

US EAC BOARD OF ADVISORS 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

April 28-29, 2026

Rough Transcript

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April 28, 2026

>> Everyone, we're going to get started in about two minutes. Two minutes, please. Start wrapping up your conversations and take a seat. Thank you.

>> Let's go ahead and bring this meeting to order. Can everybody hear me okay? I don't know how tight I have to ride this microphone.

Good morning. First off, a small piece of personal privilege, I'm glad I'm here. Last year I was telling Ben I watched half the meeting curled up on the floor while recovering lung surgery. I don't recommend it. Every day is a gift, even if you're at an EAC meeting. My wife says either leave the glasses on our take them off. I can't decide.

I am Scott Schwab, chair of the Board of Advisors and I'm calling this meeting to order.

Thank you for making the trek in. And those watching online. I will turn it over to our Commissioner Ben. Welcome to DC.

Wait.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thanks, Secretary. Great to be here. We will get this meeting going here.

First, I would like to ask everyone who can to stand and we'll do the Pledge of Allegiance.

[Pledge of Allegiance]

Well, thank you. And thank you all for joining us. Many of you were here last year. I see a few new faces or a few people who were able to join us. We're glad Secretary Schwab is back in person. Welcome back. We're glad you're here.

It's been a busy year for the EAC. We have had a very productive year. We have had some insightful conversations just in the last month with the other boards. As you all probably know, we will Local Leadership Council on Standards Board earlier this month. You all are not batting cleanup, but close to it. Appreciate that.

We're looking forward to continuing those conversations and discussions, sharing the work that the EAC and updates about

what the agency has been up to and what we are looking forward to doing in the rest of the year and going forward.

I do want to acknowledge -- I'm trying to see if there's anybody else. Wesley and Ricky are on double or triple duty here. They just can't get enough of us. So we do appreciate their continued service on our many boards. Again, we got great feedback about the Agency's current and upcoming products at Local Leadership Council. In particular, a lot of acknowledgment and appreciation for some of our more recent efforts, like the election supporting technology evaluation program, the learning lab, and the Clearinghouse Network efforts. All of these were made possible because of the overall budget increases the EAC has received in the past several years. But more recently, I do want to mention that the Agency took a 15% cut this year down from 27.72 million in 2025 to 23.86 million. Along with some added responsibilities, that has created some challenges and has made us have to really think about our priorities going forward. Which is where all of the boards really do come in. It just makes it that much more important that we hear from you, the Board of Advisors, the stakeholders that you represent makes this Board unique compared to all of our others. So that feedback is really critical to ensure that we are being as effective and as efficient as possible with the resources we have.

We don't want to backslide on the programs that we have

put in place again.

Just waiting on the adjustments there. Okay. I will just keep going.

Again, so much of the work that we do is based on the feedback that we get from election officials around the country, from our Boards, and so much of our role as an Assistance Commission is that customer dynamic is providing resources to assist state and local election officials as they do their job, which continues to get harder and harder. So there's no shortage of work to do, and we want to make sure we're doing the best job we can for them.

So again, thank you for being with us here today. We appreciate your time, taking time out of your busy schedules, and the assistance that you provide us to help make our work better.

And with that, I will turn it over to Eric Fey, Secretary, for a roll call.

>> Thanks very much. Is roll call first or the proxy committee? Proxy?

>> Therefore, I will recognize Eric Fey.

>> I'm usually not recognized this much.

>> You're so recognizable.

Okay. Mr. Chair, we have five proxy designations as of this morning. Nick Myers has named Jonathan Brater as his proxy.

Deanna Brangers has named Karen Sellers as her proxy.

And Larry Norden and Bryan Limmick have named Liz Howard as their proxy.

And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

>> Thank you. Without objection, these proxies are accepted. As a reminder, proxy voting is allowed for all business matters. I will turn this meeting back to Eric for roll call.

As we go through the roll, please introduce yourself and your roll and let us know a little bit about you. But let's not be too inefficient with it, though. Thanks.

>> ERIC FEY: Mr. Chair, if you don't mind, we can go around the horn here and you can set the tone for how we should introduce ourselves.

>> Scott Schwab, Kansas Secretary of State from the great state of Kansas and been secretary for seven years and on this committee for four? Three?

>> Feels longer.

>> I can be dry.

>> Chris Walker. Sorry about that. I forgot I didn't have a mic.

County clerk in Jackson County, Oregon. I'm the chair elect. I have spent 31 years in local county government,

including 18 elected. And honored to be here and to serve the people. Thank you.

>> Good morning. Ricky Hatch, the county clerk and auditor for Utah. I was elected in 2010.

>> Good morning. I'm Lisa Marra, the state election director in Arizona. Prior to that, I was a local election official in a county in Arizona.

>> Isaac Cramer, I'm the director of elections for Charleston County, South Carolina. I'm a children's book author right here. We can talk about that later. Give you a preview. Albert Learns to Vote. Anyway. Glad to be here. I represent NACO and glad to be on the Board of Advisors.

>> I won a bet that you would mention that.

Tina Barton. 32 years in local government. Former Michigan election official and former senior program advisor at the EAC. Good to be with some of my home folk here. Vice president ready for Tuesday and the cochair of the committee for safe and secure elections. And appointee of the U.S. conference of mayors.

>> Derek Bowens, elections director for Durham County, North Carolina, home of the Durham Bulls and the best college basketball team in the country. The duke Blue Devils. I'm here

representing the National Association of election officials.

>> Wesley Wilcox, the supervise or of elections for Marion County, Florida. I'm a little new, this is my 36th year. I'm here representing the election center, as well as the chairman of the board.

>> Karen Sellers, I'm the Kentucky state board of elections executive director from the great state of Kentucky. We have a big week this week in Kentucky. Kentucky Oaks and the Derby follows.

>> Let me follow up. Most of the horses born that are going to run in that are from Marion County, Florida.

>> You may be right about that. And I have been the director since 2021.

>> Hi. I'm Stephanie Enyard from Arlington, Virginia. And that's it.

>> Hi. I'm Eric Neff, the Department of Justice. I appear to be the only rookie at this table so far.

>> Don McGahn, speaker of the house appointed me.

>> Hans von Spakovsky, I'm a senior fellow at Advancing American Freedom, former member of the Federal Election

Commission. I also served on two county election boards in both Georgia and Virginia. And I think Don may remember I was a member actually of the first Board of Advisors that was formed after the Help America Vote Act was passed. Which unfortunately tells people my age.

>> Representative Pat Proctor. I serve the people Kansas as a state representative and serve the people of Kansas as the chairman of the Joint Kansas Security Committee and also the Elections Committee in the House.

Christian Adams, I'm a commissioner on the United States commission on civil rights. President of the legal foundation and a designee of the Civil Rights Commission.

>> Good morning, Lucas Vebber, a litigation attorney with the Wisconsin institute for law and liberty out of Milwaukee. And I'm an appointee.

>> Hi, Justin Reimer, appointed by the leader of the senator. A partner at First Street Law and President of restoring integrity and trust in elections. Former of the Virginia elections. It's great to be here.

>> Barbara Simons. I might be the only computer scientist here. I got sucked into this work when computers got introduced into our elections and people started voting on paperless

machines, which my colleagues and I all thought was kind of crazy.

I am the representative of the minority leader of the Senate.

>> Good morning. I'm Liz Howard, a director at the Vernon center for justice. A former election official and follow Justin as the deputy commissioner at the Virginia department of elections.

>> Hi. Good morning. I'm Rosalind Gold, chief public policy officer of the association of Latino officials where I have spent 37 years working on a variety of election administration issues. I am a designee of senator Alex Padilla and a proud Dodgers fan looking for a repeat. Thank you.

>> I'm Thomas Ferrarese, the former commissioner of the board of elections for 21 -- actually, this is about my 53rd year involved in government. This is my fourth year on this. And my appointment was designation was from Congressman Morale on the house administration committee.

>> Good morning. Greg Moore, the former chair of the board, I believe. I think I was. I represent Congressman Morale from the house administration and served as President of the democracy foundation, capital hill staffer and a voting rights advocate.

And I'm author of a book called Beyond the Voting Rights Act. Any other authors who wrote books, here is your chance. Thank you. Happy to be here.

>> Good morning, everyone. Jonathan Brater, director of the bureau of elections in Michigan. I guess I will add, national champions in this year's college basketball season. The income president of the National Association of election directors along with my colleague nick Myers.

>> Good morning. Cathy Darling Allen, I'm the retired Shasta County clerk and register of voters in northern California. Designee of the ranking senator rules committee Senator.

>> My name is Eric Fey, secretary of this board. And director of elections in St. Louis County, Missouri.

>> J. Scott Wiedman, director of the federal voting assistance program. I'm in my 34th year now. And happy to work with every commissioner since its inception.

>> Donald Palmer, one of the four commissioners of the EAC. I think we actually probably have five alumni of the voting section here. It's quite amazing frankly.

>> Tom Hicks, Chair.

>> Christy McCormick, vice chair.

>> We made it back. Thank you. That was enjoyable.

A couple of housekeeping things. One, North Carolina only wins national championships when they take a coach from Kansas.

Two, if you remember and I reminded myself, put your phones on silence if you think about it.

I want to make sure I'm in the right spot.

I will recognize the commissioner to administer the oath for the Board of Advisors.

>> Thank you, secretary. We might need voting later about the best college basketball team from around.

But first, we got to get everybody sworn in. If you will stand and raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

Thank you.

Back to secretary Shcwab.

>> I will call for motions to adopt the agenda and minutes from the previous annual meeting. After I call for the motion, it needs to be moved and seconded by members. After the motion is moved and seconded, members will have an opportunity to object or add nonsubstantive edits. Members were send the agenda and the previous meeting minutes ahead of the meeting. So please before you speak during the meeting, state your name for the transcript.

I will entertain a motion for the agenda as approved -- as presented.

>> Mr. Secretary. Wesley Wilcox from the elections center. I make a motion to approve the agenda.

>> Is there a second?

>> I will second that. Ricky Hatch from Utah.

>> Okay. Any discussion? Seeing none. All in favor, say aye. Opposed, same. Motion passes.

Now we will go ahead and move to the minutes. Correct?

Yeah.

Did everybody have a chance to see the minutes? Is there a motion to adopt?

>> I move to adopt. Greg Moore.

>> Is there a second?

>> Liz Howard, I second.

>> Discussion?

Seeing none. All in favor, say aye. Opposed, same. Motion carries.

Sorry. I had to get a list of names he's pulling it up on his phone.

So pursuant to the bylaws, we will appoint the elections certification committee. I'm appointing three members. That will be Justin Reimer. Justin, did I pronounce that right?

>> You did.

>> Come on, seven.

J. Scott Wiedman. And Tina Barton. The committee will announce the nominations for the positions, describe the election process, and certify the results.

Therefore, I will recognize the spokes person to go through such.

>> Thank you. In March of this year, the EAC solicited nominees on behalf of the nominating committee for two open positions on the check executive board. There was one nomination for the chair elect and one for secretary. Information about the nominees was distributed to the membership of the Board of Advisors in April per the bylaws as there was a nomination received for each position, no additional nominees may be accepted. As there is a single nominee for each vacant position,

voting shall proceed via a voice vote.

>> So if Eric wants to take a minute real quick to explain and justify himself, which is not hard to do because he's such a standup guy. The floor is yours.

>> So recognizable, right? Eric Fey, director of elections in St. Louis County, Missouri. Appreciate the opportunity to take on this position. I have been in elections for about 20 years now. I have served as President of the State Association of Election Officials in Missouri. Incoming President of IGO. Care a lot about this profession and this field. Currently secretary of this board and look forward to the opportunity to serve in this position of chair elect.

>> Thank you, sir.

All in favor of the election of Eric Fey as chair, say aye. Opposed, same.

Congratulations, Eric.

[Applause]

I will recognize Justin for the next seat.

>> Okay. I believe now we will have the election for

secretary. And that's all I have got.

Lisa? It's your turn.

>> Good morning, again. Thank you very much for the honor. I'm happy to serve here as a member of appointed member of the governor's association. I am the state election director in Arizona. I served four terms as the state election official for the election officials association, and I am honored to be here today with you and look forward to taking on this new role. Thank you.

>> All in favor, say aye. Opposed? Congratulations.

[Applause]

Now I get to turn it back to Eric again.

>> Submissions to the changes of the bylaws.

>> Okay. Mr. Chair, we had one amendment presented, one bylaws amendment presented today for your consideration vote. This amendment has been considered and advanced by the bylaws subcommittee. I thank the committee for their service over this past year. The proposed bylaw amendment was shared with the full membership in advance of the meeting. In summary, this proposed bylaw amendment number one would require members to attend the

annual meeting if they wish to vote by the elimination of proxy voting. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

>> Thank you, sir.

Now, just to remind people, no substantive amendments or changes from the floor will be accepted. But the floor is open to debate before the vote. Should substantive amendments or changes offers, a motion to recommit to the bylaws to the committee or consideration for a future meeting may be in order. The bylaw amendments can be adopted by a two-thirds vote. Therefore, I will open the debate on the bylaw change.

Hans?

>> HANS VON SPAKOVSKY: Thank you. Since it was my proposed bylaw, let me -- amendment, let me very quickly address it.

Look, all of us here have very busy personal and professional lives. I acknowledge that. My wife sometimes gets upset at my schedule and I'm sure everybody else has the same problem.

But this Board of Advisors is very important. The work it does is important for the EAC. And it only has one meeting a year. And if you cannot make this meeting, then you are not fulfilling your duties and you are not doing what you're supposed to be doing for the organization that you represent. And I just don't think allowing proxy voting and allowing an organization's representative to skip the one meeting a year

that we have is a good idea. I also don't think it's a proper way of running the business of this Board of Advisors.

That's why I have proposed that we get rid of proxy voting. Because look, if you represent an organization and you can't make the annual meeting, you should notify that organization and get them to appoint someone else who is going to be able to make this meeting. And I just don't think given all of those responsibilities and duties that we have that allowing proxy voting is a good idea. That's why I proposed this.

>> Further discussion?

>> Just a quick question. Has there been a comparative analysis with other Federal advisory boards as to their rules about proxy voting in consideration of the proposal?

>> So Derek, I received your question about this the other day. I did a quick analysis of a few of the bylaws and it was not addressed either way. It neither permitted or denied the proxy voting on the bylaws that I was able to locate.

>> Further conversation. I'm sorry, I cannot read your name from there.

>> Thank you. Hi. I'm Rosalind Gold.

I completely understand the intent and desire to make sure that everybody takes their responsibilities to this Commission

very, very seriously. That people fulfill their obligations and do everything they can to be here personally.

I also know that there are often very unexpected and unanticipated things that come up with people's lives. It can be a family member's illness or care taking responsibilities. And with the fact that folks have to travel to get to these meetings, the commitment to come to this meeting not only involves your time at the meeting, but that travel time as well.

If this meeting allowed virtual participation, I could see perhaps being in favor of something that completely eliminated proxy voting. But I think it is possible for people to be very, very committed to their responsibilities on an ongoing basis, but then, like I said, just have something completely unexpected and unanticipated happen in their personal and professional lives and want to make their voices heard. And would like to -- would need to vote by proxy under those unusual circumstances.

>> Can I see your placard? Christine?

>> Christine Walker, Jackson County, Oregon, county clerk.

I want to agree with Rosalind. A couple of years ago they did the joint meeting in Florida of the Standards Board and the Board of Advisors, we already had ballots out in Oregon. There was no way I could take off in the middle of conducting our May

election. But I was very vested in this and I had actually asked to see if we could have an online mechanism to be able to participate. And at that time, they did not.

So I agree, I would like to see for an otherwise completely involved member to give options in this day and age, we should have an option for participation virtually. I just could not leave my state when I have ballots out. In fact, ballots go out this coming Friday. Which is another option. We could do vote by mail.

Or online. And I won't mention that, Barbara.

>> Mr. Adams?

>> Thank you. A couple of questions. Maybe for you, Adam. But somebody.

First of all, do we know if there's studies conducted or data collected on whether these are family illnesses resulting in proxy votes? Do people have to turn in an excuse? So we don't know. Okay.

Next question, what does HAVA say about this? HAVA doesn't seem to authorize proxy voting. It makes it clear if you're from the civil rights commission designee, for example, like I am, if I don't show up, I don't get a vote. What does HAVA say about proxy voting? Does it perhaps prohibit it? Not explicitly, but implicitly. If you want to be on the board, show up. If you have a family illness, you give up your vote. There's no right to be

present by proxy in HAVA that I see. Perhaps somebody has looked at this on the commission staff.

>> Hi, everybody. Camden Kelliher. It doesn't explicitly reference it. So we haven't done the analysis on HAVA. But the bylaws are in the control of the EAC. It's a determination how you all want to govern business matters. It does list the designees. But it's optional and up to this board as to how you present resolutions to the EAC, which is the HAVA designated responsibility.

So frankly, it's a determination of the board and that is the way that FACA advises on bylaws for these types of committees.

>> A follow-up. Has this been considered by staff before? And on the civil rights commission, we have advisory boards, state advisory boards and there's no proxy voting on the United States commission on civil rights. If you don't show up, you don't get a vote.

>> Camden?

>> I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question in there?

>> Before today, had this issue been considered by staff? As

to whether or not HAVA authorizes proxy voting?

>> No.

I can tell you that the EAC, our interpretation would be that HAVA does not prohibit the board from choosing to have or not have proxy voting. And that would be the Commission's interpretation of HAVA's opinion on this matter.

>> Ms. Simons?

>> Thank you. I would like to support the idea of being able to vote remotely. As someone who lives on the other side of the country, it is a Schlep to come here. I can do it. But there are times that I can't. For example, two years ago, I was hospitalized and couldn't do anything. But I could talk on my phone, which I can always do. So I could participate remotely in a situation like that.

Also, remember a few years ago, there was this disease where people just weren't traveling much? I think it began with a C. You know, something like that could reoccur maybe on a local basis and people just couldn't travel.

And one final comment. I have no problem with voting over the Internet if the votes are all public. And our votes should be public. So I would be happy to vote remotely over the Internet. That's okay. But public.

>> I will try to stay on topic.

Hans, I will let you have the last word. Is that okay?

And I'm calling you Hans because I screw up your last name. Please have grace with me.

Ms. Howard?

>> Thank you. One thing that's top of mind for me is that the location of the Board of Advisors meeting is now consistently in DC. And if we decide to not allow proxy voting, I fear that's going to bias the membership toward people that live here versus the election officials who are actually out in the field doing the work.

>> Further discussion?

>> Isaac Cramer, yeah. So last year, I had MRSA and was hospitalized during this meeting. So I understand the intent of the amendment and I agree that we should all take our responsibilities seriously. But we have to have flexibility knowing that there are things and emergencies that do happen. And I would say this should probably go back to the bylaws committee and look at different ways we can address the concerns and making sure that everybody here is taking the responsibility seriously and coming, participating, they're engaging, but also at the same time having an understanding that I was still engaged, but I was in a hospital. So that's a little bit difficult to do when we're responsible for these things. And we

take our jobs seriously.

>> Is Camden, you're waving at me.

>> If I can just offer one -- the EAC Board of Advisors policy allows your entities to change their representative up until the day of the meeting. We authorize a policy for this that is of maximum flexibility. So I'm not arguing in favor one way or the other. But that's something that we did that the entities are now aware of it but you all might not be aware of and is important to this conversation. You can be swapped day of and placed back into your role the day after the meeting that you were unable to attend.

So it's just so that everybody has all of the same information. That is the way the appointments work. So if it's a flexibility thing, I think that's an important factor here as well.

>> Mr. Cramer, was that an official motion?

>> No. It was a suggestion. But someone else can make that motion. No, I think as we think about this and hearing discussion here, I think that can inform what we can do next. I think the purpose of the amendment is a good purpose. It's a good goal. Right? We heard that.

But I think we can address it differently maybe from what I'm hearing from general consensus of people. So my recommend -- there we go. Maybe I make a motion then to send back this amendment to the Bylaws Committee and further discussion on the topic.

>> Point of order, Mr. Chairman. You can't make a motion when there's already a motion on the floor.

>> True. It was a setup. That was a setup. I was trapped there. I'm sorry.

>> In Kansas, we allow substitute motions. I will try to keep one chairman separate from the other.

>> I never made that motion. Retract everything I just said.

>> Mrs. Enyard? Is there further discussion?

Hold on. Sorry. One second. I think the fact that the appointee can switch the -- or appointor can switch the appointee is a strong argument to get rid of proxy voting. Because it also putting the onus on the appointor, who honestly sometimes they're out to lunch and don't even fill these positions. It puts the responsibility on them instead of the appointee sub delegating out their responsibility. It could be without authority of the person that appointed them and they go and get it to everybody. I think that's an argument in favor of getting rid of it.

>> Mr. Brader?

>> Thank you. I definitely understand and support the concept of trying to facilitate more in-person participation in the meeting. And the point about being able to swap out members is a good one.

I wanted to emphasize in terms of the election official representation specifically, it is often the case this things with elections come up in an hour's notice. It's election responsibilities, some of which are predictable. And we are also often sued and we get subpoenaed and have to testify. It could have easily been the case, there are multiple litigations in Michigan and other states and I could have a court imposed deadline, which I could ask to be set aside. But that's up to the judge.

So yes, these procedures are in place that allows swapping members. But there's internal process with each of the organizations that doesn't move that quickly. I know that the organizations are conscientious about selecting balanced membership. It's not something that they can do at the drop of a hat. It is more difficult in general for election officials from different parts of the country, especially those are fewer members in offices and the ability to travel longer distances. I think the effect of this would be to ultimately reduce election official membership on the board.

The only other thing I will mention is I think big picture the goal of the bylaws should be to make sure that the critical

mass of the Board supports motions. And I think that allowing more participation, whether it's by proxy or other methods of voting would better facilitate that goal than a system in which things could be passed with a fewer number of overall votes.

>> Further discussion?

I can't see that down there. Say your name.

>> Lucas Vebber, Wisconsin. I want to reiterate what Mr. Adams was saying before. I don't think HAVA does allow this and I don't think it's in the goal of the boards. We're supposed to give our independent judgment. Having a proxy vote does away with the independent nature of what we're supposed to be doing. It's never been litigated that I'm aware of, but it may well be if we continue to allow it.

>> Ms. Simons for the second.

>> Okay. I just wanted to support the comments about last-minute demands on the election officials' time. And it's not just election officials. If I had to reach my appointor on a short-term basis, there's no way in hell I could. These things often take -- I would like to think that thought was given to my appointment. Maybe there wasn't. But ideally, there should be. And you can't just turn on a dime and appoint someone else.

>> Further discussion?

Seeing none. Hans, you may close.

>> I would like to remind folks that you're not members of this board, your organizations are. Whoever it is that's appointed you. They are the ones that have the responsibility and the authority to appoint who is a member.

If you know that you're not going to be able to attend the meeting because you're going to -- you have been told that you have an election coming up, I think you have a duty to notify the organization that appointed you so they can decide whether they want to substitute and send someone else there.

Adam, how far ahead did we get notice of this meeting? Yeah. A long time. And if it's a last-moment thing, if you have enough time to fill out a proxy form, determine who is going to -- who you're going to give it to and send it to them, I think you have enough time to quickly contact the organization that you represent, tell them that you won't be able to attend, and give them, because it's their decision on whether or not they want to send someone else there. And I think folks are forgetting that it's the organizations and members of Congress that you represent, they are the ones that should be making the decision on who attends this.

Thanks.

>> Do you want to move the resolution?

Do you want to make a motion to move the resolution?

>> Well, I thought the -- I will make a motion -- actually, I thought the committee putting it out, does that not count as a motion?

>> I was told there's a motion and a second.

>> I will make a motion to amend the bylaws according to the amendment that I submitted last year.

>> Second?

>> Representative Pat Proctor from Kansas. I will second.

>> Okay. I'm going to do this by a voice vote. And then if there's a roll call called, I will have Eric do the roll call.

It is a two-thirds to amend. All in favor, say aye.

Opposed, same.

I'm going to say -- so roll call. Eric, I will let you take the roll.

>> Okay. Mr. Chair, I will just go down the list then in alphabetical order and take the ayes and nees.

>> Christian Adams?

>> Aye to adopt.

>> Cathy Darling Allen.

>> Nay.

>> Elver?

Tina Barton.

>> Nay.

>> Derek Bowens?

>> Nay.

>> Deanna Brangers?

>> I'm her proxy. Nay.

>> Jonathan Brater.

>> Nay.

>> Isaac Cramer.

>> Nay.

>> Selfny? That was an aye? Thank you.

Thomas Ferrarese?

>> Nay.

>> Eric Fey. Nay.

>> Rosalind Gold?

>> Nay.

>> Ricky Hatch?

>> Nay.

>> Liz Howard?

>> Nay.

>> Cheryl Kagan?

>> Nay.

>> Brian Limmick?

>> I'm his proxy. Nay.

>> Lisa Marra?

>> Nay.

>> Don McGahn?

>> Aye.

>> Nicholas Myers.

>> Nay.

>> Greg Moore.

>> Nay.

>> Eric Neff.

>> Brian? He is not present.

>> Larry Norden?

>> Nay by proxy.

>> Victoria Nourse? Not present, I don't think.

Pat Proctor?

>> Aye.

>> Justin Reimer?

>> Aye.

>> Scott Schwab?

>> Nay.

>> Karen Sellers?

>> Nay.

>> Barbara Simons?

>> Nay.

>> Steve Simon?

>> Nay by proxy.

>> Lucas Vebber?

>> Aye.

>> Hans von Spakovsky?

>> Aye.

>> Chris Walker?

>> Nay.

>> J. Scott Wiedman?

>> Nay.

>> Wesley Wilcox?

>> Nay.

>> Okay, Mr. Chair, there are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight ayes. 24 nays.

>> Motion not receiving the two-thirds hereby fails.

Hans?

>> I have a question. When a representative of a particular organization does not attend this meeting, is the organization or the legislator who appointed them notified that that person did not attend?

>> I would imagine that would be up to them to let them know.

>> Okay. I'm going to submit another motion to the bylaws for consideration that if and when an individual does not attend the annual meeting, whoever appointed them must be notified by the

EAC.

>> Wesley Wilcox, I will second that motion.

>> So that needs to go to the resolutions committee.

>> I would point out I know the bylaws require submission a year ahead of time. If you look at the original motion that I submitted, that motion had that provision in it.

>> Do we have language on that then?

>> The language is in the resolution approved by the committee. So I guess my motion is to amend the original motion which was defeated, if that's possible. And simply take the language about notification.

>> I'm going to say no as Chair. Because the motion failed. So that portion failed with it. So it would be -- it would take a reconsideration from someone who voted on the winning side to resurrect a portion of that resolution.

>> I move that we reconsider the motion.

>> Were you on the prevailing side?

>> No.

>> It takes somebody from the prevailing side.

>> Wesley Wilcox. I was on the prevailing side and I will make that motion.

>> Okay.

>> I will second that. Ricky Hatch.

>> Okay. All in favor of reconsideration, say aye. Opposed.
Motion carries.

Okay. So explain again what portion you want to move forward?

>> If a member does not attend a meeting, the Secretary shall notify the designating authority that appointed that member to the Board that the authority's designated member did not attend the meeting.

>> Is there discussion? And you're saying that's the only portion your advancing?

>> Correct. My motion is to add that to the bylaws.

>> Second.

>> Seconded by?

>> Adams.

>> Thank you. Discussion?

Ms. Simons?

>> I have a question. At what point would it be determined that the member hasn't come to the meeting? I mean, if my flight is late or canceled or someone and I come the next day, did I not -- I mean, at what point is it determined? Is it the start of the first day after lunch? At what point?

>> Wow. Make sure you turn your placards toward me. I don't even remember the names of my children. Ms. Gold?

>> Rosalind Gold. Yes, I think there's a vagueness about this. And I would like to hear what our election officials feel about this requirement. And the timing of the notification, the form of the notification. So I would like to hear a little more about that.

>> Mr. Cramer?

>> Just a clarification point. So the Secretary would have to notify each organization?

>> We took a roll call at the beginning of the meeting. If you're not present for the roll call and therefore you have not attended the meeting, obviously, the Secretary according to that language would send a notice to the designating authority. I don't think -- I think we could leave it up to the Secretary to determine how that letter is sent and how quickly it is. I don't think that needs to be in the bylaws.

>> Ms. Walker?

>> Thank you. Christine Walker. Does this include if we have an online option? If they're not here in person, but what if they're attending the meeting online? So again, I agree with

Rosalind, there's gray area here that needs to be resolved. I can perfectly attend a meeting and I do it every single day with a Zoom or a Microsoft Teams. I think there needs to be clarifications. Is that in person? Or via an online option, as has become very standard in today's world.

>> Mr. Bowens?

>> Just one quick question. Excuse my novice. Are the minutes of this Board of public record?

>> I believe so, yes.

>> Okay. And so would the secretary have discretion as to the distribution of this notification? And I'm assuming minutes would be permissible given it would include the record of attendance?

>> Camden?

>> Yes.

>> Camden says yes.

>> Thank you.

>> Mr. Wilcox. If you have spoken, please put your tent down.
Thank you.

>> I believe roll call is determining moment of when this should be your attendance should be taken. That's what we do to determine the quorum. Therefore, that's when it should be taken.

>> Mr. Kagan?

>> Senator Cheryl Kagan from Maryland. You missed the roll call, but I am very much here and engaged. I would want to be counted.

>> Mr. Mcgahn, you had your tent up?

>> Yeah. When the secretary records attendance, any body has to have a quorum, there's a roll taken, people come in and out that might be noted in the record. First time here. This doesn't seem like a gray area at all as to whether you're here or not. A deliberate body since we broke from England. This is not that hard. You're here or you're not. And how does it get recorded in regular order by whoever records such things, which I assume is the secretary or someone along those lines. If I step out and go to the bathroom, there's a vote, I miss the vote and come back, is that noted that I was absent for the vote? Probably the answer is yes. So I don't see the gray area when it comes to basic parliamentary and deliberate body who is near and not here.

>> Further discussion? Seeing none. Hans, you may close on the motion.

So moved at least?

>> I think this is a basic thing. And I think part of the problem we have had with this Board for the last 20 years, and

you can see this, you have seen this from year to year is the designating bodies often will appoint people who then don't show up. And I think they should be notified of that so they can decide whether they want to keep that person on the Board or whether they want to replace them with someone who is going to attend. And that to me is a basic obligation that I think the EAC has to notify the designating authorities if someone hasn't shown up for the one annual meeting that we have.

It just doesn't seem very hard to me.

>> Is that a so moved?

And a second?

>> Second, Adams.

>> Thank you.

We'll go ahead and do a roll call.

>> Okay. I will go in the same order as before.

Christian Adams.

>> I notify for absenteeism.

>> Cathy Darling Allen?

>> Aye.

>> Elver Ariza-Silva. I don't believe he's present.

Tina Barton.

>> Aye.

>> Derek Bowens.

[Inaudible]

Deanna Brangers.

>> I'm Karen Sellers, I'm her proxy. Aye.

>> Jonathan Brater.

>> Aye.

>> Isaac Cramer.

>> Aye.

>> Stephanie?

>> Aye.

>> Thomas, how do you say your last name?

>> Aye.

>> Eric Fey?

>> Aye.

>> Rosalind Gold.

>> Procedural nay.

>> Ricky Hatch.

>> Aye.

>> Liz Howard?

>> Abstain.

>> Okay. Cheryl Kagan.

>> No.

>> Brian Limmick.

>> No by proxy.

>> Lisa Marra.

>> Aye.

>> Don McGahn.

>> Aye.

>> Nicholas Myers.

>> Aye by proxy.

>> Greg Moore.

>> Aye.

>> Eric Neff.

>> Aye.

>> Brian is not present.

Larry Norden?

>> No by proxy.

>> Victoria Norse is not present.

Justin Reimer.

>> Aye.

>> Forgive me. Representative Proctor, I skipped you. Sorry.

>> Aye.

>> Scott Schwab.

>> Aye.

>> Karen Sellers.

>> Aye.

>> Barbara Simons.

>> No.

>> Steve Simon.

>> No by proxy.

>> Lucas Vebber.

>> Aye.

>> Hans von Spakovsky.

>> Aye.

>> Chris Walker.

>> Aye.

>> J. Scott Wiedman? Scott Wilcox?

>> Aye.

>> The ayes, Mr. Chair, 24. I think 24 is two-thirds for this purpose. Okay.

>> Having the two-thirds majority, motion passes.

I have to figure out where I am in my notebook. Give me two seconds.

I recognize Camden.

>> CAMDEN KELLIHER: Hey, everybody. If you thought that was fun, you will have a great time with me. I have done this a couple of times and you have heard this. I am going to do my best to make up for the time and go through this quickly. It's important to cover our four FACA boards just so everybody is aware of where the Board of Advisors falls alongside some of the other advisory committees.

The initiates the VVSG process and the standard board and Board of Advisors have a unique role in the process. The standards board executive committee and Board of Advisors are the same in that they receive a copy of a modified or new VVSG and have 90 days to review and provide recommendations to the recommendations.

And while the executive council is not mandated by HAVA, they provide advice, 110 members, all local election officials decided on by the local election official. 110 doesn't sound right. Anyway.

Quickly to cover for you, again, this will where we will make it time. There's a lot of lawyers in the room. But these are the primary rules and regulations that govern Federal advisory committees. Just so everybody is aware, records created in the course of your business in the EAC are subject to the Federal FOIA. Records maintains by yourself if you are an official is maintained by the sunshine laws. Your primary duties and responsibilities. Somewhat on par for the conversation we had are participate in meetings and submit nonbinding advice and recommendations to the EAC.

The purpose of your appointment to this Board is to provide advice and counsel to the EAC and represent the membership so that last bullet I would just point out to you is not to promote yourself and services, products, or private parties. We will accept children's books, though.

The main point of this slide, and again, this is where I make up time, we really appreciate this board for a long time and especially for members appointed by our congressional bodies have been supportive to the EAC. We like to remind everybody that you may not lobby Congress on behalf of the EAC. If you think we're great, that's great. But say so in your personal capacity.

Another thing that this Board necessarily hasn't done quite as much as some of larger boards, but is using subcommittees. If the board wants to form a subcommittee, if one is formed, we need to maintain a clear reporting structure. Subcommittees are allowed to meet and deliberate outside of public meetings only if they report to this board overall. To they meet and make a determination and present it here. Then the board decides whether or not it's a formalized recommendation to the EAC or something to move forward. If we break the chain, the subcommittees become committees themselves and we have to formalize it and it looks more like this.

So that's everything. If there's any questions, I'm around. I'm happy to answer them now. Like I said, just wanted to be short and sweet. And let us know if you need anything from us.

Thanks.

>> And next, executive director of the EAC, Brianna Schletz

for an agency update.

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: All right. Good morning. I'm the executive director. Very happy to be here with you today. And also on point, just want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here. We appreciate you coming and participating and giving us feedback. Our mission outlined in had voir dire is to improve election administration. And we can't do that without the advice of our boards.

As the commissioners mentioned, two weeks ago, we were in Chicago holding our annual meeting for the LLC and standarding board. Both of those boards are made up entirely of election officials. They were very successful. We got a lot of feedback. Had really good discussions. And overwhelmingly, the take away was we heard election officials are using our resources and taking advantage of the free training opportunities we have and supportive of the work that EAC is pursuing. Hopefully we will have the same sentiment following this meeting. That was really successful and great to hear from the election officials that our work is having an impact.

It's only appropriate those meetings are followed by bringing together the Board of Advisors and your range of backgrounds and perspectives contribute to the work that we put forward. Our hope is this results in improvements to elections and helps Americans vote. So we value that feedback and

perspective.

Today, we're going to hear a lot from our staff on upcoming work. I would like to highlight some of the EAC's accomplishments. I think the screens are working.

When the Board met last year, there was a lot of uncertainty. Today, I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to report on the progress we have made as an agency. We have a talented and dedicated team that you will have an opportunity to hear from some of the great work they're doing. I just want to highlight that last year we spent a lot of time working internally responding to data call requests, defending our spending, ensuring our policies were updated with the new guidance, implementing AI in our operations and streamlining our processes to be more effective. Ultimately with the goal to do more with less.

I'm excited to share some of the outward facing accomplishments.

We have continued to focus our attention on election technology. Last year was a historic one. We certified our first systems to VVSG2.0. There are two systems certified. And they have five systems under test to 2.0 right now.

Our team completed the transition from VVSG1.0 to 2.0 and completed the accreditation renewals. We have been expanding research under the election supporting technology program or ESTEP. And we have exciting progress to share. We have three

Electronic Poll Books certified to the voluntary standards. That's a fairly new program and excited about that.

For electronic ballot delivery, our pilot has recently been completed and we're gathering the results of that effort and hope that will be available very soon.

On voter registration systems, we have developed draft voluntary standards and are currently in the early stages of conducting a pilot for that technology. That pilot is going to test commercial and state voter registration systems for conformance with security standards.

For election night reporting systems, we have two kind of updates in that area. One is that we contracted for research on a security testing framework using a system that's a proof of concept. We think that this research is going to provide information on systems connected to the Internet and risk mitigation strategies more broadly that can be applied to other web-based technologies. So voter registrations as well. We expect the results of that before the end of the calendar year.

The other research is internal research. We're revisiting the draft ENR standards to try to do a call to pilot before the end of the calendar year. That one is a little bit behind the other technologies, but we are making progress.

All right. So our field services team is responsible for quality monitoring within our testing and certification program. In 2025, our staff provided support for 48 hash verifications in

nine different states. What a hash verification is a security tool. We basically use that tool in order to see if software has been altered. And our team can explain this much better than me. But I will try. It involves comparing the trusted version of a software code to the version used in the field to determine if they match. If there's very small modifications, that changes the hash and we can see that something is altered. Our team has been working with states and jurisdictions directly to ensure that the systems haven't been altered and assist with the anomalies they find. We write the results of the field services into a report and then also offer a one-page summary. That's the example on the slide right there.

What we found is jurisdictions have been able to use this as a communication tool following our site visits, they have had positive local media stories come out. And really they found that it's increasing voter confidence and also helping the public understand some of the steps that go into election security.

We have also been working with NIST to drop the VVSG 2.1. We held four meetings over the course of the year and tried to revise the standards to incorporate the feedback. In addition, we in January of 2026, and this is related to VVSG, EAC published a notice of clarification establishing an end of life certification review policy. What we're doing is trying to ensure that the list of certified voting system reflects those

that are supported and used. We received that list from the manufacturers, but we also a couple of weeks ago posted the proposed list in the Federal Register to get feedback from election officials.

The goal is to make sure when a system is not supported by the manufacturer, it's removed from the active list. So administratively. It doesn't change any of the previous certifications, but has the updated list moving forward.

Before moving on to our training program, I want to highlight how impressive this volume of work is.

>> If I may, I have a question. How many labs are currently certified by the EAC to do the testing according to current standards?

And then I have a follow-up question.

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: We have two accredited labs.

>> Okay. One of the problems with the entire testing system, and I'm wondering what if anything can be done about it, is that when manufacturers send equipment to the testing labs, they test the software and the equipment based on the standards and then certify that they have passed them.

The problem is that equipment goes out to election officials all over the country and the manufacturers are constantly sending them patches to update the software in those machines to fix issues and problems. But those patches don't go

through the testing process. Correct?

So there's no way for us to figure out whether the systems remain compliant with the standards. Is there any thought to what we can do about that?

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: My understanding, and correct me if I'm wrong, Brook, if there is a modification to the system, that does have to go through test. If it's a minor modification, those usually run fairly quickly because it's a minor update. The team in the lab determines that it's a more major update, it has to go entirely through the process again. So there is a check on any of those modifications.

But I did think you bring up a good point as far as we lose visibility once something is fielded. That's why we're trying to push the field services team. The eyes on the ground and helping the jurisdictions understand what the manufacturer is telling them and what the reality is on the ground is useful.

>> Another issue, and I don't know if we can do anything about this, but I was at a meeting a week or so ago with some computer scientists who were telling me -- and some election officials who were telling me that one of the other problems is that they were talking about a particular state I won't mention, they actually have not put the patches in that they are getting from the manufacturers to fix problems. And again, I wonder is the EAC at all involved -- do you guys get advised when a company is

sending out a software patch, something to fix a problem, are you advised about it so that you can monitor whether the jurisdictions that have this equipment are actually doing what they ought to be doing, which is installing those patches to fix the problems?

They were citing a particular jurisdiction that for the last ten years had not put in the patches that the manufacturer was sending them. Which could cause all kinds of problems.

>> I can jump in briefly here. But I want to be cognizant of time. One, I don't know that I'm familiar with the exact situation you're talking about, and two, the conversation is a long one.

But number one, the basis of HAVA, as you know as well as anybody, is that they're Voluntary Voting Systems Guidelines. So states choose whether or not and how they use them.

But secondly, we are aware of some places that some of your patch schedule depends on the election schedule and when you have time. Also one of the things that we hear a lot about and one problem particular instance now, there is a funding dispute at the state level and the upgrade would cost money and people don't have the money to do that. Which is unfortunate. So whether that's a local solution, a state solution, or a federal solution, someone needs to pay for that.

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: And I think we have a session on VVSG2.0 later and the staff that are better experts on this can talk in detail about that area.

So just before moving on --

>> Hold on.

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: We have time for questions at the end.

>> Let's let her finish and then questions.

>>

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: Appreciate it. Our full technology team including the testing and certification, ESTEP, and services is ten people. They are doing an impressive amount of work and a year ago we were getting the question what's going to happen when all the manufacturers bring 2.0 systems and how your team is going to handle that. I am happy to report we spent the last year cross training our teams. All of our campaigns have a testing and certification team lead and supported by the technology staff and we were able to meet the demand in that area.

We are currently hiring for two more testing and certification team members to help us do manufacturer audits. So we do see the importance of the program and understand some of the challenges and then also just trying to tighten our processes and improve so that we can meet the demands and changes of the technology.

Training, we have continued to expand the training and reached nearly every state and territory. Where are stats there. We have train -- the learning lab has 32 training courses in seven categories. And in 2026 already, we have conducted live training in Montana and New Jersey, which had 325 election officials at those events. We have requests right now in from New York, North Carolina, Utah, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington. And they just keep coming in. So we have had a huge demand for the online and in person training we're offering. That is free for election officials and we have gotten really good feedback that it's interactive and their teams need it. We anticipate that the demand will continue to increase.

Our clearing house community is EAC's network for bringing election officials together across the country in order to ask questions and share resources. In 2025, the community added 685 new users, which was a 90% growth rate. Just counting the local election officials, our members serve 102 million voters or 58% of all registered voters in the United States. So pretty impressive the community that we have been able to kind of get into the network.

The goal was to be able to connect election officials so that you could ask each other questions and provide information and kind of support one another. And there's a few quotes on the slide, they are small, I apologize for that. But demonstrating the value that members have found.

Unfortunately, with our budget cut this year, which I will talk about later, we asked our LLC and Standards Board to give us feedback and we welcome the feedback here as well. We're trying to understand these initiatives, learning lab and Clearinghouse community are serving the election officials the way that we would like them to be. We're constantly trying to assess which programs to keep and which to scale back. So it's useful for us to have feedback in order to make those decisions.

This slide, our team continues to produce a variety of different resources for election officials. We added more than 20 new materials this year on a number of different topics. And we also distributed more than 3,500 election scenario test decks. You probably saw them out front. Feel free to grab one. We expanded it with natural disaster expansion pack and poll workers. That was at the request of election officials so they can use those cards in their trainings.

This slide is on grants. You will hear in the grants director later. So I will go over this briefly. Just want to highlight it has the break down of funding from 2018 to 2026. In 2025, EAC distributed \$15 million in HAVA election security grants. And as you know, in fiscal year 2026, \$45 million was appropriated. The team has made the funds available to states and offered training. Last year, the team conducted eight on site visits. We have tried to focus on providing technical assistance around grants and increasing the amount of training

sessions that we provide to the grant offices. That's a place where there's turnover and us having the training opportunities helps tremendously.

Didn't mean to do that, sorry.

Okay. EAVS. In 2025, we published the 11th survey of EAVS and had 100% response rate. We have seen the EAVS cited in over 70 publications. And we also created state one pagers. On the slide there, you have the one pager for Iowa and Delaware as examples.

We have an EAVS data interactive on our website. It's a tool where you can compare data from different states or jurisdictions, find like sized jurisdictions, and basically compare statistics across them. So it's cool if you haven't checked it out, encourage you to do so.

The team has also published new research. We have reports on election worker recruitment, training, retention, and evaluation. A report on the impact of grants to election administrators, which you will hear more about. And the history, evolution, and future direction of the EAVS. Those are just a couple of the reports. We send these to the boards for comments and we appreciate your feedback. Please continue to give us that.

This slide demonstrates the outreach that the agency is focused on. In 2025, we dedicated a lot of time and resources to the outreach with congressional staff, OMB, and election

officials across the nation. This slide is pretty impressive. Between the four commissioners, there were 100 visits to better understand how the EAC can best serve the needs of the election officials. EAC hosted 22 events in nine different states, including Guam and the district of Columbia and started holds regional meetings to connect and discuss and share ideas. We had really good feedback from doing those.

Sorry, the goldish color is the states that were visited and the gray is ones that we didn't make it to.

Good question. There's no legend on that slide.

So the next -- what we have here is just a demonstration of some of the ways we have tried to share information with election officials, stakeholders, and the public. We have a newsletter with over 30,000 subscribers now. We have a dedicated newsletter just for election officials. That has 4,000 subscribers currently. We had over 15,000 press mentions and we try to do everything we can to get the word out in all the ways that we can.

So looking forward. We were able to achieve a lot in challenging circumstances last year. But I do want to highlight some of our challenges with funding. So the EAC is facing a significant budget cut for this fiscal year. We're operating with fewer staff than we were at this time last year. Our budget for -- this is a little hard to see. Our budget for fiscal year 2026 is 23.8 million. And we have a direct transfer to NIST for

1.5 million that goes directly to NIST. So lowering that amount. For comparison, our budget in 2025 was 27.72 million. So we're operating with approximately a 15% decrease.

With a budget as small as ours relative to other Federal agencies, this reduction has a pretty large impact.

For staff, we reduced by 10% and have 63 full-time employees now. And we're having to make difficult decisions to ensure that we meet the mandates. We want to be as transparent as possible. We shared this with the other advisory boards. We want to talk about some of the areas we're considering reductions in order to operate within this budget.

So the first area is contracting for special research projects. We're going to try to move as many of those in-house as we can. But there is some work such as the ENR work that I was describing that requires the technical capacity that we have to contract for. So the reality is that there will probably be less of those research reports.

The other large area is travel. We're watching this very closely. But we love to say yes to all requests for training and field services. We think these programs are incredibly important. As we get to the end of the fiscal year, we will be faced with tough decisions and may have to say no to some questions.

We are as a small agency always working to be good stewards of taxpayer funds. We continue to try to provide

resources in a bunch of mediums in order to help election officials. And just want to be transparent about some of the challenges we're facing.

We have been able to back fill some critical positions with the testing and certification. But we're underresourced in some of the program areas. So your input here really does help us try to prioritize those resource.

All right. On to a little happier note.

So you might wonder how we decide where to prioritize efforts and what we are working on. Last year at our board meetings for LLC and Standards Board, we had a session in between the meetings and gathered election officials. We had 81 federal board members participate. They developed ideas and solutions for challenges in election administration.

So we called this the ideas lab. And the results of that are up on the screen there. So participants generated 230 different challenges that face election administration. Those were narrowed into 53 high priority issues, which are shown in the chart or the graphic on the left side of the slide. And they fit into nine different areas that are listed there on the right side. So you can see that the main areas where challenges were identified are communication, workforce, and election administration and operations and funding.

And it goes down from there.

There were teams formed to create 16 big ideas for

improving election administration.

So from EAC's side, what we did with the data and the information collected, we put the 53 high priority areas into a tracker. And we have identified the ways that we're making progress on that right now and what we can do in the future.

So some of those categories you're going to hear a little bit more about, including the workforce and what our plans are in that area. Again, we welcome feedback.

The challenges were developed with statements that started with wouldn't it be great if. So as an example, for technology, one of them was wouldn't it be great if election officials leveraged AI effectively by sharing practical use cases with each other.

So what did EAC do? We have tool kits and resources online for using AI. And we issued in March 2026 a report titled AI in action. It included just that, case studies for election officials on how actual election offices were effectively using AI and how others could do the same in their offices.

One of our senior subject matter experts recently provided an AI presentation to election officials that included how to get started, what it means to have a corporate account versus a personal account or a free account. Basically other tips for implementing AI responsibly in an election office.

In the future, we hope to expand our AI efforts. We're piloting an AI answer function in the Clearinghouse community

that folks can opt into. And we're also hoping to deploy an AI agent on EAC's website before the end of the year to make the website easier to navigate and find things. Trying to do what we can in that space as well. And we have this for every one of the areas. Not as far along on all of them.

All right. So our 2025 annual report includes many of the highlights that I have talked about. But it also includes recommendations for Congress. And that's something that we started doing last year. This year, we included eight recommendations. And I want to highlight these because many of them were challenged identified in the ideas lab. Some of them are not things that we're able to easily fix on our own. And many of them also are things we can address at our current funding level. So I want to walk through these as well.

The first one is that recommends that Congress consider legislative efforts to strengthen election security and cybersecurity by establishing an independent testing program and coordinated vulnerability program. You have heard Commissioner Palmer talk about this. We were pleased to see the support for penetration testing of election equipment. It did not come with funding, but we think there's more that can be done in this area. The penetration testing was a great first step, but there's more we can do to advance this.

The second one there is to fund the ECA for ways for accuracy and interoperability. This was a large discussion point

at the other board meetings. This is one of the main issues identified in that ideas lab as well.

We recognize that this is a challenge. And we're trying to do what we can. We have two ongoing research projects that I will highlight quickly. One is to understand the cost of voter list maintenance that states and jurisdictions bear, including identifying efficiencies and options available for easily exchanging information across states. So trying to gather more data on this.

And the second research project is the design study looking at ways to improve response rates of voter notifications. So we have those two projects. We understand that that doesn't tackle the issue entirely. And we put this recommendation in the report really to show that we would need dedicated resources to actually tackle this issue in a real way.

Similarly, recommendation three is on our training program. So again, we have heard really, really positive feedback on this program. In the learning lab, we are finishing the content that we paid for with last fiscal year's funding. We for this fiscal year under the budget cuts are only able to fund the platform and there will be no new content we can pay for at the current funding level. So just want to talk about the LLC Standards Board, we launched a certification program. We wanted to recognize election officials that had completed 30 credits of these online training courses. We at that event recognized over

100 election officials. There was really, really positive support for creating a Federal election certification program. We expect that the number of election officials that will have completed the credits will be nearly 200 soon.

And some board members even accepted certificates on behalf of their whole offices. Because they were doing this as a team together to all get training in these areas. So again, positive feedback. We're seeing a huge demand for the program. Election officials across the nation need this and don't often have access to it. So we're hoping to see it appropriately funded.

All right. I'm going as fast as I can. Sorry. I know there's questions.

Number four is to amend HAVA to include CMNI.

Number five and six are areaing directly identified afunding issues in the ideas lab.

Five is really understanding the cost structure and rising could says around elections. So getting data on that.

And number six, we just completed research on what it will cost for VVSG 2.0 equipment to be deployed across the nation. That report should be issued very soon and supports the needs for funds being available for states and territories to procure the new systems.

Number seven is to amend HAVA to improve the efficiency of the TGDC appointment process. This was a large topic of

discussion at the meetings. We're talking about the joint appointing authority with NIST.

For number eight. Encouraging sharing election administration best practices. This is advocating for a program to host overseas visitors to learn more about U.S. Federal elections.

All right. I'm going to cover these quickly. Just high level changes to EAVS.

So we held six different working groups with 38 participants across 18 states. We incorporated a lot of the feedback from the working groups and there are highlights on the slide. It was pointed out to us the need for clear instructions. Some of the burden with reporting, outdated survey content, and just more communication needed.

We also heard that reorganizing questions before 2026 would be incredibly challenging for election officials to respond to. So we did take the information that we heard, we put out a modified or suggested changes in the Federal register. We received over 15 comments -- 50, I'm sorry. Not 15. 50 comments, the most we have received on EAVS. And we made most of the changes to the comments we received. It's now back for public comment, the 30-day window is open and comments are due on or before May 25th. So encourage you to take a look at that and let us know if you have feedback. Again, we did accept most of the changes provided in the public feedback the first time. So we

take that seriously.

And kind of just hoping that these changes will increase the data quality and also make it easier for election officials to fill out. We hear over and over again that it is not a difficult survey to complete. So we made changes in order to help with that.

I think that's it. I hope this presentation demonstrates that we really do take seriously the feedback we get from all of our boards. Happy to answer any questions. But appreciate you being here.

>> Questions. If it's for VVSG 2.0 and 2.1, you will get a better answer after the break with Brooke. Is that fair?

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: That's fair.

>> Ms. Simons?

>> Thank you. First of all, I really like what you're talking about independent testing with penetration testing and more emphasis on cybersecurity testing. I hope that goes forward. I think that's a really good idea.

And I wanted to pick up on Hans' comments. And none of this is critical of the EAC.

It's sort of a theory in computer science that all large software programs have bugs. They all do. That's why Microsoft and Apple are sending out frequent updates. With Hans' question about certification, there's probably a lag between say when

Microsoft sends out an update, when the voting system vendor incorporates the update. And then whether or not that actually gets used by election officials when they have their machines.

This is a really hard problem. And EAC testing no matter how good it is almost certainly won't find all of the flaws. In fact, Anthropic just came out with a really scary result that they have found flaws in essentially all major pieces of software out there being used.

So you have to assume that the voting machine software has bugs.

That means that we can't totally rely on the software. Which means we need to have good, strong post-election ballot audits that use the paper ballots as a check on these computers. Because you ask any computer scientist and they will tell you you can't trust computers and we are heavily dependent on the computers our election.

Our ballots are all counted by computers.

>> BRIANNA SCHLETZ: We are going to present on the efforts we're doing on the audit standards that we talked about last year and the progress we have made there and what our vision for that is in the future. So we are all in agreement of the importance of audits.

>> Ms. Howard?

>> Thank you. Just really appreciative of this presentation and all the great work that the EAC has been doing, especially

the efforts that y'all have made to make it easier for election officials to communicate with each other and talk through best practices so that everybody across the country can have a better election.

I wanted to touch base about the AI piece. So excited about that. I did just want to hope that you will consider partnering with Bill Gates, the former supervisor in Maricopa County. He's now running model. So the mechanics of democracy lab. As part of that, they have an AI and elections clinic. That is going out across the country hosting boot camps for election officials to help them identify ways that AI can be helpful in a safe environment.

And I will note that I hope we get to this later on in the discussion, but we did a local election officials survey and we asked about AI and we have shown that 16% of local election officials are using AI. That is double the percentage of the local election officials that were using it last year at this time. They're primarily using it for helping with social media and helping with internal stuff that's not voter facing right now.

>> Ms. Gold?

>> I also just wanted to echo the thanks for the incredible hard and effective work that has been done and the amount and

scope. And I also want to, again, amplify the comments about the importance of getting in front of AI.

I just had two questions. One is when you were identifying the different priorities that people had brought up, I would like you to talk a little bit more about communication and what's involved in that. So that's the first question.

The second question is easy. I think. When you talked about AI and the use cases, are chat bots part of that? I want to know if chat bots are being used or considered as part of the AI practical use cases.

>> Absolutely. Yes, they are. The AI chat bots answer.

For the communication piece, one of the main things we heard is election officials like tool kits because you can modify whatever the communication tool is for what makes sense in your community. So you can put in the correct date, you can put in whatever people need to know.

So we have done a lot of work to do communication tool kits. We also have a social media tool kit that we presented on at the LLC, which was really well received, basically showing people how to shift in and out characters to tailor their social media really easily so you don't have your own social media. Most election offices don't have the luxury of having a social media expert in their office. So this tool kit is real easy to use. It's based off of free software systems so people can use

it and we offer in it PowerPoint which most people have access to. So try to do things where people can customize it the way that they need to. That's the feedback we heard that's most useful.

And then additionally, just like with the more recent one with mail dates changing or things like that, how they get the message so voters. That's what the election officials are struggling with the most. Trying to find the tool kits that can be helpful and customizable.

>> Thank you.

>> Justin Reimer.

>> I had a question regarding the EAVS survey. What are your impressions about the data quality and completeness from the information gathered from the states? Especially compared to '22 or '20?

>> So, the data quality is a concern we continue to hear. I think what we were hearing is some of the questions made it difficult for election officials to determine where to put the data. That's something we heard loud and clear. Some of the changes for 2026 will help with that. And also the instructions. The other thing that we heard and something that we changed is there's instructions at the top of each section which tell an election official what they need in order to complete that section. So hopefully that will help as well.

And then plain language for the instructions. In the

working groups, we heard multiple people say we don't know what this question is asking, which makes it hard to get correct data when that's the case. We have done a huge rewrite on the questions to put those in plain language, which we hope with help with some of the data quality concerns that we have heard.

>> Mr. Proctor?

>> Thank you. My question was about the hash validation that you're doing with the field teams that are going out to election officials. Did you have any instances where it didn't match? Where the hash for the software did not match the software that was supposed to be on the machines?

>> Hello. I'm Brooke Watters, the director of testing and certification and oversee the field services team.

Whenever there is a hash that doesn't match, usually it's because we're looking at a different software version. They just the counties don't know what they are using so we have to make sure that we're getting that. So engineering change orders or minor change orders will periodically change the hashes on the devices. So most of the systems match.

But there hasn't been any mismatches like maybe what you're referring to where the system is completely different. That hasn't happened. Any issues have been quickly resolved.

Just noticing mostly version control.

>> I think that would be a great thing to publicize. Because this is one of the things I hear over and over again. The tampering with the software. You guys are out, you have checked, and you have not find a single instance of that. I think somebody should be shouting this from the top of the building.

>> Ms. Walker?

>> Thank you for the great report. Just a couple of comments.

For years, I have been seeing about all the publications we see talk about poll workers, poll workers, poll workers. That may seem minor, but we are a decentralized system and not a one size fits all. I love seeing how one of the books, I saw the slide that says election workers. And from a state that we have no poll workers, I really appreciate that being recognized. Because election worker kind of encompasses everyone.

And I know it might seem minor, but we are not a one size fits all.

I loved also seeing the number five on the list about the Ideas Lab, about the rise in election costs and looking at that as part of that as your priority list.

Again, we are not a one size fits all. And what they do in one state doesn't necessarily mean that we do that in 49 others.

The EAVS item. One of our former election directors statewide to what your point was, it is a struggle to try to quantify and figure out a lot of those questions. And he once said bad data in, bad data out. And I really want to stress that point on all the surveys that we take, even Brennan, even different things that if we can't ascertain exactly what's being asked or it doesn't fit, like in the vote by mail model, we don't have polling locations. So we get taken down in some of the surveys on the rankings because we don't fit into the perceived norm. So again, no one size fits all.

Just a few comments on that. So thank you. It was a great report.

>> Mr. Bowens.

>> First, great presentation. As a state or a county that uses EAC resources, given North Carolina's ban on private donations, in kind contributions toward the supportive elections administration, it is critically important that EAC provides these resources.

On that same vein, does EAC, given your limited resources and budget drops over time, do you all contract with private entities to help support the execution of these trainings and various things you do within the states?

>> For the in-person trainings, those are our team. We have a

team of subject matter experts that develop the content. One of the ones they provided for the boards in Chicago was a new training called ballot ship. It's based on the game battleship teaching logic and accuracy. This is why we get the great feedback. But they're all developed in house for the in-person.

All of the commissioners sign off on the scripts and those are actually produced through a contract. So we use a contract for the production of the Learning Lab content. Which we'll continue paying for the platform but we won't have the funds to do any new content on the Learning Lab this year.

But we do hope to continue always evolving, taking in feedback on which trainings are missing. We have gotten a lot of really good feedback on the chain of custody one as well. Things that seem to be there's a need for it. So our teams develop that in house.

>> To the extent that EAC would consider contracting the private entities to execute training, there would need to be an assess. Of states that think they're getting something from the EAC facilitated by a private entity that could conflict with the law in the respective states.

>> Derek, I do notice that some of the private entities are looking at our trainings and our resources and then copying those and putting those out. Which I think a high level of what

the EAC is doing.

I will say that even with our cards that we have put out that I have noticed that there have been several companies and several private entities that have done that. And on another note, we were able to take those cards and give them to a foreign government, foreign election commission, and they duplicated those in Dutch. So those things are being done, people looking at the things that we're doing and multiplying that and putting it to their constituents, whether that's here in the U.S. or other countries as well.

>> Mr. Adams?

>> Regarding the EAVS survey, are you getting universal compliance on the UACAVA portion? If not, do you have a dialogue with the voting section regarding enforcement of the mandatory provisions of the EAVS survey?

>> Sorry, I'm looking to my EAVS experts here.

>> Phoning a friend.

>> Actually I might ask Scott.

I can look into your question. Right now we have 100% compliance so people are filling out the EAVS survey. But if there were concerns about any of the data quality, because it's

a survey, we take the data that the state provides to us, we verify it to the extent that we're able. A lot of it, we don't have the ability to double check to see if the information that they're providing is accurate. If there were concerns about a certain jurisdiction's data, you can bring that to us and we can follow the mechanism that investigate that.

>> My question was related to zeros. We sued a number of states for not providing the UA CAVA data on the survey. So are you getting zeros from states on the UACAVA portion? And if so, have you dialogued with the section of the DOJ regarding enforcement?

>> I don't believe we have any zeros for entire states. Perhaps for a jurisdiction that's small, we might not have a UACAVA voter in that jurisdiction. I'm not aware of dialogue with the DOJ or other enforcement agencies.

>> Mr. Hatch?

>> Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Excellent presentation and appreciate all the work that the EAC has done over the past couple of years especially. Really improved I think. My question relates to the NIST appointments. I know that was one of the items that you were working on is improving the process.

We don't necessarily need a lot of details, but has that situation been solved as far as getting more appointments? And is it looking good for the future?

>> I actually think we're making progress on that. And there may be some news in the near future. So we're making significant progress on that.

>> Hans?

>> Maybe I missed this. But is the EAC done any work on or does it have plans to do a study on with recommendations on data format standardization and interoperability? What I'm talking about is different states, sometimes different jurisdictions, when it comes to the voter registration systems, et cetera, they use different data formats and it makes it difficult if neighboring states want to compare their voter registration list to potentially find individuals who registered in two states, like Maryland and Virginia. Because of that issue, it's very difficult to do that. And what would be great is a study coming out from the EAC that has a recommendation of a standard data format, for example, for voter registration systems and software recommendations for interoperability to make it actually easy for different state data bases to get -- to compare data. Even within the same state often the voter registration system, the

DMV, they can't talk to each other because there's no interoperability. And I'm wondering whether there's any plans to do it. That kind of a study could have a major effect in improving things across the country.

>> We agree. Definitely. There are two things that we have in the works right now. So one is one of those voter registration list maintenance studies that I talked about where we had a handful of states that have agreed to help us in determining both the cost of voter list maintenance, but also what are the challenges with interoperability or some of the opportunities in order for there to be common data format or sharing amongst states. That hopefully should shed some light and have recommendations out of it.

The other thing that we're doing is in the ESTEP program, our draft standards for the voter registration systems called for interoperability and have standards if somebody -- if the program continues and systems were certified to that, they would have a requirement to have that interoperability in CDF format.

Jay, I don't know if there is anything you would add.
Okay.

[Inaudible]

>> Okay. I have Allen Moore -- and five minutes behind schedule.

>> Well, I will try. Cathy Darling Allen.

Thank you so much for the presentation.

So I will go through my questions quickly and you can pick and choose, I guess.

Under the tech eval research, it doesn't sound like there's a lot of funding for that going forward. I would love to see added to the list signature verification software that's in use across the west. There are no state certification procedures certainly in California for that. And it's a really -- for those of us who count a lot of vote by mail ballots, it's an essential part of the process and could use the outside verification software.

You said the hash process increases voter confidence. Maybe off line you can share data or metrics used to support that statement. I love that. But the devil is in the details. Right?

This is kind of a sticky wicket, commissioners. And Commissioner Hicks, you answered my question partially about the cards being translated to Dutch. But we went to Chile and Poland and other nations. In the presentation, I'm wondering what the benefit is to local official and election administration in the United States for those visits.

And not to put you guys on the spot, I -- as a former

elected official who had to justify my own travel, I get it. I was wondering if you could talk about that a little bit.

>> Sure. It's also traveling to talk to Americans overseas. So when I was in Holland as an invitee to witness their election and to give them advice on their elections, I think of it as not only benefitting the U.S. because when the U.S. coughs, the rest of the world gets a cold. When they have questions for us, we are able to answer them personally.

But also going to to the U.S. Embassy and speaking to Americans overseas, I think was really helpful.

>> Thank you for that.

>> I would add that for particularly Chile, I went to represent the United States at the Organization of American States. And there hadn't been an American representative there in years. So it's really unfortunate that we don't engage when we should. So yeah. That's the type of thing.

>> Thank you.

>> Sorry. I know we're tight on time. One thing I wanted to add there too that is useful on those conversations, I think obviously everybody here knows that the U.S. elections are unique in so many ways and we have the 50 states to benefit from

with Federalism. But some of the challenges we have been facing in recent years with both foreign interference and disinformation, as well as trust dynamics, I think for some many Americans, we were privileged to be born into democracy and grew up with it. A lot of these people have had to sell it to their populations. So again, really interesting conversations and learning opportunities, again, to think about the process in a different way or how people have been able to engage in some of these areas and so those have been useful dialogues.

>> Thank you.

>> I will quickly -- thank you for the feedback on the signature verification software. That is exactly what we're looking for, what areas are we not considering.

My seat mate here asked me to ask are you referring to automatic signature verification software?

>> Stuff attached to and used with ballot sorter devices.

>> Yeah. That was the clarification.

>> Okay. And then on the voter confidence, I think I was speaking more qualitative. I don't have metrics. But we think the local media reporting saying hey, these are the things that your election office is doing is an avenue to a communication tool and to generally help with voter confidence.

>> Thank you. On the EAVS rework and plain language on the questions, is there a plan to do a look back and ensure that the

data localities thought they were reporting didn't go into the wrong bucket?

>> We could consider that. I imagine that would be a big lift just with the volume of data that there is.

>> As somebody who filled out the surveys many times, that might be something -- some cleanup retrospectively. And I hope there's a demarcation where the questions have changed. Ten years from now, we can go back and see if they're seeing different trends because folks now understand better where to put that data.

>> That's a good point. And I was going to say because I think it was brought up on the vote by mail, we did update the definitions and instructions for jurisdictions that conduct the elections. There were data quality issues with that. So we are trying to target certain areas as well.

>> Mr. Moore.

>> First of all, congratulations on all the work you have been doing with the entire staff and with the 15% budget cut. This is pretty good, I believe.

But you have heard a lot of comments around the room about things that you might want to add to your plate. Can you talk a bit about the 2.6 to 2.2 drop in your budget and what you're looking at for the fiscal year? We can save it for this afternoon, but just a sense of where you're going and going

toward a Presidential election.

>> Let's deal with that in the next session.

>> Good enough. Thank you.

>> Ms. Marra?

>> Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you for all of the hard work. I have used the services for well over a decade as a state election official and a local election official. I feel your pain with budget cuts. And that's my concern. My concern is budget cuts on a Federal level. We're not getting funded on state levels. And now is not the time to cut back when you look at the new election officials coming in to the industry. I'm on the down side of my career because I'm elderly. We have a lot of younger people coming in and they need the training and need the resources. So that's my comment about money and budgets. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> Seeing no further comment.

We're going to do a 15-minute break. But we have two minutes to get everybody up there for a quick photo. Leave your name tags in front of you.

>> Can the members of the public stay seated to make it as easy as possible for us to get the members up and do the photo quickly so everyone gets their break? Thank you.

>> After the photo, we will be here at 11:15 a.m.

[Break]

>> Let's go ahead and reconvene.

Okay. Welcome back from break. Next we have a brief update on VVSB2.0 and 2.1 from Brooke.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Thank you. Hello, everyone. My name is Brooke Watters, the testing and certification director here. And I want to use this opportunity to talk --

>> If we could have the chatter down a little bit so we can hear. Thank you.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Thank you.

So today I really want to spend the majority of time talking about updates to the Voluntary Voting Systems Guidelines, the VVSG, to keep the mouthful down.

But a start in background is just a high level video I have for you about what the testing and certification division does. And then we can dive into a little bit more context and start the conversation.

>> We deploy a rigorous testing and certification process in accredited labs that culminates with an official EAC seal of approval. With hundreds of millions of votes cast, you can imagine there are many different voting systems and equipment

used across the country. From Ballot Marking Devices to tabulators, it's critical that a thorough process is in place to test each manufacturer's voting systems and machines. Here is how the EAC makes that work. We accredit independent test laboratories where equipment can be analyzed and stress tested. We have different manufacturers's voting systems and software and equipment sent to our labs for testing. When the software is ready, it's installed on to the system for dry runs of elections. Then we run tests to make sure that the hardware and software are up to spec, performing securely as intended.

We check against physical interference, technological tampering, and even extreme hot and cold weather. And only after the software and system pass this thorough testing process successfully meeting all of the requirements do they have receive an EAC certification.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: All right. That short video does a very high level of what we do. There is a lot more not listed in this and we could talk for just the entire time about what it is that we do. But instead, I really do want to focus on the VVSG and the versions of the VVSG and talk to you all about a proposed update we have for a minor revision 2.1.

On screen are the three adopted and implemented major revisions of the VVSG over the life of our program. Until recently, all systemed certified by the EAC has been certified

to VVSG1.0. The guidelines were operational through November of 2023. And when the status was changed to legacy as per the VVSG life cycle policy due to VVSG 2.0 coming in effect and being implemented.

However, in the life cycle policy, while we no longer accept submissions to VVSG1.0, there is an exception for limited maintenance modifications where minor change orders can be submitted or potentially modifications if additional testing is required.

There were no systems certified to VVSG1.1, largely because the work on 2.0 began shortly after 1.1 was adopted. And 2.0 was adopted in February of 2021. And while it's not here on screen, I do want to talk about VVSG 2.1 and the proposed changes. But I need to get a little bit of context in the framework about how we got to 2.0, its differences from 1.0, and the way of thinking that we are going about with 2.1.

So VVSG1.0 is made up of two volumes. Volume one is the list of requirements. Volume two contains the methods used for testing. 1.0 focused on device level requirements and it's a little bit prescriptive and assumes that these components are integrated into an end to end voting system. So it defines the scope of what a voting system and its elements are and the requirements read as an accessible device must, a BMD must, a precinct scanner must. It's very specific at the device level.

However, with 2.0, it was a complete rewrite of the

guidelines reflecting modern voting system design. It introduced 15 core principles which contains 53 guidelines and nearly 1,000 requirements. In addition to that, we maintain a separate document for the test assertions which act like the test methods to assist our labs in their testing. This is a 300-plus page document, not including the test assertions, and it's a lot of work that's gone into it.

Of those 15 principles, I have here on screen, the ones in bold have been the forefront topics of conversation as of recent. And I imagine that they will continue to be. We have things like usability and accessibility, auditability, software independence and reliability, system integrity, and security, which encompasses a lot of that.

So these topics are often at the forefront of conversation because there's a balancing act that needs to take place. This is a poor analogy, and I apologize, but it's a simple one of an open door is accessible, but it's not secure. A safe vault is secure, but not accessible. How do we keep voting machines secure and accessible for all?

So the point of this and the reason why I'm talking about 1.0 and 2.0 is because there's often this question what's different in the equipment? And there has been a couple of asks about where is this requirement from 1.0 found in 2.0? And it's difficult to create a mapping. Because it was a complete rewrite with VVSG 2.0.

It was not an incremental update and the differences are best understood looking at the structure of the documents, how the requirements are expressed, VVSG 2.0, instead of doing these device-based requirements, it says the voting system must. It does not prescriptively describe that your precinct scanner must.

So the point is that the 1.0 way of thinking is not particularly helpful to the conversation when we're talking about updating the VVSG in the sense of a minor change, which is what is proposed.

If we want to go back to that way of thinking, we would be talking about a 3.0, which is not off the table, but it's not currently the focus of where we are.

A quick pause and just to reiterate some positives and echoing what Brianna shared with you all. Like I had mentioned, until recently, we had -- we have now 2 systems certified. This was done last year in 2025. The vanguard 1.0 and the VSR12.1 by Smartatic.

We have more systems under testament one of these is a modification, not a surveillance system. We have four new systems and a modification under test this year.

So just a little bit more context before we dive into the changes here. The landscape of the technology in these topics are constantly evolving. Even HAVA has outlined in the commission shall review the guidelines at least every four

years. This is in the HAVA subsection C update.

I want to note we just passed five years since VVSG 2.0 was adopted. So seeing the length of time it takes to develop and update these standards, the TGDC unanimously passed two resolutions in September of 2019 while discussing VVSG 2.0 principles and guidelines.

Resolution one was recommending the that EAC development a yearly VVSG review process. And resolution two called for the EAC and NIST staff to make the minor technical changes efficiently. These were implemented by the life cycle policy adopted in 2022. Starting in 2023, we have been conducting annual reviews of the VVSG and the proposal draft 2.1 was presented as part of the 2024 annual review report posted on our website.

The testing and certification team take feedback and proposed changes at any time. So we use our Boards or communications with our labs, manufacturers, we just want that feedback of when is and isn't working. And this is part of the quality monitoring program and field services team is we're trying to get a sense of is the VVSG working and what needs to be changed.

So we are taking in feedback at literally any time and on an annual basis, writing a report which we present both to the executive director and the technical guidelines development committee.

So a visual on screen of this is we have a series of blocks which outline the steps and what I just described to you are these first two blocks which work in a cyclical fashion where we're taking in feedback, presenting it, and so far, the feedback has back to us and says okay, table that. So this information, even though it might not be directly applied into a VVSG update, all of that feedback is not just being stored by us, but constantly undergoing evaluation, something given back to us in 2022 and 2023 is still in our purview, it just might not have made the scope of topics for that year's report.

But that does not mean it is off the table. Some of these conversations just need to happen at the right time where there's not interest for them. But if the feedback is not directly in the report, that doesn't mean it's not important to us. We have to do a large evaluation of what goes into this. We're receiving lots of information, but we're not receiving enough. Give us your feedback.

So next, this leads -- so the step in white here which comes after the green blocks is actually where the executive director has made the decision to initiate the updating of the guidelines. That is our executive director's decision and what actually initiates the what HAVA process here in blue.

So right now, and I want to note that we are still on the first blue block. Even talking with you today, we are still at the first step of this is with the technical guidelines

development committee for review and recommendation of VVSG 2.1. This was presented back to them at the high level, we are more in the white block of this stage of January of 2025, but since have moved to the first blue block.

So once they provide the recommendation, we can more formally move the proposed guidelines to our other boards, the Board of Advisors, this board, and the Standards Board and post for a public comment review period. Following the 90-day period, the EAC will hold a public hearing on the proposed recommendations and from there, our commissioners will have the opportunity to vote on adoption.

So this sequence is very intentional. We want to ensure that we are getting all of the review, stakeholder input, and feedback as much as we possibly can. This is not a rush to the finish line. However, we want to make sure that the process keeps moving as well, giving that once again, we are five years past the adoption of VVSG 2.0.

So I believe it is the executive committee of this board who has received a copy of the proposed changes. You might have only received the red lines to the larger document VVSG 2.1. That's over 300 pages. If this hasn't been provided to you, I can work with the ADFO to make sure you receive a change notes document. That's taking where the red lines are so you don't have to search for them and put them in a shorter, 30-page document for easy digestion.

And we want to be forward thinking with providing this to this board. While we are still with the TGDC, this is an opportunity to get the informal feedback from you all on what this should look like when it comes to you more formally.

The team as we receive all of this feedback works hard on determining what is in scope and what is not in scope in regards to these changes.

So a major revision may necessitate things like new hardware or an architectural update. Significant changes to features and basically breaks compatibility where a requirement and the current set of standards just doesn't work anymore with the new proposed requirement. They are completely contradictory.

A minor revision maintains backward compatibility where you could meet the current standards, but there are additions. It's compatible with the same major revisions. A lot of the feedback is divided in those topics and we are talking about a minor revision, maintaining compatibility.

Now we have gotten to the fun part. Thank you for staying with me for all that context.

To talk about what was in the proposed draft to the TGDC back in January, that annual report considered fixes to erata, making it more easy and readable. As well as incorporating Request for Interpretations directly into the document. And I will go into all of these a little bit more.

We also introduced two new Common Data Formats developed

and finalized by NIST. And then there was some consideration around the prohibition of bar codes for containing voter selections.

Through discussion with the TGDC, some of these topics expanded to include things such as accessibility, voter verifiable paper records, and physical removal of wireless hardware.

So these are the parts where we get into the topics a little bit more. And if you have questions, we can address them during each slide and each topic. But I'm also happy to save them at the end.

Go for it.

>> Since you offered. On the previous slide, you said there was some consideration of prohibiting bar codes from containing voter selection. Is that or is that not in the proposed 2.1?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: The draft shared with the executive committee here does have those changes red lined in there. But none of this is finalized. This is all up for comment.

>> I want to make sure you had discussion meant that it made it into the draft.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Yes. And we have a slide on that as well.

There is a whole slide for it. Yeah. If you're all okay with that, I'm also happy to go over all of the topics at a high level. But if you have a question, please interrupt me. I would rather make this as clear as possible at the topic we're on.

With regards to the request for interpretations, there seems to be a little bit of confusion about what is a request for interpretation. It's not meant to be adding new requirements or changing anything. These are used with an inconsistency has been identified in the current set of requirements. A lab or a manufacturer has come to us with a question saying hey, I'm not sure how to read this. And so we work with our technical experts to develop a RFI document that we publish to help create clarify where there was one ambiguity. We have 13 of these publishes right now on our website and they are in effect. So 2.0 is accompanied with 13RFIs at the moment. But the am big you don't say language is there in 2.0. So we're looking to add in clarifying language to remove the ambiguity at the onset with 2.1. There's no effective changes other than just getting that language to be a little bit more clear directly into the document.

With the Common Data Formats, there are actually four that were approved and are in VVSG 2.0. The ones on screen here were both published after the adoption of VVSG 2.0 by NIST. Now that these were finalized, we're looking to add these in. So common data format is just this opportunity of data exchange between systems. Now granted, the scope of the VVSG is just for voting systems so we're not necessarily talking about VR, that is another subject. And hopefully this is a building block to help with that subject.

But we're just looking to get as much information into a common data format as possible so this equipment can talk with each other. This one in particular is around election definitions and ballot definitions. So we currently already have cast vote record Common Data Formats in our system. That's probably the most important one of being able to share in a common data format what those results are. It helps get you to the finish of election night reporting and consolidation of votes.

In regards to the bar codes and other QR codes, the main concern here is machine readable code that does not allow voters to verify the encoded information, particularly when it is storing voter selections. Whether creating a conflicting or duplicating vote record. 2.0 has done a lot of work around this subject. This is not a new topic. And the requirements that we have in 2.0 are all around bar codes being open source. They are not encrypted. That has to be publicly documented what this information is. While it's meant to increase the speed at which a machine can interpret the information rather than OCR, which at the time 2.0's adoption was a little hit and miss even though it's more reliable now, that is still a machine readable code, but it happens to be a human readable code.

So the requirements we have in 2.0 really are just to make an attempt to make this as transparent as possible while still allowing that opportunity.

The changes we have here for consideration prohibiting storing voter selections is truly just that. It's not a full ban on bar codes. They still could be used ideally in these changes that are being proposed. But they would be storing things like election information. So when you go in a polling place, the -- I'm sorry, the stuff before when you sign in and they tell you what precinct you're a part of. Jay? Yeah. Electronic Poll Book. Thank you. I was thinking voter registration. The Electronic Poll Book would give you a Q R code and you could scan it giving you the correct ballot. That is still for consideration and would be available. So it would not be a full ban.

>> I want to be sure I understand the answer you're giving me.

If you're in a state like Georgia that has an entirely electronic voting machine system, but that voting machine, as you know, is one of the ones that prints out after the voter selected electronically who to vote for, it prints out a paper ballot that lists the names of each candidate, the concern of course from a lot of people, including a lot of grassroots groups that talk to me is the whole purpose of that is so they can check to make sure that the names were correctly recorded by electronic machine so that when they then take that paper ballot that's printed out and they walk over and put it through the scanner so it drops into the ballot box, the scanner is actually

reading the names, not a bar or QR code on it, which is a summary of it. Because if it's reading the bar code, it's a waste of time for them to look at the names because they have no idea whether the bar code is correctly summarizing it.

So my question is does the standard bar the scanners from reading that bar code on the paper ballot and require it to read only the printed out names? That's the issue that everyone wants to know about. And I'm not clear on what the answer is to that.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: That is the concern is voters being able to verify what their vote is. And I apologize because I don't want to confuse it. I just don't that VVSG 2.0 has already done a lot of work with you, including requirements around being able to review how the system will interpret the voter selections. So they get to see that at the time of casting.

>> My question is does the standard require the scanner to only read the names that are printed out on the paper ballot? Does it bar it from reading the QR code that's also on the paper ballot? That's the question. And I'm not -- maybe I'm just being dumb, but I'm not getting an answer.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Right. I had not answered that yet.

This would be a -- that is the consideration of the red line is to ban the use of bar codes from storing voter

selections. There may be still a bar code on that ballot, but it would not be allowed to store voter selections. The scanners would be reading the remainder of the ballot, not the bar code. Okay.

>> Can I add a little on the historic journey for folks what are newer to this. What you see in the field right now are 1.0 systems. Some of which by some manufacturers may have proprietary bar codes, which obviously raised some concerns. So with the 2.0 consideration for our little fun history lesson that we somehow get to give now, when we were considering that, there was concern around it. So what you ended up with was the compromise that Brooke was just talking about where for your scenario, theoretically, potentially you or someone could scan that bar code with your phone and check that in fact it was matching the print out version. So it would be verifiable in an audit way. And that was, again, what we talked about with 2.0. As Brooke said, optical character recognition has also come a long way since that conversation. So then I think with the pending version is whether or not to then move away from that. But again, not prohibit it for security features or for ballot styles, et cetera.

Is that accurate?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Yes. That's extremely helpful context. Thank you.

>> So I know there are some current systems under 1.0 that the touch screen Ballot Marking Device produces the exact same ballot that the printer would produce. It just pre-fills in the dots.

Would that be allowed under this 2.1 standard that it read the dots the same as it reads the dots for the hand marked ballot?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Yes. I think it's kind of here at the bottom of this screen at least. So things like timing marks or oval selection, given that they are both human readable and machine readable aren't necessarily in a red line change for the 2.1. Those would still be allowed.

>> Just a quick question. Are these additions or changes related to bar codes in response to the President's executive order preserving and protecting American elections?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: I'm not sure if any of the commissioners want to add to this. The confess conversation regardless of where the idea came from, they were a consideration in 2.0. That may be part of why they made it to this set of considerations. The fact remains that this is an important topic to discuss, given that there are concerns around voters being able to understand what it is the machine is reading.

>> In the executive order, section 4, subsection 2, it states

that you're supposed to implement or make the adjustments within 180 days of the executive order. I think that compresses the time frame of when you would have to respond, assuming we're responding pursuant to the executive order.

>> Can I respond to that?

So technically, there's legal issues. But I think that one way of looking at this is number one, the manufacturers are already moving in this direction. So when you think about a 2.1 version, just like we saw with 2.0, almost talking about five years down the road. It's the future what manufacturers develop to test to this standard. Part of this technology is already happening. Right? The manufacturers are moving in this direction away from the -- and states, a couple of states have banned it. And some states are moving away from the voter selection being inside the bar code.

So that is sort of looking to the future why obviously we have to try to keep up with the technology.

>> Small tweak to Mr. Bowen's question. Is the concern about the bar codes, is there any information you have at the EAC regarding its impact on voter privacy and ballot secrecy? Like in Texas where the chair of the GOP's ballot was exposed publicly by use of the bar codes?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: I am not familiar. Yeah.

>> Thanks.

>> Thank you. Cathy Darling Allen.

Just to be kind of to Hans' point and for crystal clarity here, the current practice of bar codes being printed on the ballot, the QR codes that contain voter selections, those QR codes will no longer be present in future iterations that comply with 2.1? Or they could be present with different data contained in them?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: The latter. Could be present with different data. They're not all used for storing voter selections. In fact, many equipment that is currently certified, granted it's under 1.0, they're using bar codes and QR codes for ballot activation.

>> Okay. But that's printed on the ballot?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Yes.

>> I will say a lot of the discussion was whether there should be a larger ban on bar codes. So that was some of the discussion.

>> I think we know we need timing marks. But yeah. Thank you.

>> Christine Walker. So the issue was looking at the bottom timing marks, oval selections, and OCR, optical character recognition. And part of my other hat is as county recorder. And

right now, OCR really is being replaced by AI-based applications. So is that something that maybe should be recognized? I look at OCR and I'm thinking the majority of that is going to be controlled in the AI world eventually. True optical character recognition looks at typed, but the AI can extend that to handwritten. Say when we're doing write-in votes and stuff like that within our system. So I guess my question is is that something that is interchangeable when you look at the term OCR? Because AI has just opened up and will continue to open up new worlds in that. Should that be something that's recognized within this? I think it's moving that direction if it hasn't already been replaced, OCR being replaced by AI.

Does that make sense?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: So AI is enhancing the ability for OCR?

>> Yeah.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: This would be a topic for the manufacturers on how they would choose to implement. There are other ways such as timing marks or oval selections that can get the information that's both human readable and machine readable. As OCR improves, we may see that more. Currently for write-ins, at least my familiarity, is taking a picture of what the write-in was, there is a mark noting that the write-in was used. And then that has to be typically adjudicated by a person. Because equipment cannot do handwritten.

>> Correct. That's my whole point of this. As we move forward, it's probably something that needs to be brought into it, into the conversation. Not that we really want it. But let's face it, it would absolutely be a time saving tool when we're looking at a race with no filed candidates and we're having to abstract every single name on that.

To think that that's not going to be brought into this world is being a little naive. I think if there's something that's going to bigger and better and improve that the manufacturers are absolutely going to want this is a piece of that platform so we need to have the conversation here and in other groups about how AI is going to be used under the guise of OCR.

So I hope that makes sense. Just a concern. Same as automatic signature verification. That's all AI-based at this point. Thank you.

>> Yeah. Just one quick follow-up. And not to opine on the executive order, but I think it's important. In the executive order, there seems to be a carve out in the previously mentioned section for voters with disabilities. And so if we're talking about the removal of bar codes that store voter information or cast votes, how would that happen given the executive order gives a carve out for those bar codes to remain for disabled voters?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Thank you. This was largely discussed at the first couple of meetings with the technical guidelines development committee. The feedback was that bar codes are not accessible. And they are not used for accessibility. I think that some of the conversation also evolved around what about equipment that is smaller paper receipt, can't fit a full ballot on it and that machine is what is being used by those in the accessible community. However, that conversation didn't really progress. So we have dropped that piece of the EO language in the consideration.

Okay. So there's two more topics. And then a small wrapup. And of course more time for conversation.

But some of the additional conversation with TGDC included accessibility. And this conversation really brought up the whole principle of accessibility and usability. And that is a huge undertaking. A lot of the red lines are actually dialing that conversation back. Again, these conversations are not being thrown away or ended. They are simply being tabled considering some of this conversation would require a major revision of the VVSG, like a 3.0.

Things that have made it in the red lines thus far are things around requirements 51E for reading paper ballots. Paperless handling. All in one. We have an RFI around that actually. 6.2 way with voter independence.

But I would say that the bigger things here that we are taking away from these conversations is the consideration for labelling of equipment around accessibility, as well as having specific documentation in the technical data package that we receive from manufacturers around their systems accessibility.

The conversation has also helped us with a lot that we did not know we had about understanding the difference between WCAG and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The language going into how these requirements were developed and what to look for if there is confusion is being updated to get that order a little bit more clear.

>> Thanks, Mr. Chair. Eric Fey, long time listener, first time caller. I think it is lunch time so this is quick. And hopefully a good clarifier for everybody. This is a TGDC question and how it's constituted. Right now, I understand and Commissioner Palmer spoke to this earlier, there is concern about the confirmation of TGDC appointees. Is there a quorum currently? And if there is not at some point, can this process continue and make its way to the full Commission without a quorum on TGDC? Thank you.

>> We do currently have a quorum. If we were to lose a quorum, we could move forward with the process under our interpretation of HAVA.

>> I was going to save my question until the end. Since Eric brought it up. We did have a VVSG committee on this Board of Advisors. Eric was our last chair, which I appointed. Do you know if there has been another chair? Or is there plans to do a VVSG committee for the EAC Board of Advisors?

>> Yes. So secretary Scott Schwab appointed a committee recently. And those committee members have received the draft documentation that Brooke referenced in the conversation.

Break brook I do apologize. This is a lengthy topic and I have a handful more of slides. But I don't want to stop you all from getting to lunch. So bear with me.

I can speed through this one a little bit more. There was discussion around paper records and going to paper-based machines. We currently do have a section in VVSG 2.0 for crib to graphic systems. And this would be considered more of a major change given the architecture change that would be required. So simply removing these requirements around E to EV as well as anything around indirect voter associations, while it is in the red lines, the conversations has evolved a little bit more that this may be considered more of a major revision.

And the last topic of the changes and preparing myself for many questions if there are, really it boils down to this one right here, it's to clarify that no wireless capable hardware may be physically present in a voting system. That is not the

only change, but it's easily boiled down to that. Instead there's a bunch of requirements that go into this and whether we talk about fully banning physical hardware for wireless, these other changes may be considered regardless of which way we go with that wireless capability. So things like making a clarification on when we refer to local area networks, we're talking about wired networks. And no nonessential networking hardware. If it doesn't need to be part of a server client, it doesn't have that capability in it.

So we'll just run through this real fast. But what this means. What a new VVSG means. This is often the question we get about how does this affect our equipment? What about already certified systems?

So I guess the easiest thing to say is a new major revision does not affect the systems that are already certified and in use. There is no automatic desert if I indication because we are looking at a new set of guidelines.

The new VVSG would only apply to systems submitted for certification after the new version is adopted and does not retroactively impose to those in the field. They are not required to come back in to receive the updates. Manufacturers are not required to update or modify the previously certified systems, 1.0 just because a new VVSG is released. And states and local jurisdictions remain in control for the adoption of the new version.

And this happens on their time line, not ours. So this approach is intentional to -- intentionally designed to avoid disruption, maintain stability for system use, and allow for gradual modernization. The goal is to make the gradual updates. A minor revision is we're trying to get this unstuck and not go another 10, 15, 20 years without an update to the guidelines given that technology like AI is constantly evolving. So even a minor change to help get the ball rolling is the goal here. And hoping that we're talking about a 2.2 soon or if our advisory boards come back and say really we should be considering a 3.0, we are open to all of that.

There is a little visual on screen just to talk about what it means to go from a major revision versus a minor. You can see here on the left, we have the circles where 1.0 was a subset of 1.1. When the complete rewrite of 2.0 took place, there was an overlap period of 12 months that systems could be submitted.

Now that sunset period is only in our program with regards to what we accept in for testing. But those certifications are valid throughout the life of those machines and equipment.

And so in this case, looking at the right side, the minor revision with 2.0 inside a bigger circle of 2.1 and 2.X, we're not looking to change the game, but simply make the minor improvements. Manufacturers could come in and say we're prepared for 2.0 because that's what we have been developing to. And if they're able to make the adjustments, they can submit to 2.0.

And it could come in as a set of modificationings, especially given that these are relatively minor changes proposed, depending on which ones make it in.

So there is a little section here. I'm not sure how we want to do time. There is an opportunity for me to switch with Kristen and talk about how to communicate this out given it's a lot of information.

Or we can go to questions given the time.

Just go to questions? Okay.

Questions?

>> One more quick question related to the executive order. You stated that there would be no automatic de-certifications, but the executive order requires a de-certification based on adoption of the new standards, as I understand it.

>> Just to resolve the executive order comments, that section of the order is currently in joint. We are taking that as a signal of interest and the EAC aindependently considering the topic for inclusion, that is the bar code section of that. So it is enjoined and we cannot move forward with it.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you. Just a quick question about the wireless provisions. And the ability of vendors to use equipment. I love

the idea of removing the conversation about wireless connectivity from the whole conversation. But some vendors have talked about using cogs equipment as a cost-saving measure. How does this impact

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Yeah. I guess the topic of conversation can go about two ways talking about COTSs. So there's modified commercial off the shelf where they're going in themselves and removing it, which is concern and why this is a topic of conversation. But there are some purchased from the manufacturer without the wireless hardware built in. Those are agreements to get that specially made. And some COTS manufacturers are aware of this. We're not the only ones in voting systems who do this. There is banking, ATMs, kiosks, medical equipment that all require non-wireless hardware.

>> Thank you.

>> Mr. Cramer?

>> Yeah. Isaac Cramer. I think we all agree here that we want secure elections. But secure elections cost money. And lots of it. And I think we all here at this table have a unique perspective with relationships with members of not just our Federal Government, but state legislatures. And anything we're doing here, I'm also on TGDC. If we want to adopt the systems,

it will cost a lot of money. South Carolina, we updated our scanners and that was \$30 million. And that was South Carolina and only one-half of the system. As we engage with members of Congress and state legislatures, it's important to get funding for this. If elections are a matter of security, a matter of free and fair elections, this should be a top priority for Congress especially to give the EAC what we had when we had the changeover with HAVA.

When we look at this and continue dialogue, everybody at this table, we should be promoting more funding when it comes to election administration so we can have safe and secure elections.

I am going to say this because I sit on TGDC. I don't love bar codes. My voters in Charleston County bring that up all the time when they are voting. They look at the bar codes and someone always makes a comment about it publicly in front of everybody and really what it does is brings distrust in the election process. I know it's secure. We do the testing and all those things ahead of time. These are certified systems and that's a key point. But the problem is when that's the message they're hearing and they're seeing it every day talking about elections, that's the number one thing people are bringing up.

This is an easy way to bring compliance to that. But it requires money and a lot of it. And we need that desperately. That's my comment and my charge to everyone here is that we are

advocating from our unique perspectives for this.

>> Mr. Proctor?

>> So this sort of ties together several of the comments that have been made. How many systems right now have been certified to 2.0? Are they out in the field? And do they also comply with the proposed 2.1 standards or not?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: So we have two systems certified. The heart vanguard and Smartatic VSR1. I am only aware of vanguard certification in one state at this time. But I know they have gone into several. I'm not familiar with where Smartatic looked to deploy.

Of the systems in question, depending on what set of red lines make it through to 2.1, we do meet these requirements.

>> So be crystal clear, they're not using bar codes now to store voter information?

>> BROOKE WATTERS: Correct.

>> So it wouldn't cost anything if we were to de-certify anything that doesn't meet 2.1 standards?

>> It would.

>> BROOKE WATTERS: When I add in de-certification --

>> My point being that they are not going to have to re-do their entire system if it already meets the standards.

>> Every county in your state would have to get new equipment.

>> We had this discussion last year over whether the executive order means de-certify all systems or de-certify all 2.0 systems. My reading of it is that it says de-certify all 2.0 systems. If the only two systems that you have certified will have meet the 2.1 standard, they wouldn't have to do any reengineering.

>> Potentially.

Ms. Walker?

>> Yeah. I'm going to absolutely support what Isaac stated. We can talk about all the new systems, certifications, I mean, we have an array of equipment within our offices. But we also fund them differently. Some may approve at the state level and put down that the state needs to use this. In Oregon, we have three approved vote tally system. We don't have machines that we put out. But that falls at the local jurisdiction. So anything that we purchase, whether it be a vote tally system, whether it be scanners, whether it be a half a million dollar sorter, my county is going to have to put out funding for that. And right now, what, 45 million in the current fiscal, proposed 15 million in the next, divide that by 50 states and how many election jurisdictions, there is no basic funding. It might be a printer I could purchase when it gets down to my level.

This is great and I love the conversation. But we are

dismal. And what I look at right now is we're looking at what happened in 2020. It's almost being prepared to fail. But instead of being proactive in our funding and being able to fund everything that comes to us in the future, we are being set up to fail. And I just hate to see that look right now. So I 100% back. I have been on Capitol Hill. I encourage anyone who hasn't done it, talk to your representative of your local jurisdiction of your state and talk to them about the funding needs. Again, all this is great. Unless we have proper funding, we're being set up to fail.

>> We're 20 minutes into lunch. So Ms. Gold? And then we will wrap up.

>> Yeah. I will make it quick. First of all, I completely support all the comments about the need for funding.

Secondly, in terms of the interpretation of the EO, there was not consensus that it would not require de-certification. And now that it's up for a litigation, I think that is still an unclear part of the EO as to what it would require.

>> If I represented that there is consensus, I apologize for doing that. I think that a significant number of people in this room did read the executive order to mean de-certifying. I agree with your point that we did not reach a consensus on that point.

>> Do you want to stick around for lunch for a little bit in case there's further questions?

>> I'm available.

>> Thank you. Let's go ahead and break for lunch. Lunch is for the board members only. Public members, you can go outside and get something to eat and staff will allow you back in the building at 12:45.

>> If anyone in the public needs help finding a place, we have a list of recommended restaurants.

>> We will reconvene at 1:00 p.m.

[Lunch break]

>> Before we get started, I don't know if folks are going to listen to me, but that's okay. I will keep talking until they stop.

Before we get started, I wanted to just say that the four commissioners earlier this year got together and decided that we should celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation being founded. So this is very nominal for anyone who is going to be a fiscal conservative, but also the fact that we wanted to celebrate our nation, but also give something back to you for serving on this advisory board. I know that it's a lot of work and not a lot of thanks. But I want to thank you all for being

here and being a part of this.

It's a small coin, challenge coin, that the Commissioner commissioned to have done. So on one side is our logo, the EAC's logo, which the four after us approved a little over five years ago now. And then on the other side, it shows the America 250 logo. And each of you get one.

>> Let's go ahead and bring the meeting back to order now that we all have our coins. Some change in your pocket going Jingaling.

To do this right, I need my glasses.

Hopefully you had a good lunch and you're prepared for your food coma. I want to hand it to Sara Brady, Clearinghouse director here, going over the EAC's audit stands.

>> SARA BRADY: Thank you so much. If you don't mind, I will pass these around and they can slowly make their way.

So yes, thanks again. My name is Sara Brady, the Clearinghouse director here at the EAC. I also before you got the Adam upgrade, used to be the ADFO for the Board of Advisors. It's nice to see a lot of familiar faces.

I will talk for a little bit at the top here, but I wanted to look to use most of our time today to have a discussion around audit standards.

So a couple of updates from me. I wanted to be able to share about progress on standards since last year's meeting.

Talk about what we have heard from the field, including from public comment. And to hear more from you as we prepare to consider revisions on the draft standards based on that feedback.

So as a little refresher here, the Agency's primary objective with the audit standards is to provide a clear framework that helps election officials conduct high quality audits can competence and objectivity. The goal is to improve election audits generally and support continuous improvement, recognizing that this will be an iterative process in most jurisdictions. We see successful audit standards as broad, practical, and achievable and flexible enough to accommodate offices of different sizes and resources and inclusive of a wide variety of audit types used across the country at different parts of the election process.

Where we are at now is high level principles that we hope will bolster public confidence by demonstrating the rigger and care that election officials bring to their work.

You have a copy of the paper that's going around right now of just the top line standards in front of you. What went out for public comment is a full practical guide which includes the standards plus a discussion on each one and examples of how election offices may describe meeting those different standards.

Process wise, how we got here, so at the start of this, we reviewed existing audit standards from entities inside and

outside of election administration. This included things like the yellow and blue books, NAS, and others. And we gathered input here, as well as with the Standards Board and the Local Leadership Council at their annual meetings and in a series of feedback sessions and conversations with board members and stakeholders throughout 2025.

So first I want to thank you for your input. Last year, it did directly shape what you're seeing hear today. A few things that you raised that I wanted to acknowledge here was the piece about audits throughout the election cycle. We heard folks noting that there is value in considering audits throughout the entire cycle. So we sought to reflect that in this draft in considering audits before, during, and after elections.

The independence continues to be an area of discussion. And one that I think we'll get into today. Some of that tensions between interest of independent third party verifiers, as well as folks with election expertise. And of course many state statutes require election officials' involvement or oversight of the audits processes.

And communication continues to be one of the greatest challenges. Using the right language talking about audits, making sure that communications meet the needs of the people you're having communications with. You will see a standard in the draft because of this.

And you flagged that the standard should seek to promote

continuous improvement in auditing, not cast doubt on elections conducted with integrity. And that insight shaped our tone throughout these standards.

In late February of this year, we held a public hearing on election audit standards. The EAC convened election officials, audit professionals, academics as a broad bipartisan group. It included the board of advisory member Ricky Hatch as a feature presenter. Some of the things we heard there included references to no single audit can check everything. Flexibility is essential. What works in a large urban county won't work in a small rural one. That the public needs to understand what audits are and why they matter in plain English. And a few items that struck us coming out of that hearing. Referencing to elections being an accounting project. A complex human technical accounting project. And thinking about audits from a quality assurance type perspective.

There was also reference to procedural audits used to identify issues before they turned in. Again, emphasizing the value of the pre-during, and post-election audits.

And more questions and discussion around transparency and is transparency enough.

After the hearing, the draft standards went out for a 60-day public comment period, which just ended yesterday. We have received more than 60 comments. Those will be published soon on the Federal Regulations website. We haven't had a chance

to thoroughly review them. But I will touch on a few of the themes we saw on the first look. Two-thirds of the comments mentioned third party audits conducted separate from election officials. Several of those comments used similar language that came through.

We also had comments on additional topics, including someone who shared that they thought that the standards were excellent draft report, while also calling for discussion of statistical audits specifically. For example, risk limiting audits and about how to explain them to a nontechnical audience.

We received feedback that the draft is not necessarily explicit enough about what happens when a tabulation audit has a discrepancy. And suggested without guidance an election office could explain away a discrepancy rather than proving what caused it, leaving findings unresolved.

Other commenters shared support of the standards, but argue that areas most vulnerable to fraudulent activity, including vote by mail, UACAVA ballots, voter registration by noncitizens need more.

And a comment that supports standards and suggested that election offices really short plain language summaries of audit results so that the public can understand what was done and why it matters.

From the needback we received here at this meeting last year and continued conversations with board members and

stakeholders over the last year, I want to highlight how a few of the pieces were handled in the standards. On independence, we acknowledged what we were hearing, full independence isn't always possible. Election officials must be involved. The standard as it is now is that auditors maintain a meaningful degree of independence, that the process doesn't solely depend on the chief election official and any conflicts are disclosed and documented.

In terms of scope, the intending to be broad and applicable to all audit types. We specifically don't have prescriptions in there right now or suggestions for single methodologies, for example, there's not a specific mandate for example risk audits or full retabulation.

And also flagging again the voluntary standards. So guide post, not a checklist. The hope is that any jurisdiction, large or small, can point to these and explain how it meets each principle and context of their on statutes, resources, and processes.

Where we want to go from here and what we would like to hear from you today is flagging that we're going to be talking the public comments that we have received into consideration and revising the draft. And following that, I want to explore next step, including time line considerations, recognizing we're in a Federal election year. Also gives us more consideration about what's next potentially after this. Would things like best

practice guidelines be helpful to develop in a longer term timeline.

So today, we want to hear from you about these election audit standards. Anything that's unclear. Anything you suggest we further consider. And to get a better understanding of anything that would help you to be able to use these standards.

So I will stop talking now. I'm happy to open it up for general discussion and then I also have many a prompts. But happy to bring it to the group. Thank you.

>> Jonathan?

>> Thanks. And thanks for all the work that went into this. I definitely think having some additional substantive information is helpful.

I have a threshold question which I assume you thought about, about the term standards in terms of voluntary standards. I'm wondering about the term standards given that these are voluntary and given that states are going to have different legal constraints about what they can and cannot do. I was wondering if other terms like guidelines or best practices were considered and kind of the thought behind calling them standards.

>> Yes. I can speak to this and if any of the commissioners want to weigh in as well. It has been an ongoing part of the discussion, something that we were hoping to hear more on

through public comment as well and part of why we're having these conversations.

Yes, as described right now, standards, really, again, what you see in front of you, we recognize as principle levels. And so thus far, the terminology used has been standards there. But we recognize where the language is at right now would probably best be described as principles.

>> Hans?

>> Just a quick comment on that. I think they're following the business model. Because in business, auditing, there are GAPSS general accepted auditing standards. The idea is you come up with standard protocols.

I have a procedural question. Once you have worked your way through all of the public comments, I'm assuming you will then if you're following the kind of procedures normally with an NPRM, you will come up with either recommended changes to what you have got, and/or reasons why particular recommendations that you have gotten you're not going to change. Are you going to then circulate that to the board so that we can see your reaction to the public comments and what you think ought to be done with them?

>> Yes. I can speak procedurally, that is generally in terms of reviewing those comments and assessing what those

determinations are and the review commissioners would be part of that final review.

I will let someone else speak to in terms of kind of sharing back out to the board specifically. If procedural if that is something preferred.

>> I will just say I think that obviously we're not going to probably make everybody happy on everything, but we have been very deliberate and purposeful in sort of the public-facing nature of these. We are creating a new thing. So we want to make sure to get plenty of feedback. I wouldn't see any reason that we would deviate from continuing that. So I would completely expect to continue to solicit feedback from all the boards to make sure that we right size these with the ultimate goal being that we create something that's useful and that people value rather than sort of rushing that in a way that creates, again, so much of our work being voluntary and customer service oriented, if people don't want it or don't use it, it wasn't worth our time to do it. So we want to make sure we're hearing from everyone in making the best standards or principles possible.

>> Justin?

>> Thank you. I wanted to emphasize I think the importance of

independence. It's very hard to audit yourself. Even there's just a tendency to overlook things that you were running the process. It's just natural. Whether it's subconscious or otherwise. And I think some of the most effective audits that I have seen, especially in the procedural side, are independent agencies with in-state government that have conducted the audits. Whether it's a legislative audit or the bureau or state auditor or whatever, they're getting to the processes that's easy to overlook when you're running these things day-to-day in your office not even realizing that these things are not done or not done properly.

And just an observation, and having spent a lot of time reviewing state election statutes, especially in the risk limiting audit context, they rarely seem to provide for independence factors like in the statutes themselves. And I know there's inherent difficulties with technical processes like counting ballots that only the election official probably has expertise in. But you have to find ways for it to be as independent as possible.

>> Ms. Simons.

>> Thank you. I'm glad that the EAC is addressing questions related to audits. I think that's a good thing.

I'm a little bit confused as to what the goal is. Obviously, these are all good recommendations here. I think they're fine. But it seems to me that the ultimate goal to these

audits so to be able to confirm the result of an election, right? Does that seem reasonable?

And if so, I don't see that really here. The only way really you can confirm the results with an audit is a full recount or a risk limiting audit. As we know, if the results are close, you have to look at a lot of ballots and maybe need a full recount. If the they are far apart, you don't have to look at many unless there's a real issue. In which case you have to know if you have to look at more or not.

There are many different areas to audit, which are important. I don't mean to minimize them. But isn't the ultimate goal to confirm the result of an election? Is that wrong?

>> I think one thing that's useful just sort of stepping back on this project and effort is, again, this is sort of a high level baseline recognizing the types of audits and certainly probably the one that people are most familiar with is the post-election tabulation audit. And obviously, that is certainly an area we have a lot of interest in. But again, trying to design sort of step one to be broader than that. And then allow you to drill down on different types of audits, again, whether those are process audits or post-election tabulation audits and draw lines to these principles or standards, whatever term ends up being there.

But again, so you could say okay, for a post-election

tabulation audit, or maybe it's a type of whether or not we would go into the granularity of saying for this type of fixed percentage audit, here is how you see some of the best practices around the country.

So I think those are sort of future layers. But this is sort of step one in establishing the high level piece and then going from there.

Cognizant of what it looks like to do sort of the 50 state and not be prescriptive on to saying a particular state needs to do a particular type of audit. But if you're doing these auditing, here are things to keep in mind. Here are standards that you can design your audit around.

>> One quick response. I think maybe this is down the road. But at some point, it might be helpful to describe the different types of audits and the weaknesses and strengths of them. Again, really the only kind of audit that can with high probability verify the result of an election is a risk limiting audit.

>> Yeah. And again, we have other products that sort of map out some of the different types of particularly on the post-election tabulation audit. And I think so much of this effort, again, is to think more through how we normalize audits, how we talk -- improve how we talk about it. So much work goes into this for election officials, and often we don't have useful ways to talk about it and communicate that to the public in a

way that builds the confidence that so many election officials have.

So again, those pieces are useful and that nuance is important. But it is further down the road than where we are now. Or we have separate products that talk about those variations for people who are interested in trying to compare apples to apples across state lines.

>> Ms. Gold?

>> First of all, again, thank you so much for the thoughtfulness that went into the development of the principles and looking at the public comments.

I do want to, yes, I do want to recommend that there be strong consideration of best practices, something that deals with the fact that there are enormous variations in the way elections take place and types of audits that are done and some type of best practices document that also gives people ideas about this flexibility.

The only thing I did want to comment about, I appreciate the opportunity for us as a Board of Advisors to take a look at the comments that were received from the public and provide feedback. But I would just want to ask as a regulatory question whether any kind of really substantive changes could be made without having to go back to the public again. Just because the

whole point of getting public feedback on a document, as the public knows what is being proposed.

>> Yeah. We opted for public comment here. So it's not a rule. It's not subjected to actual public comment. I'm not saying we won't. If it's substantive. But that requirement doesn't exist because the public comment in the first place wasn't a requirement here. So just technically.

>> Mr. Proctor?

>> Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to highlight something you said, expand on something Justin said, and make a paid political announcement.

You said something I think that is key, which is publicizing the results of the audits. And I think the only time that people ever hear about the audits is the 1 in 1,000 times when something is wrong. So I highlight that, bold, underline, italic in whatever report we produce.

The second thing on something that Justin said about independence of the audit. I think independence is about who does the audit, but also about the method of the audit. For a long time, several of our counties were using the electronic ballot image rather than the piece of paper. And if the machine

didn't count the paper, then it probably didn't make an image of it either. We have gone to all paper audits where they have to use the ballot and that instills more confidence. It's a completely dual independent check.

And I have to say this, NCSL has great stuff on how ever state in the union does audits. I would encourage everybody to look at that if you're looking for new ways to ensure public confidence. Thank you.

>> I think the NAS website has stuff on that too if you want another resource.

Mr. Bowens.

>> Just a quick comment. There's usually a lot of emphasis on risk limiting audits, account verification audits. Is there contemplation with voter history reconciliation audits which can go to the legitimacy of an election? Do the number of ballots cast on a precinct match the number of voters that have voter history by that voting method is a really important thing to emphasize in addition to ballot verification audits.

>> Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. And I think part of the some of the language that you will see in the principles is with attempt to make this be such that it could be used for those different types of audits. And when we're talking about audits, not exclusive to the post-election tabulation, again, before, during, and after. And even things that may fall outside of the

direct election cycle. Things like voter list maintenance and other activities ongoing, that's part of what we envisioned with the standards here.

>> I guess my question on that would be if it's already a public record that anybody can go in and see the voter history and see the results, would there be a need for an audit?

>> Respectfully, ask Riverside County California, about that. They are in the middle of quite a tornado with that kind of an audit performed by an outside group, a third party group. And that conversation continues.

>> I know our state it's all public. So both our political parties can say here's the people who voted, here's the tally. And then include the provisionals that the board of canvassers did or did not take. And that's open as well.

>> I can quickly follow up. In North Carolina, you don't get voter history finalized until ten days after the election following certification. So it may not be available. So we do audits during the canvassing period, but it's not official until we certify. So having that ahead of time could allay some fears about legitimacy.

>> My state don't do like your state.

Further comment or questions?

I didn't see you. There was a water bottle in the way.

>> No problem.

This discussion warms my heart. I was a CPA in information systems auditor. So I will try not to take us until dinner time.

I like -- there are a few areas that I really like on this. I like the section 1, the appropriateness. Because it talks about having the goals of the audit. And one of the goals, as Barbara mentioned, is to certify that the winners won. But there are a ton of different ones. In Utah, we conduct seven audits. Every jurisdiction conducts seven audits for each election. So there are many other things, including the reconciliation, which in my mind is a form of an audit. And I think it's very helpful.

The other thing that it does is having goals of the audit helps prevent phishing expeditions. We have heard so much about forensic audits and CPAs laugh when we hear the term and so do election officials. It's a different meaning.

The concept of independence and impartiality is crucial. It competes a little bit with the concept of competence. We have to have I think independence is crucial when you're auditing. At the same time, so is competence and sometimes those are going to conflict because you don't want people who don't understand the process or the technology or the goals conducting the audit. At the same time, you don't want the people who did the work to conduct the audit as well.

There are different ways to achieve independence or to maintain. And it's not a binary you're either independent and impartial or you're not. It is a continuum. There are ways if you're in a small jurisdiction or a situation where independence is harder to get, there are things to make it better. One is having it done in a public meeting and having the public involved in sample selection or in actually doing some aspects of the audit is a great thing.

Having segregation of duties during the audit for the tasks. And making sure you document who tested and what they tested and how the samples were selected. All of those can add confidence that the audit was performed without some kind of bias or the auditor trying to do a favor for the auditee.

I also really liked the comments on public communication. I think it's crucial and there have been studies that have found that citizens in general, they love knowing that an audit was conducted. They don't care what kind of audit it was or how long it was or anything. They love the fact that somebody was audited and that gives a lot of confidence. But we need to do better at championing what actually has happened. Because virtually every jurisdiction in the country has audits. And we should be championing that. Just like the hash validation. That's a form of an audit too that will lead to a lot of confidence.

The other thing, the last two and then I will be quiet. The security section, I really like that it clarifies that this

audit should not prevent election officials from using audited equipment. I'm thinking of Maricopa County and that makes our skin crawl knowing that we don't have control over the equipment anymore.

And lastly is the standardization. I liked that it talks about being part of the process. Obviously logic and accuracy is a follow of an audit. In Utah, we audit the signature verification process before we accept the batch of signatures of ballots that are being processed. And audits can be proactive and identify problems before it becomes an issue. That's all. Thanks.

>> Jonathan.

>> Tough act to follow there.

First an observation. There has been a couple of comments about the content of the audit. I read this as intentionally not weighing in on what the content of the audit should be. That should be determined by the audit process. So that would allow obviously for results based audits, procedural audits, and many other types of audits. That makes sense to me.

In terms of the content, just a few observations and these may be described in existing categories that I'm too dense to pick up on.

One concept that's important is a level of practicality.

So say it's a varying election calendars that allow for more comprehensive audits and sometimes don't. Some of us have audits pretty close together and they don't allow the audits that we want. So each jurisdiction audits should reflect what can be done in the given time. And it may be appropriate to do more or less comprehensive audits.

I think in terms of the definitions of audit, I like the language about clearly defining the audit. I think there's a sense of making sure we're sticking to those definitions. I don't know if that's captured and clearly defined. Sometimes there have been incidents of either auditors or bodies that do things that may or may not relate to audits or matters of the public not necessarily understanding that the questions they have can potentially with answered, but not as part of that audit. And that can sometimes derail the process. So an aspect of a mechanism to enforce that the audit will proceed as defined.

And the other thing that I would reference more is interaction with other post-election processes. Whether talking about canvass certification, recounts, I think each state has a slightly different way of doing those things. Depending on how they're arranged, the audit can fit in in different ways. That's an important consideration as well.

>> One moment.

Further comments? Questions?

Just in time. Go ahead.

>> Thank you. I wonder if it would be possible to identify some jurisdictions that are doing these things well as a helpful guide post for people that are whether it be legislators or election officials or others who are trying to implement a good audit or design a good audit?

>> That is one of the things we are considering. And kind of looking at next steps from here, contemplating best practices, but also having perhaps some of those best practices be informed by what some folks are doing in the field. So on our list.

>> Senator Kagan?

>> I think this is a terrific list and thank everyone for their work. It talks about the audit team, it talks about a little bit about transparency and fairness and ethics. It doesn't, however, indicate that this should be bipartisan or nonpartisan, but preferably bipartisan observers invited to monitor the process to make sure that they can go back to their activists, their constituents and say yep, it went just the way we expected it to go and thumbs up. I think that's missing.

>> So I gave you the two-pager version, which is the front and back printout. Just a heads up and we can certainly make sure this gets distributed to the board if you haven't seen the wider one released for public comment. It has more contextual information for each of these standards. And included in there you will see references to nonpartisan and bipartisan. So again, recognizing that it looks different in different jurisdictions. You will see references there of those being types of examples of ways to potentially achieve those standards.

>> I acknowledge that, Sarah. I wonder if this two-page might be most of what the press would see, what party leaders or candidates might see. It seems like including that consciously on this abbreviated executive summary might be wise.

>> Understood. Thanks for sharing.

>> Sure. Thank you.

>> Hans?

>> I was just going to add to your earlier question, which was -- if you want to see comprehensive audits, because that's what I have been pushing and wrote a paper about it a couple of years ago, go to Texas and Mississippi. Texas passed one of the first auditing statutes in the country and in fact the Secretary

of State's office didn't have anybody to do audits because they had never done them before. So they had to set up an entire office headed by a guy named Chad Ennis to do audits. And they did an exhaustive and frankly embarrassing audit of Houston, Harris County. That was the audit I believe that turned up 10,000 votes that had not been counted because they had been overlooked at election.

But the audit, you can get the audit, it's two volumes about this big. And it's a great example of how to do a very comprehensive audit.

The other place you should look at is Mississippi. Mississippi has also passed a statute requiring an audit of a certain number of counties after each election. And they are in the process of setting up the procedures for doing that. And it's not a risk limiting audit where all you're looking at is accounting, what you were talking about. It is comprehensive audits to look at the entire election process from voter registration to casting the ballots to counting the ballots to making sure that complaints from voters are taken care of, reviewed, and remedied. It's the kind of comprehensive system that frankly we ought to have in every state.

>> Commissioner Palmer?

>> Thank you. I appreciate all the work on this. It was a

great hearing that we had. And I think that just I appreciate the feedback. I think that there's a lot of chatter that we're hearing from the community, from the Congress, frankly, about how we're auditing elections. And of course, it's very decentralized. One of the things that really got me working on this a bit was as states consider what audits are doing, they're like well, where's the professional framework or structure? And there just really wasn't much out there.

And so really what we're trying to do is create these are the high level principles. What would be the framework for if any state saying okay, what's the neighboring state doing or what's the trend, there should be a resource to go these are professional principles and standards that are part of any audit in any part of the process that's going to take place.

So we're going to put more meat on the bones. There are examples of states that do a really good job. But frankly, there may be a difference of opinion. We think that this is the best. This state thinks think the best.

But we want to provide those details to states. But we want there to be the reassurance of the public that that's framework to audits and how the states approach it when the legislature goes in and says yeah, you're going to do A, B, and C.

>> Mr. Cramer?

>> I'm going to get my funding cap on.

I love audits. Audits are so important to elections. We don't have staff. I come from South Carolina. Most election jurisdictions are Office of one to two people. So I want to be proponents of more comprehensive audits. But also giving the resources to county election officials because they desperately need it. A lot of them are brand new. When you're doing a recount with a staff of one person and a part-time employee and they have been doing elections for six months, where is their backing? Where are the resources that they have? Where do we come into that equation? And I think when you look at election administration across the country, you're going to find very quickly that small jurisdictions struggle with this is what we're talking about. And yes, Paris County, and there are problems across the board. But smaller counties and smaller municipalities need assistance in this process of elections.

And then you're relying on poll workers who are volunteers basically that are of retirement age. And I think with elections, there's a different lens of what an audit is. We're humans and humans make mistakes. Don't ask me why I know that. At polling locations across our county, poll workers do things and you're just like that's wrong, nope. We do ballot reconciliations and they fill out cells wrong. What do you do? Obviously when you look at those things. And we can explain those and have an explanation. That's why it's important to hold

up audits, 100% need them. But also we need to be able to explain that process or what happened and give responses. Because in South Carolina, I know last year the former director there touted elections and audits in South Carolina. And I can tell you right now from an accounting perspective, they didn't listen to us in any of the responses to the audit process.

And actually revealed the state's forms were outdated, incorrect, hard to understand. So it's a give and take. You have a state entity bring out the list of things for an audit. From an accounting perspective, this grinds my gears 100%. You get the packets of things and say do it. No funding attached to it. No resources. No feedback opportunity. When it comes back to the audit part, you will find problems or mistakes and it wasn't something wrong with the election. It was actually something wrong with the form. That's why we need to look at more comprehensive looks. Okay, if the states get all of this responsibility, we have to make sure there's a two-way street and that feedback. Let's try this out and pilot it and look at it. We're looking at risk limiting audits in South Carolina right now. We certify the Friday after an election. Three days after the election. How are you going to do a risk limiting audit during the canvass period? It's not possible. And I have one of the biggest office staff in the state. I cannot do that because I'm researching the 1500 provisional ballots to bring before my board on Friday. As well as all the equipment coming

back that could have the provisional ballots in the compartment of it. And you have to take the variances in. And we piloted one. It was great. Fantastic. But the problem is it doesn't make sense in the confines of South Carolina law. It would be better post-canvass. But a lot of people don't like that either. And they would rather have it before the election is certified.

I say that because funding is critical in part of the election process and I want all of the jurisdictions whether you're a small county or big county you have that backing and support. So we can do the robust audits. Maybe in the audits, it would reveal that those offices need more support and use it as kind of the piece like hey, yeah, we did not do this correctly. But we need resources to make sure that's possible.

We understand elections require perfection and that's impossible. But we need the resources to be able to get us close to perfection as possible. And that is all I'm going to say on funding. But I will probably bring it up about 100 other times throughout the rest of the meeting.

>> Ms. Howard.

>> Just a follow-up question, Isaac. How much do you pay your poll workers and colleagues around the state? And how much training do we get?

>> South Carolina law, it's \$135. That includes training for

three hours. Maybe sometimes four hours. Including the 14-hour work day. So way less than minimum wage.

Charleston County, we supplement that to be \$250. But we're talking if I could do it, I love early voting because these are my workers working basically full-time hours for two weeks and I can spend multiple weeks with them and train them. For election day, that's impossible for 2,000 poll workers. When they're working every day full time, we can train them and there's less errors and mistakes and we get to pick and choose across early voting sites.

A lot of people are like oh, early voting. You hear a lot of negatives. I see it as a positive because I can train them more robustly and give them all the scenarios. Managing for me seven locations versus 120 is a lot more manageable to oversee.

>> Okay. Thank you for the conversation. We're going to let this Sara go and move on to grants and bring the next Sarah in. Sarah Dreyer, the Inspector General in the Office of the Inspector General for the EAC. And give us a brief update on her office audits of grants distributed to the EAC.

Welcome, Sarah 2.0.

Not to be confused with VVSG 2.0.

>> Move over, college basketball. We have Sarah spelling rivalry.

>> SARAH DREYER: I'm Sarah Dreyer, the Inspector General here at the EAC. Officially been in the role since September, but have been in the office for over four years now. And I think I was born an auditor. So this is the stuff that I like to talk about.

I hope I have time for questions at the end. If not, feel free to pull me aside if you see me in the room or email me later. I'm happy to get back to you.

I caught some of the presentation before me and I heard the phrases I love auditing. And we have a former IT auditor over there. I even heard a reference to GSGUS. So I think we're ready.

Now some of you are probably more familiar with offices of Inspector General than others. So first I want to set the stage with background.

My office gets its authority from both the Inspector General act of 1978, as well as HAVA. And we operate independent from EAC management.

Our role is to provide objective and independence oversight of the EAC, its operations and programs and grantees. Where EAC money goes, I can go too.

We promote effectiveness and efficiency and do so through audits, evaluations, and investigations. Broadly in my world, audits assess financial and program performance, evaluations

look at efficiency and effectiveness, and then investigations are where we get at fraud, waste, and abuse.

We keep both Congress and the Commission fully and currently informed on our work. And most of our products are also made public. So you can go to our website, which is OIG.EAC.gov and see most of our work out there.

Each year we conduct annual oversight planning and put a plan out there on our website, which you can go look at today. But we do try to remain adaptable so that we can respond to emerging issues as they come up.

Now one of the things we consider each year as we do our planning is the top challenges facing the agency. And I'm really here to talk about number two, but I will quick go over number one and three.

The first challenge that we have identified for the Commission this year is managing resources for mission success. And the priority areas there are ensuring that funding is strategically allocated, engaging early with stakeholders to set realistic expectations, and then optimizing the Commission's human resources -- human capital resources. It's particularly an acute challenge during the Federal appropriations process. And it's mitigated through meetings just like this one where interested parties come together.

The third challenge there is related to internal controls. Which a key priority would be implementing up to date written

policies and procedures and advancing financial management. In the grand scheme of things, the EAC is a newer agency and a smaller agency. And historically one that prioritized the implementation of strategic programs. Often at the expense of compliance and operational infrastructure. However, to their credit, they have closed out eight internal control related recommendations in just the last six months. So there's been a lot of progress made in that area.

But on to the second challenge, which is managing grants effectively. And so I guess I first note that while the EAC has a responsibility to ensure that grants are used efficiently and effectively for their intended purposes, it's really grant recipients that have the primary responsibility for ensuring that activities funded by HAVA are carried out in accordance with the laws, regulations, guidance, and grant terms.

So what's this challenge exactly? Well, much of it is inherent with the types of grants that these are. Most HAVA grant funds are distributed through pre-determined formulas and eligibility criteria. And recipients are not required to demonstrate their capacity to meet standards or comply with requirements before receiving the funding. And as we heard, some election offices are simply not consistently resources to handle the administration that's needed.

Others are. But these are non-expiring grants and there's frequent turnover in election offices, which means that the

grants often remain open longer than the tenure of the staff administering them. So continuity and knowledge transfer come into play.

Now as you will hear from those coming behind me most likely, the EAC has worked to improve their relationship with the stakeholders, increase their production of guidance, conduct more site visits. And they do pay timely attention to audit findings. But my office estimates there's over half a billion dollars in grant funds currently sitting in state election offices. So the amount of attention required is not insignificant.

By my count, my office has done over 100 or close to 100 grant audits in the last 20 years. That includes audits of election security grants, 101 funds, 251 funds, CARES Act money, and other of the smaller grant programs. We have audited each state and territory at least once.

In the last six months alone, we have issued seven grant audit reports and we have another five in progress right now.

What you see up there is our most recently issued audit report. And I'm not going to pick on them specifically. I'm here to talk generally. But I wanted you to see that each report, that's the cover page on the right. And then on the left is the highlights page, which is the quick and easy to read summary if you don't want to read the full report.

Generally speaking, each audit looks at whether the funds

were used for authorized purposes in accordance with the applicable requirements. And we pick who we audit based on a couple of factors, such as how long it's been since the last audit, the feedback that we get from the EAC grants team, other stakeholder feedback, including complaints that we get through OIG hot line. The dollar amount associated with each grantee, et cetera.

This report from Florida was issued in March. And it covered \$71 million and made five recommendations to improve grant administration.

Now this audit was conducted by an independent audit firm. We hire those firms to augment our staff. We're a small office. We currently only have three people. So we hire outside firms and then we oversee their work to make sure that they're following those government auditing standards.

So the good news when we look at these audits in totality is that most of our grant audits find gaps in internal controls and not widespread fraud or even misuse of funds. As a case in point, we audited 40% of the CARES Act grant recipients and found that less than 1% of funds were used for unnecessary, unreasonable, or unsupported reasons.

Even better, the issues we identify are generally fixable with a few tweaks to process, personnel, or training. You will hear from Risa the Office of grants works with them.

One of the most common findings is inadequate financial

reporting. And that's going to be the late submission of financial reports to the EAC or the submission of financial reports that don't agree with the grantee's general ledger. That's problematic because it decreases both the EAC's and state's visibility into how grant funds are used.

Another common issue is issues with grants management -- excuse me, cash management, such as the earning and reporting of interest. Again, these grants are given as advances and they may sit in a bank account for a long time so they should be earning interest.

We conducted an audit on this about two years ago and found that roughly half of grantees were either not earning interest, not calculating it correctly, or not reporting it correctly. So that's one that we're happy is getting attention right now.

We also find noncompliance with Federal and State regulations. Generally speaking, we are auditing states against their own policies. So for example, if a state has a procurement policy that says you have to have three quotes for any purchase over \$10,000, we're going to want to see those quotes. If you didn't follow your own policy, that's an issue. The reason being is that the Federal Government wants you to treat Federal money with the same care that you would treat State money.

Another common finding is inadequate time and effort reporting. A lot of states will charge salary expenses to their

grants, which is perfectly okay. But we find that they aren't tracking the actual time and effort spent by individuals. So for example, in you have an employee that generally works 50% on campaign finance and generally works 50% on grant administration, you can't just split it 50/50. You need to have time cards that show no, it was a 60/40 split or 58/42. And that's a Federal requirement. That's not unique to these grants.

The next one would be poor sub recipient monitoring. Many states will advance funds or reimburse funds to local jurisdictions. And they don't realize that they have a responsibility to ensure that those local jurisdictions are spending the money in accordance with Federal regulations. And I intend to do some work specifically in this area over the next year.

And then last but not least is a lack of supporting documentation. This is when a grantee can't find their invoice or another key document. So we can't tell that they paid the right amount, that the expenditure was approved, or even in some cases what the expenditure was for. And in those cases, we recommend that EAC ask for the money back.

So while we do consistently identify control gaps, the key take away is these are largely correctable issues, not systemic failures. And the real value of this work is how it strengthens the programs going forward.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on proactive oversight,

identifying risks early to ensure good program delivery. We're also going to do targeted oversight of high risk areas, meaning that it's a frequently found issue, it's high dollar value or it's emerging. Think changing rules or new infrastructure.

For example, audits of interest and local jurisdictions in the coming year. But we will continue to do state by state audits as well. Not only do these audits give us a lot of information, but they are also a deterrent to those who may be contemplating fraud. In fact, we started a program where we are presenting to election offices on our audit program, as well as what to look for as it relates to fraud, waste, and abuse and how to report it if they suspect it.

So our audit work becomes particular effective when the EAC takes the results and works not only with individual states to help them implement changes, but puts out wider guidance and trainings for the benefits of all grantees. It's the continued emphasis on consistent expectations across states that would significantly reduce recurring findings.

So I will stop there and I can I have got about five minutes for questions if anyone has them.

>> Hans.

>> I have a bottom line question for you. Actually a couple of questions, all related.

I have been on the board now for a year, as have others in this room. In the past year, the audits you have conducted, how much in total have you found of unsupported, unjustified, or unallowable spending by states or other jurisdictions that have received these funds? Of that amount, how much has been reimbursed to the EAC? And from those audits, have any criminal referrals been made to the Department of Justice?

>> SARAH DREYER: I don't know the last year off the top of my head. I know the last six months. We had \$1.5 million in costs that we questioned. Questioned means it could be unsupported, that there wasn't a document available for us to examine. Or it could be an unallowable expense where an activity was not allowed that we found.

It is not yet sustained, the agency gets to look at it themselves and make a determination on how much of that they actually ask for back and how much they have reviewed and has determined is okay.

So for the last six months, it was \$1.5 million. And that's still going through the process to determine how much is sustained.

I think the sustained number from prior periods that was determined in the last year was about \$50,000. And there were no criminal referrals in the last six months.

>> Thank you. Eric Fey.

Isaac was talking earlier about mistakes his poll workers make. I sympathy these with that. I'm doing the training and we go over all these things. If you forget everything else, remember this one thing. So Sarah with an H, I'm wondering if you were in front of a group of state and local election officials, is there one overarching thing kind of you keep seeing that you would say if you forget everything else, please just remember this about EAC grants, make sure you cover these bases or something?

>> SARAH DREYER: Document, document, document. Whether it's keeping receipts on the stuff you would normally do as part of procurement, or documenting the results of a conversation you have had. Maybe you had a question on whether something was allowable and you call the grants team and say hey, can I do this, what do you think? Write that down. Because in three years when an auditor comes and asks you why you made this decision, you want that written down.

And if you win the lottery and you leave the office and someone else is doing the work, they're not going to have the memory of what the conversation is. So write everything down would be my number one tip.

>> Ms. Gold?

>> Thank you so much, Sarah.

Just a question and I don't know if this is for you or for the folks coming after you. To the extent that you are finding the common audit problems, to what extent could these have been caught during review of the report that folks were asked to submit or caught earlier in the process?

>> SARAH DREYER: I think there's ways that some of this could be caught earlier before it gets to the audit stage. I also know that the typical length of our audit from when we send a notification to when we issue a report is about 400 days. So a lot of work goes into identifying these issues. I know there's competing priorities as well. But yes, I do think if there was some attention paid in specific areas earlier in the process, some of this could be avoided. Both at the EAC level and in the state and local election offices. Yeah.

>> Mr. Hatch and Mr. Bowens. And then I would like to move to the next session to keep things going along.

Mr. Hatch?

>> Thank you, Chair. Looking at the report on the website, it looks really helpful. I didn't know what you guys existed. This is really good.

My one question is oh, and they did an audit going to the questions about travel earlier, they did an audit of the travel

of the EAC. And they audited the state of Utah as well. To thank you.

>> I think that one was pretty clean.

>> That was a good audit.

My one question, I see on the audit reports a particular firm. How many other entities do you outsource? Or are they the primary entity that conducts your audits?

>> SARAH DREYER: We go through a standard procurement process to identify the firms that do work from us. It's a competitive process. We currently have two firms under a blanket purchase agreement. And any time we have new work, a requisition goes out and the two firms bid on it for grant work. We have another if you remember that does some of the IT security work here at the EAC.

>> Mr. Bowens?

>> First, do you all offer sample templates for tracking items that are important to you all when you're conducting audits? So if a locality wanted a template to use for things that support documentation, do you have documents or templates available?

>> SARAH DREYER: I don't. That would be a great question for Risa, who is up next. I could not give you a template because I couldn't audit it later. If I give you a template and it doesn't work for your team --

>> But I want what you want.

>> SARAH DREYER: Then I would be hesitant to write a finding. So that's something that would need to come from the EAC itself.

I am always very happy to come out and talk to any grant administrators about what we look for, about my tips and tricks, about how to identify fraud, how to report it. Just give me a call and I would be happy to do either a virtual presentation or come visit you and have those conversations.

>> And going back to the audit standards, who audits the auditors?

>> SARAH DREYER: Great question. We follow generally accepted government auditing standards. And we are subject to a peer review process. So other Federal offices of Inspector General come look at our work every three years. And we go look at other office every three years. Our last review was last year and we passed. We just conducted a review of the Federal Election Commission, OIG. They passed too.

>> Quid pro quo. I see.

>> SARAH DREYER: No. Ours was done by the farm credit administration is who looked at us. It rotates every three years and it's quite a robust process making sure we're following the standards.

>> All right. Thank you, Sarah with the H.

>> SARAH DREYER: I have started something with that.

>> Your mom did.

Next we're going to take a break from the Sarahs and go to the Risas. Risa Garza for the EAC. So this is the EAC side, not the IG side.

>> RISA GARZA: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Risa Garza, I'm the grants director at the EAC. I have been with the Agency for five years now. And have been in the director position since I believe 2023. Hard to remember now.

I did want to start off by answering was it Mr. Bowens question about the financial documentation guidance. We actually have just recently published guidance on that. That's on our website in response to having that as a common finding in a lot of the HAVA grants audits.

But today, my talk is really to follow up with what Sarah was saying on HAVA oversight and share about how I manage the HAVA grant program to ensure compliance, as well as share some insights from state grant reporting.

As you know, since 2018, the EAC administered over \$1 billion in HAVA funding for election security. The bulk of the grants division work is to monitor the use of election security funds and provide the states guidance and technical assistance to better manage the grant awards.

We also administer \$145 million in older HAVA grants, including the original election improvement awards from 2003 and Title III payments.

And those amounts represent just the principle. HAVA requires states to earn interest on all grant funds, as Sarah mentioned. States reported earning an additional 12% on their cumulative HAVA funding.

So the primary challenge of overseeing the HAVA grant program, as again, Sarah indicated in her presentation, is the longevity of the grant awards. HAVA funds, including interest earned, are available until expended, which means the grants have been around for multiple election cycles and through several iterations of grants management teams, both at the EAC and in state election offices.

Therefore, our goal is to provide a strong framework of support that empowers and enables grantees to improve the management of the awards and increase the impact of grant dollars. In practice, that means we focus on building strong relationships with state grantees through technical assistance and guidance. Identifying areas of risk and potential improvement. And developing accessible user friendly resources. We primarily monitor the use of HAVA funds by reviewing budgets and quarterly financial reports submitted by the states. These reviews ensure that spending is consistent with planned program activities and compliant with the terms and conditions of the

grant award. They also provide an opportunity for us to engage with states regularly throughout the year. As was discussed a little this morning, election administration is not a one size fits all. And that impacts how states manage their awards. So we really make an effort to know staff and learn about the needs and challenges of their respective offices.

This in turn informs how we provide additional technical assistance, both generally through live webinars and published grants guidance and individually through tailored support, including regular check-ins, training, site visits, and audit resolution. And just as an example of that, like I said before, we recently published guidance on financial documentation in response to common audit findings, which serves the states as a whole group. And then for individual tailored support, we might look at a state and say okay, you recently had staff turnover, you have new people in the position, and so we need to do additional technical assistance with you. Or you recently had an audit. So we are working with you hand in hand to resolve the recommendations that the auditor made.

We also have insight into the trends and challenges that impact them as a group. For instance, state election offices struggle with staff turnover. I know we have talked about this before already today. And retaining talent, most often due to a lack of resources and a change of leadership after an election cycle. The result is states lose their experience, skills, and

institutional knowledge for administering the HAVA grants. In some cases, this led to states not spending their funds, especially older HAVA funds, because they're not sure what they're allowed to spend it on or how to manage the funds. Similarly, states delayed or stopped requesting their allocation of funding due to concerns about meeting the requirements of the grant. For instance, the HAVA match requirement for election security grants increased from 5% in 2018 to 20% in 2020 and subsequent funding years.

Under HAVA, states are required to make match funds available within two years of receiving their award. Many state election offices must rely on appropriations from their state legislature to meet their requirement. Other states must depend on sources such as general funding, sub award match requirements, or program-generated revenue.

Even with our limited capacity as a grants team of three, we invest time and resources to address these concerns and work directly with grantees to identify solutions and provide flexibility whenever possible.

However, there are many other factors that affect state management of HAVA awards. Consistent sustained funding would allow state election offices to plan in advance of receiving funds, including securing match funding, timing of critical system and equipment updates and dropping future programmatic improvements.

We know that HAVA is a critical resource for the states and has made it possible for states to run safer, more secure, accessible, and trustworthy elections.

Since 2018, states have spent just over 70% of election security funds with only 7 states spending below 50%. Notably, six states have spent more than 95% of their funds, which means that they are spending new funding as they receive it or relying on previously earned interest to cover programmatic costs.

My colleague will speak more about the impact of the grants. But I wanted to share with you some of the trends in spending that states reported to us.

Overall, state spending is consistent year over year. As you can see, there have been unusual years, primarily 2020 and 2021, when states were given larger grant awards and average spending nearly doubled as states worked to address complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, we are seeing HAVA funds used to maintain a high level of security and sustain the ongoing modernization of vote systems.

Looking at the data from state grant reports, it's immediately clear that cybersecurity, voting equipment upgrades, and the development and maintenance of modern voter registration systems are the critical elements of all state HAVA programs. Of those categories, spending on cybersecurity, which again is the purple line if you can tell the difference, and voter registration systems, which is that green line, are very similar

from year to year.

While spending nearly every other category dipped in FY25, cybersecurity expenditures remain steady and states continue to report a list of risk mitigation activities to secure their elections.

Voter registration system updates and maintenance are another theme in grantee reports with many states taking on expensive multiyear projects to overhaul their outdated systems with more security and user friendly systems.

In the past two years, 35 states reported spending more than \$62 million on the voter registration systems.

The final item I will highlight is that the state expenditure data shows clear trends across the spending categories, including cycles for replacing old equipment and unique events that shift program priorities and needs. For instance, again, in 2020 and 2021, the need for additional health and safety protocols and changes in procedures for casting and counting ballots caused an unusual spike on improvements to voting procedures represented here by the orange line on the graph.

You can see that after 2021, spending on voting procedures dropped down to similar levels as the remaining categories.

The story this data tells is that the HAVA grant program has been and continues to be effective at improving the administration of elections. The grant funding has allowed

states to not only sustain continuous updates and upgrades to their systems, but also to respond quickly to evolving threats to elections.

And again, I'm preaching to the choir again. But as we look forward to the implementation of VVSG 2.0 and a fast-moving technological landscape, it is important that we provide states with the guidance, support, and resources to meet today's challenges while planning for the future of elections.

>> There we go. Thank you. Question on this graph that's up right now.

The yellow line, it says voting procedures over \$50 million. What does that mean? Voting procedures? Certainly it doesn't have to do with state law or procedures. What did they spend \$60 million on?

>> RISA GARZA: During the pandemic, for instance, it was stuff like increasing mail-in ballots or drop boxes. It's basically anything that regarding casting a ballot that's outside of the actual technological part of it. I'm trying to think what else they used it on.

Oh, yeah. The PPE for during the pandemic. A lot of times, the e-poll book maintenance and that kind of thing is included in that because it's part of the process of casting a vote.

>> Mr. Proctor?

>> Yeah. On the topic the frequently discussed topic of unspent funds, what percentage is it your sense that it's just state appropriations, like getting the matching funds to be able to execute on the grant? Or do those having to be in before the grantee ever applies?

>> RISA GARZA: I'm sorry, can you restate that question?

>> For HAVA funds, there's a matching piece from the state. To what extent are those states that are not expending all their funds not expending them because they're having trouble appropriating from their legislatures the matching funds?

>> RISA GARZA: Okay. Yeah. It's a pretty small percentage. So the funds have to be available within two years of receiving their award. So they don't have to have it right away, but there are some states that are worried they won't be able to ask for the funds or otherwise meet the match, so they have delayed. It's a handful of states. But it is a factor on whether or not they will even accept their awards or when they will accept their awards.

>> Senator Kagan?

>> State legislators think alike sometimes. Cheryl Kagan. My question was going to be broader. Are you in touch, and thank

you for the presentation. Are you in touch with the states not spending their money? And are there other excuses or I can say reasons why they're not spending the money that we, they most desperately need?

>> RISA GARZA: Yes. We are in touch with them. We cannot compel them to spend the funds. We can ask them why they have not spent the funds. A lot of it has to do with cycles in terms of when their equipment has aged out and when they need updates to the voter registration system. But a lot of what we hear is that they don't feel secure in the Federal funds that they're going to receive. Last year, we only distributed \$15 million, which is a drop from previous years. And this year was only 45. And that caused a lot of states to even question if it's worth requesting the funds at this point. Last year was 272,000 per state. And then this year was just under \$1 million. It's not a lot compared to the past. And also with the match requirement, a lot of states I think are seeing that it's not really worth it.

>> I would also say real quick as someone having my chairman across the room, I have to have my disclaimer. Part of the reason we don't spend is each state has different programs we use it for. I kick mine aside because we provide cybersecurity down to the county level. Often time that election office is on the same server as the treasurer of the court. And we provide cybersecurity down to the county level. So we put the money

aside and use the interest to pay for that for the county. So it's listed as unspent, but it's doesn't mean it's not being used.

All right. That made more questions. Sorry about that.

>> Secretary, can I add to that point?

You know, and I know Kammi is coming up in a might be. But a couple of the big categories, you may have noticed, not to pick on them, but Louisiana is zero. That is because Louisiana is waiting to procure new equipment and they will go from 0 to 100 in one day because all of their Federal money since 2018 is a drop in the bucket to what their state system is going to cost. So that's a piece.

We have seen some places hold back major procurements like statewide voter registration data base replacement or upgrades. So those can be big chunks.

You also see some states that have implemented new program, things like cyber navigators and they want to maintain that. One of the things we started asking a couple of years ago was rather than what you have spent, what have you sort of allocated for a purpose? And what we know is that 98% of that money is allocated to something even if it hasn't been spent down yet.

>> Okay. Real quick. Walker, Vebber, and Moore. And then the

next topic.

>> Thank you. And I love this information because what I have heard in the past is when they look at allocating money for HAVA or funds, we have already allocated this much, but it hasn't been spent. You never hear or quantify why that money hasn't been spent. So it would be nice to be able to go to a place and say here is my state, this is the money left, and this is what it has been earmarked for. There's a misconception about there's not a need because the money, previous money hasn't been spent. But I'm looking at a new ballot sorter. And with first-year maintenance and licensing, \$500,000. My cult ballot sorter is 13 years old. We keep bandaging it. We're putting in new operating system, new cameras, new computers. But my county isn't going to put out over a half a million dollars for that. I have to have funds.

So maybe something to let Congress know hey, just because the money is unspent doesn't mean it's not earmarked already. We need to continue in this. There's ongoing need. Thank you.

>> Could you explain, what happens with the interest earned on the funds in the states?

>> RISA GARZA: They become part of the award. They have to spend it down in order to finish out the award to complete.

>> So there's a matching requirement on the main fund? Does it

apply proportionately to the interest earned?

>> RISA GARZA: No. The match is only on the principle.

>> So let it sit and grow as much as possible?

>> RISA GARZA: Yes. Absolutely.

>> When there's a match, it becomes the principle and becomes Federal dollars.

Mr. Moore? And then we will move on to the next subject.

>> Could you explain why the match went from 5% to 20% and how much that factored in?

>> Congress.

>> By statute, you're saying? Okay.

>> Thank you.

Next we will go to the next presentation. And Kammi Foote, chief election information officer for the EAC program's role as it relates to reviewing the impact of HAVA grants. Kammi, you're the last one. You're sitting between us and a restroom break.

>> I will jump in quick before Kammi starts. We talked about the budget cut earlier and I saw raised eyes to the fact that our IG is three people and our grants team is three people. To give you a flavor of the history, it wasn't that long ago that those divisions were both one person, one FTE. So we are able to exponentially provide more than we were not that long ago. But again, when we talk about things like other reports or other

things that would be great to have as resources, that's dependent on having the people who are able to do that.

So again, that's part of why we wanted to talk about that on the front end. Just both to level set and understand how it impacts us when we're operating on such tight margins.

>> KAMMI FOOTE: I will try not to keep you between you and your break.

As Scott Schwab said, I'm Kammi Foote, the chief election information officer here at the EAC and I work with Sara without the H in the Clearinghouse division and the research director and communication division. I will talk about another way that rereview the HAVA grant programs, which is through the program offices and looking at how the grant funds are actually used in practice. We do that in a couple of ways. One approach is through the Cleary Awards. We have a specific category for innovative use of HAVA funds which helps us to identify strong examples of how the states are using the funds. What I want to talk about in more detail here on this panel is about how in recent years due in large part to those additional funds that the executive director mentioned earlier that we have been able to use that additional funding to look at the impact of HAVA grants through our research division and how these funds have directly improved election administration.

So if you have been on the board for a while, you have

probably noticed an increase in the amount of reports that we have been sending you to review. That's in part because of this additional funding that's allowed us to look more in depth of some of the programs, including the HAVA grants and expenditures there. Rather than just evaluating compliance, the goal of the reports has been to examine how they're used in practice within different legal and operational frameworks to help us identify effective uses of the funds and consistent with our Clearinghouse function to share those best practices so that election officials can learn from each other about what's working well across the country in different jurisdictions.

For example, you have heard a lot today about the election security grants and we had issued an election security grant impact reports one of the reasons why we know that 98% of the funds have been allocated is through that research. And to give you an example of some of the things that we found, in states like North Carolina, we found that they used HAVA funds to invent -- to develop a TAC response kit which consists of laptops and other tools to access county infrastructure in case of emergency. This was after a cyber attack in early voting in 2020. This was award winner in 2023 and initially funded with HAVA grant. This is just one example. You have heard also from Risa and the last panel, but we found that the security grants enabled election offices to protect IT systems from foreign and domestic cyber attacks, protect the integrity of voted ballots,

and audit elections to ensure that proper procedures were followed and outcomes were correct.

So all of these are core investments in keeping elections safe, secure, and trustworthy, which is what the funds intended to facilitate.

Soon, you will also receive a report examining the impact of HAVA 261 and 291 funds intended to improve the accessibility of elections. Unlike past EAC accessibility reports, this one is -- the past reports focused on how voters experienced elections. But this report takes a look at the concrete steps that states and local jurisdictions took to improve accessibility so we can better understand not just that progress was made, but how that actually happened.

And then another research approach that we have taken is more forward looking. And an example of that is a report we shared with the board even more recently that examined what the cost might be for states to adopt VVSG 2.0 voting systems. As you all know, HAVA enabled widespread adoption of the first generation of VVSG systems. In this report, the road to widespread deployment of VVSG 2.0 makes clear that funding is the most important factor in modernizing voting systems. That research showed for all jurisdictions to adopt 2.0 voting systems, it would cost roughly \$2.71 billion. However, this figure only represents the cost of the voting systems themselves. This does not include the cost of all election

technology, including e-poll books, voter registration system, those election supporting technologies and doesn't cover the cost of actually administering the election.

So research like this does a few things. It provides transparency in how the funds are used. It highlights effective practices that can be shared across states. And we hope that it helps policy makers and the public understand the real world impact of these Federal investments.

The EAC is uniquely positioned to do this work because we have built strong relationships with states and local election officials. And as a bipartisan Federal agency, we strive to produce reports that are truly bipartisan in nature.

And importantly through the Clearinghouse function, we also look to turn our findings into practical guidance and resources that help professionals in the field.

So I would like to acknowledge the important role of this advisory body and your feedback for us in developing these reports. Like I mentioned, we do share all of them with you and ask if for your feedback. I know that some of them can be lengthy and get into the weeds. But we really do appreciate when you take the time to read them and provide feedback because it strengthens our reports by helping ensure that the framing is balanced and that the analysis is truly useful for policy makers and the public.

So in closing, these impact reports provide a critical

third layer of accountability beyond grant administration and compliance. They help us understand what Federal election funding actually achieves in the field. And what we have consistently found is that HAVA funds have strengthened election in areas such as poll worker training, communication, security, and accessibility.

And I think we can definitely say that HAVA grants have improved how elections are run nationwide in ways that wouldn't have been possible in jurisdictions without the level of local funding needed to make those necessary advancements. I know in my previous role, I was a local election official. I actually some of you around the table here because I didn't have any funding at all and I took full advantage of every HAVA grant that made itself available to me.

So at the same time, the ability to produce this kind of research depends on sustained capacity as Commissioner said. Our research division has been operating with only two full-time staff. And as mentioned with the recent budget reduction, it means that we likely will see less of this kind of research going forward.

That said, if you have ideas for areas that you would like us to look into, we would be happy to hear your suggestions to ensure that the research that we do invest in is as useful as possible for making meaningful improvements in elections.

>> Questions? Comments? Commissioner.

>> Just a couple of things that I thought would be interesting for the group.

The HAVA grants are very unique. Number one, as you heard, they're unlimited on time. There's no five-year window on those, like most grants. States have a wide range of activities they can use them for for the improvement of Federal elections. That's fairly unique. There's few strings attached to them.

And you should know that the Congress has a lot of insight into these grants above much more sensitive use of money in the states. And then they want more additional insight from our staff. So there is a lot of eyes looking at these grants and the use of them in the states. But that really, my plea to you is to talk about the use of the grants in the states and how effective it is. And that's really where I think the Congress will come around with additional grant moneys. But I thought those points would be interesting for the group.

>> Further discussion?

There you go. Ms. Allen.

>> Just briefly. I know this is an issue for Congress and not necessarily for the Commissioners or this body or Kammi, for you or your office. But money that can be directed directly to local jurisdictions is vastly preferable to the state grants.

California is 63% expended, I saw on your chart earlier. There's literally tens of millions of dollars sitting in a bank account at the Secretary of State's office that locals can't access.

So if we want to help elections on the ground, that's one way to get around some of that.

>> Further comments? Questions?

Commissioner?

>> Yeah. I want you to know that we have had those conversations with Congress. And it would be helpful if you had those conversations with them as well. They're looking for ideas on how they can do that. Right now I think they feel constrained that they have to go through the states, not directly to the local jurisdictions. If you have an idea of how they can do that, I think they're concerned about state regulations and legislatures approving of those moneys. And again, the matching issue as well. So I think it's helpful for you to go and have those conversations with them directly.

>> I would also add to that that Hans issued a motion earlier on when folks aren't here to basically report that back to the recording body. I would encourage you all to report to your bodies after these meetings to give them a readout of what you have learned, what the concerns are, and other aspects. Because

I think that the closer that is to when the meeting is adjourned, the better of a chance that we will have of getting things done.

I say this all the time that Ben and I both worked in Congress and the folks that would write letters, a lot of the letters would sit in the corner. If folks were knocking on the doors and coming and talking to us, those are the folks, Barbara, who would get a lot more listening to.

So I would encourage you to keep doing that.

>> Isaac? I think I know what you're going to say.

>> Hey, it's funding. Ms. Allen, I represent NACO here. And this is literally -- and Caleb, I see you over there. Just know I remember our meetings. This is the number one thing we bring up is county funding. In South Carolina, our elections directors, they send zero dollars to the counties. I get jealous when I see on LinkedIn a check from the Secretary of State. How do we get that? And I'm told we don't have the access. The state determines what to do with that. And when we go before Congress, I'm saying we have to find a mechanism by which counties can directly tap into it, whether that's a percentage has to go to the counties in a formula. I understand you can't have 3,000 plus jurisdictions applying for grants.

So we understand that was a concern of the members of Congress is how do we actually do that with 50 states and

3,000-plus jurisdictions.

And I'm not even including Michigan and Wisconsin in the 3,000 number. So we go to 10,000, 12,000 townships and municipalities. We have to have the avenue for the counties or local jurisdictions to get direct access. And Caleb, I just remember our conversation. It's hard because we can continue saying that, right? Tom, you said writing letters and they collect. But we are having those conversations. That is happening. I think there has to be a louder voice, and right now, the louder voice could be senior level Republicans talking about it and bringing that up, saying we want more security in our elections, let's increase the funding. Let's give the access for those things. And we need that voice. The county election officials, we are trying. We're amping up and saying hey, this is what's going on. But we really need help from everyone to increase election funding and giving counties access.

>> Mr. Hovland?

>> As designated Federal officer of the body, I am obligated to say don't forget the FACA training. And if you are doing that in your personal capacity, not as a board member. So I wanted to flag that.

And also, with a former hat as somebody who noodled on this as a Senator staffer, two things to keep in mind as you think about it.

One, there is the Federal compliance element that we saw the presentation on. And particularly if you think about small counties when you start doing the math and you divide by thousands of jurisdictions, you don't want people in a situation where the Federal compliance will cost as much or more than getting the money. And then because of top down, bottom up dynamics with states, again, I mentioned Louisiana earlier, Louisiana pays for poll workers from the state level. So amongst everything basically; as I understand it. So again, I think that's why the House years ago had 50% in cash or in kind language to accommodate that top down, bottom up dynamic.

But certainly a concern that we have heard. I just mentioned those factors as people noodle on this, that is part of the conundrum and thinking about this from a Federal level. So encourage you to come up with the answers and in your private capacities talk about that.

>> Yeah. Private underlined and **bold**.

Representative Proctor?

>> Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would be remiss as the NCRS if I didn't make a plea for state sovereignty here. I understand the concern about making sure the money gets where it needs to be as rapidly as possible. There's a great deal consternation in my state about Federal involvement in elections. And I think it would only aggravate

that if a Federal agency started negotiating directly with a county to expend moneys on their elections.

I think that it allows for a greater level of comfort which we currently enjoy with HAVA funds and with EAC if the state legislature, the state was involved in that and/or the state was involved in that discussion.

We have actually passed legislature recently to stop other Federal agencies from spending moneys on elections because we're so kernal about it. -- concerned about it. Add that note of caution to the discussion.

>> Ms. Walker and Mr. Bowens and another one that I can't see.

>> Thanks for the great conversation. As a side note, if we were not at this current meeting as a Board of Advisors member, right now, there are over 100 election officials on Capitol Hill today advocating on behalf of election funding, security issues, et cetera. Unfortunately, it was the exact same day as we were all doing this. So my other hat as the county clerk in Jackson County, Oregon, would have been on Capital Hill today. So letting you know this is happening, as Isaac stated, to NACO, election center, privately as election official, secretaries of state, there are many opportunities and it is actually happening today. So they must be listening to King Charles' message first. But excited. And just got an update from one of our association president and he said they have been very busy and it's going very well. Just on a side note.

>> Mr. Bowens?

>> Situations that could preclude this, is there a grant recuperation plan that could be put in place to recoupe funds from states that are not actively using the grants or having submitted a plan as to use to potentially redistribute to states that are using the money?

>> I will put my old hat back on and say for the money that has been distributed from Congress, that term is set, I guess, unless they retroactively changed it, which would probably not be popular.

But I think that would be a future funding consideration. And certainly something that there has been talk about. Or again, you could put a time line on it. Actually, the CARES Act funding from 2020 was time limited in ways that the HAVA dollars have not historically been.

>> Ms. Gold? You want to wrap it up?

>> Yeah. Just quickly here and a bit subjectively. I would just say I would hope with the incredible wisdom around this table and I'm not exactly sure how this would emerge, but it would be good to see if there was a model of a program where states got money and had a requirement or were encouraged or provided incentives to get that down to localities who had the actual responsibility for the work and the jobs and the tasks involved in implementing the program. So perhaps if folks know

of other models, it would be an interesting topic for discussion.

>> Thank you, Kammi.

We will go ahead and take a 15-minute break and back in here at 3:00 p.m.

[Break]

>> Let's go ahead and bring this back together. Everybody can have a seat.

Our next section is going to be moderated by Commissioner Hovland on the Cleary award.

The conversation will highlight the experiences of several winners in the room, including Derek Bowens, Isaac Cramer, Eric Fey, and Lisa Marra. Over to you.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you, Secretary. As everybody comes back in from break, we're excited to talk about the Cleary Awards. Again, for those of you less familiar, the Clearies, this is our tenth year of them and they're really a great program that we have developed in order to both recognize outstanding work that election officials are doing around the country and then also to share those best practices. Again, if you're less familiar, the

Clearinghouse function provided to the EAC and HAVA was really probably the vaguest charge of HAVA. It really is leaning into I think of it as leaning into Federalism and leaning into the 50 states running elections 50 different ways. And how we can share those ideas, share those best practices, and learn from one another.

So we do that at the EAC in a number of ways. But one of those is through the Cleary Awards. And we are fortunate to have several members of the Board of Advisors as Cleary winners. So we are going to have some of those folks share a little bit about their programs and efforts.

So I want to ask that each of the folks that are going to join this conversation or at least the beginning of it share a little bit about their jurisdiction, their winning program, and I think it's probably easiest one to stay where we are, and two, maybe we will go with Eric and down to Derek and come down the line. Is that clockwise, I guess?

Eric, if you want to kick it off and tell us a little bit about St. Louis County and your submissions. Or your winning ones. Honorable mentions.

>> ERIC FEY: I submitted a number of times. Not always as a winner.

>> BEN HOVLAND: They can't all be winners.

>> ERIC FEY: That's right.

For me at least, speaking only personally here, a lot of

the changes we have made in my office in St. Louis County have been from the result of seeing what other people have done in other jurisdictions across the country. We like to call it the CASE method, copy and steal everything. We have done that a number of times. And the Clearies, that's a great way to see what other election offices are doing and if those are things we can implement in our own office.

We have submitted a few times and our winning submission a few years ago was for the love your ballot campaign. That was in response to changes made in Missouri state law during COVID to allow voters, any voter to request a mail ballot. Missouri was and still is really a traditional state and where the vast majority of folks vote in person. So during COVID when we had close to half the voters voting by mail. A lot of folks never voted by mail before. We tried to spin up a robust public education campaign of how to treat your ballot. Like don't fill out your ballot when you're eating a bag of Cheetos. Remember to sign the envelope. Things like that.

So I think it had an effect. We did see the first election under COVID was our municipal election in the spring of that year. And the rate of issues we saw did decrease throughout the year. So leveraging media paid and earned I think helped. But yeah, that was our experience. But I want to say just as an end user of the Clearies, it really is a great way to see and a cost effective way to see what other election offices are doing and

look at those things to implement.

I will stop there. I know Isaac wants to talk for a long time. So we want to get to him real quick.

>> You already stole my jokes about stealing things.

>> Before we get to Isaac, Derek, have you had Cheetos issues in North Carolina?

>> No. But maybe other chips.

So we have about 250,000 or so registered voters. We won a total of five Cleary Awards.

Well, I didn't do that to get the hand clap, but thank you.

And I won one in Hanover County. We have been doing it for a long time now. And we won them over various things. The I voted sticker contest. The ballot tracking tool app. The precinct official portal. A number of things. It's a really good way to display innovation amongst jurisdictions. As Eric stated for other jurisdictions to see what you're doing and to implement those for the betterment of the overall process.

>> Thank you. Isaac? What we have all been waiting for. Signed Albert books.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: I'm the director in Charleston County. We're a diverse county and growing. Charleston is probably one of the most desirable places to live in the country. U.S.A. Today or whatever top 50, we're always number one or two. I don't know why we get those rankings so we get a bunch of people that move

in. It makes our job challenging because we have people moving in from other parts of the country. One of the things that I was thankful for was the leadership before me that kind of pushed me to grow. And when I became director, I didn't know about the Clearies. I didn't know what the EAC was. I knew it was in DC. I was told about the Clearinghouse and the awards and I actually was able to look at all the previous winners, which is a cool thing you can do. And it got me Envious.

I can say we have three wins. What's that? That's not five. Well, I will say we -- I will find out later this spring, I applied for two that might get me to my five. When are we announcing the winners?

>> You're not going to get it.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: I'm going to say one of them was outstanding use of HAVA grant funds, which I'm proud of with the College of Charleston.

>> Maybe. Stay tuned.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: Maybe. Here we go. I actually brought one of our winning submissions. That's actually a children's book. In 2021 when I became director, I went to the library and said what I really envisioned was to make voting accessible to the younger generation. And not a boring book. Not a book like go to the polls with mom and dad and you will see a Ballot Marking Device. Or how was the country founded? That's already existed. What actually this book is about is about how kids can have

disagreements and have respect for one another in the disagreements.

I remember when I was in high school, my best friend differed politically than me but we had the best conversations. And this book is teaching that.

And just a spoiler alert, it's about a playground. And the kids are on the playground and -- sorry, it's a field. They play soccer on it every day after school. There's a vote on whether it is to become a playground or not. Relatable to us as adults in the land use debate. So something for adults to read about. It's a practical way for students, young from I have the best test case, my 2-year-old and 4-year-old always ask for this book to be read. That's how I know it's popular. And whenever my kids go to the library, they're like Dad, can we see your book and here it is.

Anyway, I have some copies that I'm willing to give away for the people that are my best friends and will come to me and say it is good to meet you and here's my business card.

What was cool about this and awesome about this was this was released right before the 2024 Presidential election and covered on CNN and NPR. The NPR, I had calls from multiple schools across the country and sent these books to students, real students who did not know me. And after the election, I got handwritten letters from the students with pictures of them reading this book. And the teachers were very appreciative that

there was a practical thing that they could talk about voting in a real way that they would understand.

And it ends on a cliff hanger. It's a real vote about ice cream or cake. And it's an outreach event for us and we bring ice cream or cake to the student and do a demo there. Come see me after and I will give you a copy. Wesley got one of them. He will see his grand kids tonight.

The other two, we did a voter accessibility advisory committee, the VAC is what we call it. And actually, we noticed that we kept getting similar concerns after every election from our accessibility community. And one of the things I envy from Orange County, California, was how all of the advisory committees they had. And we formed this in conjunction with local disability community advocates and to give us live feedback. We're launching these posters in the polling place in this upcoming election. It's called an accessibility menu. We found that a lot of voters who have disabilities, whether that's invisible or seen, they don't want to keep repeating what they need assistance with through the voting process. We wanted a one-stop shop of how they could easily identify what they need without telling ten different poll workers about that.

And we put this theory out there and now for this upcoming primary election, we'll have these in every polling place. That's part of the work we're doing.

So just really excited about the Clearies and obviously I

could talk about it for hours of time.

Lisa, it's your turn. So come see me about a book. And it's really professionally done. Look.

>> LISA MARRA: Lisa Marra, state of Arizona. I don't have a prompt. So it's hard to follow that.

But I will share a story on how I met Isaac. This is fun. We met at the election center conference because he tracked me down and stalked me through the hallways to give me a book to give to someone in one of our counties. Natalie needs this and she's expecting you to bring this book. That's a cool book. He said you can buy it on Amazon.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: I only had one copy.

>> LISA MARRA: I got it to Natalie and Natalie know works for him. That's my Isaac story. That's it.

So Secretary Fontez, the Arizona Secretary of State, is a huge fan of the Clearies. He won one when he was recorder. So it was important for him. We won two at the state of Arizona. One was for a table top exercise. We do a lot of table top exercises. I think we were one of the first people that starting doing those on a large scale. We have done them for the counties, media, law enforcement. So we did win one for TTX for AI.

And then the second one was for the election of officials fellow program where we partnered with local universities and

were able to get people, college students, into almost every one of our counties and paid them. So that was very successful.

Before Tina, you start getting excited, we only have 15 counties in Arizona. So we don't have like 3,000. That's our story on the Cleary Awards.

>> Thank you for that. I think for the next question, we will go in reverse order and back to Lisa.

You think one of the things we have attempted to adjust the calendar for submission, but we're very cognizant of the fact that time is one of the most precious resources for election officials. And it takes time to fill out this submission. Again, we have tried to make that easier and tried to be aware of. At one point, it seemed to overlap with people certifying elections. When we moved it a little bit, we saw an uptick in submissions, which was good, and the program continues to grow. Hope that you could share a little bit about, again, I guess a little more about sort of why it's been worth taking the time out of your schedule to make the submission or why others should consider it.

>> LISA MARRA: I think first of all to share that knowledge with people so we're not re-creating the wheel. I think that's important.

As government officials, it's important to have that

public accountability. And for the public to see what we're doing and know what we're doing. But also recognition for staff. And I have always been a fan of awards because it recognizes your staff, but it's also to your points, Isaac, a recruitment tool. Often people see these programs and think that's really cool. I want to work at a place that allows you to do these kinds of things.

>> Yeah. I want to work for Derek, by the way. The work he does in Durham County, it's phenomenal, by the way.

>> Isaac, does Derek want you to work for him? Probably not. Probably not. I will take a pay cut to work for you.

>> But Derrick, you do an amazing job. And Lisa's point, it's highlighting the important work we do and the innovative work we're doing. I like to say government always has this bad image that we sit behind a desk all day and do nothing and we're not innovative or creative. We're just given these tasks and we do these tasks. I view my role in a lot greater capacity. Our culture in our office is built upon continuous improvement. And continuous improvement always looks and reflects back. That's what the Clearies are about. It gives you the opportunities to sit with my team and go over the programs we have launched and how we can tell that story. And like Lisa said, it highlights your team. Yes, I'm the executive director and I will get the

credit for whatever we put out there. But you know what? It's the team that made that happen and they are the ones getting the recognition.

There was an article going around with a new magazine about elections. We were highlighted in it. Isaac's ideas come to fruition. But the people that carry it out were recognized in the article. And it went around the office and everyone was excited for the coverage. The Clearies do a good job of elevating the work of the professionals and the people and boots on the ground that make sure that elections are free, fair, and secure.

>> DEREK BOWENS: Ditto, Isaac. You do great work.

I think recognition for an underpaid staff goes a long way to them staying in this very critical work where they could go in other places to get more funding for their skill sets.

I think another big benefit for us is it creates a profile with our county commissioners who are responsible for funding us. And so if they gain that respect for our work because they see that respect is happening on a national level, they're more willing to invest in us. And I think a big part of their investment in giving us a brand new \$20 million consolidated facility is because in part the Clearies. We share it with our commissioners. We share it with bodies that can provide us funding that we can accept. And I think because they have grown

in respect for our work and they understand the complexities through things we do, through the Cleary Awards and submitting the work that we do, I think it's had a huge impact beyond just recognition, but also getting some money out of the purse.

>> Eric?

>> ERIC FEY: I guess the one thing I might add is the other thing we do in our office, I have my staff look through all the Cleary awards and honorable mentions. And a lot of times especially like the stuff that Isaac submits, yeah, we're already doing that, we didn't think to submit it. No.

So it's useful. It's useful in that regard as well.

I will stop there and let you ask your next question.

>> BEN HOVLAND: You do remind me that I will leave them unnamed, but I did have a particular state election director complain to me that they had long been doing something that somebody received an award for. I was like did you submit it? And they did not.

So to your point earlier about copy and steal, if you have done something innovative, submit it for a Cleary before someone else does.

>> Commissioner, if you have been named in a comment, you can respond? Does that work that way?

>> No. Scott says absolutely not. We are staying on time.

>> Sorry, Chair.

>> But also, and to the point earlier on recognition, again, the Commissioners travel around the country with staff for some of the trainings. When we visit your offices and see the Cleary awards there, one, that's fun for us. But also to meet some of the folks who are not able to necessarily join us on these boards. But like you are talking about are really the people behind them and to see that pride is awesome.

So coming back to you, Eric, because I like going back and forth this way, thinking about you had started to talk about, again, looking at other programs or looking at other programs and realizing that they have copied and stolen from you potentially, but can you talk a little bit about what that's looked like in your office or how you have found other programs that other jurisdictions have done? And again, obviously, they have to be tailored to state laws or circumstances. But if you could share about that, that would be great.

>> ERIC FEY: Sure. One example that is coming up pretty immediately for us, I saw Palm Beach County, Florida, they submitted for a scheduling an early voting appointment essentially. So I'm meeting virtually with Wendy Link, who is the supervisor of elections down there later this week to talk about that and maybe implement it in our office.

And another thing I should have mentioned earlier that I think is great about the Clearies because I want to -- I don't know if it will come up later. There are other organizations and other bodies that have awards and we have submitted to awards for that. The Clearies is a relatively low barrier of entry. There are no entry fee. And I want to thank the commissioners and the EAC for that. Because it is I think very accessible to all size of election offices across the country.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you for that. And again, if you are less familiar with the Clearies, in addition to that, we also assign the submissions to we recognize the difference in the sizes of jurisdictions so that we are not just giving awards to large jurisdictions that have a lot of dedicated staff and/or to innovative ideas that consider the challenges that election offices face across. If you're a one-person office or a 500-person office.

>> Commissioner? When you say we, can you talk aboutly about who is doing the judging so that folks get an understanding?

>> BEN HOVLAND: Well, we judge the stickers. But that's it. Because that's fun.

The we in the judging is you all. And is election officials from our boards who volunteer. Ricky had to go to another commitment or I would have picked on him. But I will do that and/or paraphrase. Ricky has been a multiyear judge for the

Cleary's and has talked about how valuable he finds that simply because it forces him to read through all the submissions and sees all of the great ideas out there. But really, again, we hand out the plaque, I guess, but it is a peer recognition. It is election officials from around the country recognizing these as best practices and programs to be lifted up.

So to your point, Chairman, I do think that that is a big deal. And beyond just us anointing something as a best practice, it is acknowledgment by your peers.

With that, let's see. We're doing good.

I will take an award for that.

I was at Eric. But Derek.

>> DEREK BOWENS: I want to plug Eric real quick. He's humble with his one Cleary award, but he wins a lot of the awards he has to pay for. He doesn't mention that. I thought I would give him a kudos there.

One great program back in 2016 for Maryland, Montgomery County, I believe, they had a precinct performance report. So we modeled that and created a precinct report card. And so we kind of do an objective analysis of their performance, did you audit this correct, did you pack your cart correct for return. And in that data, we share with the political parties in hopes that they won't reappoint people who can't follow instructions because they got a bad grade. I thought that was cool. It creates an incentive for workers to perform better and to follow

instruction.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Isaac?

>> ISAAC CRAMER: Yeah. I would like to say we're going to Charleston County that and see an idea and steal it. I will see Eric doing his podcast, plug your podcast right now. I'm a long time listener, one time on your show and talking about things that I didn't want to talk about. Yep. Last time too. I'm not invited back. I have been trying to get my book on that show and he said no.

But we see good ideas. And one of the things about learning, I talked about the culture of continuous improvement. We have these giant white boards in our office and I asked the projects guy, okay, review all the Clearies and write down the top five that you think we could look at implementing and doing here. And the number one for us was hurricane response. I live in Charleston. Hurricanes are always hitting in October. Most of the time during early voting or some form of that. And the last thing I want to do is not have the best preparation for it. I want to see what other jurisdictions are doing. That's really isolated to certain parts of the country. Obviously Kansas is not going to be able to tell me how to handle a hurricane.

Tornados, you could do that.

So I think when we come to learning from others and seeing what worked and I can reach out to that election official too and say hey, we saw all the things that happened on the front end and we see your final report. But where were with pitfalls and things that you did not include in the report that I should be mindful of when talking to emergency management personnel? We don't have a lot of space in the submissions. I think this will go to a later question. It might be awesome to do some of these things as webinars featuring a Cleary. Let's learn of how this state or jurisdiction handled this.

>> LISA MARRA: I like it. The Cleary lunch and learn. I like it. That's a good idea.

To your point on judging, this was my first year as a judge. And I want to say it was overwhelming, but not in a bad way. Like it's so hard to judge these because they're all so fantastic. It's really difficult. You think going into this it's going to be easy. It's not. It's very difficult.

And I think there's really very few that I saw that couldn't be replicated on a large scale or a small scale. So while I would encourage people to submit to those awards for all the reasons we have talked about, it also gives the real positive impact to an industry that doesn't have a lot of positive focus right now. And election officials just want to

come in, do the job, have good elections, have voters have good experiences. But the focus that we have had the last few years has been difficult.

So that I think is really important.

We have had some counties that have taken ideas from things they have seen so we have encouraged them to apply. Even if they don't apply, I think to all the points that have been said, we learn so much from these. And we don't have hurricanes in Arizona. We have 122-degree temperatures. That's a whole different thing. But we have monsoon storms. A lot of our Tribal lands, we have flooding. So things that you learn on a scale of hurricanes can easily be tailored to whatever your area is.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you for that. There were a couple of great things you highlighted. One, Isaac got national press attention, but we see a lot of -- and for the winners, we provide sort of tool kits and draft press releases. But we see a lot of amazing local press conference, which again, helps build confidence in elections, tells a great story about the outstanding and innovative work that election officials are doing and that's important.

And then you teed up where I wanted to go next. But one of the things as we continue to think about how this program can evolve, we have been able to build a data base of the winners and that's searchable. Lisa, to your point on judging, all of

the ideas are good ones. It's not just the winners. And even something that doesn't win, it doesn't mean it's not the solution that you need. So thinking about how we can expand to share all of the submissions and do more with that I think is important.

But I would love to hear from each of you and we'll go backwards here. So start with Lisa. Are there other ways that the EAC or the Board of Advisors can use the Clearies as a tool to uplift these programs and ensure and educate others about the innovative work done in election offices, as well as the challenges that are faced across the country?

>> LISA MARRA: I think the positive focus is really important. I know I came from a jurisdiction where they didn't think awards were important. Executive leadership in that county government was like we don't have time for that, we're too busy doing the work. Why do we need to tell people the work? Just do good work. And that is detrimental to employees. They're not paid a ton in government service. We can't give huge raises or bonuses. So just that focus on them. And we need to encourage to take the time to apply for awards and share the success stories. Because it's not about the time commitment it takes to do that, it's about what we can do to help others grow.

And when elected officials at least in that county did start receiving awards because somebody just applied for them on

their own time and didn't worry about that, that positive recognition they got. And again to that point of gosh, I want to work there where they do cool, inventive things.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: The lunch and learns. We will go with that one. But really, you have at your disposal the best of the best of what's worked and what can be modeled. Yes, there's a website that lists those things. But if the EAC developed -- like even just like hey --

>> BEN HOVLAND: You asked, we delivered.

>> ISAAC CRAMER: Good job.

But even short play books. Compiling some of that, the best practices in those things and in making it digestible to people reading it. And part two of that I would say is I said in the last answer, but really highlight the what didn't work to get to the what worked. Because I guarantee you that there's a lot of jurisdictions that are currently spinning their wheels on some of these issues. We all face the same issues. We come from different backgrounds, states do different models of voting. A lot of when we get together for dinner or a drink at the bar or whatever, we're talking about the same type of challenges. It's kind of universal in the challenges. We reminisce on those things and talk about what you're doing. And to kind of zoom out and give that resource to everybody who doesn't get to come to this or go to a national conference, to zoom that out to give

everybody that access, the state associations can help you with that and getting that message far and wide and be a very impactful thing.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you for that. Derrick?

>> DEREK BOWENS: I think for the submissions, having to Isaac's point, a piece that allows you to list implementation challenges. That would be effective.

On the website where you list the award winners, when you click on the award to read about it, it gives a brief summary, but not a link to the submission. I think it would be valuable to see the documents submitted. That's probably a huge storage concern. But it would be nice to get to the minutia of the submission to get the details.

In term of expansion, I don't know if expansion of categories is appropriate with your question, but I have one thought.

Given kind of a lot of the concern around transparency in elections, I think a category in transparency.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Appropriate for the Clearies.

>> DEREK BOWENS: Yeah. To highlight what offices do to ensure that people can have confidence in the elections process.

>> He's doing that intentionally. You have so many dashboards and showing realtime things. You will win the next one.

>> Like a hosting SNL thing. Five timers.

>> DEREK BOWENS: Point proven. Point proven. I digress. I think that category in transparency would be great and I would be happy to win in that category if you think that's appropriate.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you for being transparent in your motivation. Eric?

>> ERIC FEY: One thing I would add, I mentioned it a couple of times. The EAC commissioners do a great job of getting out across the entire country. I think every -- I have been around a little while now, but every current EAC commissioner has been to my office and our state association meetings. I love it when you come do our state association meetings and mention, it doesn't have to be mine, but mention the Cleary award winners, honorable mentions, and I think that's a great way to re-emphasize that there are folks from this state that you're in that win these things that are talking about things.

And there probably won't be conversation right then when you're talking, on the sidelines election officials go up and say hey, tell me about the project that Commissioner Hicks mentioned briefly in passing trying to get to the end of his presentation.

>> In a couple of states and we're offering that the commissioners could do this, we present a brief synopsis and the award at the state association meeting. And I think that's been

very valuable. And it goes to an earlier point. It's not just the local election official, but it's the staff that's there. So you get to recognize them as well.

>> So the other piece of that is when we go out, it's usually -- so it's evolved in terms of going from a piece of piece of paper that I signed to an actual award that folks can put on a mantle or so forth.

But I do think that it has been helpful to increase the confidence in elections overall where we have gone out to present the award to the election official and done a little press with the local news reporters there to tell them what the award is about, why this county won it or why this jurisdiction won it, and how this is bettering elections for that county and jurisdiction and for the country in general.

So I think it's very valuable that we are recognizing counties and jurisdictions on awards. And I do think of it as -- it's clear in this room about how the competition can have of how can we make elections better. And I want to win this, therefore, I want to do these things. So I think it's valuable. And I do think that to continue on with this is something that's positive, not only for elections now, but elections in the future.

>> BEN HOVLAND: Thank you, Chairman Hicks.

I have a few more questions. But you all have been a chatty bunch. I want to open it up for members for questions for our panelists and past award winners, possible future award winners to be determined before I get to those and we stay on time for Chairman Schwab.

Okay. Ms. Gold?

>> Just a recommendation to our hard-working election officials here. We were talking about the importance of terminology and talking about election workers rather than poll workers. For consideration, you may want to substitute the phrase copy and steal, CAS, with the phrase of paying homage to, PHT.

>> Good recommendation.

Along those lines, opening up to the broader membership as well any suggestions or thoughts on improving the Clearies program or awareness about it would certainly welcome feedback from anyone on the board on that.

>> I'm going to jump in. Can do I that?

One thing I would say, future would be keeping the winners engaged. So I know we go quickly to the next year's submissions. Adam, you're doing a great job on the Clearinghouse on round table featuring winning jurisdictions. I think we need to stay

engaged with the winning jurisdictions. Maybe they have improved on something they have won on that got changed and they adapted it.

So --

>> You want the Shark Tank revisit.

>> Yeah. Five years later, they're \$10 million revenue and I'm on Good Morning America selling many more books of these. I'm not going to lie, my dream was to be on Good-morning America be like look, children's book, voting.

Can I do a plug on this? Cameron said it was okay. This is a great book for children, and everyone knows grand kids, nieces, nephews. Mother's day is coming up. My wife loves to read this book to my kids.

>> All right. We have a schedule.

You have a gavel now.

>> Call me out of order.

One of the things this kind of program does, we'll talk about our sequel coming up. Where are they now? What are they doing? So I think that would be a great initiative to look at later on what happened afterwards.

>> That's a great idea.

>> Just one additional point that I didn't mention earlier. It would be good for the EAC to send the announcement directly to Secretary of States or state election authorities. Because they

can easily get it via Listservs to localities that might be interested and that might increase the volumes of submissions. If you're trying to find a way to reach localities, getting the Secretaries of States or state election directors would be a means of getting it out without having to send emails to multiple jurisdiction or solely depend on press releases.

>> Go ahead.

>> Thank you. If the application doesn't already, maybe consider adding in who could -- would press be allowed to contact your office? And if so, who? Because I know that a lot of us here get calls asking to get connected with local election officials and I know the EAC does too. So this might be an easy way for the EAC to collect that information and share out with the press.

>> Thank you.

Mr. Brader?

>> Thanks. I agree that one of the great things about the Clearies is the low barrier to entry, relatively speaking. But there are obviously going to be differences in submissions in terms of presentation, how effectively people present information, and that might include the resources they might have with a public information officer or just that kind of thing.

So I guess question and maybe suggestion would be how do you go when you're evaluating things, how do you go about trying to distinguish the presentation from the substance? And then I guess a suggestion maybe would be are there things that we could do to raise the floor of presentation and make it easier for jurisdictions like clerks, local election officials, maybe our smaller jurisdictions don't have a public information officer to make it look better and help them with the presentation beyond just the form, which is good, but doesn't compete with a nicely put together presentation.

>> Thank you for that.

I thought Isaac was about to have a comment or question or plug.

>> I'm just really excited about this panel.

>> You know, one thing that I will ask the panelists in an unscripted way. One of the things that actually was a tool kit that we built I feel like a couple of years ago was to encourage state Cleary programs. And unfortunately, as far as I know, have not seen a ton of pickup on that. I think we would like to. But again, in my mind, that was a similar phenomenon. But based in the state where you would both have more programmatic submissions that were relevant because it's under the same set of laws. And then obviously the folks out of that could

certainly already have a submission ready to submit for the national Clearies. But didn't know if any of you all had seen that or recommendations on whether or not that was a terrible idea and we just totally missed the mark?

>> Well, the state of North Carolina, the state board of elections loves submitting Clearies. And they have won. And we have a state board member in the room, Ms. Angela Hawkens here, who will continue and make sure that the state board of elections submits their innovative practices, which she will have a part of making sure they have innovative things.

North Carolina definitely has taken the EAC up on Cleary submissions.

>> I don't think the state has done that as much, but what we have done is encouraged counties to apply for the CSA and the NACO awards and the local things. And some of them that have won awards -- because once you have an award submission, people love winners so it's easy to sort of replicate that and send that on. I think that's a good starting point to be able to then apply for some of those awards that have a fee or something like that.

>> I know one challenge to it is where or for the state tool kit or for creating a state-based Cleary, one of the challenges is that a state association thing, is that a state chief election official? Who is operating that? Certainly that's a

consideration. But again, a program that we think could be useful for lifting up the broader Clearies. Just wanted to plug that like a book.

Any other questions or comments?

>> So Commissioner, I have one. At one point, and I don't think it's been brought up because of the budget cuts. For one thing that the Board of Advisors should be aware of is there was talk in the past about having a Cleary day, basically, of having the winners come in and present to various boards or just have a day of presentations.

But that's one of the things that has been put aside right now because of budget issues. Just to let you know that we are talking about award winners and talking about good things in elections and trying to get that information out. But this is one of the ways that we're not able to do so because of the way that the funding structure has been put forth.

>> I saw Secretary pass the book. You didn't even open it.

>> He has a copy. He got it on Amazon.

>> There are multiple Secretary of States that bought a copy of the book. That hurt. That hurt me right there. I saw it.

>> Ms. Gold.

>> Thank you. By the way, Mr. Cramer, I'm not sure, do you want people to buy the book? It's unclear to me.

>> No. You can -- as you're own independent, go to Amazon and

find Albert learns to vote there. Two-day shipping.

>> Flag for me in the back of the room the EAC does not endorse this. Other than the Cleary award.

>> I just ordered a copy. It does work on Amazon. \$10.99.

>> I had a quick question. I thought this idea of maybe how do we help jurisdictions that don't have technical assistance on how to do presentation and make it look really good. So just two quick questions actually.

First of all, what percentage approximately of the submissions win a Cleary? And is there any way just subjectively to get a sense of the extent to which if somebody doesn't win a Cleary, it's because their idea wasn't as good or because it was a presentation issue?

>> I have some sense of that. But -- I will take a shot at while Kammi walks up.

Winners wise, I would say we have been around 250 submissions lately in between winners and honorable mentions in the 50ish range.

On the quality of the submissions and how that's judged, again, because we don't do the judging, I don't have a ton of insight into that. I can tell you about the stickers, except that I'm sworn to secrecy.

25%? Better answer.

Maybe there would be an adopted like if you have a

jurisdiction like Jonathan was saying that felt a little bit like I don't have the resources, maybe you could partner alongside a previous winner who could help you through that process. Potentially you can pitch that idea and maybe they can help you formulate the product to submit from a previous winner. Maybe just send out a form, see who would be interested in that. And they can take you under their wing, arm, wing. Wings.

>> Thank you. Liz?

>> This might be a great, safe opportunity to practice playing with AI to put together a Cleary award submission.

>> We have got a lot of good ideas. And I am going to take the executive privilege to give back some time to secretary Schwab so that I am esteemed in his opinion.

>> SCOTT SCHWAB: This is the point we will open up to general comments before we wrap up the day. And if there is a resolution, it is okay to go ahead and make mention. If there is a resolution proposed, we have to have the resolution committee stay late to draft.

With that said, is there any particular focus you guys want for the next year? Concerns going into the major election year we have for 2026?

Elisabeth?

>> Secretary, I will ask and we did not submit this until late last night. Totally understand if you can't accommodate this

question. The Brennan Center does a survey of the local election officials across the country every year. We just recently got back results from the 2026 survey which I think helps provide the Board of Advisors with insight into some of the challenges that our election officials are facing and some of the things that they're doing right now.

So I have got about 10 or 15 slides. But I know, I know. Totally understand. We were tardy on sending this over to you.

>> 10 or 15?

>> I will be quick. I promise.

>> All right.

>> Okay. You're on the clock.

>> Yes, sir.

Okay. Thank you so much, Chair.

So we feel this survey every year. As I mentioned, there were 8,000 to 10,000 local election officials in the country. Thanks to the research of Paul and Natalie, we know that the typical official is a 50 to 64-year-old woman who makes about \$50,000 a year.

We asked them about some of their concerns and worries as we look ahead. So 75% of our local election officials -- let me see. Adam, I may need help here. All right.

75% of our local election officials said that state or local government has not provided additional resources to

address the Federal cuts. We have heard a lot today about how the local election officials need the funding to ensure that they can continue to conduct safe and secure elections and that's reflected in this survey here. We see that there were 6% who said yes, their state and localities had stepped up to fill the gap. 16% said that their state and local governments had started to fill the gap but hadn't filled it all the way.

I may need help with the slides. Okay. If you will move forward.

This will probably not surprise anyone here. Local election officials express the most level of satisfaction with their local government who they see I guess 92% believe that they support their local government. The election officials who express satisfaction with the Federal Government decreased from 52% in 2024 down to 45% in 2026.

And if we go to the next slide, you will see the broad majorities of local officials say that the election security training such as the cards that the EAC provided are very helpful best practices and guidance on emerging security threats. Cybersecurity scans and other things.

The next slide. You will see that 80% of our local election officials said that their annual budget needs to grow to accommodate election security and election administration needs.

If you go to the next slide, we asked them if your budget

was to grow, what are you going to use that money for? The majority said wages. Next highest, 44% said hiring poll workers. 41% said voting equipment.

If you go to the next slide, more than 1 in 5 local election officials had a budget request denied. For those of us who worked in government before, this number is probably larger. When I was in government, the budget I submitted was a negotiated request. And I had already had to take back a lot of things that I wanted to include on that. So I think this is a very high number. And again, the important item that was denied personnel and wages.

So if we go on to the next slide and to the next, you will see that the threats that election officials receive continues to be very high. 32% of local election officials experienced threats, harassment and abuse and 1 in 7 reported being threatened.

Local election officials, the next slide. Reported threatened were most likely to receive the threats in person or over the phone. These are not anonymous online threats.

And the next slide. More than half of local election officials are concerned about their colleagues' safety. This is wild to me.

And almost 1 in 4 are concerned about being assaulted at home or at work.

If you go to the next slide. As I mentioned earlier,

adoption of AI at election offices doubled since 2025 from 8% to 16%. And they are most commonly using it to draft social media and create graphics.

And the next slide. A growing share of local election officials want guidelines on using AI and help to know what is and is not permissible and what can help them and what might not.

And 19% approached by vendors who are saying that their tools incorporate AI.

And the last slide, most local election officials are concerned about AI and the spread of false information online making their job more difficult or more dangerous.

Thank you, Chairman.

>> Thanks for keeping that concise.

Further comments and discussion?

Commissioner?

>> I will say that in my haste to give back time to you, I forgot to mention that EAC will announce the 2025 Cleary winners in mid-May. So I wanted to do that public service announcement.

>> In a few weeks. Yes.

Seeing none, I would entertain -- I'm sorry, I didn't see you there. Are you sure? Okay.

I move that we recess until -- I entertain a motion that we recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Moved by Cathy. Seconded by Ros? There we go.

>> I had a question. I'm sorry.

Well, that was if we had a resolution to discuss. So we will push it back a half hour and let you get more breakfast.

All in favor, say aye.

Am I missing something?

>> Yes. I raised my hand because I had a question.

>> Sure.

>> I apologize.

I was hoping during this time to talk about the executive orders. We had quite a bit of discussion this morning. This is probably fairly brief. But we had multiple discussions about executive orders this morning. Some of which was continued from last year, which was I believe the '25 executive order. And Derek had many questions about what I believe is the '26 executive order. I just wanted to offer that, make sure that I was hearing it right and understanding that we are talking about two different executive orders in those conversations?

>> Camden?

>> Thank you. I'm sorry.

>> I think people may have been confused on whether or not this is an open forum for discussions. I was a little confused about that.

>> It was supposed to be an open forum about conversation. What you need information for and whatnot. Which this clear applies. I will withdraw the motion. Or -- withdraw and the second withdraws.

And then we can have this conversation. I see Representative Proctor had a comment too.

>> I was going to say I was talking about last year's executive order, which discussed revising the 2.0VVSG. So I can't speak for Derek.

>> I was talking about this year.

>> Okay. So let me -- can we reframe? I'm happy to talk about the two directly election related executive orders if that is the conversation that we want to have. Is that -- do we want a summary of the two?

>> The Senator clarified and so did Derek. I wanted to be clear because this morning it felt like we were crossing streams and it was very muddy.

>> Okay.

>> Perhaps you could clarify the status of the '25 and the status of the '26. Maybe that would suffice?

>> Sure. Yeah.

So admittedly, the 2026 executive order, I'm not following because the EAC is not named. When it comes to section by

section analysis and injunctions and things along that line, I would Google it and talk about it and off the top of my head I don't know it because we're not directly named.

Preserving the integrity of American elections from 2025, I will focus first on three primary EAC provisions. Section 2A directs the EAC to add a documentary proof of citizenship. There's section 4 of the order that asks us to update the VVSG. And rescind the prior certify cases.

And there's sections on grants. And section 6 asks DHS to work with us to update documentation on citizenship.

The three sections, so again, section 2A, section 4 on the VVSG and the grants related provisions are all enjoined somewhere around the country. We are as the EAC not allowed to implement that pursuant to the executive order. However, courts have been fairly clear in pretty much every decision that that doesn't prevent the EAC from independently considering the topics in the executive order. There hasn't been a ruling that terms the content of the order to be illegal. It is a determination on the President's mandate for us to do so. That is why we talk about bar codes with the VVSG.

I did mention the section on section 6 of where we are working with DHS. We have done a great job establishing relationships with DHS, but I don't think we have seen a work product out of that. So that is, Liz, you did a great job with quickly going through your 15 slides. I try to do the same with

somewhat lengthy executive order. I'm happy to do the follow-ups. I wanted to give the broad overview.

>> And Cathy, I was speaking about the 2025 executive order. Apologies.

>> Scott?

>> I want to renew the motion to recess until tomorrow.

>> Look, the executive orders are on the web. You can read them yourselves, you can see what it is. It's not really relevant to the business we conducted today.

>> Just real quick.

>> I'm making a motion to recess until tomorrow.

>> Second.

>> All in favor, say aye.

>> Okay. Discussion.

>> I was going to say that the fact that you can read it online doesn't preclude us from discussing it. Just had to make that point.

>> Further discussion?

>> We were also in that executive order 3B to update the federal -- and we talked about this earlier off line. There are some states that do require documentary proof of citizenship and

in our voting assistance guide and online tools we do mention that and we clearly say if the state currently requires that or not. So we have updated that.

Representative Proctor?

>> I would say that the states doing that right now are having to go through some legal gymnastics by only requiring it for the state registrations. We tried to do it in Kansas several years ago and got slapped down by the court saying we couldn't add to the Federal forum. So I think that's why it's in the executive order.

>> Senator?

>> Cheryl Kagan. I'm not always going to speak after my colleague, Mr. Proctor.

I am speaking against the order. The motion. If anyone wants to leave because they're not interested in learning from other smart people in the room, I think they can do so. But I think a conversation is always valuable. I think the questions are important. And I can say that as a result of the executive order, we passed in Maryland emergency legislation to make sure that our voter ballots can be counted regardless of when they arrive in our election offices.

>> Further discussion on the motion?

>> Clarifying. Not whenever. As long as they arrive before the deadline. Thank you.

>> You have heard the motion. All in favor, say aye. Opposed.

Division? All in favor, raise your hand.

This is to recess until tomorrow.

13.

Opposed?

I have 13-10. Did I count that right?

Motion passes. We're in recess until tomorrow morning.

April 29, 2026

>> Everyone, we're going to get started in about four minutes. We have got a little bit of time.

>> Welcome back and good morning, everyone. As you notice, Scott has changed. Scott had items that he needed to take care of and was not able to attend today's meeting. So we just have a little change a year early. So thank you for being here on time.

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you all had a great evening. Enjoyed the night life in DC. Or not.

We will now turn to Jay Phelps, director of the election supporting technology and evaluation program, who will provide an update on the agency's pilot study related to voter registration systems.

>> JAY PHELPS: Thank you. Good morning, everybody. I want to make sure you can hear me. I'm multitasking here with the microphone and clicker.

Good morning. My name is Jay Phelps. I am the director of the election supporting technology evaluation program. It's great to be here this morning.

I would like to cover -- I understand there's some newer Board members. I want to give a really brief overview of ESTEP of voluntary Electronic Poll Book certification program and the

pilot.

The work we're doing with MITRE, and use the rest of our time to focus on the voluntary pilot.

That's the agenda today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you this morning.

I'm going to go right through here. We are working. Fantastic.

Real quick, if you're not familiar with ESTEP, our primary responsibility is to evaluate the functionality, security, and accessibility of election supported technologies and their growing popularity across the election community.

These technologies consist of Electronic Poll Books, electronic ballot delivery systems and election night reporting systems. As we know, technology is rapidly evolving. States need consistent trusted evaluation standards and security accessibility functionality interoperability are critical to ensuring that you as a stakeholder and in our election community are running the best possible elections that are secure and that everyone is able to cast the vote who wants to.

ESTEP provides a structure framework for piloting and evaluating technology that states and jurisdictions may not have the resources to assess. We hope to create common ground amongst the different jurisdictions who use the same technologies but may have different laws or state code that apply to how the technologies are utilized. These efforts provide the development

of the technologies helping election officials make informed decisions and increase public confidence in election administration.

And just real quick on our Electronic Poll Book certification program. Two years ago around this date was the inception and the commissioner's vote on developing our -- approving our Electronic Poll Book guidelines and standards. That was a really exciting positive move forward for the Agency. There were a handful of states who conducted state testing for Electronic Poll Books. And so we use that as a guide and expanded our requirements around those. And couldn't have done it without a lot of stakeholder feedback and input. And you will hear me throughout my presentation mention who the stakeholders are. I apologize for some of the redundancy. Some of you have been very helpful through the process and appreciate that.

Currently, we have three registered manufacturers in our voluntary -- excuse me, volunteer Electronic Poll Book program.

And we have also been in contact with Content Active who is looking at becoming a registered manufacturer as well. This means they're serious about coming into our program and having a product to be able to test to our standards.

So taking a look at our EAC certified systems. We have through from Noinc and they were the first in our program in 2024. We certified the first one in 2025. There are actually two

we certified in 2025. And most recently here this month still here in April on the most latest system.

And currently, one of the systems under test is the 10X precinct central version 6.1.3 testing at pro VNV. And they're in the penetration testing phase.

I have a QR code if you would like to follow along through the progress of our program and see who our testing manufacturers are and who is joining as a registered manufacturer. We would encourage you to do so. It's a great resource, all the different topics related to the presentation will be on the website. I want to flag that a few times.

Turning to electronic ballot delivery systems. I want to make sure that the scope of the pilot that we conducted, so we did develop standards with the National Institute of standards and technology, NIST, with the four FACA boards, as well as the NAS and NASED. And reached out and talked to the commissioners and personally reached out and offered guidance to developing our guidelines.

So I do want to flag that this scope of the pilot was for delivery only and not return. So I just want to make sure that that's noted. And if you have questions about that, we can certainly talk. But just from a security standpoint and some of the uneasiness about the full ballot return process is why we kept the scope to the delivery portion.

As you know, the 1986UACAVA Contact started this process

for our military and overseas voters. In 2009 with the move act that allowed the electronic transmission to militaries and overseas voters and families 45 days before an election really started the landscape of electronic ballot delivery systems in states and jurisdictions utilizing them.

So we do -- it was a really honestly outstanding pilot. We had Maryland State Board of Elections, who participated and utilized their in-house system, as well as democracy live, enhanced voting, and votes were the other participants in this pilot. The testing took place from September to February of this month. And then we got -- we had a lot of great exhibit interviews both with the manufacturers who participated in the pilot and we are currently writing a comprehensive report that starts really of what's the landscape, what are the uses, who utilizes the systems? UCAVA, voters are disabilities? What states have systems, commercial systems? And which have in-house and which states are not using any systems at all. And how can we kind of maybe bridge that gap to support them in future standardization?

And so be on the lookout. We are on the tail end of finalizing that draft. We also have a break down of all of our guidelines and kind of how it is scored. It's aggregated and anonymous. We laid that out right away for folks to be able to participate. But for each requirement, we have a matrix and seeing how it matches up and how we could take these guidelines

in the future and we'll turn it over to the Commissioners and say hey, here's the information we have. Here is where the manufacturers are and the state of Maryland is helpful with the in-house system. And next steps on what a program could look like and maybe a best practices.

So I wanted to thank the participants in that. It was very, very helpful. I'm just going to give a screenshot here of the results, if you will. And they scored very well. Again, these are pilot results. These are a lot of research and industry standards and feedback from you all. And so just want to note that the security, it says 78%, but there were documentation just to prove that the system could comply with security standards. So because this was a pilot, there were some documentation that manufacturers just didn't have, which is certainly understandable. And the future of this will be more of a formal program. That would be something that would be required. That doesn't necessarily mean that they're not secure. This number could be much higher. Accessibility outstanding with the WCAG 2.1a A and our functional requirements. You can go on our website EAC.gov/ESTEP and look at our guidelines and be on the lookout in the next four to six weeks from for the pilot report and digesting the results of our guidelines.

Next, I would like to turn the attention to what we are doing with MITRE and kind of the expanded testing for election technologies and this could be applicable to voting systems.

And kind of this concept and framework we're working on and why.

The two accredited do a great job of testing and testing to the standards we present them. We understand that web-based systems, for example, are not static and constantly changing. With that, our approaches could also change and meet the needs of the systems.

I want to methodically lay out where we are with MITRE. The project started in 2024. Some of the staff that I work with, partnered to say hey, can we do a feasibility study to see if it's feasible to expand security research testing for election technology for added security testing. And they concluded yes, it was feasible and there was appetite from the election community. We talked with interviews with manufacturers, states, and state organizations and security researchers that would point to a potential agile security testing framework. Including some remote testing when appropriate.

This framework was conceptualized and the thought of a menu of services came out of these ideas. And for state and locals and manufacturers to decide hey, what's best here and what is something that my system, even in development or something that's in product could be examined. So the goal is to identify and address system risks.

And to save states time and resources currently expended on static testing.

And I will hone in a little bit more on our EAC expanded

testing for election technology. So that's kind of the second phase of this is working with manufacturers to develop an approval concept. Why ENR? That's something we have to pilot on the conformance testing side and we wanted to know what this looks like for MITRE and on the VSTL side. And the national defense of authorization act requires penetration testing for voting systems. So that also was something that, again, we have this could apply to voting systems in person and could also apply to web-based technologies in a remote environment.

So again, it needs to be secure. We understand that.

We have two vendors, manufacturers that we are working with and external security researcher. I will tell you that as you could imagine, it is highly sensitive because we are looking -- and I say we, MITRE is looking at source codes and there are NDAs involved. It is a very highly sensitive process. The goal for us is to understand the goals and outcomes of this pilot project, can we evaluate these technologies with the security researchers in mind in a different setting. And what are the pitfalls, where are the gaps, and what are the benefits from this?

So MITRE will issue us a report at the conclusion of all of this testing. I will say too we do have a state that is also going to participate later this summer after their primaries. So also wanted to kind of flag that. For right now, I want to be cautious and careful. I want to make sure everyone is

comfortable and we're on the same page. We are, I would say, it's still in the early stages of this development. But again, the goal is, and I think someone mentioned it yesterday, the bugs in the system. And kind of where can we identify the vulnerabilities right up front.

I will -- I know another term used a lot is the F word, which is funding. And so this is something that we can get it to a -- we can build this out to a more mature stage, but it would take more funding. And again, we could talk about what that looks like once the framework becomes more mature if that's something that the EAC can provide a resource or through HAVA grants in the future to increase security testing. But it's something that is critical and we all understand that in this room I think.

So I just wanted to be sure to mention that as something --

>> Jay, you had mentioned more funding. How much funding was associated with this new requirement that the EAC has to do?

>> JAY PHELPS: With this project stand up, I think within fully operational, we're talking \$10 million. And that's just a rough estimate.

>> No, how much was allocated to the EAC for this?

>> JAY PHELPS: To do the study itself?

>> No, to do the penetration testing. Yes.

>> JAY PHELPS: To work with MITRE? So we were -- \$1 million.

Yeah. \$1 million.

>> The question is how much did Congress appropriate to the EAC?

>> JAY PHELPS: Oh, thank you. Okay. I follow you.

>> With the national defense authorization act. 0. The big 0.

>> JAY PHELPS: Thank you. Sorry. If I would have been known where you were going, I want have started with that. Yeah.

As I would say unfunded mandate. Right?

>> I wouldn't call it a mandate. It is a mandate. But it's very important work. Frankly, in my mind, some of the most important work we need to be doing. And the Congress recognized that. It's inexplicable why they wouldn't at least give a couple million dollars to it.

>> JAY PHELPS: Absolutely. Thank you for noting that.

>> Does anyone know how much funding was attached to the National Defense Authorization Act? Trillions of dollars. Okay. And none for the EAC. Okay.

>> JAY PHELPS: So yes. Please stay tuned. This is a major priority, as Brianna mentioned yesterday, for our agency and something that we will continue to work on not only the rest of this year, but continue to develop it in the future.

So appreciate those points as well with funding.

Okay. I am going to turn our attention over to our latest project that's going concurrently with the project.

>> Do you want us to wait until the end for questions? Or if

we have questions about the penetration testing, do you want to hear it now? How do you want to handle that?

>> JAY PHELPS: You can ask it now. Sure.

>> Okay. The question I have about the penetration testing, I'm wondering whether this project has looked at that, is one of the key vulnerabilities in this area is when the counties are totalling up the votes in certain states, of course, it's the townships. They then are uploading that data. So the local jurisdictions doing the actual election administrator vote counting are uploading that data to the state officials. And my question is have you all looked at what kind of encryption are local governments and others using to encrypt the data that they're uploading to the state? And is the penetration testing looking at whether that can be penetrated so that someone can get in and change the data that's being uploaded from the locals up to the state?

>> JAY PHELPS: Yeah, that's a great question. I will say that that is something that yes, MITRE is looking at a full penetration testing from several angles and aspects. And that is I believe one of them. So that's a great point. And yeah, I think when we talk about -- and election night reporting, that's another very sensitive data upload and we want to be sure that information does not change from the county to the state and create misinformation and chaos. So that's an excellent point.

>> Do we have any idea how many jurisdictions are all

encrypting the data and how many are not, are simply uploading it and sending it through the Internet? Is everybody encrypting it? Or only some jurisdictions?

>> JAY PHELPS: That's something that we will find out through the pilot. The manufacturers have widespread coverage throughout the country and we will figure out the encryption standards. Absolutely. That's the goal of this.

I can't speak for everybody, but for the folks here, please feel like the state and local, please jump in any time and say here's what we do. I also want to learn from the Board and use this time wisely.

>> It's really no different than me handing you a sheet of paper and you changing a number on there. Just because you have changed the number on that report doesn't change the results. I'm posting not only to the state, but I'm posting locally as well. And so at any point in time that those numbers do not agree, obviously there's going to be something, somebody has just defaced a website. How many of you have not seen somebody that logged into a website and especially back in the day, not so much anymore, that it just got defaced. You have written something on a poster somewhere. So it doesn't change the actual results.

>> Wesley, I understand that. But the problem is and everybody in here knows this. Think about the problems we have seen in

past elections where data appeared on, for example, Secretary of State's website of the totals in a particular county. And then all of a sudden later it changed.

And yeah, the situation you're talking about if someone was able to penetrate, yeah, obviously you're going to eventually correct it with the actual results you got. But the fact that it changed is going to cause huge perception problems among the public saying oh, there was some kind of bad things going on there. And that's why even though you will be able to correct the results, we want to be sure things were encrypted so that they can't put false data up.

>> Barb?

>> Barbara Simons. I had a couple of questions and comments. First of all, I'm really glad you're doing this. Thank you. This is really, really important, as Commissioner Palmer said.

I always get nervous when I hear about NDAs. I realize you probably can't get this worked on without them. But one of the problems it strikes me is if you uncover areas where things are vulnerable, it would be nice if you could let the users, the election officials, the counties who use it know. But with the NDAs, you might not be able to. So that's something that makes me uncomfortable.

Again, I'm not faulting you guys for doing it because I realize this is a conundrum you're in. But I wanted to highlight

that.

And there is a state that's going to be participating in this? Can you tell us what the state is?

>> JAY PHELPS: Not at this time. We want to get their permission.

>> So it's not a done deal yet?

>> JAY PHELPS: Correct. And they wanted to get primaries out of the way. We need to sit down with them and make sure they're comfortable.

>> On the transparency side of that, again, this is a very preliminary pilot and sort of down the road I think there are different conversations that can be had. But again, as we sort of get a better understanding of what's possible, I think it's important to encourage people to participate so that we can make more informed decisions.

>> Next, Mr. Brader?

>> Thank you. Thanks for the presentation. As I understand it, the NDA requires penetration testing without funding to do so, and separately, Congress cut your budget. But it doesn't necessarily lay out a process for incorporating the results of the penetration testing into future -- into the future testing centers. I'm wondering if that's the case, is there a plan to create a formalized process for incorporating any issues that

are found in the penetration testing into future testing protocols and also the way that feedback and input will be provided into that additional process?

>> JAY PHELPS: That's a great question. I think that's the good deal of where we're moving with the MITRE project is we're being proactive and trying to have the vulnerabilities met.

Now, granted, there is proprietary information and we have to be careful about putting results out there. To Barbara's point, there's the line of folks want to know. So we will have to balance that when we continue to develop this framework. Again, we are in the early stages.

>> I would just add that so we do penetration testing with the voting systems and we have been doing that for a while now. This really expanded the NDA expanded it to election systems as well, web-based and Electronic Poll Books. So we're trying to establish that framework for that and for independent vulnerability testing for voting systems, which is a little bit different.

>> Mr. Fey?

>> Thanks. Just a quick comment and a question for Jay.

First comment responding to Hans inquiry earlier. Just for the record, in Missouri, like in St. Louis County, we don't send anything to the state. The state has to go to the website and

see the results and type it in their election night reporting systems. That way, no data is going over anything to the state. And most of the counties are the same way. Of course that that has vulnerabilities. The state can make a mistake in typing in it.

My question for Jay real quick is with the ESTEP program, the vendors and maybe states that want to submit to the testing regime and so forth, how does the payment or funding for that work? Do they have to pay the EAC? They pay the VSTL? What's that?

>> JAY PHELPS: As far as the pilots are concerned, the EAC covers the cost of those. We have a pilot agreement and laying out expectations and what it will look like. But we do cover, because again, this is a learning experience for all of us. And we want to be able to see where our standards are and are we close, can we expand them? Do we need to pull back a little bit? That's the point of what we're doing so we cover the cost of those.

As far as the actual certification program, the manufacturers cover that cost.

Great question.

>> And I'm just going to make the comment too, Chris Walker, county clerk. We as well have election night reporting in Oregon and I can only speak for Oregon and how our system works. For

the tally system, it has no Internet connection, we take thumb drives, new one each election because they are part of the retention of the election materials. And we take and download that data and then we take it to a network computer where the election night reporting can be then uploaded from that encrypted thumb drive.

Now, I don't know if every county uses encrypted thumb drives, but we have chosen to be proactive in that.

And with concerns, my always biggest concern about this is we know what we're doing internally to keep that secure, but our question is what happens from the time we send that as Hans was stating to be published at the state level? And that was always my concern is we double, triple check our numbers to make sure before we publish they're correct off our reports. And the great part is, though, that remains our numbers on site in our system. But again, it's that perception issue, what if something doesn't publish correctly or what happens in between. So I'm glad that you all are looking at this. Because again, even though our numbers stay, it's that cumulation once it goes to the state what happens in between.

I think it's a great program.

Let's see. We have Mr. Bowen.

>> Just a quick question. Are there any standards around flash drives that the EAC has? Our process is pretty much similar to Christine's. One of my concerns is we buy the off the she have

flash drives to upload the results in the system because it is connected. I have never seen standards around the purchase of flash drives. Must be U.S.-based, must meet these particular standards. Has there been discussion about standards for flash drives?

>> To that specific level, Derek, I don't believe so. However, there's best practices like pass word encryption and things like that with flash drives. I would be interested hearing your thoughts and learning about where you're going with that thought and if that would be helpful in our pilots and programs in the future. If you have situations where you're like hey, here are some examples of some issues we have had with them. Again, our information is as good as what you give us sometimes and that's why we want to hear directly from you.

>> I just think that every single aspect needs to be analyzed. And that's a critical part in the transmission of results locally from our off server systems to network systems.

>> Absolutely. Thank you.

>> Ms. Howard?

>> Thank you. I will note that Virginia has a very good, perhaps best practice. And I don't know if my predecessor started it or if it predated them.

>> Of course.

>> Yeah, 100%.

But they have a change log so that there is a recording of the changes from the differences between election night reporting results until certification. So they track whether there was a transcription error on the paperwork completed by the poll workers or another issue that impacted that and make that publicly available on the state website.

>> Very helpful. Thank you.

>> Mr. Wiedman.

>> You mentioned the NIST standards regarding the electronic ballot delivery. Are there new ones based on this?

>> There aren't new ones, but there are several out there.

>> The joint release you guys put out a couple of elections ago?

>> Are you referring to the statement about the return ballots?

>> Talking about the entire process.

>> Yeah.

>> The various risks involved.

>> Sure. There was a joint statement a few years ago from the Commissioners.

>> Nothing new was created standards wise for this then?

>> No, I would say yes. My memory is that's all mitigations

and best practices that were recommended by Federal agencies. This is much more granular in my opinion. It's literally what are the security standards to this and usability, functionality. In my mind, it's more of a technical standards versus mitigations. I could be wrong here. But after reviewing it, that's what I would say.

>> Yeah. So just for clarification, NIST has security criteria that we put into our guidelines and sometimes they have to be documented during testing. So that's separately from what was issued, to your point, by the Federal agencies and the caution around full ballot return.

>> Thank you.

>> JAY PHELPS: Okay. I am going to move on to our voter registration systems and talking about our pilot. Let me preface by saying it's a pilot. We're still in the testing phase of our guidelines. But it's still a pilot, which means that we could still take your feedback, we want to hear your feedback and now what's working, if you have personal examples of your system. There's 3100 counties in the United States of America. 49 states utilize voter registration systems. They are not static. They are used every single day. Voters think that occasionally oh, the elections office. They're busy a couple of months a year. No. You're constantly registering voters to vote.

>> Two days every other year.

>> JAY PHELPS: There you go. I think you have heard that before.

So the goal, again, the goal of this pilot, we have had a lot of outstanding feedback and really excited to where we're at today. But I'm not saying it's perfect. I think we're going to find out a lot more at the conclusion of where these three manufacturers are.

I will say we have also talked to a state that may potentially have interest. We would love to have a state interest in these things because we get their feedback and their buy in and understand where they're at in their process.

So stay tuned for that. But I'm going to walk through our guidelines. These are draft guidelines. And just kind of talk through them and answer any questions that you have or anything that you would like for me to know as we move along during this piece of the presentation.

So as you know, the Help America Vote Act mandates each state chief election official to establish and oversee a single statewide voter registration data base that is uniform, centralized, interactive, and maintained at the state level containing records for all legally registered voters. The system must be integrated with other data bases to support coordination and data consistency and states are required to keep voter registration records accurate and updated while putting the protections in place to keep voters from being mistakenly

removed from the official voter roles.

49 states, 3100 counties, 8,000 jurisdictions. Everyone is doing it a little bit differently. So we want to bring some standardization and try to help states and jurisdictions with this particular pilot with the voter registration system process.

As was pointed out yesterday in the grants presentation, you see the millions of dollars spent on voter registration systems and modernizing those. That's something that, again, these guidelines can play an important role in whether or not we have any type of formal program. But having baseline standards in place I think is really critical and key for states to look at and utilize and saying is my manufacturer, is my system where the industry is right now. So I think that's really important.

So moving on and giving a little bit of background here on the process.

So right now, we have the draft guidelines are to the point that they are ready for the pilot testing at the two accredited VSTLs. Again, like to thank NIST, NASS, NASED, all four of the FACA boards for providing feedback. It's been valuable. So briefly talk about the CDF voter list maintenance accessibility, data base security, and kind of close out the presentation.

But we have initiated testing with these three pilot participants, ES and S and 10X. And like I mentioned, there may

be a possible state that can be in the mix. So we are testing against 217 functionality guidelines, 62 security, and 50 accessibility WCAG 2.1a A. From a functionality, systems operations, data processing, reporting configuration, security access control, network and data base protection, architecture standards, system integrity, and portal protection. And then accessibility WCAG compliance.

And just a quick overview. Again, we do as I mentioned earlier the question, there's NIST standards that I will get to in a minute. And we have had our -- the manufacturers in the space, even though they're not participating in the pilot itself, take a look at the guidelines and the VSTLs and different state stakeholders and local jurisdictions. So I appreciate that.

I specifically would like to thank some states for meeting with us or giving valuable feedback. And I apologize if I missed anybody. Nevada, Colorado, North Carolina, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Virginia, Connecticut, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

And so kind of digging into security specifics. We have data base security for cloud and locally hosted. We have portal and web-based application protection. As you can imagine, greatly needed. Multifactor authentication. And then SOC line controls, which is a framework for managing and protecting customer data, especially for cloud-based services.

The bottom line is we want consistent and high confidence system security with these standards.

I apologize. I talk and I get a little dry.

Interoperability. Turn our attention there.

So interoperability is the ability for systems often in different states or jurisdictions to talk to each other and understand the information exchanged. Voter data isn't confined to one place. People move and update information.

Interoperability keeps the voter records up to date and prevent duplicate registrations and support secure data sharing between jurisdictions, state to state, jurisdiction to state, vice versa. And as you can imagine with interoperability, the systems are constantly talking to one another with the social security administration, the department of health, the department of corrections, the DMV and so on and so forth.

And so our goal was to -- this is something that hasn't been put into any Federal guidelines that we're aware of, especially for voter registration systems and web-based text. So we want to be sure they're having robust guidelines. We want to take a look at the voter list maintenance activities that are required. The state jurisdiction level. And ensure that the systems are meeting those regulations. As well as sharing information between voter registration systems and Electronic Poll Books, which is key, but doing to securely. And sharing voter data across jurisdictions.

I will keep moving on here real quick.

So as I mentioned, the different state -- and I apologize, the different state cross check programs, first of all, I would like to give a shout out to NCSL. They have a wonderful document that goes through each state and their code behind how they can transmit data across state lines and who has the authority to do so. So if you get a chance, check that out. That's a really helpful resource. I have to thank Adam for that. He's the one that flagged that if one of our discussions. Thank you, Adam.

So as you can imagine with interoperability, states having the ability to talk to one another. We don't -- we want to be helpful --

>> Jay? Sorry. I want to flag that --

>> JAY PHELPS: Thank you. Yes. Sorry about that.

And just so you know, this presentation will be shared with everybody. So Adam will send this presentation to you. I just want to note that.

Sorry. I see what's happening. Some screens back and forth. Are you okay with me continuing? Okay.

Appreciate it.

So as we know, every state does things a little bit differently. I think right now there's over 25 states in ERIC. We have the AVID, which is the Alabama cross check. There's nine states and then Ohio in the ALEXA, about 11 states. Some of these are MOUs at this point. But you can understand the

importance of interoperability standards and being sure that we can help and be a resource and evaluate these systems when you are doing the process. And there's the save DHS, which I know about half the states are looking at or involved in.

And then continuing on. As I mentioned with voter list maintenance and accuracy activities, we also in our standards have six different record voter status. So we want to be sure the systems are accurately flagging them across the board. These are deceased voters, noncitizens, voters with address changes, voters who have not responded to an official notice and who have not voted in two general Federal elections, a felony conviction and declaration of mental incapacitation.

We also have five identified voter record issues. Those are missing and mismatched signatures, misspelling, and typing errors. Invalid or wrongly placed addresses in precincts and duplication of records.

And I understand some states are prohibited, but the national change of address does strengthen your voter registration records and keep them up to date.

And then telecommunications and interoperability. Web services framework is something that is crucial when transferring data in and out of the system. Again, your systems are doing that every day. And these need to be private networks that limit access. So for example, an EPV vendor may need access to the data. There should be limitations and restrictions so

they can't access or change any other voter data. And that goes for any other type of third party across the board.

But this is web services framework is a common framework that encourages the use of common data format.

And that's what I'm going to talk about next.

So when we talk about interoperability and how systems talk to one another, we also want to be sure that the data that's being displayed is uniform with the systems. If they're not, then they can't accurately transfer voter records because we're having mismatched end data and they won't synch properly. So CDF is a simple way to make every voter registration communicate the same way. Through research and recommendations, we recommend the JSON or XML formatting. That's something that we will test too. And in fact, we did work with NIST on 51 different test cases utilizing both of these to see how the -- how each system, name, address, date of birth, party, precinct, ballot style, you name it, we put it in there. We understand that's a little bit cumbersome, but it's crucial and important. We need to understand where the voter registration system platform is when it comes to common data format and try to bring some type of standardization closely and do it carefully.

And so we understand that. And that's something that is, again, something that you saw where interoperability and common data format is a priority of the agency in our opening remarks

yesterday.

Next steps in the process. And again, there's not a guide book that we're looking at for certain, but we want to take these standards, we want to go through the complete testing process, and we want to make a strong recommendations and evaluations for just a path forward. Even if that's best practices. Here's where you can standardize your system or if you're going to modernize your system, here is where you need to go. Maybe there's other ways to do that. But we are going to synthesize and analyze the results for each guideline, as we have for the others. And make sure that we're assessing performance, consistency, and areas for improvement. We will conduct structured interviews with all the participants with the VTSLs and evaluating the testing methodologies and are they effective. And develop a comprehensive report of all the findings, identify gaps, provide clear, actionable recommendations for next steps for the EAC commissioners and we'll present findings to them.

Testing is ongoing right now. I expect it to conclude in four to six weeks. From there, we will get the test reports and start aggregating that data and start building out the recommendations and where we're at.

Maybe we find that we need more testing. That could be a possibility. There's several options here. And so we want to do what's best for the community because we understand how critical

and widely utilized these systems are.

So with that, here is the QR code to go straight to our guidelines for voter registration system pilot.

And I will be happy to answer any questions that you have. I really appreciate your time today.

>> Jay, has there been any coordination with or cooperation from IEEE, and for folks who don't know, the typical Washington acronym, that's the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The reason I ask is they develop industry standards for all kinds of equipment, including this kind of equipment. Two decades ago before HAVA was passed and the EAC was established, they had a committee because I was a member of it that was working on trying to establish standards for different kinds of voting systems and equipment.

I mean, developing government standards is a good thing. But if they put out the same kind of industry standards, it would spread much faster out into the industry. Have they been involved at all in any of this?

>> JAY PHELPS: Not to my knowledge, no. I haven't worked directly with IEEE on any of these. I would be willing to meet with them or see where they could be helpful and we could partner if that's something that they were willing to do. Do you have anyone specific that I could reach out to?

>> I might suggest it would be worth while. They might not be

interested, but it would be worth reaching out to them. Like I said, if you check their website, they do all kinds of industry standards and they might be very interested in participating and actually helping you guys with this.

>> JAY PHELPS: Thank you. That's very helpful.

>> Jay, they have helped with voting systems and we have seen a proliferation of Common Data Formats that have come out of NIST. I know this has been helpful and they have worked together with IEEE.

>> Mr. Reimer?

>> Thank you. I think this is such an important issue, the statewide registration list. I'm personally convinced that a lot of state systems are not compliant with the letter of the law. If you look at 52USC21083, I think you had it on the screen, it's very specific about the requirements. And for one, I don't think a lot of the states have a single statewide system, especially those that have a bottom up type process where information shared via batch processes and stuff like that, I just don't -- I have done enough investigations where a lot of information is being sent back and forth between the states and locals over email, email attachments and things like that. I don't think that's what HAVA envisioned. I certainly don't think a lot of these systems have the interoperability with other state data bases and whatnot that HAVA envisions.

So I know I think the EAC well proceeding any of your tenures had signed off on a lot of these systems. But honestly, they just don't pass the 21083 test. As these new second generation systems are coming online, I think the EAC needs to be very exacting in making sure that these systems check the boxes that HAVA requires. And then I will say one last thing. I think this is an area where the lack of a private right of action in HAVA is a serious issue because a lot of these HAVA issues have not been investigated because there's no ability for private litigants to bring enforcement actions. It's only up to the DOJ.

>> Ms. Gold?

>> Hi. Rosalind Gold. Jay, first of all, thank you so very much for the very hard work you and your team are doing and this great presentation. It's really good stuff.

I wanted to talk a bit more about a question I had about some of the issues with interoperability with other state data bases. I wanted to see what you're seeing and finding and looking at with respect to exchange of informations from Department of Motor Vehicles. A lot of states with really finding that providing automated voter registration at the DMV is becoming an increasing, increasing way for people to register to vote.

And we have just seen an enormous variety in the ability of states, like they pass a bill and say they will put the system in place and we keep hearing it's taking a long time, partly because of what the DMVs have to be to update the systems, and also because of the communication. I don't know if you want to say what you're learning about that.

>> JAY PHELPS: We will learn more at the conclusion of this pilot with those State and federal agencies in relation to interoperability and how the manufacturers can test to them.

I will say in my previous role, and you made good points, as election director in Indiana, interoperability is a challenge. For example, southern Indiana, we border Louisville, Kentucky. Someone goes over to the hospital because that's the closest one and they pass, there is no way to get that record back to Indiana. Right? And there's these different gaps that we see just generally.

I will say at one point, and I have been at this a while, but at one point, Indiana was a part of a cross check system. And it was reassuring to log on every morning. We called it a hopper. Basically, you would have your various this person registered at the DMV online through the state voter registration. And then the state cross check and you could open that up and they would have confidence matches based on all the various data points.

I have not heard a lot of folks talk about that generally

in their system. That's why I want to learn more. Is that still happening? And maybe that is. I can't speak fully to ERIC and understand the process. Each state works with it differently from my understanding. But that's one example of I think where the gaps could be bridged. And kind of increase the voter records across state lines.

But to the other point earlier, yes, I do think there's other states that do struggle from getting the information from even one county to another, even to the state. That's where we're hopeful this pilot will kind of shed more light on that.

>> Thank you.

>> JAY PHELPS: Thank you.

>> Ms. Simons?

>> Thank you. As usual, I want to follow up on Hans' comment. This is a pattern.

So Hans mentioned IEEE. I want to give a plug for ACM which is the computer science professional society comparable to IEEE. Some years ago, ACM did a study on voter registration data bases. We looked at -- which I actually cochaired. We looked at issues like security, vulnerability, accessibility. I will send that to you when I get home, which won't be until tomorrow. But anyway. One of the aspects of security, and I don't know if you're looking at this or not because of all the talk about penetration testing, which is important, is internal security.

For example, who has access to the data bases. Which

entries, because some are much more sensitive than others. So I think that's a really critical area. I see you're nodding yes.

>> JAY PHELPS: Absolutely. Yeah. Thank you. And I would be very interested if you could send that report to me.

>> It's a bit dated.

>> JAY PHELPS: And I apologize, so this is just our general ESTEP handle. My direct email is Jphelps@EAC.gov. Please reach out. Just the letter J. Thank you.

>> Mr. Adams?

>> Thank you, Jay.

Something really easy for you guys to look at, many states do not have NVRA required informs in the registrants' file. For example, dates of birth are missing in some states. Super easy to fix this.

Now states always get into a defensive crouch and they don't want to hear about the problems with data bases, everything is perfect in every state capitol. I get that. But there are states that have huge numbers of missing dates of birth. There are states that have huge numbers of missing first names, sometimes last names. But you have problems that are easy to see. We, as you probably now, accumulated most state voter files and we can just do sorts. Show us all the registrant entries with no dates of birth. And there are huge numbers. This

ought to be a top priority in designing a system to improve the statewide data bases. Get the information that Congress requires you to get on the form.

>> JAY PHELPS: Yeah. Thank you. And I would add, I'm curious, in the data that you're looking at, do you know some of the states or jurisdictions that they have Electronic Poll Books by chance?

>> Yes because every state has problems. But the state with the most acute problems, I don't know if they have Electronic Poll Books.

>> JAY PHELPS: The reason I'm asking, in my experience, you go to check in, if there is an issue with your voter record, it should flag that missing date of birth, missing last four of social, those types. And the poll worker should be trained to say -- and again, I'm speaking for Indiana, but that's the flow of the process.

>> Here is another one. Citizen check box, no. We have dozens. I could have done a demonstration of states that registered voters who marked are you a citizen and they marked no. You will see some of that from Louisiana shortly. And so there's a problem with states registering voters who tell the voting office they're not a citizen.

>> JAY PHELPS: Yeah. Thank you.

>> Mr. Bowen.

>> Yeah. Just real quick. North Carolina, use of the HAVA complaint procedure has been used significantly in our state. And it's caused a lot of voter registration system changes such that our general assembly authorized \$15 million for us to start the process of redoing our statewide elections information management system. But to plug Isaac's continuous point, if we want to comply with HAVA, which we want to, and I agree with you, Justin, there are serious issues with overall compliance and North Carolina is working to comply, we really need significant funding. It is a huge undertaking to have integration between state systems, to have cross-state data sharing agreements where you don't want to use systems like ERIC. So I think funding is a huge piece to us getting into compliance and states for the most part want to be in compliance, but it's expensive.

>> So we have -- we're at 10:00 right now. We're going into a break. Is everybody okay with continuing the conversation? This is great conversation.

Mr. Cramer?

>> Yeah. Give a perspective here because South Carolina actually does this really well, which I'm surprised to hear

because we're a statewide system and everything integrates between every county. If you move between counties, it's updated and we can see voters from everywhere in the state. The data transfer is seamless.

But to the point here on systems talking to each other, I do want to make this point to what Mr. Adams said. Because as election officials, we rely on agencies outside our control, like DMV, to transmit the correct data. And rely on a bunch of people who have no idea about election laws. So when people go to the DMV and they are filling out the paperwork, they're expecting that state official that's before them to know about elections and voter registration and they have no idea. So we have people for a long time South Carolina misinterpreted the law about DMV where we're in an opt out state, not an opt in state. But the voter registration for the DMV was an opt in and this got looked at in the '22 election, I believe, where all these records hadn't been transmitted to the election offices across the state. That was a huge issue.

So I want to emphasize that when you register to vote in person or online in South Carolina, I know that that record is correct. But when it goes to an outside agency and comes to the state, there's always a gap there. And we're relying on other people to ensure that we're getting that information.

So and then when the state actually migrates, so this is before my time, I know I look a lot older, but back I believe in

the late -- if some of our state officials were here, they would know exactly, but the mid to late 2000s, they changed the system over. And what happened was a lot of birth dates were pushed like a year. Not everybody's record, but there was some data transferred back then that some people's birth dates were off. Some middle initials or suffixes, all that did not transfer over with the system. So we will have sometimes randomly a voter will call in and we will have their birthday 1947 but they were born in 1948 or 1946. And we have to update the records. That was not an error on our part, but a transferor.

And also to make this point clear, DMV will register people based on some people have four names, five names. And when it gets to us, a person with the DMV, I just did this with someone who filed for office. Their name was incorrect on their driver's license. What do we do? Is that the board of elections' fault? Or is that the DMV's fault?

So we sometimes have to be cleaning up some of those records that we're getting from the state agencies. So just putting that out there. I think the voter registration is a very complicated, not a one size easy fix because every state does it a little bit differently and how that information is shared. We don't have a direct link to the DMV. They give us a file. If there's not records in that file, we'll have voters come in and say I registered at the DMV and we have to call them and we're on hold for 30 minutes and the voter is in front of us and finds

out the voter did not check no, they did actually want to register to vote. And we have to update that record in realtime. Because we don't want to disenfranchise the voter who did everything the right way.

>> One more. Mr. Wilcox?

>> I think this is a great spot for you mentioned ERIC, you mentioned some of the other multistate agencies or whatever that have all this stuff. I think this is a great spot for the EAC to step in and provide systems and layout, schema, whatever you want to talk about where all states participate. And it become a non-political thing where it's not ERIC because of what that is, it's not one of the Alabama's or Ohio's. It's the entire. And then we can look at records that y'all are missing dates of birth or whatever else and we can get that information. Because the biggest challenge we have is voters move all of the time and they don't just move in state, I get all of those, but they move to Georgia and move to South Carolina and North Carolina. I don't have access to that.

So if the EAC could step in and be the central repository and put in requirements that the driver's license office, DMVs, whatever, have to participate, the voter registration systems have to participate. You have got the SAVE data base and all these other data bases that we could pull all this stuff

together under the umbrella of the EAC and require everybody to play. And we could either require them through something or peer pressure. You know?

>> All right. Great conversation. And barring any other questions, now it is 10:07. We will stay on schedule so you have about eight minutes and we will restart at 10:15. Thank you. Great conversation.

[Break]

>> Okay, everyone. It is 10:15. Let's have everyone take their seats.

It's 10:15. If everybody could take their seats so we can continue.

All right. That's the last photo. So let's have everybody take their seats, please.

>> Can we have everyone please take their seats? We're trying to get started. Thank you. Trying to get everyone out on time.

>> Let's have everyone take their seats, please.

Real quick, everyone, I would like Senator Kagan to say

briefly, she wants to pass around a periodical for everyone to look at.

>> Thank you, Madame Chair. Cheryl Kagan.

Isaac did such a great job as sales guy for his book that he wrote and pushing sales and give aways, I decided to come in today with my favorite election book and many of you know it, but many of you probably don't. It's Grace for President. I did not write it. I don't get any percentage of the sales. But I am going to pass it around and encourage you to think about sharing it in your localities. It is the most wonderful book, especially at this time, to share at the elementary school level with your kids or grand kids. It has the electoral college, the campaign process, it is nonpartisan, and it's adorable. So thank you for the opportunity. I will pass it around.

>> Thank you, Senator Kagan.

Welcome back from our break. I know it wasn't long, but hopefully you made it worth while.

I am going to turn the floor over to Ed Golembiewski, otherwise know as Eddie G or Ed G. This is the senior election subject matter expert at the EAC. He will present on the effort for training and workforce development for election officials. You're on.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: Thank you, Chris. Ed Golembiewski, senior election subject matter expert and pleased to be speaking with

you all about election workforce. Prior to my role here at the EAC, I was an election director in Michigan for almost 13 years. Workforce is a perpetual challenge that I have experienced and lived through, as I know many of you who are election officials at the state or local level have as well. And the rest of you working in support of those officials know it as well.

Today's presentation discusses significant EAC investments in workforce development over the past several years. It includes both the training program that is really starting to gain traction across the country, as well as research and collaboration with election officials, with researchers, and human resources and election administration subject matter experts to address workforce challenges.

So just to kind of provide a high level overview before diving into some of the details here. In 2024, the Agency launched the only nationwide no cost professional development training program, the Learning Lab. You have heard a little bit about that already, including yesterday during Brianna's presentation. The Learning Lab offers entirely online, on demand training for on boarding and continuing education for election officials and their staff. And it's covering at this point over seven high level categories with 37 trainings within those categories. So things like creating standard operating procedures to accessibility to post-election processes, and all things in between.

In addition, we have been providing a large amount of on the ground training to election officials and staff across the country, and I'm excited that I will be able to go into a little bit more detail on both those efforts this morning.

In addition to the training platform and program, we have also engaged with work with the University of Maryland, and I'm pleased that a couple of folks related to that effort are here in the audience today. We engaged them to commence a study and they put together a multidisciplinary team that conducted interviews and observations across the 2024 Presidential election. They interviewed election officials across the country. They collected organization charts, job descriptions, workforce data, all of which has gone into the report that you have for review currently and that Kammi might have touched on yesterday, among a number of other reports that have been shared with this board in the past couple of years, the strengthening the election workforce report is with you all for feedback right now.

So today's presentation and that report are in large part based on the work that we have been conducting with our partners at the University of Maryland, as well as beyond.

In 2024 -- excuse me, 2025, we also held the first ever EAC Ideas Lab, again, that Brianna touched on yesterday. Among the many ideas and challenges that were presented during that conversation, workforce was a key challenge. During that

conversation and during conversations with a working group and during a feedback session, the idea of a unified election workforce framework emerged as a key tool that can help alleviate some of the challenges or address some of the challenges that the election workforce is facing, in addition to robust training programming.

Some of the challenges, and again, this is probably not unfamiliar with you that have worked in the field, but there is growing complexity across the work of election administration. Things like new technology, continuously evolving policies and laws that election officials must manage, change management, security precautions. The work is increasingly complex and requires an increasing need for advanced and a multidisciplinary skill set to administer. It is unlike other public service professions in a number of ways and we will talk about those in a little bit of detail here.

We see rising turnover. The BPC published reports and has shared data that since 2004, turnover across the election workforce has risen from 28% to over 40% in 2024, demonstrating the fact that we as a field have a lot of work to do to help train the incoming folks that are back filling and succeeding after folks are leaving the field.

The field itself enjoys a really robust professional development and training landscape right now, including efforts at the states and through National Associations. But it lacks

alignment around common language that really describes the work of election administration. And that is what we'll be talking about today in the form of the election work force framework.

So we can see some impacts of challenges in election offices in a number of ways, especially within smaller jurisdictions. Election officials perform dozens of executive level work roles without proper classification. And in many cases, compensation. And election work is often grouped under administrative support roles rather than being classified appropriately as in many ways executive level functioning. These gaps really hinder recruitment and retention and compress compensation and create clear challenges creating a shared workforce language and ability to communicate the profession to human resources, stakeholders, policy makers, et cetera.

So let's pivot into two ways that the EAC is working to address these challenges.

First, the training platform that I mentioned earlier, the Learning Lab, today there are 37 modules available with 15 more in active development. We are very proud to say that since implementation, it rolled out in September of 2024, we have grown the platform to over 1500 active users. Every state, every territory represented more than 80 million voters within the jurisdictions represented by Learning Lab users. To date, they have completed over 10,500 training modules and over 2,300 training hours to date. So really a lot of growth for the

platform in a relatively short amount of time.

Looking forward to how we are going to continue to grow the success of the Learning Lab. Right now, we're deeply engaged in dedicated outreach. We heard from election officials one of the primary bits of feedback as we stood the program up is why aren't you talking about it more. We are addressing that through direct dedicated communications, for example, through the EAC newsletter, as well as directly with election officials and their staff that are members of the Learning Lab, and throughout live engagements, for example, when the Commissioners are engaging with the election officials at state association conferences, we're trying to keep it front and center in the minds of election officials.

We are also gathering feedback. We have commenced interviews with super users of the Learning Lab platform. The folks that, for example, have completed 100% of the training modules that are currently available. We're trying to understand what their experience has been, how we can continue to grow, and improve the platform as time moves forward.

And perhaps the biggest and most important pending effort right now for the Learning Lab is a recognition program. Brianna mentioned this yesterday. We are engaging now in the early stages of issuing certificates for completion of both core and elective modules within the Lab. And have so far beginning with our Standards Board and LLC members have issued over 100

certificates for completion of those courses with an expectation that we'll be recognizing hundreds by the end of the year. So we're in the early stages of expanding the recognition program with more information to come in the coming months. But held an initial recognition ceremony for folks during the annual meetings of the LLC and Standards Board that was very well received.

Turning to live training. Over the course of the last fiscal year, we were engaged in live training events in over 23 different events across the country training more than 3400 election officials on foundational and practical election administration concepts and principles. Chain of custody was a significant effort. A lot of interest last year. And we see it again continuing into this year. Folks wanting to furnish their expertise in upholding chain of custody procedures and implementing them successfully across the country.

We have received really positive feedback across various events. A lot of folks really appreciate that our live training is very interactive. It's unusual in some situations compared to other trainings that happen within the context of association conferences in that way that we really try hard to get people talking, sharing information, sharing best practices with one another. We see our roles as facilitators in having conversations that occur organically through facilitation to, again, share information, share core and foundational best

practices, but let folks take it from there and add their own local context, expertise, and share information with their peers.

Looking forward to this year, we have introduced a number of new live trainings. You have a one-pager in front of you that describes all of the current menu of live training options. I want to point out one of them. The state election scenario training exercises. This is a brand new addition to our tool kit essentially offering a customized TTX environment, a discussion-based TTX that we are offering to states and state associations where we really facilitate, again, discussions and try to guide folks toward incident response planning, contingency planning, Continuity of Operations Plan development and give folks tool kits and tips and best practices. And again, foster discussions between election officials and their supporting stakeholders at the local level, for example, law enforcement or information technology, et cetera. Get folks talking and building relationships that they can leverage.

We have a number schedules, including upcoming in Missouri, Indiana, North Carolina, Utah, South Dakota, and Michigan who has asked for a couple of TTXs. I'm actually going to have to share a fun fact. Director Brader from Michigan, not only do we get to talk about elections and TTXs, but we are neighbors in Ann Arbor and we can talk about keeping all the kids off argue lawns.

So that TTX effort right now is robust and underway. And we have added trainings, and you can see the full description, ballotship is a popular one. Election officials are asking for support with pre-election testing. This is one of the ways that we provide that. We are seeing a number of folks take us up on it. If you look at the training descriptions, you can see, again, that they are interactive and in some cases fun. We try to make them as engaging as possible to facilitate a comfortable learning environment and one that folks can easily relate to and engage with each other.

I will move past that discussion point. I want to make sure that we can spend enough time discussing the next effort underway. A new effort from the EAC to develop a voluntary election workforce framework. Again, this is addressed in the strengthening the election workforce report that you all have for feedback right now. But I will kind of talk about this at a high level, try not to go into too many details here so we can have a conversation about it, if you would like. This is based on significant research undertakings, again, that we have worked with the University of Maryland, as well as through our convening mechanisms through FACA boards, et cetera. But an election workforce framework emerged during that work as a means to especially support classification and compensation efforts across the country at both the local and the state level. We see across the field that there is an opportunity to develop better

and more enhanced career pathways and to have conversations about professionalization. And really what this means is creating a shared language that really addresses the actual work that goes into administering elections be it in a small jurisdiction in Michigan or a large jurisdiction in LA County. The work across election administration, the work roles at least, are relatively consistent. The scale changes dramatically. Job titles vary dramatically. But the work itself of administering elections while it differs in scale is roughly the same set of responsibilities. And what we endeavor here to do is create workforce planning tools and create an opportunity for alignment across training, both that are happening at the national and state level, as well as engaging academic partners to really bolster the election workforce, help recruitment, classification, and compensation efforts.

>> Ed, we have a question. Senator Kagan?

>> Thank you, Ed, for the conversation. I'm very proud of the University of Maryland for all that they are doing.

Cheryl Kagan, Senator.

We talk about our states, we talk about our counties or our local boards. One of my challenges has been with municipals, municipal elections. Maryland has 157 cities and towns and they each one their own elections. They too often have not the skills, not the sophistication, not the understanding, not the partnerships that they should have. And yet these are real

elections.

They want autonomy. They don't want to be told what to do, which I understand. They are not a one size fits all. But I literally at the last election in my hometown saw a guy throw a box of ballots into the back of his car and drive off. So there was no bipartisan, no chain of custody, no oversight. It was insane. And they don't know what they don't know.

So I'm wondering whether the EAC, whether the University of Maryland, whether we can also be thinking about some of our most local governments. Because they can be part of a career pathway and training at most local level. They get inspired and move into our county or state level of election administration. Would love to hear your thoughts. Thank you.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: Yeah. I think in large part, the Agency is focused on building capacity and resilience among our smallest election jurisdictions. Acknowledging that most election jurisdictions across the country are small and have unique challenges or I guess each has a unique challenge in administering processes and in bolstering the capacities and capabilities within their office. Professional development and training on national best practices is really important. Fortunately, again, there are a number of state training programs. I think most states have some form of training. But trying to make training as accessible as possible to staff in

addition to, for example, chief election officers within those local units is critical. And we see EAC, the Learning Lab especially, as a means to connect folks with immediately actionable training content in very bite sized pieces that are convenient and, again, at no cost. No travel required. Providing a real means to get down to that foundational level within local election offices.

>> Just to be clear, some of these municipalities don't have an election director. They might be the assistant deputy city clerk with no training.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: Yeah.

>> Thank you.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: You're welcome.

>> Ms. Howard?

>> Yes. I have a couple of things.

So excited about all of this work, Ed. Thank you so much.

So I was just pulling some information from some of our prior local election official surveys and even if there's not as much awareness outside of the election official community about the great work that the EAC does, inside the election community, almost half of local election officials are aware of the great resources that you put out. And I will note that there was more awareness about EAC resources than resources put out by any other agency that we asked about. I think that's very important

and that is a testament to the great work that y'all are doing. And I also want to note that there was in 2023. And I think that that number has just increased for lot of reasons, including the great work that I think the EAC has done to make sure that they are hiring amazing election officials, people who have practical experience in the field and can communicate effectively with their colleagues who remain election officials. I was just thinking about it and we have seen former election officials from Michigan, Indiana, and California, and I'm sure I'm missing some. So anyway, just many, many thanks to the Commissioners who I know made this a priority and for the Agency.

And in response to Senator Kagan's comments. I am a representative of the U.S. conference of mayors. So just maybe some background is helpful.

So in states like Michigan and Wisconsin, the local, the municipal election officials have a huge responsibility in administering Federal elections. In those states, the clerks have a huge amount of training. So Jonathan can talk about some of the 1600 clerks that he oversees, many of which are municipal. I would encourage you if you have concerns about clerks in Maryland that in your position as a state legislator, you may be in a great position to provide them with resources and other information that help them get up to a different standard. But my understanding is the municipal clerks in Maryland doesn't conduct Federal elections.

>> Ms. Barton?

>> Thank you. Tina Barton. I also am an appointee of the U.S. conference of mayors and also spent the majority, probably 30 years of my career, working in local government. 16 of those as a city clerk in the state of Michigan where we administer the elections there. And Senator, you have been a great friend, so please don't take this personal. But the city and township clerks that I often speak with, train across Michigan, Wisconsin, the New England states are incredibly dedicated to their jobs, to learning, to training, to being the absolute best election officials that they can be.

I will also say that as the city clerk in a city of 80,000 people, I had to be an expert in liquor law because I also did liquor licensing. And I had to be an expert in cemetery law because I oversaw three cemeteries. I can tell you what you want to know about cremation. Those are just a few. I had like ten other things that I had to oversee, as well as city council.

The locals as it's decentralized, I believe in decentralization because I believe it gives us one extra layer of accountability in the process, but they are drowning right now. And the best thing that we can do for our cities and towns running elections is support them in lots of ways. Either in your way through the legislation, through my friend Isaac's favorite word, the F word, funding. Not Liz's favorite F word,

but Isaac's favorite F word. They need our help. What you're doing, Ed, coming from Michigan, obviously, you know better than anybody what the local clerks are up against in our state. I would feel like I was a terrible person when I left here today and didn't stand up for the city and township clerks in this country who are doing the absolute best they can with limited resources. They are underresourced and understaffed tremendously. And frankly, their positions are under attack. And all we can do right now is show them all the ways that we can be a resource to them and how we can help them and support them through legislation and funding and through the great work of the EAC, which you all know I am a massive fan of the EAC and somebody who advocates for you all frequently. So thank you.

>> Ms. Gold?

>> Tina, sorry, if I could respond briefly. Agreed and thank you. And totally appreciate our folks who are overworked, underpaid, underappreciated. It often is the lay leaders. When I told the story of the guy who threw the box of ballots in his car, it was the member of the city board of elections. Lay leader. Untrained. Or insufficiently trained. So agreed with everything you say, though. Thank you.

>> So thank you, again.

I just wanted to get a little bit of a better idea to what

extent in these recommendations or guidelines is -- and within the training itself is there an integration of how do you deal with staff transition? I know you talked about career pathways. Right? But whether it's people who are very experienced, kind of saying okay, this is time for me to go on to another chapter in my life. Whether it's bringing in people, how do you attract people. And then how do you just deal with people who have a lot of knowledge and skills or who have decided okay, I have gone to my career pathway in this way, but I kind of want to now try something else.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: Great question. So currently in development, we have a succession planning training module that will be produced and released in the Learning Lab. We have a strategic planning module that focuses on staffing and in a budgetary capacity as well, like having the foundational knowledge to have planning discussions about a budget that includes needing to bolster staffing or have conversations around classification compensation.

One of the efforts, and I will just kind of I want to make sure that I'm not going too far over here, I have gotten some permission to continue for five minutes since we had a bit of a late start. The workforce framework and related products that the EAC envisions coming out related to them also stand to help folks in those capacities that you just addressed. The workforce framework itself at a high level is an effort to identify and

create detail across a hierarchy of election functions and the roles and tasks and knowledge and skills that go into it there is a presence dense including at the Federal level, NIST developed the NICE framework. We have looked at this as a potential model for scaling and creating an election workforce framework as well.

NICE does a lot of the things and addressed a lot of the challenges we see across election administration right now, including fragmentation across job titles, things being very complex with a lot of folks called a lot of different things that do roughly the same degree of work with responsibilities that are roughly consistent across the country. And it's helped standardize hiring and training and enabled workforce mobility and aligned education, especially with workforce needs.

So related to the workforce framework, the EAC is looking first to, and this might be a familiar image, if not, it's the EAC competency wheel which did work years ago to identify at a high level the competencies and functions that go into election administration. What we see is that this has become a great communication tool. But stands to be something that we can further develop into an actual framework. For example, that helps identify the intersections where the spokes come together, where competencies and functions overlap and really kind of build out the detail across the work roles within election offices. This is a really high level example of what we're

talking about as far as a workforce frame work and hierarchy. At the top, you see a classification area and we envision at least a dozen different classification areas that are high level groupings of work roles. Beneath them, the related knowledging and skills.

We see this as a phased project, but one that can be quickly begun, including through working group that we are working on putting together right now that involves our FACA board members. I very much encourage anyone interested on this board that would love to have workforce conversations to be in touch as we build this working group out. But through engagement with a multidisciplinary working group that would also leverage not only the election officials, but folks that can speak HR languages, and for example, working with partners that we have at NACO that might be able to bring folks to the table to have those conversations and create a framework that not only translates and understandable by election officials and their staff and informs conversations among them, but also stands to benefit the conversations that need to happen with local policy makers, local HR professionals that can help inform compensation studies that use HR specific language to conduct and also we heard feedback from some of our Standards Board and LLC members have conversations with legislators as well and provide a shared language for folks to be able to communicate about classification and compensation across the board.

And I will jump ahead before this final bit of discussion here. This is some high level examples of the framework itself. But I want to talk about some of the EAC products to get to that question, Ms. Gold. We see a framework and related guide that covers implementation and a number of practical tools for election offices. For example, work role library with perhaps real world job descriptions attached to demonstrate an example of the work role, all of the competencies, all of the tasks, knowledge, and skills that go into these things. But also shows how these things are leveraged and talked about, for example, through job descriptions that are effective.

Also a self-assessment tool kit that might be help a local election office or a state election office with planning to identify gaps that they might have and bring in and have conversations around bringing in additional staff to address those gaps, build professional development to enhance capacity and competencies, et cetera.

So with that, I will turn it back over for more discussion.

>> Great. Mr. Brader.

>> Thank you. Doing a great job representing Michigan, Ed.

So just picking up a little bit on the previous conversation about different roles in different states. It definitely underscores the reality of the differences in state

by state administration of elections. But as EAC is building out all of these tools and the library of information is growing and it seems like you're thinking about it in a competency-based way, which makes sense to me, it seems like -- and maybe this is under discussion, but there's an opportunity to make these trainings and pieces more bite sized and modular and customizable so that you could potentially identify based on what your role is the set of information that you need to know without having to pick up this paragraph off this sheet and this off this sheet. Is that a goal to create play lists that can be kind of customized for different officials depending on their responsibilities?

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: Yeah. I certainly see it that way. And Commissioners, please feel free to provide your input here as well. But in a number of EAC resources and tools, we endeavor always to make them customizable and to be something that can be taken by election offices both at the state or local level and adapted to be something that can be scaled, to provide templates in large part that can be applied in local context.

>> Mr. Cramer?

>> Are you working with the University of Maryland on this?

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: The effort that we had with the University of Maryland was to conduct a study during the Presidential election of 2024, during which we had a lot of

interviews, observations that occurred with the election offices across the country.

>> I was one of those.

>> ED GOLEMBIEWSKI: And thank you very much, Mr. Cramer.

>> Other questions? Conversation?

I'm going to bring one up. And I really appreciate seeing kind of that quantitative look at under especially the administration piece. And I said this many times in conversation, but ours are all grouped between me and one other person under those. We have about 170,000 registered voters and I have two full-time staff members. One is the election program manager, and then of course myself. I'm the elected. And then I have one other full-time staff member in our office to do all of the things. And I think the EAC put out a great diagram, wasn't was the circular diagram that showed how many different things? But that's one piece to the puzzle. Also add on we are the recorder, so we do property records, all the property records, plats, marriage licensing.

We accept petitions for the property values appeals board and conduct the hearings, as well as archive and research.

So I love seeing this piece of it, but it is just one faction. And that's not true in every county around the country, or even municipality. But it is relevant to the conversation because it is not just crying that we're understaffed and

underfunded. It is absolute reality. And as Tina stated, we have got elections, then we go to liquor, then we go to graveyards and cemeteries. It's kind of all relevant.

But anyway, I really appreciate this. And I think there is great opportunities to be able to expand on this. And especially the continuity of operation with the staffing, we have no continuity of operation or a plan for the future.

And also part of that is restrictions statewide. With the elected, you have to be within your jurisdiction. My elections program manager lives in a different county, an adjoining county. So there's not opportunity for that person to move into the role.

So hugely problematic. But we are our own worst enemies. No matter what's thrown at us, we get the job done every time. Again, as I stated yesterday, at what point does that break? And we just need more robust programs. So thank you.

Other comments, conversation?

It looks like we're ahead of schedule now.

All right. So thank you, everyone, for the engaging and robust conversations. I think this is how we make things better, working together, not separately.

So now is an opportunity for us to discuss any priorities for the Board of Advisors for the next year.

And let's just open the table up to suggestions, to

comments, to anything that we might have that is going to add to the conversation and to this great Board of Advisors.

So please. Feel free.

We have Mr. Wilcox.

>> Thank you.

I would like to go back to the comment I made a little bit earlier. I think the EAC should look at what it would entail to be the agency and whether the oversight comes to this board or one of the other FACA boards, but to be the agency Clearinghouse for voter registration data. So I have been on that obviously for over a year talking about that and wanting to do that to where there is one central, not a repository, it's not that I'm giving my data to the Federal Government. But it allows me to exchange my data with other jurisdictions and do voter registration processes.

Correct, less maintenance.

>> Proctor?

>> First of all, I would like to add my voice to that. I think that's a wonderful idea and it solves a lot of problem for us. We're engaged in Kansas in these individual interstate compacts and sometimes the -- exactly. Yeah. And I don't have 50 of them. And a lot of the states that we are dealing with have their own data formats. And that's the other thing I would like to leave

you with is -- and we talked a little bit about this yesterday too. Common Data Formats so that we have more interoperability for voter registration, but also for voter selection data in the election equipment would be super.

Right now, it's you go with one -- we have 105 counties that run their own elections and go with their own vendor. Then the data doesn't talk to the next system when they have to upgrade and that's out of its life cycle. So standard data formats in addition to this being the Clearinghouse for voter registration cross checks would be very, very helpful. Thank you.

>> I think one key component for those great ideas are -- and I go back to Mr. Cramer's comments. Funding. I think anything is possible. And I think there's great potential. But it has to be funded. And just a huge hurdle.

Ms. Simons?

>> Picking up on funding, Chris. Chris and I were talking last night about the fact that there's a lot of unspent HAVA money. You mentioned funding. And that could be an inhibitor for Congress to provide the needed funds for the EAC.

So we have a suggestion for information that should be gathered about that. Chris, do you want to pick up on that?

>> Sure, thank you, Barbara. As a lot of things happen, you

have a great dinner, you have a cold drink, and you spent hours of further conversation about trying to fix everything, or what we can in a limited time.

And we did have conversation last night because it really stood out to us the comment from the audit issue about there was the number I wrote down was a half billion dollars in unspent HAVA funds. Which we know a lot of that has probably already been earmarked from the states. But what we don't see is they might say they spent 63% of their funds or 50% and a state is sitting on XX dollars. What we haven't seen is the accountability of that.

So our idea was how about, well, we don't know where it would be better served, in the EAVS survey, could it be a yearly additional response from the states? Say okay, my state has, I will throw out a number, 60 million in HAVA funds. Where are those funds earmarked, if they are?

Some accountability so that when we are going to the Congress through NACO, through other programs to advocate, when the Congress sees this number of half a billion dollars in unspent funds, why should we give you any more money, except maybe a minimum allotment, when this money remains out there and the accountability of that.

So if we had some greater accountability yearly about where those are earmarked, hey, we're putting in a voter registration system in the year 2028. Or we have got

these -- replacing all of our vote tally system in this year. We could say hey, this money has been earmarked. So we have some accountability for those funds. And that they may look and say we agree, there's 30 states that have 0. We have these other states that have earmarked funding. You know what? It could just be the data speaks very loud, I believe, to the Congress.

So just we wanted to throw out that idea and if there's anybody who has any ideas, suggestions, because obviously we're doing the advocacy, but we're not getting -- not getting anywhere, but we're not getting resultings from that. And any suggestions and ideas.

>> Just we believe that this half a billion dollar figure isn't -- it's not a real figure because of all the earmarking. But Congress doesn't know that.

So our job is to make sure that Congress understands that there's far less money available and the money that is available is available in a limited number of states.

>> Correct.

Mr. Bowens?

>> So something I'm a huge advocate for because it's worked for me is I like to see EAC put emphasis on helping localities do story telling to support local funding. We continue to have struggles at the Federal level getting funding. But can we help localities tell stories about their struggles? Documenting

events, providing chronologies, really getting into the minutia of what they're struggling with to help get the folks that fund them to provide more resources.

And then another huge kind of benefit for us in Durham is the use of enterprise-wide solutions. I find that a lot of localities, boards of elections, they don't know what their county government has that they could utilize to support their functions.

One example for us is we were looking for a communication system to communicate with voters en masse. So we're doing all this research trying to find a product. Low and behold, our county emergency management department has an enterprise wide solution that they allowed us to opt into for no cost. So there's a lot of solutions I believe in counties that are untapped by elections officers that could be utilized and really be a game changer to operations. But I think there needs to be more local story telling to try to get more funding locally in addition to the efforts to get additional Federal funding.

>> Thank you, Derek.

Camden?

>> Yeah. I didn't come up here and clatter the chair just to do it. But I think we have a lot of the information on the unobligated funds but we don't report it in a usable way. One of the things done previously is the grants expenditure report,

which is different than the grants reporting obligations. We are condensing that in a usable one to two pager and that's information we can provide. It's a conversation we have with the appropriators. And it's a surprise if you recall the presentation from yesterday on the grants that map that was scaled red to white. That even for appropriators is a surprise. But that's expenditures. The conversation continues to be these are expenditures. But it leaves out what I talked about. When we show the map, we talk about Louisiana being prepared for a statewide -- thanks, that's a bad phrase to forget in this room. So yes. Anyway. All I'm saying is we have that condensed usable report upcoming and that's a good suggestion and I will enforce that that be added into it. Appreciate it.

>> Thank you. Great to hear.

Mr. Fey?

>> Thanks, Chris. I wanted to give a reminder here to all the members of the Board that the presenters here, the meeting doesn't happen by accident. Adam helps to coordinate a lot of this. The Commissioners do. If any of you have suggestions or thoughts on speakers or topics between now and the next meeting, send it to Adam, send it to Chris or myself or Lisa because we all work together to try to get an agenda together for these meetings. Or communicate with the Commissioners directly. They have a lot of input into this as well.

So the meeting is what we all want to kind of make of it. So I want to remind everybody.

And the last thing I want to say is having served on the executive committee, all the cat wrangling that Adam has to do. I appreciate that. Thanks for all your work getting us organized today, Adam. Thanks a lot.

>> Thank you, Eric. And could not agree more. Amazing staff. Yeah.

Ms. Gold?

>> Thank you. Yes. Rosalind Gold. And I just want to amplify two of the comments that folks made. First of all, to the extent there can be really user friendly documents on this whole issue of supposedly unspent funding that is clear, concise, that kind of an average policy maker would understand and explain the situation I think would be very helpful. So we're looking forward to that.

And I wanted to follow up on what Derek had said, which is I think technical assistance or resources not only for story telling, but for best practices generally in terms of enhancing local funding. Right? Just what are some good handy best practices and tips that people have learned, any kind of success stories. I just think that would be of great help, given I think this meeting which was fantastic, I think just has really

highlighted so much more that one needs to be done, but also that could be done if the resources were available.

>> Commissioner Palmer?

>> This is probably a bit unpopular because I have had to survive off of HAVA funds when the legislature wouldn't put enough funds into the agency. As we saw with the COVID funds, the CARES Act, I think having a five year limit on the fund, use it or lose it over five years is probably the best for the community. I think the state election officials and locals will use the money in a prompt and rapid manner. And having it just sit in the accounts for years and decades is not good for them or it really isn't good for the election community. It may feel a little bit better to have you have something in the bank. But I think that it should be something that the appropriators and oversight committees hear from you. I think that it's to a point that it needs to go to a five-year limit.

>> Yeah, and when we do go to Capital Hill or even at our local legislators as well, as Isaac knows, they want to hear your story. We can get data and numbers are amazing. But even our congressional delegation has really appreciated when we told them some of the stories behind that scene. And it humanizes. You're not just an election official, but you're a person. You

are struggling with providing services. You are struggling with equipment. So I think humanizing that aspect as well to a certain extent is definitely helpful.

Do we have any other questions, comments, suggestions for the future?

I agree with Eric, please reach out to any of us. Let us know your ideas. There is no silly idea. It's all relevant. And we'll move forward from there.

So -- oh, yeah. We have a photo they are going to show real quick.

In honor of Isaac's book from Charleston County. So there you go.

>> I want to -- no, I want to clarify. If you buy the book, I don't see any of that money. I want to be clear there's no personal gain. It goes back to Charleston County Government.

>> Not supplementing your retirement account, right?

All right. Barring any other suggestions, questions, and conversation, I'm going to now turn over --

>> Wait. Before you close out, Commissioner Palmer wants to say a few words.

>> Okay, great.

>> So I want to take this opportunity, I want to let you know that I am resigning from the EAC. And I will be leaving at the

end of the month. My -- I really appreciate everyone in this room. When I looked around the room, I have a relationship with just about everybody and it's been a long seven and extended seven-year term. That's the way things are.

But I also always appreciated the teamwork here with the Commissioners, as well as the teamwork and sort of commitment to elections that you see having served in Virginia and Florida.

And that commitment to free and fair elections and the foundation of our elections.

You know, one of the things that attracted me to the EAC was I really felt that there is a lot of attention to security and accuracy of elections. Ever since 2000, but even in recent years. And so we work together, I think the Commissioners, we all come from different backgrounds. But we were able to work together I think to put the EAC in a role to help assist the states on the front lines actually administering elections with the locals and how can we help. And I took that from Florida and Virginia, how can we help what's happening in 134 jurisdictions in Virginia. It's not an easy job. It's like herding cats. I always took the approach as flexible uniformity. I will see you at Z. Let's make sure we all end up at Z at the same place.

But I just wanted to let you guys know that and I appreciate every one of you. And I want to thank the Commissioners and staff for everything over the years. Thank you very much.

>> So before we give Don his plaque for his seven-plus years of service, I wanted to say that one of the things that I find really difficult being here at the Agency and just in life in general is that we don't basically tell people how much we appreciate them while they are there and here. So most of you have been on this advisory board for a number of years. There's a few folks who have moved on from this. But still are very active.

I want to give Commissioner Palmer his flowers now in terms of the work that he has done with the Agency, the work he was doing before he was at the Agency. Of the four of us, it's without question he has traveled the most and seen more jurisdictions than the other three of us have. And I think that that goes to a testament of his willingness to be out in the field to help the election officials, as being one of you, to see that the Agency survives and moves on.

When Commissioner McCormick and I got here, people hated the Agency. Did not want us to be a part of this. And we did our best to move that forward. I think when Commissioner Hovland and Palmer came along, they did a little bit to move that. I think that was helpful.

I think that the four of us have done really well in terms of being a cohesive unit to move things forward.

We all come from different backgrounds and have different

strengths. I think that our strengths have been able to to allow for us to do well. So I always say that I get along with the three of you more so than I do with my own family. And we agree on about 85% of the stuff.

>> We keep going down on that.

>> We keep going down. But I do say that I think of it as you have opened my eyes to some things that may not have been able to for us to do initially. Like going on the USS America, that aircraft carrier back when OVI was doing stuff with us. And then the vet the vote stuff of allowing for more poll workers to become -- allowing for veterans to become poll workers and so forth.

But I do think that that has been really helpful in the event that we did last month in Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which is the largest museum in the world.

And I do think that you will be missed. We will survive. But I do think that as someone new comes on board, they won't have that same coherence that we have together. But I do know that you are not going far. So I know that you're going to still call us and give us advice.

>> Every day.

>> We may answer.

But I do think that it will -- we will be able to still do some things, but I do think that you will have a legacy here at the Agency of things that you have done.

So with that, I will stop and then read the great plaque that we put together. In appreciation of leadership, dedicated public service, and steady, fast commitment to strengthening the administration of elections and democratic institutions nationwide. And I will say not just nationwide. But worldwide. Because as I said yesterday, the things that we do in this country, the world looks at to see how their elections can be run. So when the U.S. coughs, the rest of the world gets a cold. But I do think by the four of us going around to not only the 50 states, because we have all gone to the 50 states collectively, but going to several different foreign countries I think has improved their process and made the world a better place.

With that, I will give this to you. And if the other Commissioners want to say anything else.

>> I appreciate it.

Thank you.

>> So before we move on real quick, I want to give Don some accolades. I got a phone call one time two years ago, four years ago? I forget. And he says I want to come visit your operation. Little southern Oregon. You know? And so he did. He showed up. And low and behold, I'm running the ballot sorter and in the middle of his visit, we did a tour. I have my bipartisan election boards there. We're in the thick of it processing everything.

And sure enough, the ballot sorter stops slitting, meaning just cutting the envelope, the outer envelopes so that we can easily remove the secured materials, the ballots, envelope, et cetera at that time.

And so goes life, you never know when things are going to happen. But based on these amazing things called HAVA funds, we had our backup table top envelope openers that were in case something happened with that. We converted to that manual removal -- not removal, but slitting of the ballot envelopes. He was on site. We had bipartisan teams waiting to process these. So we were about an hour delayed. He graciously sat there and took questions and answered about what the EAC does, about what his history was. And we were easily able to get back on track converting to a more manual process. But I was just amazing that he was able to -- he kind of took over the boards while they were waiting for the ballots to come to them in batches. And just a testament to working as a team and to the outreach of all of the EAC board members and it is so appreciated and so grateful.

So I always wanted to pass on that little story just about in live time, we just had things, but we got back on track and got it fixed and we were moving again.

So anyway, thank you. Thank you, Commissioner Palmer.

All right. Moving forward. I am going to throw this over to Commissioner Hovland, the designated Federal officer, to

provide brief closing remarks. And then we'll close out the meeting.

>> Thank you, Chris. And again, thank you to Commissioner Palmer for his time. I remember I think it was our first collective meeting together after the Senate process and former Secretary of State, the NASS conference, somebody said basically how are you going to get beyond the partisanship? And I think the answer was basically well, we're going to focus on the things we can agree on first. And then we'll get to the other stuff.

And I really do think that probably people wouldn't have bet on seven and a half years at that point in time. And that stability and that consistency at the Agency and that ability to put the work and really just good governance and customer service first. I think it is really a testament. And I think that the presentation that you have heard over the last couple of days shows the work and where we have come. I know at that point seven and a half years ago, people didn't think VVSG 2.0 would happen. When we talked about e-poll book certification, people literally said you're crazy, that's a pipe dream, that won't happen. So just remember we're keeping notes and we are going to -- but no.

Certainly just the time and the commitment has been appreciated. And again, I think it is a team effort and that goes to our staff who have made some of these ideas a reality.

And it goes to you all for the feedback, the conversation. Again, this is a collective effort. And while I think I have most of the really good ideas, I know I don't have all of them.

So no. Really appreciated you taking the time in the last couple of days. Obviously, it's an ongoing conversation. We want it to be. We know we get together for this annual meeting in person once a year, but in sharing the resources that we're working on, sharing these things out, that is a continual conversation that we want to engage in to make sure that the products and resources that we're providing are both maximizing what we can do with our budget, as we have talked about, but also ultimately recognizing that assistance is our middle name element of the EAC and making sure that we're providing the best service we can to state and local election officials and voters around the country.

So again, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be a part of this.

And again, I want to recognize the EAC staff that made this possible. It has been a busy month of meetings for us. We also had the Local Leadership Council and Standards Board meetings in Chicago right before this. And so a lot of folks have been just running meetings and doing the prep work for this, our subject matter expert team, our travel folks, our communications folks, our general counsel and IT teams. Again, they have all made this happen very seamlessly and we appreciate

it.

And also as Eric stole my thunder earlier, for this meeting in particular, another big thank you to Adam because this meeting, I just sort of show up. And he really does make it happen. And so appreciate all that work. Thank you again, Adam.

And Chris, you have proved yourself as the incoming Chair today, stepping up. And with that, we will turn it back to you. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Commissioner Hovland.

In closing, I want to thank all of the board members for attending the meeting over the past two days. I think we have had very robust conversations and a great move forward for the next year. And I appreciate your engagement. Again, Adam and all the administrative staff at the EAC, thank you so much for your hard work throughout the year.

So now I will entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

So moved. Greg Moore.

Is there a second?

Lisa Marra.

Any objections? Barring none, it is moved and seconded that this body adjourn the meeting. I will now take a voice vote to adjourn.

All in favor, say aye.

Any nays?

Barring none, the ayes have it and the meeting is adjourned. Safe travels, everyone.