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EAC

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U.S. Election Assistance Commission

>> Thank you for being here. I'm calling this public meeting of U.S. Election Assistance Commission to order. Before we begin, I'd like to ask everyone in attendance to rise and recite the pledge of allegiance.

(pledge of allegiance)

So for the first order of business, I am calling role and establish a forum. Commissioner Hicks?

>> Here.

>> With that, we will move on to the adoption of the agenda. I will take a motion as submitted.

>> Move.

>> Submitted.

>> So good morning again, thank you all for joining us. The EAC is grateful to be here in Los Angeles County. I want to express our appreciation to Dean Logan, registrar reporter County clerk and his

team for hosting and working with us on this event. I also want to recognize the hard work and dedication and preparation of officials and workers. Some are with us here today. Thank you for being here. Over election has a story, but you never know what it is going to be. At this time, we saw election officials preparing for many scenarios. It has grown increasingly complex and the elections community faces numerous challenges. Election officials created contingency plans, painted in table top exercises, took additional training, hired more workers when they could and created communication strategies and messages. These efforts help to minimize the unexpected. This included unprecedented efforts by Russian and other foreign influence actors to undermine confidence in the U.S. election process. The use of AI to mimic president Biden's voice and hurricanes Helene hitting the southeast weeks before election day. And drop box fires in the northwest and the influx of hoax bomb threats made to election officials and polling locations across the country. The 2024 election demonstrate how the U.S. election community at the federal, state and local levels come together in many ways to insure the accuracy and intake gritty -- integrity around elections. Today we will hear about officials on the ground about their experiences administering the 2024 elections. We will discuss the ongoing and new issues facing this election cycle. Lessons learned and what needs to be done to continue to improve oh, elections going forward. Thank you. Chair Palmer;

>> Chairman Palmer: Thank you. We have thousands of election officials and poll workers across the country. The election officials across the country and we want to express how grateful we are with those administrators and the poll workers that serve at the polls of the election. The election was a success. Things are not always perfect, but we should step back and examine how we can improve the process, lean forward and how we can identify for the future and view technology to help this process improve. As we conclude another presidential election, bipartisan policies and investments are needed to increase voter confidence in our elections. As we enter 2025, what will be the vision of the election administration community? What can we do together to the city and state local officials? What is the potential of partnerships well it comes together to federal, state, local level for funding and assistance of states. One was communication to voters. When concerns arose over the United States postal service, processing and potential delays well communicated to those working with us on those that are voting when they needed to get their ballot in the mail in a timely manner. And hurricane Helene, voters sometimes their voting process was disrupted. And come that hurricane went southeast, election officials assessed how they are going to adjust voting and communicate those with a combination of voters. In the end, I think

we did a great job communicating and improve. Thank you for all you have done. We'll continue to do to the election community and we'll hear about our witnesses and truly represent this region. Back to you.

>> Thank you, commissioner Palmer. Commissioner Hicks?

>> Commissioner Hicks: Thank you. I believe we have found every state and territory this year. Every single person I talked to express their (?). We're essentially grateful to the million workers and stepped up to serve their communities and their environments. Every election is challenging and even more so, everything certifying stage results, preparations for the next elections were not stopped after election day. As we conclude the election day, we need to work together as election community and beyond to insure (inaudible).

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you, commissioner Hicks. Commissioner McCormick?

>> Commissioner McCormick: All the voting staff you could -- we could not have done that without you. We also remind so many officials that these officials stepped up and worked through built election for the first time. We all work together. There are so many very smart, talented and capable officials reaching out to others to provide tips, share documents and improve. The EAC works hard to improve the elections. They have commission and resources and we're still here now post election with information resources on audits, visiting communication and information and now the election communication process. Our mission is to improve the elections and continue to work with that. We are committed to keep supporting. We look forward the visions and we thank you all for being here. Thank you.

>> commissioner HOVLAND: Next. We will be joined by Shirley Weber as our post Secretary of State here and certainly like to welcome you for any opening remarks you would like to share, secretary.

>> SHIRLEY WEBER: Sounds good. Thank you. Well, good morning.

>> Everyone: Good morning.

>> SHIRLEY WEBER: One more time. Good morning.

>> Everyone: Good morning.

>> SHIRLEY WEBER: There is a gad time. I was warning the face of ply registrar voter in L.A. and saw a smile on his face. So I knew all of the material had been turned and I see that on many of your faces that this is a good day, this is a good experience.

I want to welcome you to California, the largest voting base there the nation. We have 22.5 million registered voters in California and 84% have actually registered to vote. The potential is 22.5 million and represents 84% of those eligible to vote. We had an amazing election. I want to compliment California on that and across the nation. We have -- we all know there are many things this could

have happened and some folks think that things should have happened and their thing has did happen, but the greatness of it is regardless of what happened, we came through it. We came flew it with the same principles and values of transparency and honesty and equality -- honesty and equality that should be the hallmark of the elections. We didn't start when we had 29 bomb threats in California in all those places. Our folks knew what to do, how to get out of the building, when it come back into the building and came back and continued working. Our support from our judicial individuals are support from our -- our support from police officers go all individuals who helped us through the process was standard and no panic that took place. California came through the elections extremely well. Everyone I talked to said there was no drama, no this or that. Things that could have happened in a state this size did not happen. Yes we're slow and counting, but we're slow and counting because we have a lot to count and ways in which we count and try to make sure that every voter really has an opportunity for their vote to count. So I tonight thank all our folks in California and all of you who come to California and who also had amazing elections and great results and whether we want to lose, depending on your preference, reality is that we came through it and we came through it quite well and we'll also have complainers and lawsuits in California. We have many of those. But we're used to that and prepared for it and we know what we're going is important.

I want to thank HAVA. It has been extremely important. I've been Secretary of State not quite four years, and I learned a tremendous amount about elections. One of the things I learned and reinforced over and over is that people who run elections from the top to the bottom are totally committed to this democracy. There was not a person who had negative commented about the fact it was not worth it or worth their time or energy, but they understood the role they played in making that happen. I was continually surprised and pleased by that because of what you hear in the press and what you know as a fact on the ground, they don't match at all. Those folks know my mother was a poll worker. Our house was a polling place. Not just a poll worker, but a polling place. I walked up in middle school about to school and back oh, election day because my dad had transformed our living room into a polling site, a voting place and she was known as the polling lady in the community. So I grew up with this vision of democracy. I knew from day 1 it was extremely important to my parents. So I'm a second generation voter despite the fact my family was into this country about 200 years. I'm a second generation voter. I appreciate the work that HAVA has done. It is good to know come you're this far away, we have a federal government that still has an interest in elections, that tends to support our efforts, wants to help us and help fund our technology and help fund various efforts to combat mis and disinformation. I

can't thank you for all you did for California. When we were short on things, you were there to make sure we knew there was someone else watching and protecting and cheering for us. I want to say we had an amazing election. My first presidential election. We were all prepared and every morning that I met during the 11 days of the election, there would be this discussion. This is the problem we had last night, but we already resolved it. I love that. I love hearing that the next morning. They told me what took place and they had already resolved it. There were no lingering dramas left over and I want to thank our team in Sacramento, all the of the 58 counties that helped so much and work so hard and having those counties with different points of view, different views and challenges, it's amazing. I've been to visit counties that had 2,000 voters. You can imagine that compared to Los Angeles. 2 million? So you can imagine diversity, the size, the resources and different counties and yet there was not one county more committed than another County to making sure that this election was safe and fair and secure and that every California had an opportunity to have their voice heard in the national election. So thank you so much. We appreciate all you have done. I'm glad you come to California. I'm grateful the fires didn't take place all during the election, we had our challenges and we've had those happen before. But interestingly enough, whatever happens with changes and challenges, when we finish with leading the challenge, we rise up again and start back to work. So once again, welcome to California and thank you so much for putting us under agenda and having us here today. It's been a wonderful experience working with HAVA. Thank you so much.

>> Commissioner Hovland: It was a great reminder about a number of things. One, the scope and scale of California. We had a large number of international observer missions visit with EAC this year and one of the things that was always -- they're fascinated by the decentralized they were of the elections, but also the scale and scope of that. I think it is one of those hinges that is hard for many observers and really anyone who really dives into the process of our elections to recognize. Nothing exemplifies this more than our host. I know when other election officials from across the country hear about languages and scope of this operation is certainly mind anything boggling. Thank you. Registrar Reporter, County Clerk of Los Angeles County Dean Logan, thank you.

>> Dean Logan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and welcome, everybody. It is an honor to you have here at this facility, which for us is really a part of the story of the 2024 election cycle. We actually took occupation and moved into this facility in January of 2024 after a complete renovation. This used to be a Fry's electronic store. It is similar to a Best Buy. We squatted in the electronics store and we did vote by mail in the middle. Out of that, we were able to have a long-term lease and have this renovated into a valid

processing center that's been a game changer for Los Angeles County. The activities that take place here and the processing of voter ballots in L.A. county were spread out to four different locations. From a transparency standpoint, if you wanted to observe the election process, you had to decide do I want to be in Pomona watching the vote by mail or Downy watch think the tabulation or Norwalk. All of those activities have now consolidated into this facility. It is 144,000 square foot facility. Our tally system and operations are all here and we process close to 3.8 million ballots in this election at this facility and I was thinking secretary -- I don't know if I tonight admit this publicly, but I realize this is my 10th presidential cycle of being engaged with that in way, shape or manner. I think that it's not an exaggeration to say that I think this is probably the most secure and most transparent election, presidential election that I have seen. I think a lot of that goes to the comments you heard there commissioners, that you heard from secretary Webber. The amount of coordination and preparation and anticipation of this election really paid off for us. I think we were prepared for things that didn't happen and that's a good thing and we were prepared for those things that did happen and we were able to handle those in a way that maybe yes and maybe not everybody agreed with the outcome, but I think they were satisfied with the process. But we had the opportunity here to have the international observers, but we also had members of the house administration committee come during canvass period and take a tour and see how the process is working. I think those things make a big difference. I have to say from a local perspective, I feel somewhat obligated to say one of the things we anticipate in L.A. county silent very likelihood that the Los Angeles Dodgers will win another world series. And that takes place during our voting period. That means we will have the streets shut down in down town L.A. and have a victory parade. That will affect access to drop boxes and vote centers on those days. All joking aside, I never miss an opportunity to make a pitch for the Dodgers the, but joking aside, that is an example of what we're all prepared to deal with. We had our finger crossed on well they would sweep the series. It would be one day or the other day and that was part of our planning process. It's great to have you all here. I hope you had a chance to see the facility. It was designed to be secure, but also to be transparent recognizing the voting process belongs to the people. We're here to facilitate that process and comply with the regulatory environment. But the process belongs to the voters and they need to be able to see and know with confidence that their ballots are being handled and the outcomes are reflections of votes cast here in the County. I know that's true of all of the oh, election administrators here. Shout out to my colleagues here from California and my colleagues from way back and my days in Washington State and all of you who traveled here. We're pleased to have the

EAC and in addition to all the success that we had in 2024, I appreciate that you're already holding here and we're looking forward to what are the things we can anticipate in the future and how we can be prepared to secure successful elections. There is no shortage of ideas or challenges we know if to face. How do we continue to engage voters and get them involved? How do we make sure as we look at federal and state and local changes to the regulatory process that we do that with a voter experience mindset that we remember at the heart of it. The process belongs to the voter and any tweak, what is that going to mean for the voter and their ability to make sure their ballot is processed, continue adaptability whether a world series, a bomb threat or a fire or a flood. Those are all things that we have to be prepared to deal with and there are ways to make sure that the show goes on and we're able to continue. The other one, the last one I mention and I will mention this that's been on my mind is I was very cognizant this election cycle of the complexity of our ballot in California. It was a really long ballot. Contests that ranged from water district commissioner to president of the United States and we are out there talking to first-time voters or trying to get people that haven't been engaged before to be involved in the process and just realizing that opening that nail bam lot and seeing three pages can be somewhat overwhelming. Just make sure to continue to design the process in a way that meets people where they are and encourages them to payment. Thanks again for having the hearing and thanks for coming to this space. We wanted this space to be used for these meetings and thank you, commissioner Webber and look forward to a great discussion.

>> Commissioner HOVLAND: Thank you, Dean Logan for those remarks and for hosting at this facility. Really teed off a lot of the issues we're looking at here. First panel features state election officials. I'd like to welcome them up at this time. I will introduce them as they come up. We have Phil McGrane, the Idaho Secretary of State. Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the north Carolina state board of elections. Mandy vigil, the state director for New Mexico. And Joel Watson, Jr., deputy Secretary of State, communications for Louisiana. Thank you for being with us today. I know you prepared remarks. I welcome you to share those now. We'll start with secretary McGrane and go down the line.

>> PHIL McGRANE: Well, thank you. And I know Dean and everybody, it is really an election (inaudible). It is great to be in this space in particular, I am in awe. So it really is a privilege to be here and I thank the EAC for their support especially states like Idaho. It really makes a difference.

As I was listening to remarks from Secretary Webber interest Logan, I want you to know how blessed I feel going into this election. I say a prayer for election officials and I couldn't be more blessed. I was praying extra hard at this election. Not only did we have a

record for participation, but for the first time, (inaudible). So our prayers were answered. That's not just true for my beautiful state, but for us as a country. My career and following the 2000 election and here we are. We needed the opportunity. It was a good election. People could see the work and all the election. I feel fortunate to be a part of this community and fortunate to be here.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Mandy vigil?

>> MANDY VIGIL: Thank you, everyone. I am really honored to be here. Kind of reflect on all the things 2024. I want to say that I am incredibly proud of the work that we did in New Mexico in particular to make sure that we had a really accessible and successful election for all of the eligible voters. I think one of the items is that we had a relatively high turnout this time around. It was about 67% eligible voters participated. I think we were fortunate and a lot of great work over the past years and we were ready for election administration. Beyond that, we continue to modernize and continue efforts to improve and some of those things were electronic and how many were candidates and we had new reforms with tracking and exchange ballots with voters. So proud of the continued work we are doing and ultimately, participating with and also first-time voters this time around. (background voice) and some of our underrepresented community continue to feel they have (background voices) I look forward to all the conversation and I think no election is without challenges. We did see some things and I hesitate to say that next to my voters. But (background voices --

>> Over 5.7 billion ballots cast. But, um, but still as the night's largest state in the union is a testament to how we have put together a very strong team in over 100 counties. They are working to administer elections.

While we're still going in north Carolina with the 2024 general election in the state Supreme Court, it sprouted by 734 votes. We have several takeaways from the 2024 general election that reflect administration practices there North Carolina and throughout the country. Being a swing state with many contests on the ballot beyond the built contests, we knew the spotlight would be on us. We did not start planning enough from table top exercises at the state and local level with emergency management and other partners to continuing our twice per month huddles, our state conferences, our hubs, collaborative approach to work and our Monday morning kick offs, we trained for the moment. We exercised for the moment and we planned for the moment. Dotted I's and crossing Ts and advanced are well positioned when hurricane Helene went in to western North Carolina and after region. Again, our biggest challenge might be AI for just the swing state attention. Having an all-hazards approach, we prepared for the unknown and inhibited when disaster struck. We held to our frame. We do not stop elections. We figure out how to proceed. Our biggest take away this year with our

election -- our other administrators is never think it won't happen to you. It may not be a hurricane, but something is going to upset. And we must prepare and develop insurance policies that we hope will never be used, yet we're ready when, not if, the unexpected happens. I think that's what we proved in this election.

>> commissioner: Thank you, director Brinson Bell. The live stream is having some issues. So we want to address that. With that, Mr. Watson, the floor is yours.

>> Joel Watson: Good morning, everyone. I thank the EAC and Los Angeles County for having me in her place. And Louisiana also had issues and we were pleased that our early voting and number of records -- voting and number of records, one of those early persons in state history and on the final day is of early voting of over 100,000 voters in one day. One of the biggest things we learned about in this election cycle is how to communicate about election security. We instituted an election program that was three pronged, making it easy to understand, empowering our friends with the knowledge to share with others and meeting voters where they were. It is easy for us to get to the leads about election security. So we spoke about in plain language. We had the four Ps of election security, which is the people, the policies, procedures and the physical security. Secretary lane also spoke about the four Ps. We had a pilot program this year and they were handing out things detailing what the four Ps meant and another part of that pilot program was recruiting polling commissioners at our early voting sites. We saw almost 1,000 new election commissioners signed up through that program. Secretary lane also conducted a tour of the state where she lifted parishes and had local officials and staff. While she was, there she powered them with the same thing she uses with discussing election integrity. We can all be on the same page and help get the word out to help in their circles, people that may not have otherwise gotten a chance to talk to. During that tour, she also human groups and participated in radio interviews and (side voices) she was has to keep election safe and we get our message out in the security of our -- (side voices)

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Mr. Watson. I will now move on to questions. I will start out. Director Brinson Bell, officials prepare for unexpected events. We'll never know our contingency plan. Officials worked hard to insure voters had the resources to vote and I know for the rest of the country, we saw the pictures and the images and our hearts went out to all people impacted by the storms. I think one of the things always so amazing when I think about the elections is elections are run at the local level. People were running elections and experiencing those same tragedies in the loss of friends and family of their homes, et cetera. But they persevere and run our elections and it's that commitment to our democracy that really is inspiring and amazing. I was hoping you can share about the experience of managing the presidential election

in the wake of the hurricane and any advice you have for election officials as they update their contingency plans in the coming year.

>> I will set stage and give some take aways. You probably could discuss all of what happened.

So as I mentioned, here as moved into western -- Helene moved September the 26th. Just as we had started sending out our absentee by mailbag lots which were delayed because of a candidate dispute.

On Monday September 30th, 14 County election offices were unable to open and we had limited communication to even know if staff or board members were okay or not. We were in immediate communication with say emergency management who initially had to be focus on the rescue efforts and essential services but prioritized us because of the proximity starting in less than 20 days. Absentee ballot had to still go out and be received and that voter registration was at its peek. Even to be less than 40 days out from election day seemed out of reach. Within one week from the wrath of Helene, all county offices were there. No ballots ruined and no lives lost within our immediate election table. By the start of early voting on October the 17th, 76 of the planned ability sites in the 25 County disaster declared region opened with power and sufficient workers. By election day, a temporary road or alternate rout was reaching every isolated community and only seven event tents were needed as replacement voting sites. Is it truly remarkable and I have some voters to share. So these are taken in McDow County. And that's an interstate highway sign to the town that lost its early voting site. Eventually, they were able to get it cleaned out and able to use it later in the early voting period. Obviously the flood waters and the mud stretched above a highway interstates.

On the next slide, things were taken from a polling place in Poke County, another washed out bridge. And a foot of mud. You couldn't brush it out or sweep it out. There is equipment in to make these usable facilities again. And this was in people's homes. These were businesses. This is wherever the water chose to go and left its mark.

And then the next slide. These were various areas of just destruction that destroyed communities. They're still recovering. The postal service. We worked very closely obviously with them. But they had to address their own loss. This is the post office for the town of Marshall. It was flooded out and damaged and they had set up temporary postal mobile units and temporary post office set up for the county administration building. And it worked hand in hand with our elections office to be able to track ballots that were washed away from the mailboxes that went downstream and so forth.

I mentioned that we moved into some tents and those are featured on the next slide. These were being used for other occasions. But these were 20 feet by 66 feet. You can see the doors, the mats that were put down. This was not an actual -- these are not images of

a polling place, but these are the tents that state emergency management and FEMA resources helped us to put into place. Four of these were necessary in the county, which is where the worst hit areas were and one in each and Hayward county. Those are the pictures I wanted to share that give you some idea. But it is really far to grasp. I will say as much as the devastation you see now, they are open for, and tourism is struggling in this area. If you need a place to travel, the destruction was isolated and other areas are ready including the wonderful state that is decorated for Christmas. So they did not pay for my travel here. I lived in that region of the state for 20 years. So it is very dear.

So here are some of the take aways that any official should be mindful of. Build, exercise and maintain working relationships with emergency management and are the partners like IT services, SISA, the EAC, the FBI election because we had a lot of information. There are times of disaster. That was not lost on efforts and elections. Integrate with partners. All are stationed with the state board of elections on election day and we have done this for years. We started this process when I came in June of 2019. By 2020, we were set up at the emergency operation center so we can all be working together.

So, it is also important to have continuous engagement with the vendors, not just when you're doing an RFP or not just when you want them to be an exhibitor at your conference, but to keep them informed so that when disaster strikes, we had ballots that were ready to be printed and shipped. We were ready if the equipment had been damaged. But more importantly, they know us and know the area. They know what our needs are. They know what you need. If the equipment is on and the ballots are on, what do you need? They have had idea that people would need to be able to work and not have to worry go whether they had power back and fire up the crock pots and bring in wonderful desserts and so forth. If they doesn't have to worry about food on election day, what a stress that took off of people willing to work and not be struggling to know how to. Seize ESNS is one of the -- so ENSNS is one of the companies in the area and counties in the affected region and so they provided over 1800 meals on election day to workers in the affected counties. I think it came about and we keep those continuous engagements and relationships going. We had been very innovative. We looked at a lot of ways too incorporate technology. But in the end, I am glad I had been with this for 19 years and still know how to have my printed copies of numbers and how my actual law book at hand and making sure that we know how to do this without technology is important, having those manual methods and knowing how to shift them. And exercising that. Communicate and then over communicate. Stand up meetings were held internally with our staff with emergency meetings. We had touchpoint meetings with affected counties. We had daily points of contact with them. We had updates with the entire team all 100 counties so that we could

brief them on how they can be helpful to their colleagues, but also with the concept of we have to put our attention now on this injured player on the field. So we need the other 75 counties to step up and take the preparations they needed to do to be at the top of their game while we put so much focus into this area of disaster. Commune waiting with the press -- communicating with the press and making ourselves available was critical. Just being able to build out a dedicated web page and having that stood up. All communication tools and then talking about ways to inform others. We did routine aren't outs to produce meetings quite frankly. We were keeping all of our partners informed and it led to ones that were active participants from where we remember doing stand ups and so forth. But it meant the EAC commissioners will call on you if I needed you, but here's where we and were progressing. They were renting out to. And -- reporting out to. And assess how much everyone needs to know. Bring in varying perspectives to the table is important in developing -- in having exercise our emergency authority and it can't be the silence take level. We need the level input and input from our partners and legislative staff of what they would be able to move forward with in legislation as well. And then we talk about it all the time, but as I said in my opening remarks, it's not if, it's when and what will it be? You don't know. So prepare in advance for every unexpected possible scenario including the Dodgers winning. I love that. That's exactly right. You just don't know. So it's not just talk. It is reality to have the crisis communication plans, to have printed materials in place. So when you lose cell service. We didn't lose just power or water. We lost cell service. Also look at ways to repurpose what you put in place. We had put in what we call a tack response kits to respond in a cyber-attack situation. Those same kits proved to be handy in these situations where we needed to stand up temporary offices or things of that nature and we did have Wi-Fis and we added satellites to those kits as well for obvious reasons. And then I would say going forward, we are going to start looking at having emergency communication mechanisms as part of our budget. We were able to get funding. The legislature did move quickly, but they had not been age to and how could we have gotten word out. We needed print ads and fliers and mobile billboards and we needed radio. Radio was so key. Television didn't work. We did put money into those areas, print and radio and just even sandwich boards at the townhall to communicate information out. They became key. Having the money in place was really important. So contingency funds just budgeting for emergency is not only an insurance policy. It is reality.

Last but not least, one of the things we definitely learned in any situation is be human. Being able to tell my story of being connected to that area, being able to really simplify when someone is telling me they had to go to iron mountain to get supplies, but

being human and where the voters are going. Take voting to them. It was a no brainer to have distribution centers and voting taking place at the same location. So just that human element of put yourself in their shoes and be sympathetic. Figure out how to get supplies in and take water in. Whatever we do, that's what we did. It was -- they carried a spot. It really did. And we have been building that compassion and relationship as an election for a long time now and that's why we (inaudible). Thank you.

>> Commissioner: Thank you for sharing that. I know just really hats off to yourself and your team and local officials for serving voters with so much happening. I think it's one of those things that we think about a lot of at EAC as far as all across the commentary. It may be hurricanes. It may be wildfires. It may be tornadoes and may be floods and snow. All across the country, we see election officials in these scenarios. Some more extreme than others and nonetheless, dealing with impacts of extreme weather and areas where we're continuing to work on and looking for ways to support the elections community. We can learn from the situation and the work in North Carolina. So thank you again for sharing that. With that, I will turn it over to Vice Chair Palmer.

>> Vice Chair Palmer: Thank you, commissioner. Turn out numbers and turn out records and the number of voters that voted in Idays he, and -- Idaho, a significant number of the total numbers. Talk to us about the preparation what lessons can be drawn from and that record breaking and how these insights can be important for future elections.

>> First off, thank you for your service. Your dedication of other election officials in North Carolina, over the last few years, it's been difficult. Being in a battle ground state and know what you showed up there is difficult for all of us to wrap our hands around. Thank you very much for your service.

>> Thank you (low voice)

>> That's one of the interesting things about the election space these days. Not to say it's always been true, but one of the phrases that keeps coming up in Utah was you used to hear politics is local and but these days, all politics is national. I think that we have all felt that in this space and that's one of the big things. It doesn't matter where you are whether in Idaho, North Carolina, Louisiana, Mexico, we're all facing questions about processes and intake gritty of elections, trying to respond to challenges of one state over another. One of the big successes of this cycle is everybody being able to rally from all those questions to do tours of the elections and really I think that's one of the big things for us in our state is trying to figure out how best to respond to all of this. I think there is a direct correlation of the turnout we had in our state and response efforts. One of the things I am proud of that we did in our state is in August, we worked with a couple

of different groups and had an election sum it will. It was a mix of local officials, our office, but more importantly, a variety of community leaders from local media, podcast person, realtors, developers. I had a very prominent, owner walk in and he's like I already had (inaudible) elections. I don't know why I'm here. And I had to convince him why it was important for him to be involved, but what was really cool after a day of conversations and talking about it, it was a rare instance for all of us not only do you talk about the election, but talk about how you build confidence because I think that was one of the big things to build people's confidence. In a state like Idaho, it was pre-determined. I think the map was 4 years ago before we started this cycle. But regardless of my constituents are people who have lots of questions, especially nationally. You answer them all the time. How do we get out and reassure people processes are work think in our state, but working nationally. They're being done all over the country. That's one of the important messages that we had and what was really cool after these conversations is we started a baseline community input. Sometimes we're too close to it. We think we know too much at times. So we don't know what the questions are of engaging in the community leaders. We have a few things. So the podcasts our state -- largely, interestingly enough, there's such a large California migration that he is a translator. He interviews Idahoans so people can understand what we're doing. It is a thing. It was interesting. We had a series of interviews that I met with him early ins morning and it started having an impact. One of the things I didn't realize how cool it was until after the fact is we have 44 counties. All of us gathered on the Capitol steps. It was bipartisan to sign or commitments and listed out our 12 principles. Voting should be secure and accurate. Early voting, no excuse absentee voting, but post-election audits where we hand count paper ballots. Some of those practices are done everywhere. We didn't just highlight that we're doing them, but we highlighted that others are doing them and I think that was really important. It was interesting. We didn't have a lot on our ballots. We had an opposition and they had a lot of attention, but it still was largely in the political weeds that Idaho didn't understand what it was. It didn't end up being close in terms of the outcome. Beyond that, it was presidential election that seemed to drive the attention. But in order for presidential election, the key component act is all efforts we have done collectively as a community to build confidence in the process. And to learn from the 2020 election. I think every state has made some refinements and tweaks. Not just preparation for disasters, but adding cameras and new equipment. These are things we didn't do. These are things everybody did and I think it all came together. I can say my staff was graced to answer questioned about the national election immediately following. And one of the

reasons I say at the beginning I'm blessed is shocking. The phones were quiet. Two days after, what are we supposed to do now? We had temps ready to answer the phones and no one was calling. I think that's a testament to everybody.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Commissioner Hicks?

>> -- it is such important work. I think it stayed on the radar for a long time. We continue to improve and learn something every election. But certainly, I mean, this was just an environment that was challenging as we started out and the complexity continued to really layer up. So I want to commend everyone that was involved and had the great opportunity to sit here and speak on behalf of my peers. I think the challenges are there are still common themes. We continue to see misinformation. I think we have learned a good deal in how to tell our story of something we talk about in the communities since 2020. We're doing this work. They well is -- everyone should feel really confident in security and transparency and all the elections in every state and across the country. We might do it a little different, but we're all dedicated to the outcome being something trustworthy because we recognize how important it is and consequences that can't from that. I think the disinformation -- we're still learning how to term our story in a way that resonates with everyone and it is showing. It is show and tell. I think it's the ability to say here's how we do it and here's all the different ways that you can look at and check it for yourself. I think being able to tell our store and county the information. Ultimately security that is something that we have learned a great deal about, but still remains in different states, in different ways still just really unfair. And concerning in ways that election officials are treated and having to navigate just their world from a perspective of their physical security. So I think that's something we are still working with and it's a team sport. So everyone has learned how to build relationships with their local law enforcement, their state federal partners, become security experts in some form and learning how to reach out to orders when that isn't an area of expertise. So all the support has been valuable because we have day jobs. Ultimately, our job is making sure every voter can participate. It is making sure it is smooth and we say we're doing a great job if you go in to vote and it was easy. People think our job is easy and that means we're doing the job because it is not easy. I just think that security has been -- just from a cyber perspective, I think it was a huge item that everyone was having within their state. And then lastly, there's room for improvement and collaboration with federal partners. In particular, I think the postal service. We know they're working to kind ever make some adjustments in the structure of the organization. A huge organization, but I think we are important stakeholders and I look forward to really being able to address some of the things that we

continue to see election over election and wanting to make sure one bat loll has great -- ballot has great meaning and that u is Nike to the organization. So that -- that is unique to the organization. I think there are challenge and growth that we can improve that process overall.

>> (low voice)

>> Chairman: Thank you. Commissioner McCormick?

>> Commissioner McCormick: As your office looks to updating, what opportunities with adopting new voting technology and are there ways that the EAC can assist you in this process?

>> It is important to establish that we don't know what the next system will look like, but it will have a paper component to it and it is also important to say that the same legislature in Louisiana put in a number of additional steps that we will have to go through to acquire a new system and those steps have slowed the process down after some challenges in previous years. So while we're working towards that, there are a number of challenges that we will face, time being one of those. The system we have now is close to 35 years old. It is older than me and many of the staff we have in the secretary state's office. So it is hard to get parts. We have to get machines to fix other machines that aren't working as well. And then so that's a big challenge. Currently, voters like the system we have because it is a central system. You go there and click a candidate you want to vote for and that's the end of the process for you as a voter. So when we talk about moving to a new system that includes some sort of paper component, a lot of people will say why are you doing that? What's the need? We have to explain a number of things including the age of our system, but also the fact that best practices dictate that the voting system should include some sort of paper record that we can use to audit. So educating voters will include biggest challenge because it will educate why we got the new system, but also how it is going to work.

And then another challenge that we're going to face on the physical end is the storage because while we have voting machine warehouses in all 64 of our parishes, many of those warehouses will not be suitable for the new machines, especially as it relates to the paper component that we're going to use because they're not finding controls and I don't know if you know this, but in Louisiana it can get very hot. And so that's going to be a big problem for us that we'll have to figure out before we get to that new system, but the opportunities are also great because we're going to be able to fully audit our elections. The way we do that now is check the signatures against the machine to say those numbers match up. That gives them some level of confidence. When we go to fully audit those results and say this machine has 100 votes here today, we have 100 ballots that say candidates may want that. Voters will have more confidence. So that will help the voters build more confidence and that is going

to be huge for us as it relates to the EAC, one thing is the money we have gotten from grants in years past have all gone. 100% have gone to the Louisiana vote which is going to be used to acquire this new system. We have several million dollars that we're going to be using and acquiring this new system and the legislature will guarantee that. But it is also critical that we turn to those who have done this sort of thing for transitioning to a brand new system before so that we can learn the pitfalls and the opportunities that are available to us. So I think-for-those organizations we're able to use our networking to reach out to those who have been through this process before and to learn best practices as to how we can move forward. So we're looking forward to start reaching out to friends cross the country and -- across the country. Commissioners spoke to the voting system two or three years ago. Is it was established to help us make the recommendations to the next voting system and we're grateful for that. We're great of the for commissioners and relationships that we have with our office. Call on them and other election officials across the country when we have questions about best practices for anything we're doing.

>> It wasn't specifically built 2024 elections, but it Los Angeles impact on what you do and what you've been doing. I appreciate that. Thank you.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, commissioner McCormick. I wanted to ask a question for the whole panel here. I'm conscious of where we are on time. So this in some ways will be pretty open-ended and allow you all to sum up a lot of thoughts hopefully. I mentioned in my opening remarks talking about the change in threat landscape, the difficulty of administering elections in the recent environment, but also that takes a lot of resources. It takes a lot of strain on people who run our elections. So I wanted to get your thoughts about how election administration is evolved and what resources are needed to help election officials maintain the state of and security of elections, but also related to that, you know, as we think about prioritizing our work at the agency, those areas that the EAC should focus on and its efforts to support states in their planning and I will go in order with secretary green.

>> Thank you. Cyber security obviously 1 the big topics working closer with the challenges. But one of the biggest things that I see, especially comes from a rural state and I think there is in any ways rural America, it feels overlooked often is just resources and support. We have County Clerks who literally are going into court and trying to prep their ballots for the election in the afternoon. We have counts that have less than 350 voters. The one thing I really try to highlight is so we have a county that's a smaller, but not our smallest. Some of the beautiful part of the country. It has 4200 registered voters. It is 4900 square miles. So that means each voter gets a square mile and I think they like it that way. But also

when we talk about it doesn't matter what form of support it is. Just internet connectivity is a major thing because getting through the Rocky Mountains is not easy when talking about connectivity. They don't have a large tech space. They're over a 3-hour drive to the biggest next town. So things like have a funding are crucial to talk about just like talking to Louisiana upgrading their equipment. That's enough voters that it makes sense to no longer handcounted ballots. You need to start using equipment and transmitting information and that means you get internet connectivity and we invite in Iran and China. They were never in custard County before. So these are the real challenges, I think. I think so much attention goes to the big where the masses are, but also I know this coming. I came from Boise, which is the big city in Idaho. Everyone rolls their eyes because they say you have the tools and resource. There's a portion ever the country that is still upgrading. I started my ballots. So I can reflect back to not that long ago that it really was fundamentally different. A lot is changing in the introduction of e-Poll books, expectations. We were talking about expectations have changed a ton. Following the 2000 elects and now the 2024 election. It is really recognizing that all of our country needs support in order for this to come together.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, secretary McGrane.

>> We do a lot with a little. So nothing is going to change with the expectation of how we need to run elections. We need to do them securely and make them accessible. I do have concerns that we're going to start to see a shift in resources because I'm not (inaudible) if it is sustainable. Seat HAVA funding is critical for us to be able to continue our work in this mission space and we need to counted on it. Planning takes time and money. When our ability to kind of plan ahead, we're going to need to know that exists and that we can move forward with those plans. Elections don't stop. We don't have a choice. We will figure it out and get it done, but it can only be improved with support and resources from other entities. Something unique is the fact we're seeing turnover in election professionals. That is a knowledge-base that is really valuable, but unfortunately, I think folks are closing to move away from the e election. There is a freed to start professionalizing and preparing the next election of administrators. I think anything to cent that effort along with continuing all of the support that's already been accomplished is going to be great.

>> Commissioner: Thank you. Commissioner bell?

>> KAREN BRINSON BELL: I think we still need resources and need funding through HAVA and security program because I can even say within our state, we have had no state dollars committed to cyber security. We have been reliant upon federal dollars to build out our program. Where I am concerned is that we have done such a good job of being preventative that we're going to leave that we don't

need the money somehow and it is treated more like an insurance plan instead of the recognition of the ongoing investment that is necessary to insure that we are taking measures. And I think also there is still a lot of lack of recognition of the security, physical security needs and the costs involved in buildings in having climate controlled facilities and things and especially communities struggling with.

Something that hasn't been brought up is it's not -- I don't know how we help with this, but I think there's a need as we tell our story, we need the confidence to be in the processes and not that it's an acceptance of that elections were run well because the outcomes were what we wanted. I think that is something that's permeated in our society and that's not what this is about. Our elections are run well. Not because of certain person won or did not win. And to that, we still need to address that we are in a hostile society even while football games cannot end with just a handshake and we have witnessed that. We had one of the best run elections even through the hurricane and the president of our senate, possibly the most powerful elected leader has come out as we go through the ten -guy campus period. We had 67,000 provisional ballots. We had the most ballots ever in our state. We are in a recount as we talk go in a very close statewide race. He took a moment to say that we remember choosing to continue to count and chose the person we wanted to win would win. That is not the case. I asked him to retract that statement. He was conveying what he was hearing from his constituents. That's not what we need. We need our leaders and other officials to do way with this information and correct the record. They know better. They know that we're adhering to the law. It is a close state process. And as it has anyone in place by state, this is a free election and the fact that we're able to peacefully have a recount is still a testament. It is not about the over the bipartisan officials to do anything that undermine the election. So that's the environment we got to correct.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, director bell. Commissioner Watson?

>> Joel Watson, Jr.: The state government IT network and offices that we want to be our own because what we're doing is different from the stage. And that is proven to be very helpful and successful terms of communication of our safety and security measures. There was an incident that took place right before or after the election in 2019. Because of that, that means the election of Louisiana was rigged. No, no, no. Let's explain what we do to keep our elections safer and then our system is completely separate from the system that they use. So what happened there was not happening in Secretary of State's office. We talk statewide level obviously. But it is also important on a security front to talk about how we communicate those security measures. As I mentioned, we did

a number of things. This election we have done before across the state meeting with local election officials, those that have a voting machine giving them the tools they needed to spread this accurate information about how to keep the election safe, but early voting sites and Mandy said earlier, show and tell is what we were telling people. Let us show you too. Seeing the process for yourself. So something else we have gone in the show and tell, we have encouraged legislators to do a walk through and in our office to see how our elections are run and every time we have had a legislator that's done that, they come away, way more confident. They have more confidence after they do that. When we go to their committees in the legislator, they're always praising how we were in elections because we showed them how the process works. That communication is really my wheelhouse is so important. We double our efforts this year. I have a great team of people in our communications division. I had to shout their names out because it is so critical and they Kim up with so many fantastic ideas. Some ideas that we had to use resources for, but some ideas we did either. And I think we saw, you know, a tangible result in that. Earlier in the year in February of this year, there was a poll that was conducted and I asked Louisianians, in there was a -- 61% was a good number, but that was not what we wanted. After we did a number of these things, the four Ps, speaking in plain language, all the of the different things and radio spots we did, the newspaper columns, that poll, same polling firm, asked the same question in October, late October, the number was 70%. Nearly 10.8 increase from February of this year of people who believe that Louisiana's elections are safe and know secure. And then speaking to volters in plain language.

>> Commissioner: Thank you all for being leer and your service to your voters some the democracy and join me in thanking the panel.

Next we'll have a presentation from Dr. Thad Kousser. Professor?

>> THAD KOUSSER: Thank you for letting us share our research and communication on elections including the highly effective videos crafted by the EAC. So this is giant research with my colleagues at the University of California San Diego at UC Riverside, UC Davis and UC Yale. It is all done with research practice partnerships between scholars and election officials done by the UC San Diego and MIT's elections data and science lab.

So as the people in this room know better than anyone in the country, the job of election officials has changed over the last few years. Right? It used to be run trust worthy elections and accessible elections. But now, you have to run trust worthy elections, accessible elections and show people why they should trust them. There have been hugely innovative techniques that you heard about, many ever them on the last panel that election officials cross country are pioneering. Whether that's much more engaged with the media and on social media, you have seen much more prominence for

election officials like those in Louisiana and Idaho and Michigan than we have seen before. We didn't know the names of the our election officials and now we do. You see people doing this as director bell said. Steven Richards opened up the vote in the facility like this to set up public tours and you have seen versions of that in many other countries. You have seen radical data transparency pioneered by Brinson Bell. All of these ideas and new things are being tried. Are they working? That's what our research program is designed to do. It is designed to bring scientific methods to bring evidence that ask help guide election officials as they adapt and change election to election their trust building activities. So our goal is work hand in hand to show what works, what doesn't work and what works best. I want to share with you a few of the findings that we had starting in 2002 and then findings especially ones involving the EAC videos 2024 cycle -- from the 2024 cycles.

Our partners were Dean Logan here, Jesse Harris, the deputy director in Georgia and Keith Abram at the time director of elections in Texas. So with all of them, we came and say we can run large scale surveys of eligible voting population and in your states. We had surveys in the 2022 mid-terms and again in 2023. We asked them what they wanted to learn and trust and didn't trust. What are you doing to increase trust? And the thing they were all doing was crafting videos to explain the protections on elections, something that many Americans didn't know about and hadn't had explained toking them. They were posting them on social media and what they all wanted to know was were these videos moving the dial on trust? One of these election directors said who do you think will be moved most or convinced most by the videos? I don't think anybody will change their mind. My mother doesn't trust elections no matter how much I tell her. The way we did was the standard -- somebody called the survey experiment which randomizes who sees what and then ask them about the trusted election. A thousand people watched the democracy defendant video. It shows stories and at the time they were defending their election. They watch the fill in the blanks video using cartoons to show protections on election. And then a thousand people just watched Jacobs State Farm. We asked them all about the trust in elections. We had plug placebo study, it was to watch and learn the videos.

What did we find? Surprisingly for us and many election officials, many of the videos worked. At least one of the two videos we tested in every state or County was effective. They changed their minds about very or somewhat confident that elections were accurate and had integrity was as large as 5 to 13%. Allege moving the needle on trust in elections. As we did in 2022, but as you heard in the last panel, one of the big questions is not just trough your own state's elections, but other states. So we wanted to see whether

elections in one state would be trusted by voters in another, especially voters on the other side of the partisan divide. We trusted about red state and blue state. So that's where we started working first with the EAC video.

The 2018 video that the EAC did was 5 minutes video showing sort of image base on the left-hand side and we took about a 90 second snippet that had the most vital information and a really smart thing that the EAC did was you allow them to be customized. Didn't change much. The states and the maps, but because many protections are common across the country, but that was one that explained protections on California elections. We tested one Dean Logan and we tested them in Texas, Georgia and with Republicans nationally. What we found that it was surprisingly leading close to double digit increases in percentage of people saying they trusted elections. So all of that showed that proof of concept for some of these techniques that election officials and the EAC were using.

And the last thing we did we released that study before the election. We trusted a video that the Arizona Secretary of State's Office had called accurate results take time. They explain why it takes a few days and sometimes up to a week to count elections. When voters learned it took a week, their counted was much lower. They have seen this video and they were against those. So in the 2024 cycle, we're working with a much broader set ever partners across the country. Secretaries in the state of Connecticut to test a range of questions about do election facility tour work? Looking at effects of visuals versus videos, earned verse U.S. paid? Looking at communicating trusts to diverse communities and then looking at also how to communicate the effects. In the first three studies, two of the ones that use the EAC. So the first one was on election facility tours. This is Steven Richard. The recorder in Maricopa who was advertising was getting the groups taking two-hour tours of their voter election facility. When they walked in, there is QR code and they scanned it. They walked out and took another short survey and that way we're able to tell what was the impact? How much of their trust in election change of when they walked in and then walked out. Also go state overall and the nation to see ho they learned about one election and spill over into broader trust. We found statistically increases in trust across the board. Biggest rises in trust on the far right-hand side and they show the difference of when they walk in and walk out. The biggest was in Maricopa. They spill over in the United States overall. Democrats moved and they walked in quite trusting. Republicans moved the most because they had the most room to go in terms of their trust in elections. So now let's get to the EAC videos.

All the studies we did before were after the '22 mid-terms were finalized or during 2023 summer outside of the elections. These efforts you are undertaking still work in the mall of an election

when there's so much information and disinformation and so many competing claims, so much other noise in the media world. So what we did was a study of the EAC video, the national version of it. Hey started 10 days before the 2024 election. So just -- we start running it in October where we show people the video and some people in the video and some control to see if it would still be effective in the middle of the election. Then we went back in a panel survey to the same people 7 days later. This is two or three days before the election to see if the effects would last. And here's what we found. So this is a national survey of 4400 eligible voters and it shows a 90-second snippet of all protections. We found that even in the middle of the election, we found and got significant increases to people's confidence and they would be counted as intended and the nation's vote would be counted as people intended after they watched that video compared to the people who watch the control video. Do these last? We went back 7 days later and there was still a positive effect, but it was half that size and no longer statistically strong that we can rule out. So they fade a bit over time. I think message we take from that is this communication you're doing, you have to keep doing it and repeating. That's really what flows. You see it over and over again. You have to keep hitting the messages over and over.

The last thing we did from election officials, which is does information coming from a national source matter as much as information coming that is specific to my state? Here's how we harness, the EAC can be customized by different states, California, Idaho and Iowa all that different versions of this video and we got a range of states with different partisan reputations. So international surveys we showed some people the national version, some people want the state versions and then we asked them about their trust. What we found and this is getting to work and doesn't work. What we found is the customized state versions were the most effective. Customized versions really told people this is what's going on in that particular state. I'm going to trust that state's election. Thanks so much for this opportunities. I look forward to your questions and I just want to thank all of the partners mentioned here for their close partnership in this recent program over the last 7 years.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, professor COUSSER for that.

>> Thank you. You may have answered a little bit, but based on your research, we saw video and what is the most impactful action based on your research to increase voters and public?

>> Commissioner: What we're finding is there's a yes. Answer to that question, there are different strategies. We found some things that didn't work and some that were effective. It seems that videos seem to work better than still visuals. They show often people behind these protections and they match with the way that most

people are consuming information on social media these days more through videos than through eventuals, but a couple findings from surveys and the one done by MIT survey. One, what the surveys have shown is that voters simply do not know all the things that happen. All the protections on elections. They don't know that there's -- what logic and accuracy testing and those machines tested in advance. They don't know that law enforcement is involved in chain of custody. But they say in survey after survey "My state was doing that?" So just building that information gap is hugely important. Second thing is we ask people who they trust most? Politicians and their party? The local media, states elected officials? You folks are the most trusted messengers. With those messages, I think has the key.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Commissioner Hicks?

>> Commissioner Hicks: In terms of the election overall, I guess it's they're willing to trust the election officials, but would they be willing to trust all workers or election people who actually are filling that as well?

>> Professor KOUSSER: Some of the people who have gone through the certified process. We want to have their testimonials and just normal folks.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, commissioner McCormick.

>> My question is we talked about testing election officials. Do you do look at getting their information from before they get to the election officials whether they're sources for election information to start with.

>> Professor KOUSSER: They're getting it from TV and radio and people they're having conversations with and online. In our first wave, 5% of people got information about whether they should trust elections on TikTok. Everyone over 30 thought that was astounding. Everyone over 30 thought it was way too small. The second one shows 10%. But increasingly, some of the groups thought that are working in this are creating vertical style videos and working with influencers to get the message out there because it is meeting people where they're at and consume information in this much more fragmented media sphere and election officials need to meet them in all parts.

>> just one follow-up question. We have all come to the conclusion. Are we really down in 10 seconds? And how do we communicate? (inaudible)

>> Professor KOUSSER: So many 30-second spots were convincing as the 90-second spots. Thank your traditional TV ads. We haven't tested any of the micro clips that we have seen because in some ways this is a conversation that takes a little bit of time.

>> Appreciate it.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Dr. KOUSSER. And for joining us with your work. Our ever-expanding library of resources and next chair, we will have a how-to guide on how election professionals can help

with that as we now have research impacting that and it is very exciting.

So with that, I'm pleased to say that we are going to have our final panel of the day. We're going to hear from local officials. To start, I would like to welcome up our panelists and I will introduce them as they come up. Carol Koppes is the county -- carte KOPPES, Tim Scott, and Ricky Hatch is the auditor of Utah. Thank you all for joining us today. Similarly to our first panel, have a brief opening remarks and your experience for the 2024 elections. We would love to hear those.

>> CARLY KOPPES: Thank you so much for inviting us to speak today. It is my honor to represent recorders in the state of Colorado. One of the things post-elections is just the network that we have been able to successfully build over the last 4 years. We always had a network, but one of the things that's really strengthened our network within Colorado, our network, with state partners and federal partners as well. The support of the newer people who have come into our field but also the support over the vote reasons like -- veterans like myself. What a way to celebrate with a presidential election. We have a responsibility when administering our elections at the local level, our judges carried that understanding and that was such a huge win for all of us. We reach new processes and we had to implement new person voting in jail. That was a brand new thing we had to do for the presidential election. And just being able to utilize resources across the nation was help us understand that whole completely different demographic in world to be able to have that as a success overall. Obviously we had some interesting items pop up in Colorado. So the ability for us to come together as recorders and election officials to rapidly respond to that was also a great win and success for us. Like I said, it was a great way to celebrate 20 years in this local election field for me and I am proud of the work that we have all done. It was a very good success for us in that we're able to handle everything that was thrown at us, all the preparation that the previous panel answered and one thing that made us one of the things that we have is being prepared favors. Being prepared and handle everything and did it with great success.

>> Commissioner: Thank you. Director hall?

>> THAD HALL: It was very exciting. We had record turnout. We had 80% turnout, which was great. States have elections and we did have 75% on election day, but we had quite a great turnout of people who voted. We have in-person over the counter voting. We don't have early voting like some states and that was a taxing experience on all counties in Pennsylvania. We also in Pennsylvania have the joy of -- we work with elections of which was written in the 1800s and I'm not kidding, which is why I'm the person up here with paper and they all have electronic devices. One of the benefits in this election is we had a very -- we have lawsuits in the Supreme Court

this year. Basically a moratorium on any major lawsuits. We were not going to hear any cases until after the election was over. And that made everything a lot easier for us.

I want to reiterate a point. The success of why counties elections is very much dependent on the success of their colleagues. And we all work together within our state and other states. I've contacted North Carolina investigations to get information on how do you do certain things and my colleagues that used to work in Arizona. Different people you contact them. How do you do these things? And I think people have to understand that we are a community and that my success in skip mercy County is on the hard work of others who teach me and I teach them and we all work together to run better elections. I'm really thankful for that.

I just want to make one good point because we're here in Los Angeles. The first thing I observed was write a report for the national commission on election reform. I observed the L.A. mayor's race. They had 3.5 million registered voters. But elections for Los Angeles can scale this down for everybody else, it's like filling the Rose Bowl 52 times. If you try to fill the Rose Bowl 52 times, you will have some car accidents that happened in the parking lot. I think all of us have contingency plans for those, but people shouldn't be concerned if car accidents happen.

>> Commissioner: Thank you for that, Director Hall. Mr. Hatch?

>> RICKY HATCH: It is spelled the same as my county and we were there first.

[Laughter]

A little of that. We'll let it slide today. As far as talking about pronunciation, looking at lessons learned or recap of 2024 to me comes down to preparation and accommodation in election administration. So as far as preparation, we all know you can't (inaudible) for everything. That's obvious. You can't (inaudible) car accidents and then that's going to happen regarding of how well prepared we are and we heard from Carolina and other states.

In Utah, our preparation was extensive. It was -- we were well prepared. In Utah, in turn turnout on election day is about early voting election day was 2 to 3%. This past election, that quad ruined, which was a surprise to some of us. We anticipated it doubling, but not quadrupling. That led to election day and lines were 2 hours. And the interesting thing is none of the voters complained. They were there and spotted and they wanted to payment, they understood they were going to wait in lines. It doesn't mean it was acceptable for them to wait for more than 15 to 20 minutes. The voters responded really well and the poll workers did as well.

And in Utah, over 90% of all voters in Utah didn't wait a single minute in line because they cast a ballot in a drop box, a mailbox at their house.

As far as accommodation, studies have shown and MIT election lab

by this information, studies have shown over the years the number 1 factor in voter confidence is the candidate win. They show a recent survey that you just published underscore staff and the array for voters in 2024 comparing them to 2020. In 2020, 98% of Democrats felt confident the election was going to administer accurate less and fairly. That decreased by 12 percentage. Still high, but it increased. In 2020, Republicans 21% of them felt the election was run accurately and fairly. In 2024, 93% of them felt that way. So overall, it was 59% felt confident this year in aide%. So dramatic increase -- in 80%. So dramatic increase. To me, that is important. It is like riding a bunching Bronco. You hang on. You have no idea where this is going. So much of it is having a patrol. You do your best to prepare and then you hang on and you get through. We saw it in 2020 with the presidential race. That's not the first time it expressed concerns. And in Georgia, we had a pretty significant similar situation and in 2024 in Utah, we had a similar situation where a candidate was challenging some of the legitimacy of the election process.

In my mind as we prepare for this year, we wanted to accommodate people that were concerned. We wanted to reach out to them and pressing their freedoms. It is standing and standing on controls that are tests to be on what was required by law or what we felt was necessary to accommodate them. That's commendable. For me, we need to focus less -- we need to focus on concept and safety, concept and accuracy and accessibility and transparency. We can still work to accommodate that. That can't be our driver. That has to be -- that's a good bi-product or good addition to the principle base of the elections. Thank you.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, auditor Hatch. Director Scott?

>> TIM SCOTT: Thank you. I appreciate being invited here to speak. Thanks to L.A. county for hosting us. I think after 2020 around the country, we had a pretty good roadmap of what could go wrong. This became the epicenter for racial justice protests during the 2020 election cycle. Many of those protests launched three or four blocks from my office and passed right by my office on the way across the bridges downtown. So I knew how bad it could get. And what we did in 2020 that worked. So for us, 2024 was largely about taking all of those incremental security processes that we had over time, layering what we learned in 2020 and then being ready for just anything. And for us, it certainly was not 2020. Voters were general not as panicked, not as excitable as they were 2020 which led to a calmer atmosphere in our office. It just led to a different atmosphere. We also had the lowest voter turnout in the County than we had since the 2000s. So in 24 years, we haven't well an 80% turnout. Nice to know you just reached it. And we only got to 73% -- overall, that dominated much of that.

>> Commissioner: Thank you for that. We'll have questions and

I'll kick us off. But wanted to hit on one of the thins that you alluded to. In Oregon, drop boxes served as a significant option for voters who use mail ballots as a former Oregonian, I found that it can be very convenient. I will give a quick shout out go Ducks as we entered playoffs. Moderator privilege.

In 2024, there were certainly national news that everybody heard about several ports of damage to drop boxes including incidents with incendiary devices. You have bad actor or actors committing crimes, but can you describe a little bit of that incident and what occurred in your county and share recommendations or lessons learned for election officials so they can prepare and think about that going forward?

>> TIM SCOTT: Thank you. Is the smallest geographical sized County in Oregon. We're tiny compared to some of my colleagues in the room. We have the highest (inaudible). Our office is in the urban center. We are 11 blocks from downtown. High-rise buildings all around us. We have no way to create any sort of a security buffer around our building. We are absolutely in no bustling city. So a lot of the security that we've had over time, we have looked at ways that we can improve the security buildings and I'm skipping to the recognitions part. We had all those in place. Everything that we could do get in our size and geography we were doing; however, as you pointed out, there's not much you can do to stop the committed individual who is willing to break the law in a dangerous way. Around 3:00 in the monk around October 28th, a week and a day before election day, an individual drove up to the ballot box on the southside of our building and placed an incendiary device to the drive-up ballot box. You can drop a ballot in. What they were doing appeared very normal. From video footage, the person appeared to ignite the device in their car, quickly opened the door, placed the device on the box using management and then drive away. Seconds later, the device ignited. On site -- ignited. On site security had just put eyes on the box and the individual in the car seconds before it happened. There's a moment in the video where you can see the individual cause because security officers are assigned to the building and they see him and move forward. The secure officers heard the noise, investigated immediately and they ran inside with a fire extinguisher and extinguished the device which again was attached to the outside of the box. What you should know is I learned a lot of things that I never thought I needed to know. 316ths in sheet metal melts at 2,500 degrees Farenheit. Paper at 145 degrees Farenheit. The reaction caused by thermite that was the chemical used to ignite the steel instant as soon as it ignites. Pouring liquid metal into the box. And, you know, you would think that would immediately emit paper, but what it did is that infusion of highlight set off the fire suppressant devices that we had in our boxes. It was hot enough to melt the fuse that disbursed powder into the box and coated all the

paper in the box that only three ballots were signed in the entire box. Those three envelopes we can still read the voters names. They were contacted within hours of the incident happening to let them know.

To talk about something that didn't go so well. I like to write. Most people that know me. I run every day. I was up for my run between 5:00 and 6:00. 5:45, I got a call from the FBI on my phone saying you probably already know this, but I just wanted to confirm some details to you. I don't know what you're talking about. And this was 2 hours and 45 minutes after the incident and I was just going through my morning. We'll talk about that in a minute. I was able to get to the office an hour later after running home, getting changed into the office. So by the time I opened the box 3 hours and 45 minutes this elapsed. And the good news is that all our incremental security planning paid off. The largest style drop box that you can buy from vote armor was designed through an RFP process and county led in 2014. If you have any of those boxes, those were our design. I know lots of other jurisdictions have made modifications to those boxes to suit their needs, but we feel it's got all the security features. Fire suppressant inside the boxes. We started adding that in 2018. Monitors and the outside of our building got the whole incident on video and security staff on site were able to react quickly by calling the police. All the first responders were there well it was supposed to be there. The only failure was in notifying the chief election official. And then I already mentioned three ballots per damage out of 400 that were in the box at the time. And immediately, we have -- by 9 o'clock that morning, we had press released out a dedicated phone line. They had concerns because they dropped the bam lot and this is the very first time that this has happened. This has never happened before. But we had mailboxes just stolen whole out of the ground and hauled away during election cycles. So we had experiences with notifying voters, hey, if you use this ballot box, let us know. We'll go get you a replacement ballot. Thanks to a plan we had worked on over time, we had that released out. There was an announcement that morning that was coordinated. So that went very quickly and very well. And as soon as the release cleared us to stop investigating and then cleared us to remove the ballot box, we had it inside the building and replacement on the site and within 15 minutes, people were dropping ballots in the box. So it did not impact our ballot returned. As far as recommendations, you said it best. I think it is unreasonable to think we can plan for everything, but how do are plans flexible enough? Have a clearly articulated notification system for incidents do people watching your assets know when they should call?

[Laughter]

Interest the funny part is the security officers had my phone

number, but they did not have the directive to call. They had a directive to call our central command center, which they did and central command center did not. While fire suppression systems may not work, go this was the County auditor, they tell them a very different story about outcomes. They had a different style ballot box, not saying one is better than the other. They had a different outcome. Lots of ballots destroyed. So tester systems to see if they actually worked. And then it would also highly recommend -- and this is not an ad for them. I would highly recommend east dividends in many ways and how to have a communication plan of who is doing what.

>> Commissioner: Thank you for that. In King County, they have a drop box and they told me one of us hit it and the Dropbox won. Some of those are substantial. I do think that while this was an unfortunate incident, when people break the law, they need to be held accountable, but I do think in talking about it, in talking to the media, in talking to people about this incident, it was an opportunity to highlight the work that election officials do. I think people were really amazed at the efforts that election officials go in preparing and also where there were ballots lost in contacting voters in doing that outreach and insuring that people participate even when unfortunate incidents occur. Again, there you for sharing that and I the turn it over to Vice Chair Palmer.

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>> Donald Palmer: My question is for -- in addition to serving as a leader, we also serve in association in Colorado and the local down in the EAC. There Colorado, in addition to your duties administering another election, you had the challenge of defending the integrity of the entire voting system in Colorado inadvertent leak of the passwords. They explain the resiliency. That was -- we're hearing about it in multiple locations. Tell us how you responded to the flurry of activity and the concern about voting systems.

>> Thank you, commissioner. On October 29th, so literally one week prior to election day, at 5:00 p.m., we got fortunately notification there secretary states office that had been put out on the secretary's website and had been there for months. It wasn't just a recent posting. It was multiple put in question of the voting equipment for the member election, but also drew in the primary election in June as well. We weren't having to defend the current election system in that current election and also having to defend the June primary. We found out earlier in the day due to the parties putting out a press release and an e-mail, at 5:00 p.m., we had emergency state at the secretary office. We started getting hit with a locate of questions even before we knew or understood what was going on and if it was true or not. What we had been doing and I'm very proud of every single one of my fellow clerks and election officials

is even before this incident, we had been doing a lot of communications out to our voters and constituents making sure they understood exactly how the equipment worked and different levels of security that we already had in place. So it was really easy for us to be able to show the leadership and grace that was needed during this situation. Every reporter was able to do that very well. I hope I did well for both County. And so we were able to then reemphasize everything we had already been speaking to. So I was able to reboot and repost some of the videos that I actually made about the different levels of security. We were able to have some of the press releases that we had done, reworked and repost that out. So we were able to handle the situation with a lot of grace and integrity. We tried to have the pillars of trust in place prior to election and really came in handy in the very late hours of an election during this situation. We were able to then implement with the first association. We had amazing media support with Michelle Gains and our executive director Matt Crane as well. They were able to pivot and put together media for us to be able to do interviews. So myself currently serving as the Vice President along with Molly Fitzpatrick who is the president and we were able to pick up a lot of media that wasn't able to get in contact with the secretariat that time. So we remember able to have those contacts in place, be able to get the messaging out that we had been promoting and continue that with one of our biggest successes for strategies. Giving the information so late in the game and not confirm until the evening. We were working with the secretary state's office and mitigate the issue. It was still a security issue granted because of all the security measures that we have in place. It wasn't as large as some of the people that we had have. We call them election enthusiasts now. We're trying to make it. It was still something we needed to address. So we were able to have those conversations. Our governor stepped in to get people to the counties that were impacted so they were able to change those passwords. So within 48 hours, the actual security issue was completely mitigated. So working with not only the secretary state office, but the governor's office and state OIT department getting those assets rolled out quickly. They were 34 Counties and all 63 counties like some people were trying to push out with this information, the hurricane of no offense to North Carolina, they're using that, but the impacts of the misinformation escalated within 24 hours was then able to put to rest due to mitigation aspects and communications. It is something that we continue to hear not through election day, but through canvassing because of what happened after that is during our canvass efforts is that same state party. We're trying to put pressure to not certify due to that IS password and link. They didn't have an impact on the election and we were able to utilize our risk limiting odd tight prove the outcome was correct and the paper ballots were scanned and accurate and tabulated, we

had a lost conversations and members were having undue pressure to not only not certify, but try and decertify the June primary election as well. So that again, it was a lot of conversations and a lot of support that we had to give to our fellow reporters. If you do choose to not certify the election because of this aspect, there can be ramifications as well. It has that full picture. We know with that information, we don't always give you the full picture of all that. It is our responsibility to make sure neigh have the missing puzzles so you have that full landscape. That is the fun we have had and we're still continuing to have in Colorado because of that password leak.

>> Commissioner: We basically got 3 hours of material for crisis communications.

>> Yes. There are some other levels that take some feedback and accept it this time around.

>> Commissioner: Thank you. Mr. Chair?

>> Mr. Hicks?

>> RICKY HATCH: You were in a battle ground states with lots of scrutiny and aspects. Processees and even more. From your perspective, how do things go? Overall considering what you expect going on in the election and now after the election? Also, unfortunately, your office was across the country that received things on election day. Did you share with us how you handle the situation and how it affected your elections?

>> RICKY HATCH: First of all, we knew we were going to be -- we were going to have a lot of scrutiny and people wanting to vote. One of the biggest things through presidential election years is that our voters get inundated with mailing not just advertising, but we have the mailing ballot and people that get a blizzard of requests for mailing ballots from interest groups and they have to keep sending them in. We would like to tell them to stop sending in bal lot requests. We end up with these situations where this was an election where they wanted voters -- they wanted them to vote early, which is somewhat new to us. So we had -- the parties were encouraging people to come to our office and vote over the countering person. You have to filling out a form and you put it in an envelope and then bring them on election day. We knew it was coming and we had meetings with colleagues across the state. And knowing all the people that shout out. We had about three weeks of a period where people do this. Everybody shut off in the last five days and we appreciate it. We were prepared for it ask we make sure that people have the best experience possible like they experienced in Utah. We had people wait in line and everybody was happy waiting in line. They enjoyed this voting and they were happy. We did have a turnout across the common wealth, but especially in the rural parts of the state. So we well some counties where the E5 turnouts and we had election day and it all went very well. We also had a recount for U.S. senate

race. That was awesome. We wanted to fill in the video card and we got to. Even North Carolina can appreciate. U.S. senate and state law, but it got cancelled in the very end. That was better. So it was awesome.

One of the things that made this election work really well is we did a lot of communicating with state holders and that includes critical parties and we were able to put in place a lot of things statewide to include transparency in the -- improve transparency and across countries to make it to where people have much more confidence in the process. You're asking about the bomb. So we were notified about 7:00 p.m. It was a bomb. We received this bomb threat and we had -- we moved operations and phoning over there. It took 20 minutes. It is an alternate location and everything went fine. We had plans for all this and we executed the plans and everything is great.

>> Commissioner: Thank you. (inaudible)

>> Thank you, commissioner McCormick.

>> Christy McCormick: Thank you. You can address, but we know the offices are still really busy. They vote by mail. However, many voters still choose to vote in person. Can you talk about the transition to a vote center model in your state and do you have any reflections or advice for other jurisdictions contemplating all by mail?

>> You bet. To go back to your question, yes. Officials sit rest of the time. I think election officials already do this really well. The concept of incrementals and any time you're adjusting a process in elections with anything, you want to take baby steps. You want to do it in a very controlled manner and you don't want to rush anything. I think Pennsylvania did that this year with their changing any laws right before the election happens. But that's what happened in Utah. The vote center moves toward voting by mail hybrid-type state. So in -- we started to consolidate back in 2010 to 2012 era is when we moved away from polling places to vote center model. And at that point, it was a logistical move. It is done to serve the voters, but also as far as efficiency goes, insure proper training and resources. But there was no mandate. There was no mandate from the state or even within the County association in Utah. We talked about it often about what were the benefits and challenges that we have. Each County sort of just realized the benefits of having this whole center model as well as to the concept of voting by mail. The administrative benefits In addition to some of the benefits provided by voters. So we started doing that. By 2016, about half of the counties in Utah mailed the registered voter, but always had in-person voting options. Always should and always will have that. But the counties did it incrementally. It grew organically. As we had one race in particular, I would say it was 2018 where we had an election that spanned two counties, two large

counties, one voted by mail and one did not. And the turnout vote by mail was sufficient to flip that race in favor of the other party that did vote by mail at the time. That convinced the rest of the counties to jump on board back in 2020 was when the legislature took the official step to vote by mail, to mail an (inaudible) voter ballot. So incremental and controlled and then you step back and look. At that election, it was one city that was split. Half ever it was in one county and half of it was not. It was an interesting study that was done to see how versed or impact that turned out was impacted.

So back to how you do it? You have frequent check-ins and evaluations just to make sure just like we do with all the (inaudible) and take each with the stakeholders, what worked, what didn't. You do your debriefs and you take a look. And then again going back to what I said to the comments. Focus on the principles. As you're doing anything, you focus on principles and the judicial process. When we were starting that process and going towards vote by mail, we did not want to have the push be by mail voting. It really was a focus on voters that election administration or accessibility for voters. That was the focus. It was on those principles rather than whatever tool is going to be used to help accomplish those principles. So focus on principles and not processes and certainly not candidates with their needs or desires. You focus on principles of transparency and accuracy and security and as long as you keep that in mind, the rest from this group.

>> (inaudible) question.

>> Yeah. Recognizing that sometimes we are short on time. If you want to start the second round, that would be great.

>> Sure. So this question is for all of you. Take a turn in answering it. From your perspective, what are key takeaways from the 2024 election cycle and how can that best support local officials as they prepare per future elections. We'll start with you.

>> I'm so thankful we had the presentation prior to this panel is the communication aspect. I said this in other prior conversations, you guys were asked if not most were glad to see the research was supportive of that, but all of us are continuing to update our communications. So I think that's one of the key takeaways for me outside of the networking that we were able to build that was communication structure that we have not built.

>> Thank you. It is producing materials for counties they can use that are helpful and specifically I think it was earlier this year, you put out operations. The operations explanation documents that emergency management people use, which is not for election officials. They're a way to, you know, in a way they scope and took that into a document that is useful for counties. They use that document at some point to do things and resources you are providing on the website for all people you have for field services. They have

done a great job. We appreciate the work they do to provide us with various checklists and documents. We know what we're doing, but at the same time, it is easy -- often, you feel like am I doing everything else? Having those checklists are really helpful. I am doing everything. I want to say those documents you produce and all those things are very useful for all of us. I think using more of them and working with the local election officials on various boards to find out what things do we need or update will be continuing to help us go forward.

>> The EAC has been great. There are so many resources out there. It's overlooked. The one treasure trove I think EAC has is the clearing house. You have a massive database of best practices throughout the country, multiple jurisdictions and election administration that clearing house is a fantastic tool. I get to sit on the review of the applications and clearing house, clearing boards. If you read those documents, regardless of the size of the jurisdiction, you can have information and I really appreciate that. And I think if there's -- if you can make the clearing house system more navigable and reachable so that I can go in and say I have 130,000 registered voters and use this piece of equipment, I have in-person voting, tell me about best practices and they can tailor that to be fantastic. It helps because election administrators don't have quite as much time even on the 163 when they're vacationing. They don't have quite as much time to sit and just scroll through best practices. Search and enhanced a possible search function that can help make that available.

>> In 2002, not coincidentally after the 2000 presidential election simply because I want to know what happened behind the scenes of elections. The confidence was shaken a little bit after watching news footage. What I learned is that things are in very good hands. Administrators have resources and -- I'm talking about (inaudible) money. And that's odd coming from the most popular jurisdiction in Oregon as the former president of OACC, I heard from my colleagues around the state, they need more resources, they need more staff. There have been staffing studies that show this and, you know, HAVA grants are great, but I heard that they're not always dependability. So if there is some way to shore that up to have predictable stream of new coming in come they can't count on streams.

>> Chair?

>> Commissioner Hicks.

>> Thomas Hicks: This is a question for all of you. This is when we started saying a little bit earlier. As election officials jobs extend weeks after the election can be just as demanding as before the election. Reflecting on this period, how do you paint the canvass and certification processes go this year compared to previous years and how did those processes install confidence publicly not some, but all eligible ones in the county. Start with

director Scott.

>> Director Scott: Everything was back in interest this year. And one of the things that we knew is that voters having confidence in the results and how they were presented to the public was really important and as we study jurisdictions that implement choices around the country, nod was doing it exactly the same way. My philosophy has been give everybody information all the time and that isn't always the best way to go. We worked -- we worked for a long time to make very clear reports that showed all the data in lots of different tools. So we had charts and tables that showed all of the data. So no matter how you consume data, it was there. And then we did summaries. So how did this person get elected in this room? And yet we were still overwhelmed the day after the election with media and public inquiries, but because we had planned, because we knew that we were able to release the results respect every day no matter what and this we were going to release the price release with that result on people, how many ballots were left to be counted because I think that's really -- but just kind of that process --

>> If you have a wide margin, it's much more -- (low voice) we really focused a lot on our audits and improved our audit processes. We increased the scope. We increased number of the different types of a lot of stuff that was conducted. In some cases, we tried an entirely new audit pro-- entirely new audit process. Looking at castle records and increasing results which was really helpful. So we increased the scope and scale and increased the amount of company involvement. Many counties in Utah have citizens and they swear and the impact state requires if they have a team of 2 perform the audit. Only one of them can be a full-time election staff. The rest has to be somewhere else. We have a particularly close race. We had two candidates that had 200 votes of each other and we have representatives from each election. And they participate together on the audit as well and the team of 3, which is very helpful for the candidates as well.

I think for us the difference was less pressure. That's nice. But the increase during the scope and scale and nature of the audits.

>> It is a very busy time. There's a lot to do those two weeks after the election. You're going through and making sure everything is there. One of the key things that we do that benefits us as far as -- we are not allowed to canvass till election day. We knew that with bipartisan teams. We had the envelope and open that up. That alone helps us a lot in building confidence in those election processes. And after the election, we have bipartisan teams and Republican. These people were report parties and they do a hand count and that helps a lot as well. If anybody has a question, they don't have to say take my word for it. They can take the word of the people that did it was the Republican chair party or Democratic. Don't take my word for it. Take their word for it. And then we try

to communicate that clear process of how we're handling the election process and that makes everything easier. We saw that at the end with the recounted of the U.S -- recount of the U.S. senate race. We brought in the Democratic Republican party. We didn't have any arguments about any of the ballots. We didn't have any disputes. There were four votes that change. It was more votes. So tests very exciting. We had those votes. And I think the process where you have transparency and confidence of the parties, and key stakeholders, most of the people in the county of Democrats and Republicans considering what we did is build that confidence with the parties.

>> Thank you. So yes. I have a very exciting post-election time. I often try to message people prior to the election. The only thing that stops is being able to cast your ballot. That'll be the only thing that stops. Everything else continues on. We have such a huge influx on election day. Then we also had a snow storm come in. So some of the other counties I shared with and state and house senate races where they had to shut down because of the snow. Then they came back over the weekend. I was helping as much as I could request the media and very close races. Congressionalists and Colorado was very close. It also brought a lot of national observers and media to us as well. And then the very close house and state senate races as well. They have a play in how the next session was going to be. So we were able to again one of the silver lines is our ability to now educate all the people that are now curious well elections. We were having people coming in and having those questions of how does this work. And after that, we know we will have recounts. Have them come, post-election when the emotions are still high, but not as high after the election day because a lot of the results are new. I'm having them come back to the rational part of their brain. Rebuild that confidence. So having them come in and physically see as continuing to count, continuing to have a verification cures and how our judges work in that bipartisan manner was helpful. And again, helping us come back to the desire to not certify our election due to the biohazards being exposed. So that was able to again allow us another pulpit to be able to champion our election workers and times and champion everybody that we have worked with throughout the entire process., which again then leads to rebuilding the fractures that we have seen since 2020 because they were coming and in a calmer aspect and see the work that we have done. Being able to process everything we could have counted with every single one. So every person you have that confidence and their voice is heard. And have been able to show this is one of the things and being able to explain that process to the representatives to the Congressional representatives that were there, to the ones that were actually part of our canvass board members and have them come there and do that process. They had that handle on experience and that also is

something that led to us having a successful canvass.

>> Thank you.

>> Commissioner Palmer will give you the last comment.

>> Donald Palmer: Key voting is potentially the last option for voters. It is having issues at times. They communicated to their voters and you should give the ballot and make sure it is in there. What is your experience with USPS during this cycle and then your takeaways with the election and what you think about moving forward? Just sort of where do we go from here with USPS in your elections?

>> I think USPS has internal forward looking and we're at the table at the EAC level and local level as well to really be able to address the reoccurring issues that we continue to see. In Colorado, we have been a hybrid state. So we really have built a working relationship with our local USPS people, post masters there in what we continue to find is the messaging and policies and thoughts that are at the national level with USPS are coming down and being heard and understood at the local level. If we help with that communication, again, trying to fill that gap as much as we can with being such a heavy reliance on USPS is one of the things that we really need to become a bigger force with them is making sure they know we're here and we're going to continue to be little pokers at their side. Hey, you really have to pay attention to us. Just a little plug away. That's right.

>> We have a good experience this election cycle. And part of it is because we mail ballots to our ballots to 12,000 people. Bear with me. And so the official was a number of these ballots came back to us. They came back for USPS, went through the normal channels. Post offices around the county were pulling out those ballots and driving them to our office, to our local post office every day. We didn't have ballots in Pittsburgh. And so that was a key aspect of the whole process was that my ballot is basically going through the mail once. They were brought to me and that made everything work so much better because it was just such a -- it was such a process. The people had about 92% response rate. They went out and I think a lot of that was USPS.

>> We really appreciate our partnership with the postal service. Election mail in terms of that is a little teeny clip for them. It is an important clip. We advocate more resources in improving that. That partnership is super important. I think this case, communications is important. It is just between the election official and postal service at the local state as far as federal. But also between election officials post office. To me, we had in Utah a close race. It was a border County or series ever counties where ballots were processed in another state at a postal facility. There were concerned about theme not being turned in on time and things like that. The U.S. postal service did it exactly the way it was supposed to, but voters didn't realize it. Voters didn't

understand that one-week rule. It wasn't communicated to them. So to help the voters understand, you know, post office is a great tool, drop off is a great tool. It is great. You need to know the drawbacks and considerations for each of those methods of returning it. Educate voters and set their expectations.

>> They said it off.

>> Commissioner. Join me in thanking them. With that, we'll move to our next item of business. We will vote on (inaudible) as general council. First I would like to invite Rebecca Green and co-director of the election law program at William and Mary law scheme to say a few words. Professor Green?

>> REBECCA GREEN: Thank you so much for inviting me for these proceedings. I learned a lot already. But especially happy to be here because of Camden and all he has done so far. He's a poster child. So I'm going to Mary Law School has a very election law program. It is providing resources for judges and election disputes. In 2025, we'll be launching a website that we think will be useful for a lot of election officials, which we'll have information on state election codes and case law. We hope we'll make it easier to understand what the law is in your state and other states. But a big part of the election program is student facing. So there are a lot of students, law students who are interesting in how our democracy functions and what they can do to help. So we're really focused on creating a pipeline of law students who can support the election administration community and if you are interested in connecting with a law school there your state, I hope you will reach out to me. When I say that Camden is a poster child for what it is supposed to look like, I really mean it. He did a law degree and master policy. He was the editor of the state law on topics. One summer, he traveled to Indonesia where he worked on democracy building and institutional court. He wrote a paper on that experience. From that experience, he understand the up getting published in the election law journal from Stanford. To say he built an incredible resume is an understatement. When he was a third year, the election assistance commission reached on the to me because they had a huge back log of requests at the agency that were looking for law student help to address. So I put forward Camden and a few other students to help. It took me by no surprise whatsoever that they snatched him up given how smart and generous I think how kind he is as a person. He's just an extraordinary guy and I am not surprised to see how far he's come in such a quick time. I'll really honored to have him as a student and really look forward to seeing him continue to develop in this role. I turn it over to you and thank you for this opportunity.

>> Thank you for those kind words and a big take away. For anyone sloggong through, doing some of the hard work is certainly paying off as a service. We appreciate Camden's role in that vote as an

intern and still today. So pursuant to help America vote act, section 204 A4, they appoint to serve under the executive director. The general council shall return a 4 years and may serve for a longer period only agree appointed for an additional term or terms by voter commission. Acting general council in December of 2023. As you can imagine, both a federal agency interest a federal agency involved in elections, there are no shortage of legal issues that come up in our world and Camden has done an amazing job advising us on those, walking us through some of those difficult issues. So pursuant to the authority granted to the commission under HAVAS 204 A4 and 208, I am recommending the commission appoint him as general council. I now open the door for comments prior to calling a vote on recommendation.

>> Mr. Chair?

>> I would like to thank Camden for his work over the last couple of years as council and acting director council as we have moved agency. I think in a very positive direction and appreciate all the efforts you and your team have provided to the EAC as a whole.

>> Thank you.

>> We're trying to built suspense back up.

>> Any recommendations?

>> I want to (inaudible) someone who has been around the agency before was actually formed and is known each and every one of the general councils who have served as agency, most of which who have served with dignity and justice for the agency. I am looking forward to continually working with you. I think in is not the top of where you would be. Hopefully you will remember us wherever you vote eventually, but I think that you have a stride that will continually benefit the agency despite loyalties to the team in Philadelphia. But I believe we're lucky to have you here. And with the executive director, I believe that the team the EAC has in place continually shows that we are an agency to be reckoned, to be fully helping the American people in terms of their voting experiences along with the over 8,000 jurisdictions of election officials under this country. I believe that we all have the same goal and that is to insure elections are secure and accessible. And so with that, I still don't know. I believe that this is truly something that the agency will benefit from. Thank you.

>> Commissioner: Thank you, Commissioner Hicks.

>> Camden, I want to thank you for the professionalism you brought to the EAC and all your hard work over the last few years. You brought a higher level to the general council's office. Professor green was your mentor in what school and early on gave me a high recommendation for you to come work for us. Was so happy you did pursue that and come to the EAC. I just want to say that I am excited about this opportunity for you and for the EAC and I look forward to continuing to work with you over the next at least 4 years. Thank

you.

>> Thank you, commissioners. And with that, I will now entertain a motion as general council under HAVA section 204 A4.

>> I point.

>> Second.

>> I.

>> Commissioner: Is there any order discussion on the motion? I will now caught the question. All in favor say I?

>> Everyone. I.

>> Commissioner: All opposed? Hearing none, we will have this approved. Congratulations.

>> it really can't be overstated. It has made a difference. My colleagues have noted and really, I mean, this is broader elections communities that haven't been easy years. We have come a long way and made significant strides and, Camden, you have been a big part of that and we appreciate it. Along those lines or on that home, running elections is hard work, especially during a presidential election cycle. It is due to the dedication, long hours and commitment of election administrators and election workers that November elections ran smoothly across the country. I'd like to thank all of our panelists again for thanking us today and sharing their experiences and critical insights. While we know the work of elections will continue as director said, we do need to take a moment and celebrate. Again, this was a free, fair and secure and accurate election. Administrators cross the country did an, mazing job. Poll workers did an amazing job -- poll workers did an amazing job. Take a moment to rest and recharge over the holiday season. The EAC looks forward to continuing to work with all of you and implementing the lessons learn and have the support and resources they need to continue to serve as well and run elections. With that, I will now take a moment to adjourn today's meeting. I heard a bunch there. Anyone wanting to take a second?

>> Second.

>> Commissioner: It's been properly moved to adjourn and second the meeting. Anyone agree say I?

>> Everyone: I.

>> Commissioner: Anyone opposed? Okay. This meeting is adjourned.