

## **CITIZENS' ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CEOC)**

Voter Participation Workgroup

March 5, 2024 | 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. | Virtual Meeting

**Members Present:** Chair: Jude Ahmed, Stanley Tsao, Hanna Floss and Christopher Hays

**Absent:** N/A

**Special Guests:** Naheed Aaftaab and Janice Case

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

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Ahmed called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

#### **2. February 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Member Floss moved approval of the February 6, 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, Naheed Aaftaab, provided a presentation on KCE's language access efforts, in response to questions submitted by workgroup.

Member Tsao commented that the voter pamphlet can be a mouthful and asked if KCE can do micro targeting assistance for those with highest need. Additionally, asked how different community member that have the most need and are members that want to vote but are facing barriers are identified. Suggested that KCE can work with community partners to figure out a strategy to target assistance and discern prime audience.

Aaftaab responded that she would like to know what's going on with traditional and nontraditional Chinese. Member Tsao explained that there are different Chinese dialects for the various regions of China, and choosing one implies taking a position.

Chair Ahmed asked if KCE has heard from other jurisdictions about the tools they use for population data. Aaftaab responded that other counties use decennial data or another tool. Explained that King County uses public health records and KCE also uses immigration patterns. Case added that most counties just comply with federal law, in terms of language options. Since the Voter' Rights Act has not been updated, many counties do not offer the languages that they probably should, Case added.

Member Tsao commented that some election candidates sometimes translate election materials themselves, and these versions may differ from other materials, so there may be some differences in information dissemination. Added that they translate to languages based on community population data.

#### **4. End of Year Report Update**

Chair Ahmed asked for the members' thoughts about Chair Juarez's briefing of the CEOC 2023 Annual Report at the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee.

Member Floss thought it was great, added that the council seemed interested and engaged.

#### **5. Discussion and Reflection**

Member Tsao said that all the learning and presentations have been helpful but is curious about what are the resulting recommendations. Asked if workgroup is looking for one high level recommendation to submit by August or September and how they are going to get to one or two high level recommendations.

Chair Ahmed responded saying that she thinks coming up with a list of 10 to 20 ideas is a good approach. Added that they can think about gaps, then look at themes or areas that can be grouped, and then think about how to start moving to solutions that can be generated.

Member Tsao commented that using language access guidelines from the 60s is dated and suggested that workgroup potentially asked county to look into creating an equitable system of deciding language options.

Member Floss reported on state legislative bills that were passed that are relevant to voter participation: curing bill, pilot program for signature verification, and ballot rejection change. Remarked that state legislation is sometimes where voter participation will change, and King County is restricted in ways. Ahmed added that a possible recommendation could be for King County to dedicate more resources to lobbying at the state level.

Chair Ahmed said she has been thinking about how voter pamphlets can be clearer and more succinct and accessible. Member Tsao added that when candidates create pamphlets, they may write information differently. Member Floss reported that there was a bill passed that prohibits outside actors from interfering in elections material and that pamphlet editors must live within the jurisdiction. Tsao commented that the purpose of voter pamphlets is to inform the voters about the candidate's statements and initiatives, thus they should find a new format that isn't long and wordy.

#### **6. Staff Updates**

Staffer Fowler asked members to check emails and to expect an email soon about the AI impact lunch and learn. Staffer suggested that members keep in touch with each other to continue discussion and reflections and to discuss possible recommendations.

#### **7. Adjournment**

Chair Ahmed adjourned the meeting at about 4:02 PM.