerns, which is a combination of law enforcement,
23 educators, parents, youth, the legal community, just every
24 stakeholder in the community you can imagine is a part of
25 these teams, that's still in existence as we speak.

1 And currently, civic and grass roots leadership
2 was -- well, I also wanted to add, and then additionally,
3 I'm currently coordinating with county officials to
4 develop a county-wide commission on youth and gang
5 violence.

6 The challenges that we did face, civic and grass
7 roots leadership were constantly challenging at times and
8 hindered the progress and buy-in of the community at
9 large, especially during election time. This was a
10 challenging time to -- because it's never been done in our
11 county and to put something like this together, it was
12 bringing those two entities together consistently, as they
13 challenged one another on trust, and integrity, and their
14 sole purpose for being involved.

15 To foster the collaboration among Commissioners
16 and to ensure the Commission meets its legal deadlines, my
17 skills as an experienced moderator and leader will assist
18 in accounting for all Commissioners' views and
19 perspectives. My openness and sensitivity should
20 encourage diverse -- diverse diversity in public and in
21 closed session.

22 MR. RUSSO: Okay. And, finally, question five: A
23 considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve
24 meeting with people from all over California, who come
25 from different backgrounds and different perspectives. If

1 you are selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about
2 the specific skills you possess that will make you
3 effective at interacting with the public?

4 MR. MORALES: As the Director for a nonprofit
5 agency whose major responsibility is to reach out to
6 diverse populations, who are under-served, under-
7 represented, and under-educated, especially on civic
8 issues, that do not normally have a voice or voice their
9 opinions, many who are out of touch with their community
10 because of language and criminal and economic barriers.

11 My diverse living experiences, volunteer and
12 career experiences in serving the community has helped me
13 to develop diplomacy and timing skills in engaging and
14 interacting with the public.

15 My counseling and parenting skills should be of
16 value in putting folks at ease and developing community
17 trust in the Commission, and it's efforts for the people
18 of California.

19 MR. RUSSO: Okay. And with that I will turn the
20 interview over to the members of the Panel, beginning with
21 Mr. Ahmadi.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Thank you very much.
23 Good afternoon, Mr. Morales.

24 MR. MORALES: Good afternoon.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: I have a few follow-up questions on

1 your responses to these standard questions, just to make
2 sure that we got it correct.

3 In response to question number one you emphasized
4 on the fact that having social skills for the purpose of
5 understanding the cultures and diversity of the State or
6 residents of the State is an important aspect of the
7 Commissioner's work or qualifications to be able to
8 provide services the way it's intended.

9 Why is that important and how would you go about
10 using this diversity in cultural information in the
11 decision making process of the Commission?

12 MR. MORALES: First, I believe, from my
13 experiences, be it on boards or going in front of boards,
14 or councils, there's an environment that's usually created
15 that's pretty intimidating, especially for people that
16 normally aren't represented or if they come to boards, or
17 councils, county board of supervisors it's rare and I
18 believe at some of the meetings, even for staff or
19 experienced people that do out in the community, such as
20 myself, I believe those social skills aren't there.

21 The way I was raised, the way -- when our staff
22 are interacting with our students that are diverse, it's
23 important not to just lean on your own social or cultural
24 upbringing, but to be very open and sensitive to the
25 environment that you're walking into, to be very sensitive

1 to the people that you're talking to, the eye-to-eye
2 contact, to understand that you're there and you're there
3 to serve them. And in order to serve them is to be
4 sensitive, and the body language, and the purpose of why
5 you're there and the authority that you hold it sometimes
6 needs to be reminded to the public that we're there to
7 serve you, it's not self-serving.

8 And sometimes we forget those social skills
9 because it takes us so long, we work so hard and we go in
10 there with a title and with authority and we forget our
11 social skills.

12 And it's to combine those social skills with the
13 legalities of whatever board you sit on and the purpose of
14 why you're there.

15 I think it's we need to be reminded of those
16 social skills. Sometimes you can encourage by being --
17 using those social skills encourage people to speak up
18 that have never spoken up before.

19 And I see this so much in the work that I do, for
20 people to speak up that are new immigrants, or
21 grandparents that didn't know that they had access to our
22 admin. office or to city council, and we go and support
23 them that when they speak, they speak because they have
24 something to say.

25 And sometimes when respect is not there, people

1 will not speak. I think that's crucial.

2 The last question you asked, Mr. Ahmadi, was, the
3 second part of this question?

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, the first question was why is
5 it important to connect with people, to understand their
6 culture and diversity, and the how are you going to use
7 that information in your work should you be selected as a
8 Commissioner?

9 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum. Well, I think you're going
10 to draw a lot of information and you're going to draw
11 input from the community when --

12 CHAIR AHMADI: What kind of input you will be
13 seeking?

14 MR. MORALES: Well, my understanding is we're
15 going out to the community to hear about this legislation,
16 this law, and we're going to be educating them. And I'm
17 sure there's going to be a lot of questions and interest
18 of what our intentions are, and so we want to hear how
19 sometimes it's best to serve them, what is their
20 experience.

21 There are certain counties that have already gone
22 through redistricting and it's important to know what that
23 experience is. I mean, I just had a chance to read about
24 some of that and there's a lot more to read.

25 But not everybody from those counties, such as

1 Ventura, knows all about -- I just talked to somebody
2 today and they weren't aware that they went through a
3 redistricting process.

4 And so, my point is, is that by engaging the
5 community, by being sensitive and using social skills that
6 you're going to make people at ease and draw them into the
7 conversation, draw them into this new legislation and
8 that's going to impact us on how we make decisions.

9 On some of the boards that I sit on, I mean when
10 you do hear from the students and the parents it sometimes
11 changes everything you do that day or what you want to do.

12 We just started to engage with foster -- foster
13 youth. We have never done that in our youth council, for
14 whatever reason, we talked about it and finally there was
15 a big incident in our county and so we decided to address
16 it.

17 And these are a population of youth -- I mean it's
18 a sad situation, they're kicked out at 18 and we, for some
19 reason, didn't understand that. When we understood that,
20 we decided to move and when we heard from the county staff
21 that work with these kids, and when some of us got
22 involved with foster care kids and listened to their
23 plight, their blight, there was no hope.

24 There's something that we can do as community
25 members, community leaders for these youth, and that moved

1 us by listening to them.

2 And it took social skills to reach out to these
3 kids. I wasn't going there as a board member or as an
4 administrator, I was going there as a caring parent for a
5 kid that did not have, and I had to go back, it took a
6 couple of weeks for him to trust me but, to me, those are
7 social skills that went to different levels and I brought
8 it back to our youth council. And it impacted everybody
9 that day.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: So, what I hear you say is that by
11 having the social skill and ability to reach these diverse
12 groups and cultures you will benefit by knowing what their
13 issues are, or what their needs are, as you've mentioned
14 yours, their plight.

15 And then how is that going to impact your decision
16 on the Commission, in what way?

17 MR. MORALES: Well, I really couldn't say, now.
18 But I believe from my experience is that we will get
19 people sharing their stories, sharing their information.
20 And because we're human we'll be able to -- that will
21 impact our decision. We're dealing with lives here. I
22 know that it's the law, but we're dealing with human
23 lives, and the more we go out in -- I mean, a lot of my
24 travels, in some of the work I've done, it's not until I
25 meet different communities, that they're different, you

1 realize the work that you've planned -- I mean, some of
2 the work I did for the Department of Education, I had a
3 whole presentation, but when I met that part of the
4 community it changed my presentation. I was listening
5 more to them.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

7 MR. MORALES: One of the things I've learned is
8 I -- my best education has been from parents and the kids.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: What do you think -- I know, you
10 know, nobody has done redistricting for the State of
11 California in this manner, but if you can share with us
12 some of your thoughts. What do you think some of the
13 issues might be, California as a State, if you compare,
14 for example, one area of the State, let's say Chula Vista,
15 down south, to Humboldt County to the north, what do you
16 think some of the issues might be?

17 MR. MORALES: Are you talking about the diverse
18 issues or --

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Diversity, or political, social,
20 economic, the type of issues that you think that the
21 Commissioners will have to listen to and consider when
22 redrawing the lines?

23 MR. MORALES: I would say when I was in San Diego
24 doing work for the Department of Education language was a
25 major issue, immigration was an issue.

1 Going up to Stockton it was more gangs and
2 violence and different ethnic groups.

3 And so it was a change in my presentation. And
4 again it was -- I was thinking in San Diego, around the
5 Chula Vista area, that you would think that there would be
6 a lot of curriculum and a lot more development of programs
7 to deal with that and they were -- they did not have any.
8 And they were asking us for support and it was interesting
9 because they were so caught up in a larger community, a
10 larger city with the tension of immigration that they were
11 dealing with, that impacted their schools, and the
12 language issues, and teachers not being prepared for those
13 issues.

14 So, I think one of the things that is important
15 is, yeah, each community has -- in Santa Barbara County
16 you have the City of Santa Barbara that's dealing with no
17 growth. You know, and coastal issues, you have the City
18 of Santa Maria, where I come from, live, you have a rise
19 in gang issues and the issues are very diverse. You're
20 dealing with more farming communities, individuals wanting
21 to get out of farm work and be educated, and become more a
22 part of the community, that's challenging.

23 So, you have just within a county you have two
24 different needs and perspectives on what's priority
25 issues, socially speaking.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: So, in what ways or in what way do
2 you think the Commission, if successful, would be able to
3 address these issues?

4 MR. MORALES: The things I thought about were the
5 fact I think the Commission could bring some cohesiveness,
6 that it's not separate cities within a county, but we're
7 one county, and one State. And I believe that's something
8 that I've learned when I've gone to the east coast and
9 I've met agencies that do work nationally, and my question
10 is how do you do this on a national level and you have
11 such cohesiveness and team effort?

12 Why can't we do this within counties and within
13 the State of California?

14 And I believe the Commission has the potential to
15 bring tables -- issues to the table and have the
16 community, with support and dialogue, you know, on these
17 issues. I think a lot of the discussions have not been
18 done in our communities on a county level and I think the
19 Commission has the opportunity to do that.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

21 MR. MORALES: Hopefully, I'd answered your
22 question?

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, I have some follow up.

24 MR. MORALES: Okay, sounds great.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Trying to get a good sense of, you

1 know, understanding.

2 Let's say that you're one of the Commissioners,
3 that you're one of the 14 Commissioners and you have all
4 the information that you need to have in terms of, you
5 know, understanding the issues that people have at
6 different parts of the State, and understanding the
7 criteria to apply, which is the legal requirements and all
8 that, where would you start redrawing the lines? Where do
9 you start or where do you think the Commission should
10 start, let me put it this way?

11 MR. MORALES: Well, from what I've read and
12 understand the purpose of the Commission is, besides
13 gathering the data and the programming to do the mapping,
14 it's combining not only those two elements, but also the
15 input from the community.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Right.

17 MR. MORALES: And understanding the work that has
18 already been done for the Commissioners to get up to speed
19 as to understanding because once, you know, my
20 understanding, before you start touching those lines and
21 they get set it's going to be important for us to
22 understand those communities and the impact it could be.

23 I mean, we're looking to make a better life for
24 these communities, not to make it worse or have any
25 negative impact. So, I think there's a lot of work, for

1 me, especially to understand.

2 I know certain communities in our county seem to
3 be dissected and they don't have a voice when it comes to
4 issues. They don't vote because they feel they don't have
5 a voice, it's the same elected officials time after time
6 and it's hopeless to them.

7 And so, you don't get all the communities involved
8 in our government, especially in voting, or giving a voice
9 to what they feel is important, education or crime, you do
10 not get the community at large speaking up on these
11 issues.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. In your mind, what factors
13 do you think contributes to the formation of these
14 communities?

15 MR. MORALES: Currently?

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes. Or I should say different
17 communities, what factors causes them to be -- to have a
18 common interest, for example?

19 MR. MORALES: I'm sorry, the different communities
20 have a common interest is your question?

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Partially, yes.

22 MR. MORALES: Okay. Well, common interest I
23 believe is we're all going -- in our county, as I
24 mentioned before, the rise in youth crime that brings
25 everybody to the table. That's important, it impacts real

1 estate, it impacts the schools and the kids are looking
2 for alternatives, they do not want to be involved as a
3 future criminal, they're looking for options.

4 So, to me, it doesn't make sense that we don't
5 have the answers. I know we have the answers. We can put
6 a man on the moon, we definitely can put a kid back in
7 class and in college, and not in prison.

8 These kids, you know, they're Americans, they want
9 opportunity. And I believe these issues now, coming up
10 again, because of the spike in crime, those are common
11 interests we all have. We all care about kids. I don't
12 know anybody that does not care about kids. That's one
13 particular, education.

14 You know, the penal institute, the prisons are
15 another thing, we have quite a few -- every year we get
16 close to 1,500 felons released to our North Santa Maria,
17 Santa Barbara County, it's a major concern for everybody
18 in that community and yet why are decisions not made on
19 this? You know, it doesn't make sense.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: In what way this knowledge is going
21 to help you in the decision making process while on the
22 Commission, should you be selected?

23 MR. MORALES: One more time again, not --

24 CHAIR AHMADI: In what ways you're knowledge and
25 experience, from what you have learned from working with

1 these different communities, will help you to make
2 decisions on the Commission, if you're selected as a
3 Commissioner?

4 MR. MORALES: I believe because of the uniqueness
5 of this Commission, its purpose, and that people are tired
6 of lack of representation and leadership. I mean, it's
7 2010, you know, we should have people that represent us
8 that can relate to us, that are part of the community and
9 know our voice.

10 And seldom we see that. We don't see people
11 elected that represent our communities and know. I mean,
12 it's usually they come to people like me to be educated on
13 this or that, and we don't mind doing that but it's like,
14 okay, who are we going to educate this time, what
15 Assemblyman, what State Senator, who needs education?
16 And, yet, do they use it? No. Because the problems
17 exist.

18 We've -- you know, we've ran programs where we've
19 been able to divert kids from crime and unify families,
20 and I've seen it done over and over and it saves the
21 community thousands, if not millions of dollars. And why
22 shouldn't they be duplicated, why couldn't those model
23 programs go on? Not because we develop it, but I know
24 they're doing it all over the country so it's -- to me,
25 leadership looks for the best of what American is about

1 and bring that to the forefront to deal with these social
2 ills that should not be here to the extent that they are
3 today.

4 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Five minutes, you said?

6 MS. HAMEL: Yes.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

8 MS. HAMEL: I tried.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much.

10 You mention that you have been involved with a
11 number of boards and commissioners. Are all of these
12 nonprofit organizations or nonprofits, not-for-profit, or
13 do you have any -- any of them are appointed positions?

14 MR. MORALES: Yes, the Workforce Investment Board,
15 I was appointed by the board of supervisors.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: By the County --

17 MR. MORALES: Yes.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: -- of Santa Barbara?

19 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Any other appointed
21 positions?

22 MR. MORALES: The Youth Council, as Chair I was
23 appointed by the board and the Executive Director for the
24 WIB to be on that board.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Which board?

1 MR. MORALES: The Youth Advisory Council, I chair
2 that and that's under the Workforce Investment Board.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, the same county appointed
4 position?

5 MR. MORALES: Yes.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

7 In your example describing response to question
8 number two you mentioned -- you shared with us your
9 experience being on the jury and it was a hung jury. What
10 did you learn from that experience and what can you apply
11 to the Commission's work, should you be selected?

12 MR. MORALES: It was easy to see bias, but yet it
13 was blind to certain jurors. And as the emotions started
14 to get heated, we almost forgot, you know -- well, we were
15 forgetting what the judge was telling us and, yet, as I
16 was thinking about it, I go there's a person's life here
17 on the line and --

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Was that a murder trial?

19 MR. MORALES: It was a burglary trial, but he
20 would have been gone for quite a bit of time and his
21 family and everything that was involved in that.

22 Well, what I've learned was -- the biggest thing
23 was that this is our government and what I was seeing in
24 the court I questioned, there were things to me that
25 didn't -- weren't correct by -- because they had a lot of

1 witnesses who were law enforcement, it seemed like every
2 time a sheriff came to the witness stand there were quite
3 a few sheriffs that showed up in the jury -- in the court,
4 and I thought this is interesting, you feel intimidated by
5 this fact.

6 So, I think if anything I learned it's to question
7 government, not to be afraid to speak up, even in a
8 situation like that.

9 The notes that I sent to the judge, I was
10 concerned that if I sent these maybe it's going to seem
11 that, you know, I'm out of line and it wasn't. And that
12 when we all got together, the 12 of us, in making -- and
13 when it did get emotional I learned that it did get
14 important to have analytical skills. Because when I was
15 handed a packet of information about how we were going to
16 process and the bailiff left and I said, you know, I've
17 never done this before and I have to read this information
18 and break it down into -- I think there were three piles
19 or two, guilty verdict, not guilty verdict, and come up
20 with a system that was going to allow us to make some
21 decisions and deliberate before we went back to the judge.

22 And the other thing, I think, was the social
23 skills were really important because the fact that the --
24 the person on the stand was Hispanic, and I was one of two
25 Hispanics on the jury, I thought that maybe I was going to

1 get questioned on why I was saying what I was saying and I
2 just said, no, this had to do with the evidence.

3 I think if you stay with the law and you stay with
4 what you're directed to do on this Commission, that's
5 going to help us stay away from conflicts and it's also
6 going to keep us on track when we stay with what our
7 purpose is.

8 And sometimes I realized that there were two
9 individuals on that jury that had a strong leadership and
10 you could see they were winning a lot of other jurors to
11 their favor, even though it had nothing to do with the
12 evidence. And I thought, boy, this is going to be -- this
13 doesn't seem right and I need to be able to speak up and
14 deal with this as a foreman, not just as a jury, but as a
15 foreman, how do I bring this back to the point of what we
16 were meant to do? I was --

17 CHAIR AHMADI: What was -- I'm sorry.

18 MR. MORALES: No, go ahead.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: I think I'm running out of time so
20 just one last question.

21 MR. MORALES: Okay.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, sorry, no more questions at
23 this point, thank you.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, thank you.

25 Ms. Camacho?

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, good
2 afternoon, Mr. Morales.

3 MR. MORALES: Good afternoon.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I'd like to just clarify my
5 understanding on one of your responses. Did you say that
6 when the Commission goes out that they need to hear from
7 every community of interest when they go to public
8 meetings?

9 MR. MORALES: No, I don't believe I said that. I
10 said that it's important that they hear from the community
11 at large and I believe it would be important to hear from
12 all the communities of interest, if possible. I think
13 that has to do -- a big part of the Commission's job is
14 how they communicate that, how they educate the community
15 on what this Commission is for and how those forums are
16 set up. I think that's strategic planning.

17 I think it's invaluable to get input from
18 communities of interest, that's a part of this -- I
19 believe, to better the system, you're going to need that.
20 I believe it will be crucial to have input and I believe
21 that's what's not happening right now.

22 It's difficult to get all sectors of the community
23 to the table, it's a challenge.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I want to, just to make sure
25 that I understood you and thank you for clarifying that.

1 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: As you know, as a
3 Commissioner you will be having legal counsel and they
4 will be providing you with their opinions of,
5 interpretations of certain laws.

6 If you disagreed with your legal counsel's
7 interpretation, what would you do?

8 MR. MORALES: Well from the Workforce Investment
9 Board that I sit on, and we have legal counsel and I never
10 disagreed with her but if that, whatever did come up, I
11 would definitely work with her and the executive director
12 and to just clarify where my misunderstanding is. I'm
13 sure it would be a misunderstanding on my part since I'm
14 not legal counsel. I'm just very passionate and sometimes
15 I don't understand something and I'm usually the one to
16 speak out. Yeah, it would just be something that I'm sure
17 would be worked out is because that's legal counsel's job
18 is to help and assist us because we do not know the laws
19 to the degree they do.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

21 What was the objective of the Team American
22 Project?

23 MR. MORALES: Pretty rate project. The objective
24 was to develop curriculum for schools that were struggling
25 with the major minorities in California, which were Asian,

1 African American, and Hispanic, and also some of the at-
2 risk students that were getting in trouble, they were
3 being expelled.

4 So, our job was to, I believe there were 18 of us,
5 work together and develop curriculum that could be used.
6 Our job was -- I believe I went to 15 school districts and
7 they were one-day presentations, and part of the work was
8 to have curriculum available to teachers that they can go
9 to their classroom the very next day and use that
10 curriculum.

11 So, it was very challenging because, again, each
12 school district was different and so the curriculum was
13 constantly changing. But the key was the interaction
14 with -- it could be a small school district in Merced, or
15 it could be a large one in Sacramento, to where you're
16 facing 300 educators that didn't necessarily believe where
17 you're coming from. And our job was to confidently relay
18 to them that this is the latest interventions in working
19 with students.

20 And so that it was pretty challenging because
21 sometimes you would be challenged there on the spot, as I
22 see this Commission encountering. And the diplomacy and,
23 again, sensitivity and social skills were very key because
24 they didn't have to believe you or take your curriculum.

25 But we were passionate enough to express and

1 sincere enough to -- we were there to serve them and the
2 curriculum we had was available and we were still
3 available after we left.

4 So, it was a pretty great opportunity for me and
5 as well as the 18 other educators to work together, from
6 different cultural backgrounds and listen to all the
7 challenges that they had encountered historically, in
8 California, in the school districts and bring all that to
9 a point to where we started to develop curriculum and
10 shared that with the rest of the school districts in
11 California.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. I have two questions.
13 So, I'll start with one, so you dealt with many different
14 minority groups within this project and you went to --
15 you, personally, went to various locations throughout the
16 State to provide this presentation to these various
17 minority groups, or schools and locations; correct?

18 MR. MORALES: Correct.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You kind of hit on the
20 development of the curriculum, can you expand on that, on
21 what steps did you take to develop this curriculum and did
22 you get any input from other people outside of the 18 that
23 were in this group?

24 MR. MORALES: Definitely, because I was working at
25 a school district during the time. And so, we were pretty

1 much all hand-picked for the work we were already doing
2 with at-risk populations, so I already had curriculum that
3 was -- that I had been working on and constantly
4 developing it.

5 And besides the 18 that we listened to, and worked
6 with, and shared a lot of our material, we were able to
7 utilize that.

8 But the big factors also were listening to all the
9 different school districts we went to, that constantly
10 changed our curriculum, the work we did. We realized
11 that, again, each community was different and you can come
12 in there with a set curriculum and they might not be happy
13 with that.

14 So, it was what you can share in your heart, and
15 your experience, and your mind to convey to them, because
16 it was a grant that went out and so you were brought -- we
17 were brought there by a grant and so you wanted to make it
18 valuable to them, your time spent there.

19 And so, sometimes you had to think quickly and
20 sensitively to address the needs you thought you had, were
21 ready to give them your curriculum, and change that.

22 But yeah, again, be honest and up front with them
23 and realize, boy, I didn't realize the extent of which you
24 were dealing with. And so, I'd have to give them a
25 commitment that I'd either come back or I'll be available

1 to present something to you and mail it to you if what I
2 have for you was not prepared.

3 But, yeah, the biggest thing here was listening
4 to -- because we presented to teachers, educators and so
5 you would hear them with their issues and what they were
6 dealing with and so that was valuable input.

7 I mean, I had a whole notebook of notes taken as I
8 was listening to them, as well as things that I shared and
9 things that worked for me, in my school district.

10 So, there was a variety of resource, plus
11 research, looking at data and research, constantly
12 looking, you know, at what was available and reading,
13 constantly reading, buying books on students, and school
14 districts, and what was succeeding and what was not, that
15 was also invaluable to gather my own personal research on
16 what was valuable to me, that I can share with others.

17 So, I would come in with maybe 15 books that I
18 would share, also, with the community that they can order
19 or take.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, it sounds pretty similar
21 that relating it to the Commission's work where you came
22 up with this plan and you went out to the school districts
23 and received their input.

24 Were there particular school districts that you
25 went to or did you -- somehow the committee or the project

1 individuals set up criteria to select particular schools
2 to visit?

3 MR. MORALES: Yeah, it was my understanding it was
4 the State Auditor was overseeing the program, and I guess
5 I would assume a team, and they were deciding -- well,
6 actually, there was a grant under the Carl Perkins Act
7 that was available. And so, for those school districts
8 that applied for that grant and received them, they were
9 the ones that were selected.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You also did other
11 outreach when you surveyed high school students about
12 their top ten needs towards successful graduation. What
13 did you find out and how will that knowledge help you as a
14 Commissioner?

15 MR. MORALES: I think that was really helpful
16 because I had gone into an administrative position and was
17 working in classrooms with at-risk students, and with
18 teachers, and mainly supervising the teachers and
19 developing curriculum, again.

20 And so, this opportunity came up to interview
21 students on all four campuses.

22 The skills that you could lose very easily by not
23 communicating with populations you normally don't, and so
24 having to go back onto the campuses and talk to students,
25 with a camera, and them not wanting to do it, and then

1 gaining the trust, right, and eye-to-eye contact and just,
2 you know, gaining their trust was a job. The first campus
3 was a challenge and by the time I got those skills back it
4 was pretty easy at the other campuses.

5 Because also, I had brought two other students
6 with me, that was wise, I didn't do that at first.

7 And listening to the students, again, things I
8 heard from them I did not expect to hear. When you do
9 your research, when you do all the analytical stuff and
10 work together as professionals, and you're trying to serve
11 a population, you need to spend time with that population
12 because they're going to share things with you if they
13 trust you, if you're really sincere, things that you're
14 not going to learn from a book or an education you might
15 go through. They're going to tell you what's going on
16 now.

17 In my experience with youth it's probably every
18 three years issues change with them. And so, it was
19 invaluable to hear from them and then, also, I allowed the
20 two kids to run the cameras and do the interviews, I just
21 sat back and took notes. Instead of me being the focal
22 point it was about the kids, so they ran the show and it
23 changed everything, too. So, I think that's invaluable to
24 whatever we do is that the community should be a part of
25 those forums as far as structuring it and leadership of

1 them.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: From all your outreach to all
3 these various groups, it's very humbling to me for all the
4 work that you've done. What have you learned from all
5 this outreach that you could use to bring these various
6 individuals that haven't had a voice, or didn't want to
7 speak up, like you were saying, that they didn't think
8 they would be heard, bring them to those meetings and
9 allow them to be heard; what would you do to get them
10 there?

11 MR. MORALES: Well, in every community you have
12 people that are known through the media, through elected
13 leaders that are supposedly the community leaders. Then
14 there are those that you don't -- nobody knows about, they
15 just do the work behind the scenes, and you never hear
16 about them, they never get any special awards, they don't
17 get the chamber of commerce man or the woman of the year
18 award, they're doing the work and they know the community.

19 And a lot of our communities have forgotten about
20 that and that's one of the things I've been working with
21 our local law enforcement, that you have everything in
22 place with the gang task force, but you do not have the
23 grass root community leaders there at the table with you,
24 working on these issues. They know the kids, they know
25 the hot spots, but they haven't been included and it's

1 time we do that.

2 That's one thing that's important, going into a
3 community and to find those leaders that are there and
4 they're part of what keeps the peace at time. They know
5 they're community, they know what's going on, and they
6 could bring different leaders to the table once you gain
7 their trust and I think that's important.

8 You don't just go to the city council and to the
9 school districts -- well, actually, the school district
10 also would know what parents can organize for the PTAs and
11 such.

12 And so, there are entities, again, like the school
13 districts and nonprofits that know, because they've been
14 there a long time. Like the organization I work with,
15 we've been there for over 30 some years, we know the
16 community, we know which sectors if you want to bring to
17 an issue, we know where to go.

18 School districts would know elementary, you know,
19 know where the parents are, the grandparents. Because
20 grandparents are pretty tight with what's going on with
21 their kids and they know, they know leadership and they
22 know who they would trust.

23 So, that's important that you don't go just the
24 mainstream of leadership in a community, you reach out to
25 the nontraditional, out-of-the-box. Because our

1 communities are growing and they're having to strive for
2 themselves to develop their own.

3 In our community center we have a -- we work with
4 the Mesteco population and so we have the -- they lease an
5 office space there.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The Meseco --

7 MR. MORALES: The Mesteco, the Vaquenos, from a
8 deeper part of Mexico. They're the new -- in our county,
9 it was a -- from Mexico, they were the immigrants at one
10 point, now they're further or the southern part of Mexico
11 are coming to our community and they have 19 different
12 dialects.

13 And so, you have to do tri-lingualism to even get
14 to understand them.

15 But on the weekends they have a statewide forum
16 for their leadership and they meet on the parking lot, and
17 that's where they want to meet. I've given them the
18 conference room and they don't want it, they just want to
19 meet there in the parking lot, so I'm not -- why should I
20 question it? But I asked if I could be invited and listen
21 to them.

22 And it's really neat because, again, it's like
23 Ellis Island, you're seeing a new -- new Americans coming
24 in and they want what we want. They're looking, they're
25 concerned about health, they're concerned about their

1 leadership, they're concerned about how to engage in the
2 educational system and I think it's a great opportunity
3 for us to help them, you know, to work with them before
4 some of the negative things in our society step in and
5 impact them.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, you have a lot of
7 information of the various groups and organizations, and
8 needs of individuals. If, perchance, there is a need to
9 divide -- and you're on the Commission, sorry. And you're
10 on the Commission and you're having to look to divide
11 Santa Barbara because you need population, either for a
12 southern part or a northern part, would you be comfortable
13 doing that?

14 MR. MORALES: Living in that county?

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah.

16 MR. MORALES: This is being recorded.

17 (Laughter.)

18 MR. MORALES: Yes, I've had to make some
19 uncomfortable decisions in my career and life. And if you
20 do believe, if I believe it's definitely for the
21 betterment of the community, yes, no problem.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last
23 question.

24 MR. RUSSO: Ms. Spano?

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. Good afternoon.

1 MR. MORALES: Good afternoon.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Going back to your jury
3 experience, why do you believe you were selected as jury
4 foreman?

5 MR. MORALES: I was taken back because I did
6 not -- I was running the centers at the same time, after
7 I'd leave jury I was going back to working, working in the
8 evening because it was a challenging time there at the
9 school.

10 But I was surprised and honored but then I
11 realized this could be very stressful because I'm going to
12 have to learn a lot more than I thought I already -- was
13 already learning about the case, and the education we got
14 from both trial jurors and the judge.

15 Okay, your question, why do you think I was
16 picked? Probably some of the questions that I was asking
17 and --

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Among the jury members, you
19 mean?

20 MR. MORALES: Yes, uh-hum. And I think some of
21 the dialogues that when we were waiting there at times,
22 just with nothing to do, so maybe they were hearing my
23 conversation and learning more about me and what I was
24 doing, because sometimes it was either about my family or
25 the work that I was doing. Some of the jurors were asking

1 me what do you do, and they got into some deep
2 conversations about some of my experience in the community
3 and leadership roles.

4 And I was assuming that some of them had overheard
5 that and I think those are the things. I was just
6 interested, also, in learning about other people, I was
7 asking questions about the other -- I wanted to know some
8 of the jury members since we had time, I'm that kind of
9 person. You know, I want to know about you and if I think
10 you're that way, you know, I went are they that way, you
11 know, and let me ask them. And so, it was always
12 interesting to find their backgrounds that were on the
13 jury there.

14 So, I think it was just some of them had heard
15 about my leadership and how I engaged with other members.

16 Social skills, I noticed for some reason were
17 lacking at the beginning and then it was brought back,
18 giving the chairs to some of the people. There were a
19 couple of them -- there was a pregnant woman there and
20 saying, oh, you know, can you take that? There were a
21 couple of us that were being gentlemen, I think that said
22 a lot. I'm always surprised that things, the way I was
23 raised, that it's important to be, you know, have those
24 kind of courtesy skills.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Were there -- were there

1 language barriers to break down among the jury members?

2 MR. MORALES: No, just that was one of the major
3 issues.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The courtesy?

5 MR. MORALES: No, the language.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The language, oh.

7 MR. MORALES: For the -- the ones that -- the
8 individuals on defense, he needed an interpreter and that
9 was the big issues amongst the jurors.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why was that a big issue?

11 MR. MORALES: Because they felt his body language
12 and at times he was able to answer questions before --
13 through the interpreter -- he was able to answer
14 questions, I'm sorry, from the attorney without the
15 interpreter, and so that came up pretty quickly when we
16 started to deliberate that he knows English. He know
17 English, so he understood the officer when he was
18 questioned.

19 And I said, because I've worked in bilingual
20 education, I said if you're on trial and you barely know
21 the English, and you might know some of it, wouldn't you
22 want an interpreter to make sure you were hearing all your
23 rights? I go that's why he needs an interpreter. He
24 might know some of the language just from what he picks up
25 at work or on the street, but it's not a point where he

1 can say he knows the English language. And I go that's
2 not for us to judge right now, so that was -- that was
3 difficult because even though I explained that to them
4 they still felt he was lying about him not knowing the
5 English language and so it was hard to convince them that
6 he's not lying, he does not know -- his first language is
7 Spanish.

8 And so, anyway, that was a difficult period for us
9 to convey that and it frustrated some of the other jurors
10 that some of them weren't understanding the language
11 barrier and the purpose of an interpreter, so that was
12 difficult. So, that kind of -- I mean it was a hard time
13 for us to get through.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you feel it's because they
15 were not of that race, didn't understand it?

16 MR. MORALES: No, I think it was just -- it was a
17 language issue. They thought because he understood -- I
18 mean, a lot of us, too, you know, you might go to a
19 different country and they understand you, and you can guy
20 food and order food and, oh, they know English and that's
21 it, they know how to speak English.

22 But in this situation, in court, it was a whole
23 different scenario and I could see that is what was
24 happening, they were going on life experience on the
25 language versus what we were dealing with her in court.

1 Because he had a -- the interpreter was there for a lot of
2 the legal issues that he needed to understand.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Was that the -- you said it
4 was easy to see bias, was that part of it, the lack of
5 understanding?

6 MR. MORALES: Because that's when you had two of
7 the -- two individuals that decided that pretty much he
8 was guilty based on that and the rest started just to
9 follow. And I was wondering, okay, why are they following
10 him on that decision when I just -- I said, I run a school
11 and I work with migrant education and we have an EASL
12 program on site and so I'm dealing with facts on language
13 and, yet, they -- it didn't -- they didn't relate to that,
14 it didn't register that on the language issue is just
15 we're dealing with facts.

16 And also the fact when I brought fact that that
17 wasn't something that the judge asked us to do, that has
18 nothing to do with the evidence. And, yeah, it was
19 surprising that, no, it had nothing to do with the
20 evidence but they still dialogued on those issues.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How hard was it to be
22 impartial when you were making your decisions knowing that
23 other jury members felt this way? Was it difficult to be,
24 remain impartial as a jury member?

25 MR. MORALES: No, because I realized the

1 responsibility that was put on me but, also, I would
2 believe that we were able to pick up that there were
3 biases and that's what was going to bring us to what I
4 felt was a non-guilty verdict. And when I realized that
5 wasn't going to happen I thought, boy, this is
6 interesting, you know.

7 And at first I thought maybe there was an issue of
8 being impartial but then in our dialogue, you know, again
9 we were staying on course. I was and a couple of us were
10 staying on the evidence and the mandate the judge gave us,
11 and the attorneys, and try to continue to read that. We
12 are supposed to be doing this, not these other issues.

13 And so, I didn't see a problem because I realized
14 this was going to be important, especially when we took it
15 back to the court, you know, if there were any questions
16 that were asked, we were going to need to be able to
17 answer those questions based on our discussions, our
18 deliberation, and I thought that was important that
19 everything you said and dialogued about that it was based
20 on what we were directed to do.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You said there was a presence
22 in the courtroom when all the sheriff individuals, they
23 showed up, I'm taking when the sheriff testified or --

24 MR. MORALES: Yes. Because yeah, I was very
25 disappointed that they weren't more respectful of the

1 attorney that was asking him questions and I thought --
2 you know, I was hoping the judge would say something and
3 he didn't and I think he -- and then as the room got
4 crowded with more sheriff, I'm thinking this is
5 interesting. You know, every time a sheriff is on the
6 witness stand there's all these sheriffs that were
7 present.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

9 MR. MORALES: And it was causing a lot of
10 distractions because they were opening the doors right
11 behind the judge. And so, I wrote a note to the judge
12 saying, judge, there's a lot of distractions for us, as
13 jurors, that people are coming in and out and, you know,
14 some of these individuals are talking, these are law
15 enforcement talking behind there, by the clerk. It was
16 very distracting.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did it look like there was
18 some type of influence trying to persuade on some ways
19 that --

20 MR. MORALES: It was impacting my concentration.
21 So, I would think if I was a law enforcement officer on
22 the witness stand and looking at my fellow officers listen
23 to every word I said, yeah, I was sure that would impact.

24 We were asked later, by the public defender's
25 office, to give comment on our experience.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you say?

2 MR. MORALES: I shared what I shared with you.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

4 MR. MORALES: And I'm still hoping to finish a
5 letter to the judge. He sent a letter to us and I'm sure
6 all of us, I got one anyway, asking my input. And I just
7 feel, again, you know, boy, there needs -- there's work
8 that needs in our court system.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum. How would you feel
10 when you're at a -- conducting a public meeting and you
11 have influential figures representing some interest group
12 or their own individual interests, how would you be able
13 to listen to the interests and separate it from the
14 individual, not letting it maybe influence the decision
15 that you have to make in redrawing the lines?

16 MR. MORALES: I believe with support of legal
17 counsel, I believe, hopefully, they'll be there and the
18 other Commissioners will give strength and support to
19 elected officials that would come to those meetings to
20 realize what we're about, and it's about them and the
21 public that's there and we're here, you know, to help and
22 to serve. I don't see it impacting me or any one of the
23 Commissioners. I believe that's the job are doing, you as
24 a Panel, to make sure that the people you select, that
25 we're there for our integrity, and trust, and leadership

1 for the State of California.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In your work experience have
3 you -- do you maintain contacts with elected officials in
4 any way?

5 MR. MORALES: Yeah, county board of supervisors,
6 because of the Gang Task Force that I'm working on. I
7 think -- I'm known to speak out and if I'm asking an
8 elected official for something, I'm hoping they would
9 follow through and sometimes I could be a thorn in their
10 side because if they don't follow through they will be
11 hearing, not only from me, from the community.

12 It's only for those that wanted to work with these
13 issues and a lot of it has been on unemployment, and youth
14 issues, and family, social issues that I've worked on,
15 education. And it's hard to find elected officials that
16 stay with that, especially they move on and go to other
17 positions. I think that's always the case is that
18 somebody might be interested -- an elected official might
19 be interested in education and then they get elected to
20 another position and then that's it, you don't hear from
21 them anymore.

22 But, no, it's hard to find individuals that truly
23 care about a community and these issues I've spoken on,
24 crime, and youth and education. You have a couple that
25 do, county board of supervisors that do want to see change

1 and so I might be with them every -- once a month on what
2 are we going to do, and what's possible?

3 So, it's limited. I think I've kind of learned a
4 lot on who really wants to help. My time is valuable for
5 my family and the work I do, and so I try to make sure
6 that if somebody, an elected official really wants to help
7 that I'm going to have to educate them a lot on the social
8 issues and that, if I do, that they will bear some fruit
9 in their leadership and make an impact.

10 And so right now, hopefully, with this Youth
11 Commission, that will bear fruit and it will develop to
12 something that's going to serve the kids of our county.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: For those officials that have
14 your ear, what type of relationship do you have with them?

15 MR. MORALES: Type of relationship?

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

17 MR. MORALES: Just professional. I mean when --
18 for instance, the Fifth District Supervisor, it's all
19 dealing with youth issues, trying to get this commission
20 going and -- I don't know, they're time is limited and so
21 when I worked with this -- the three-day conference for
22 stakeholders on the gang issues, I had to work with city
23 council members and the mayors.

24 And everybody's looking to see if this is going to
25 be successful, is it going to fail. And because it's

1 taking more time than most people expect, you've had a lot
2 of officials kind of step out.

3 And again, I'm trying to deal with the issues and
4 they're based -- these are community meetings, or at their
5 office in dealing with youth issues at this point. But
6 that's it, I don't go out to dinner with anybody or things
7 like that. Yeah, it's just what it relates to the
8 community and the needs of the community, that's pretty
9 much it.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: If you were approached by any
11 of these elected officials as a Commissioner, outside a
12 public meeting and they had their own agenda, for whatever
13 reason, that they felt comfortable telling you why they
14 should draw the lines in a certain area a certain way,
15 what would you tell them?

16 MR. MORALES: Conversation's ended, something I do
17 not want to discuss. And I believe they would know that
18 and know that about me and my integrity.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned family's
20 important to you.

21 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you believe the
23 redistricting effort is going to require a significant
24 amount of your personal time and involvement?

25 MR. MORALES: Yes.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are you prepared to commit to
2 that?

3 MR. MORALES: Yes. Just marched off my daughter
4 to college and that was a big step, and then I have a 12-
5 year-old son that has quite a few uncles and aunts. My
6 wife has a big family there and so that they're there for
7 him. They're taking him to practice right now. So, it's
8 something that I've talked to him about, when dad does
9 something that I'm not available for your practice or
10 homework, it's something that's important and it's going
11 to impact your life, too. It's something that I've
12 modeled since they were born to be a leader, not a
13 follower.

14 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

16 MR. MORALES: And didn't know that this would ever
17 happen, especially when I saw the 30,000 application I
18 thought no way, you know.

19 (Laughter.)

20 MR. MORALES: But as I read into it I said, boy,
21 they're really talking about equality and integrity and I
22 go, man, this -- I've never seen this on any legislation,
23 you know, as far as -- I mean, our Founding Fathers,
24 Declaration of Independence, but this is incredible to see
25 this opportunity, you know, that anybody that's picked to

1 serve the people. And I believe it will impact this -- I
2 mean because there's not another commission in California
3 that's being processed this way, so this will impact the
4 country.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How important is the
6 transparency aspect to you?

7 MR. MORALES: It's everything.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

9 MR. MORALES: I mean, I think about my kids going,
10 Dad, why did you do that? Or our students, I have an
11 open-door policy, they can come to my office and ask
12 questions or complain about a teacher, or supplies aren't
13 there, and it keeps you humble.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

15 MR. MORALES: And it's what my mom was about, you
16 know, raising 11 kids and being involved in the community,
17 and working on HUD programs, and how she did that I don't
18 know. And it's always when I see her, at 84 years of age,
19 you know, and what are you doing, son? And I'm trying to
20 explain to her about this process and good, you know,
21 you'll do good. And because of who she was, honest, and
22 helping others, and you just get that -- that strength,
23 that inner strength to help people that are less fortunate
24 than you.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me a little bit

1 about the Foursquare Church?

2 MR. MORALES: Yes. Foursquare Church.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

4 MR. MORALES: The Foursquare Church is a -- it's a
5 church in our community and they work with a lot of
6 different things in the community, with kids. They've got
7 a "You Turn" program for kids out there in the community,
8 not kids that just go to church, but they work with kids
9 that are at-risk and mentoring them, providing trips for
10 them, camping trips and such.

11 They have a program for people who are trying to
12 deal with substance abuse issues, they have that there for
13 them, and the community. They give food out to the
14 community.

15 It's a church that gives and does good at it, and
16 it's a well-mixture, it represents our community, it's a
17 mixed population in there and I appreciate that. When
18 you're there and listening to the word of God and we're
19 all looking at each other and getting to know one another,
20 and doing work out there in the community it's good to
21 see, because it's about sincerity, honesty and caring for
22 one another, and it's a good place to see that.

23 You know, and it's a good place for me to get
24 volunteers to do work out there. But they know what I'm
25 about, you know, when I ask for something, I need you to

1 come and help some of the students at our school, or
2 whatever, and so you know you can trust that they would
3 want to help, you don't have put pressure on them, but you
4 know who wants to help kids.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are they heavily involved in
6 your activities on a regular basis?

7 MR. MORALES: No, I -- no, I'm usually the one
8 that's out there in the community doing things that are
9 outside of the church. My wife goes to the juvenile hall
10 or I do the volunteer work on my own.

11 Yeah, they got enough -- there's not a lot of
12 volunteers in our community right now and so I think
13 they're overwhelmed with the requests they're getting.

14 I sent a lot of our students --

15 MS. HAMEL: One minute.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

17 MR. MORALES: -- that can't afford counseling
18 services, it's free over and so I usually try to request
19 that on a limited basis for families that just need
20 guidance, and need it now, they're in desperation and so
21 they provide counseling.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Does the Foursquare Church
23 financially contribute to any political campaigns?

24 MR. MORALES: No, not that I know of, no.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No. Thank you.

1 MR. MORALES: You're welcome.

2 MR. RUSSO: Thank you, Ms. Spano.

3 Does the Panel have any follow-up questions at
4 this time?

5 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I do, but I can wait for your
7 questions.

8 MR. RUSSO: I have a couple of questions.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, you can go ahead and then
10 I can ask mine.

11 MR. RUSSO: Thank you.

12 I'd like to take you back to your jury service
13 again and, hopefully, we're not beating this to death.
14 But as you know, when the Commission is formed one of the
15 most important things for them is to not reach a deadlock
16 where they can't make a decision, because if they become
17 deadlocked then decisions about redistricting are taken
18 away from them and would go to the courts.

19 So, given your experience with a jury that has
20 reached a deadlock, let me pose a hypothetical to you.
21 Let's say you're on the Commission and the Commission
22 has -- cannot reach agreement on how to draw district
23 lines for a particular district and let's say the majority
24 feels the district lines ought to be drawn in one way, and
25 you're a part of a substantial minority, but a minority

1 that believes they should be drawn in a different way and
2 the two camps are feeling very strongly about their
3 positions.

4 And in your position with the group, the minority
5 group, would it be your position that we're right and
6 that's -- we're just not going to reach an agreement or
7 would you take some action to try to bridge the gap
8 between the two groups and, if so, what would you do?

9 MR. MORALES: I believe in the jury situation
10 there wasn't a lot of time, you could see that the jurors
11 wanted to go. And so, to me, that was unfortunate because
12 I believe that with more dialogue and understanding we
13 could have educated the rest of the jurors, but the time
14 element wasn't there.

15 Here, you're talking about Commissioners being
16 elected for ten years and so that's a lot of time. And I
17 think what's important is to develop trust, and team
18 effort and so at times it's going to be important to --
19 not to work to a deadlock, to understand that we need to
20 work together and that we need to compromise.

21 And, specifically, there's going to be more time,
22 obviously, with this Commission to be able to talk and
23 understand why the majority has made that choice.

24 And a lot of times I'm -- from my experience it
25 could be at ignorance, just at times when I've sat on a

1 board and we tabled things because we're not in agreement
2 on voting on a certain situation, so it gives us more time
3 to reflect.

4 And I could imagine at times, too, because
5 sometimes some of the meetings I sit on you do get tired.
6 Like I've been traveling quite a bit and so that's an
7 important factor, the human factor could set in.
8 Sometimes it's important for the leadership to see that
9 and to take a break, maybe we need to have a reprieve and
10 understand that.

11 But I think key is the team effort and the fact
12 that we have to work together to compromise.

13 You know, and hypothetically speaking, I'm sure
14 there would be an important reason if I was going to be,
15 you know, in a minority on an issue, it would only be a
16 reason that they're not understanding something that I
17 feel strongly on, that either I'm educated on or I see
18 something. But again, I definitely understand it's
19 important.

20 Because I think one of the downfalls of this
21 Commission, if we do create more deadlock for the State,
22 then it's going to be a negative factor for the State, so
23 it would important to be able to compromise and feel, with
24 that compromise, more cohesion and for the next time maybe
25 people would be more sensitive to the minority group that

1 we did give in to the majority, and we'll work better
2 together and find some better understanding.

3 MR. RUSSO: Okay. I'd like to ask you a question
4 about your work on the Workforce Investment Board. You've
5 already indicated that you were appointed to that position
6 by the board of supervisors of the county.

7 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

8 MR. RUSSO: You may know -- already know this, but
9 I'll go ahead and state it, that under the Voters First
10 Act there are certain restrictions that apply to members
11 of the Commission once they are appointed, and one of the
12 restrictions is that once you become appointed to the
13 Commission you can no longer serve in an appointed
14 position at the county level.

15 So, the Bureau has put together some regulations
16 that are out there and that are nearing adoption and, long
17 story short, if those regulations are adopted, it sounds
18 like you would not be able to serve, continue to serve on
19 the Workforce Investment Board if you were on the Citizens
20 Redistricting Commission.

21 And so, the question to you is would you be
22 willing to give up your position on the Workforce
23 Investment Board in order to be able to participate as a
24 member of the Commission?

25 MR. MORALES: Yes.

1 MR. RUSSO: Okay. In your supplemental
2 application you talked about your work with the Team
3 American Project, and in talking about that work you
4 indicated that your objective was to develop culturally
5 sensitive curriculum for teachers and to eliminate a
6 cultural bias.

7 Can you tell us a little bit how you go -- went
8 about diagnosing the problem and what you did to try to
9 develop that?

10 MR. MORALES: I don't know if I said dealing with
11 cultural biases, I think it was more ignorance on not
12 understanding the culture. I think that was a key factor
13 we noticed in a lot of the school districts that they did
14 not understand the culture, or were involved with it, in
15 some of the work they were doing.

16 I'm sorry, but the latter part of your question
17 was?

18 MR. RUSSO: Sure. And I'm just looking from the
19 application where it talks about addressing cultural bias
20 in the classroom and developing a culturally sensitive
21 curriculum. So, I don't want to misinterpret what you're
22 saying here.

23 What I'm trying to understand is what it was that
24 you did to try to address these issues, since these are
25 certainly important issues, in the work that you did with

1 this project?

2 MR. MORALES: Some of the things that were
3 invaluable was literally walking into the audience and
4 shaking their hand, and you can see there was
5 apprehension, and that was a good example.

6 The other things was walking through the
7 educators, in their life there with the students, asking
8 them how engaged they were with their community or their
9 culture.

10 And it was interesting they, themselves, didn't
11 realize it. Like, for example, one community, one
12 district had never -- none of the teachers had never been
13 to a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

14 And for most of the 50 school districts I visited,
15 I think 99 percent of them had never did a home visit.

16 And so, it was just also, as they were asking
17 questions of me, I was able to engage and ask questions
18 that -- to them, to see if they were involved in the
19 culture of their community.

20 And they were simple questions, but they were
21 simple things that had been bypassed. And like they
22 weren't doing home visits, they weren't going to cultural
23 activities. It was, you know, from 7:30 to 2:30 they were
24 gone and not engaged.

25 So, those are things that I think are important

1 that I was engaging not only with hard documents and
2 curriculum activities, but also having a dialogue from
3 them. Being from a Hispanic community, or from any
4 community, whether it's Asian or African American is to
5 feel comfortable to walk out in that audience and
6 especially as a teacher, telling that don't always stay
7 and be a talking head, go and shake hands with your
8 students. You know, say are you doing today, how is it
9 going?

10 As a teacher, especially a professional, you can
11 tell if your students are doing well or not, you can tell
12 if they're fatigued or tired.

13 You might be the first leader that -- or first
14 adult that cares about them. In a lot of the cases they
15 were. I mean, I would tell them that you are a role model
16 to them, whether you like it or not.

17 And so, these were simple things that I was
18 sharing with them, things that I found out in education,
19 in working with students. And so, I would engage with the
20 audience, myself, and that helped me and them to realize,
21 okay, you're not here as just a professional consultant,
22 you're really engaging with us, you're really wanting to
23 get involved with us. And it opened the door to really
24 get dialogue in a sense of ease and trust, I think that
25 was important.

1 And so -- and, also, you had some of the other
2 cultures that were teachers and professionals, they felt
3 comfortable to speak out, that this is how I feel as an
4 African American in this community, you know, as an
5 educator.

6 And it was -- it was exciting because people were
7 being honest with one another there, in those communities,
8 they were starting -- we were -- we started the dialogue,
9 they finished it with one another. And to me that was
10 powerful that you allowed them, you helped them to start
11 having dialogues about their issues in their own
12 community. Because we're leaving that day, you know,
13 we're not going to -- we were to engage them and to help
14 them solve and work on their issues, look at their
15 leadership and come up with answers to their own issues.

16 MR. RUSSO: You, yourself, have indicated, of
17 course, that you've worked extensively with the Hispanic
18 community.

19 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

20 MR. RUSSO: Can you relate to us any experiences
21 that you've had working with other communities, other
22 racial or ethnic communities and particularly, perhaps, in
23 instances when their -- when the interests of these other
24 communities may have conflicted with that of the Hispanic
25 community?

1 MR. MORALES: Yes, quite a bit. In our own
2 county, Santa Barbara County, when I lived in Santa
3 Barbara or any parts of the county, there were issues --
4 if we're dealing with the gang issues, because at times
5 that there were Hispanic gangs attacking other ethnic
6 groups then, you know, it was important for me also to
7 listen to the other parts of the community, and work with
8 them, and understand them.

9 When I do presentations to the law enforcement, a
10 lot of times they were predominantly not minority that
11 represented law enforcement, and I had to be sensitive
12 from their questions and comments where I was coming from.
13 I'm not just coming from an Hispanic perspective, but I'm
14 coming as somebody that's interested in bringing solutions
15 to the community and understanding where you're coming
16 from as a professional.

17 Different times where I lived at, when I lived in
18 West Los Angeles worked with, you know, different ethnic
19 groups, where they were Jewish, Asian, or Anglo American,
20 working with them in the work that I did. Shoot, living
21 here in -- well, living in the San Jose area, a mixture of
22 different ethnic groups that I had to work with, Asian,
23 Cuban, it wasn't predominantly Hispanic, and serving them.

24 So, in the project that we're working with, the
25 Gang Task Force, it didn't represent just the Hispanic

1 community, it represented the whole community of Santa
2 Maria Valley, so we had to be sensitive to all of those
3 issues on different aspects of the community, you know, as
4 far as it wasn't just a Hispanic issue. You had kids that
5 were getting in trouble from different -- the Filipino
6 community, the Asian community, the African American
7 community, and listen to those sectors of the community
8 and to address that, and to make sure it wasn't just one
9 cultural or one segment of the population that we're
10 addressing, we're addressing all of the youth in the
11 community and the different issues they were dealing with.

12 So, you know, when I look I don't see color in
13 this time in my life, I see humans, I see hearts, I see
14 people that are wanting to work together and have the
15 skills or the needs to make this one community.

16 MR. RUSSO: I have no other questions.

17 Members of the Panel?

18 CHAIR AHMADI: I just have one clarifying
19 question. In response to Steven's first question, when he
20 asked you about the deadlock, should the Commission reach
21 a deadlock, did I hear -- it's just to clarify for myself,
22 did I hear you say that the Commission has ten years to
23 work on the redistricting, did I hear you correctly?

24 MR. MORALES: No. Well, my thinking was that the
25 appointments are for ten years.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Right.

2 MR. MORALES: So, unlike some of the boards are
3 for two or three years that I sit on and for this, this is
4 a long period of time that you might be working with
5 individuals and I think it's important that -- that we'll
6 be working at this for quite a bit of time, and we'll be
7 developing relationships and, you know, working statewide
8 and it's important to -- not to be in deadlocks, to know
9 how to work together and compromise.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: But you understand that the maps
11 are supposed to be drawn and approved by September 15th,
12 based on the Voters First Right Act.

13 MR. MORALES: Uh-hum.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

15 MR. MORALES: You're welcome.

16 MR. RUSSO: Any other questions?

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You asked my question so,
18 thank you.

19 MR. RUSSO: Oh, sorry about that.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, I have no other
21 questions.

22 MR. RUSSO: Okay. Ms. Spano, do you have any
23 questions?

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Actually, I'm not sure if we
25 covered this but, if we did, forgive me.

1 You said you were fortunate enough to be involved
2 in the survey of 1,100 high school students to better
3 understand their challenges and their top ten needs for a
4 successful graduation.

5 Can you tell us about the survey and your role in
6 it?

7 MR. MORALES: Actually, had to develop a survey,
8 myself.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

10 MR. MORALES: I'd never put one together and I had
11 to learn fairly quickly how to do that. And then the
12 questions that are put on there, besides the format of the
13 survey that was important, how to distribute them, finding
14 out the different schools who were the interested -- the
15 student councils on each school district, the sponsors.
16 There were sponsors -- find out that there were teachers
17 that were sponsors of some of these student commissions or
18 government, reaching out to them and they would -- would
19 they partake and be involved in helping distribute it to
20 them.

21 And then we worked out, fortunately for me, that
22 some of the teachers were able to allow me to meet with
23 their student governments and find out why I was doing
24 this, and so they helped to distribute that.

25 So, the other part was the questions. And so a

1 lot of the questions I went back on a lot of the work I
2 had done with kids, the anger management programs I ran,
3 or the gang programs I was involved in, some of the issues
4 they were dealing with and a lot of the research I had
5 done.

6 So, the questions were laid out, asking them
7 multiple choice, you know, what is the number one thing as
8 a high school student that you see as a barrier to
9 graduating? Because so many kids that I was working with
10 didn't graduate because of all these barriers, multiple
11 barriers, right?

12 So, this was an opportunity to hear from students
13 that were on campus, not going through expulsion, to share
14 their challenges, what do they think are barriers to them.

15 So, it was a two-page questionnaire and it was
16 with multiple choices and --

17 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks.

19 MR. MORALES: -- I think the key was reading all
20 those surveys. I mean, it was one thing doing it and
21 getting the students to fill them out, and then getting
22 all those surveys and putting it into a final summary
23 report to the principals and administration.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How time intensive was that?

25 MR. MORALES: It was quite a bit. Because this

1 was the first time it had ever been done and I had to get
2 this information from the students, from their comments,
3 and some of them wrote little notes on the surveys, rather
4 than just check off, which is important to do, and get all
5 of that put into a clump of clay, and then get it to
6 educators and administrators at their level of
7 understanding.

8 And so, it took a while to go through all of that
9 and then get it in their hands, to make them understand
10 this is what your students are asking for. This is
11 important data and, hopefully, you'll do something with
12 it.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What kinds of issues did you
14 least anticipate?

15 MR. MORALES: A lot of them were looking for --
16 they didn't have goals. A lot of them were looking for an
17 adult in their life to guide them, were looking for a
18 coach. It was interesting, they wanted a coach. They
19 wanted guidance.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Guidance, yeah.

21 MR. MORALES: Against what a lot of educators
22 thought, that students were rebellious and very
23 independent, they were really looking for guidance and
24 direction, input into their life, somebody they can speak
25 to within a week's time. That was -- that said a lot,

1 that kids were not -- didn't have access to an adult on
2 issues that were developing within a week. And to me,
3 from what I -- the work I've done, kids get in trouble
4 within a week, a day, and if they don't have somebody they
5 can go to, that's where it gets -- turns for the worse.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are you comfortable looking
7 at complex datasets, again, doing the Census data and
8 applying complex areas of law to it, to arrive at
9 decisions that involve qualitative analysis, also?

10 MR. MORALES: Yes.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

12 MR. MORALES: Especially with others that have
13 expertise that are beyond -- is beyond mine.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

15 MR. MORALES: You're welcome.

16 MR. RUSSO: With that, there is about two and a
17 half minutes left of our 90-minute interview. Would you
18 care to make a closing statement?

19 MR. MORALES: Sure. I believe when given the
20 opportunity to understand the true purpose of this
21 Commission that the people of any circumstance will become
22 involved in the community when the purpose is understood
23 to be for the good of all.

24 And for the Panel, if -- I wanted to ask you what
25 you all thought was the most challenging aspects of your

1 decisions as Panel members or what is the single most
2 impact this Commission, you believe, will have on
3 California, in your estimation?

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Since you're looking at me, let me
5 start with that.

6 (Laughter.)

7 CHAIR AHMADI: The first question was what was the
8 most challenging aspect of the decision making? Honestly,
9 it's the qualification of the Applicants. So much talent,
10 which makes it so difficult for us to make the decision,
11 and I really appreciate having the opportunity to learn
12 from this process, but at the same time it's challenging.

13 And the second question was?

14 MR. MORALES: What is the single most impact this
15 Commission could possibly have on California?

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, that's -- since you're asking
17 about a single most impact in a way --

18 MS. HAMEL: One minute.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. -- changing the destiny
20 of residents of California, if successful.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: On the Commission or as a
22 Panel Member, making decisions?

23 MR. MORALES: Either?

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What?

25 MR. MORALES: Oh, as a Panel Member?

