

CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)

Voter Participation Workgroup

May 1, 2024 | 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. | Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Stanley Tsao and Christopher Hays

Absent: Chair Jude Ahmed

Special Guests: Angela Kubota and Halei Watkins

Council Staff: Jonathan Fowler, Tania Mondaca, and Terna Wilson

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Jude Ahmed was absent. Member Chris Hays was asked to lead the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m.

2. March 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Member Tsao moved approval of the March 5, 2024 meeting minutes. Member Hays seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. King County Elections Presentation

King County Elections staff, Angela Kubota, provided a presentation on voter's pamphlets.

Member Tsao commented that getting another language in the future may be difficult depending on different language needs. Tsao then asked if there is anything the CEOC workgroup should be thinking of recommending in terms of larger system needs, resources, money, personnel needed to add languages. Kubota responded that adding languages is a challenge for graphic designers and proofers. Added that the process could benefit from having more staff and more money, though there is a lack of budgetary space. Kubota explained that being able to use plain language would improve the process and help improve understanding, since the full text of a ballot measure is written by lawyers and is not easy to understand.

Member Hays asked if there is a minimum number of words candidates need to submit in their statements. Kubota responded yes, word count limits depend on the size of the jurisdiction and there is a page limit.

Member Hays asked if there are any rules or regulations about what people can put in their statements. Kubota responded yes, there are county rules. This includes no libel, formatting guidelines, and other nuances. Teams review every statement twice, looking for inappropriate words and comments about opponents. If a violation is found, the candidate is notified of removal/edit and the reason for rejection. KCE will only take out the violating part.

Member Hays asked how KCE determines what is most important to include on the education pages asking if this determination could include community involvement or a panel of decisionmakers. Halei Watkins responded that they make the decision in house due to production time constraints. Explained that an annual review process could potentially be implemented to make the decision more impactful.

Member Hays asked if there has been discussion about using pages to notify the public about misinformation or disinformation. Also asked if pages can be used to educate the public about ballot processing. Watkins responded that the pamphlets include media literacy information, a section on how to find elections information that is reliable, audit and quality control section, and a section on the lifecycle of a ballot.

Hays asked if there have been discussions about different mediums of delivering information. Kubota responded that they have a digital version of the voter's pamphlet available online. Watkins added that a video version of the pamphlet is also available for some candidates on King County TV's website for county level people and Seattle offers video for Seattle candidates.

Member Tsao suggested that if there is a panel created to decide what to include on the education pages, then it may be beneficial to reach out to the language communities to find out their educational needs.

4. Discussion and Reflection

Member Hays remarked that a panel or committee revolving around the education pages of the pamphlet would be interesting to explore. Also commented that the plain language discussion was important and maybe something to follow up with.

Member Tsao would like some guidance and would like to check in with other workgroup members to connect on topics and refresh recommendation suggestions.

Staffer Mondaca said that staff can create a document with the topic, date, presentation title, and highlights for all meetings. Added they can review meeting minutes to compile the information into a list for review.

5. Staff Updates

Staffer Mondaca reported that the next CEOC meeting is on May 15th.

6. Adjournment

Member Hays adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:03 a.m.