

**United States Election Assistance Commission
Roundtable Discussion**

**Best Practices for Veterans Voting: Examining Election
Operations, Procedures, and Accessibility**

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VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

The following is the verbatim transcript of the United States Election Assistance Commission (“EAC”) Roundtable Discussion “Best Practices for Veterans Voting: Examining Election Operations, Procedures and Accessibility” held on Thursday, September 13, 2012. The roundtable convened at 9:00 a.m., EDT and adjourned at 12:26 p.m., EDT.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

MS. MILLER:

Good Morning, my name is Alice Miller. I am the Chief Operating Officer and Acting Executive Director for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. I want to begin by first thanking our panelists who have agreed to be here with us today for this very important topic. We will be discussing Best Practices for Veterans Voting: Examining the Election Operations, Procedure and Accessibility. We could not do this without them, and so, I do want to, indeed, thank them for agreeing to, in most cases, travel pretty far to be here with us during this period of time.

So, just before we get started I want to give a little bit of history about what we know about our veterans. In a large sense, they have not gotten quite the level of priority that they need from many organizations. As a constituency, in some instances, that has been ignored. And so, we wanted to bring some attention to it and give them the attention that they deserve, with respect to voting, especially as we are on the heels of this big Presidential election, which is short of a little more than 40 days off. So, while we could have probably done more sooner, we’re trying to call some attention to it now.

With respect to the veterans, just in terms of stats, according to the U.S. Census statistics for 2010, which is the most recently

data available, there are 21.8 million veterans in the United States, 1.6 million female veterans, 2.4 African-American veterans. I have a few more stats, but I just want to throw that out there as we begin our discussion this morning just to give some sense of idea of the numbers of the population that we are dealing with and, therefore, the need to address them with all the relevant amount of seriousness.

For anyone who has joined our roundtables before, either in person or by Website, you know that we have the most illustrious person that we could have moderating our roundtables and that is Merle King. Just a little bit about our moderator, Merle is an Associate Professor of Information Systems and the Executive Director for the Center of Election Systems at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. He's an active researcher in election administration. He was the 2005 National Association of Secretaries of State Medallion Award for his work in Georgia elections. Professor King has led the development of one of the nation's best resources for election administration support. The Center for Election Systems provides voting systems technical support to the Georgia Office of Secretary of State and the 159-county election supervisors in Georgia. As a Professor of Information Systems, Professor King teaches graduate and undergraduate classes related to legal and leadership issues of information technology. Merle is no stranger to the elections community. He has been a true friend and indeed a supporter of the EAC. He's been a volunteer, and I've said this before and I'll say it again, a true volunteer moderator for our roundtables since

the inception of them a few years back. He brings a wealth of knowledge to this process, serving his professional capacity as the Executive Director of Georgia Center for Election Systems at Kennesaw State. He is just a jewel and we could not, again, do this without him.

And so, I'm going to turn this over to Merle. He will comment and provide guidance and logistics, and I warn you, do what he tells you...

[Laughter]

MS. MILLER:

...on how we're going to proceed today. So Merle, thank you.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Alice. It's a pleasure to be here today and join the members of this roundtable on this discussion of a really, really important topic. As we move further through this I'll ask the members of the roundtable to introduce themselves. I'm the only person who doesn't introduce themselves because I like to hear that every time...

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

...and I'm too modest to say it myself, but I guess not modest enough that I don't mind hearing it from somebody else.

Anyway, as Alice said, we're less than 50 days out from a very important election. And, of course, to election officials, every election is important, but this one carries with it the knowledge of those of us who have been in elections for awhile, that there's more things that can go wrong than used to be. Elections are much more

complex. The expectations of the voters, of the public, of the candidates, of the party, of the media, have all increased over the years, and it's important that we be able to step up and meet those expectations. This year the EAC has really been focused on the November election. For over a year now they've been driving towards identifying and providing assistance to state and local jurisdictions on topics that will help prepare the people on the ground, the local election officials to deliver the best election possible.

Today's roundtable focuses on veterans and voting. And the famous speech by Churchill at the Battle of Britain, when he said, "never has so much been owed by so many to so few" really sums up the obligation of the American people and of election officials to the veterans, the people who have put on uniform and committed to service to this country. There is already a very robust infrastructure to support the active duty servicemen and women. The UOCAVA initiatives, FVAP, there are many things that are already in place to help military voters and overseas voters. And that's really not our topic today. And we may take that on in a subsequent roundtable, but today what we want to talk about is what happens to those servicemen and women when they leave the service? How do we continue to provide attention and support to the issues and the challenges that they face? There are millions of men and women in uniform serving our country right now, but there are tens of millions of veterans who need assistance from state and local election officials in the discharge of one of the most important responsibilities of a citizen, which is voting.

So, what we'll do today is begin by first identifying, who are veterans. And I think that's one of those questions that everybody knows the answer to until they start thinking about it. And it's a very amorphous group, it's a complex group. As Alice pointed out, it's a large group. It's dispersed all around the country. And the challenges that they face are as dispersed as the individuals are. So, we want to talk about who are veterans, what are the challenges that they're facing, what are the issues that this group of Americans have as they approach the voting process. Then we want to talk about, what are some of the solutions, what are research initiatives that are in place to address these issues, what are best practices occurring at the local and the state level that can be emulated throughout the country to elevate our performance in the discharge of this responsibility.

The panel today really represents an important cross section of the stakeholders and each of us has a distinct role in this process; local election officials, state election officials, researchers, advocacy groups and federal agencies, we all have a distinct role, but those roles interlock. And understanding how each of us goes about our role enhances our ability to create a greater aggregate impact on these challenges.

So, today as we begin our discussion, a couple of things to keep in mind. The microphones that are in front of you, those are always on. We don't have to turn them off or on. The other microphones that you see are for the transcriptionist. So don't worry about those. Just speak as though we're in a conversation with each other. One issue that I'll remind you of, at 10:45, we

have a hard break built into the roundtable where we need to take 15 minute break, to allow a changing out of transcriptionists at the Web server.

So, with that I'm going to begin the roundtable, and I'm going to ask each of you to briefly introduce yourself, who you are, the organization that you're with, your experience with elections, in general, and then, anything that you might want to say as a prefacing comment about veterans and voting. And we're going to move in this direction, and then, at the end of the day, when I'll ask you to make your summary comments, we'll start and we'll move in this other direction. So, Deborah and Beth, you'll have first and last words respectively, coming and going, today.

So, with that, I'll ask Secretary of State Beth Chapman to begin.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

Hi, I am Secretary of State Beth Chapman from the State of Alabama, and I am here today, specifically, to discuss a program that we started in our state titled "Veterans Who Vote." And our tag line, I'd like to share with you is, "They provided, they protected it, and now they are preserving it for future generations."

DR. KING:

Is that trademarked, Beth?

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Because, at the end of today, we're going to talk about the things that we can share, and that's a great summary, and it's very attention-catching and it speaks to the point. I really like that.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

Thank you.

DR. KING:

Juan?

MR. GILBERT:

Hello, I'm Juan Gilbert. I'm a professor at Clemson University where I chair a division called Human-Centered Computing. And I'm also the primary investigator for the accessible voting technology grants with the EAC. And from that grant we've created the Research Alliance for Accessible Voting or RAAV. And so, I'm here to talk about the research side, and innovations in the area of making voting more accessible for our veterans.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Juan. Steve?

MR. TROUT:

Good morning, I'm Steve Trout. I'm the State Election Director for Oregon. And for my election officials colleagues out there, don't panic. We still have 54 days until the election. It's not under 50 days.

[Laughter]

MR. TROUT:

And I had a brief concern this morning. It's like I've got stuff to do, but 54 days to go, but it only seems like less than 50.

And so, my experience is with election officials, we count it in Presidential years, so this is my fourth Presidential election. I've worked both at the state level, at the county level, and in private practice. And I've also been a candidate. So, I think I see elections

from all perspectives and excited to discuss how we can better serve our veterans here today.

DR. KING:

Okay thank you, Steve. One of the things that I learned as a Professor is you always give students deadlines earlier than you really expect it.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

So, in Georgia, we've told them there's only 50 days.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Thank you for that correction. Laura?

MS. BALUN:

I'm Laura Balun, the Director of Voluntary Service for Department of Veterans Affairs. We were told in 2008 that we were the responsible office for getting veterans registration information on voting. And so, for the past four years we've learned a lot about how veterans vote and how each state is different, each county is different in how they handle elections. So, I'm here to learn more, you know, about voting.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Laura. Paul?

MR. LUX:

My name is Paul Lux. I'm the Supervisor of Elections for Okaloosa County, Florida. I have been working in the elections field since 1999, so, like Steve, I'm coming, you know, up on my fourth Presidential election. And I am coming to the end of my first term,

but Okaloosa County is home to Eglin Air Force Base, which is the largest Air Force base in the world. We also have the Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal School. We have the U.S. Army Ranger Camp and the U.S. Army 7th Special Forces Group represented there. And we have a Coast Guard station. So, we, literally, in our community of about 130,000 registered voters, have all five service branches represented there. As such, we have done a lot of work and participated in virtually every project. As Merle mentioned, talking about reaching UOCAVA voters, that has been one of our primary focuses in our county. And, of course, as we discuss veterans, and I know some of the pre-prepared questions, you know, where do veterans live? A lot of them live in communities near military bases, which means not only do we have a lot of military, we also have a lot of veterans in Okaloosa County.

DR. KING:

Very good. Thank you, Paul.

I think one of the things that we do need to explore today is that transition from active duty to veteran status. And, as election officials, understanding those life changes for those voters and what services may exist for the military voters that don't exist for the veterans. And so, you'll have a unique perspective on that.

Brad?

DR. FAIN:

My name is Brad Fain. I'm head of Human Systems Engineering at Georgia Tech Research Institute. Georgia Tech Research Institute is the applied research arm of Georgia Tech. My specialty is in the interface of people and technology, so it covers a wide area. Most

of the time I spend my time working with military personnel to provide interfaces to the soldiers such as cockpit design, command and control center design, and soldier borne equipment. For the last 12 years or so, I've been researching in the area of how do we provide interfaces to people with functional limitations such as people with disabilities. I just completed a project with ITIF, Operation Bravo Foundation, sponsored by the EAC, called the Military Heroes' Initiative, where we were responsible for looking at what are the characteristic injuries of recently wounded soldiers that are in transition, and looking at, are there different ways we could provide technologies that would assist them in placing a private, secure, independent vote.

DR. KING:

Okay thank you Brad. Deborah?

MS. SEILER:

My name is Deborah Seiler. I'm the Registrar of Voters for the County of San Diego. I have been in that capacity for the past five years, but this is my 34th year in elections. I was surprised this morning when I did the calculation, and so, it's been really a lot of fun. I actually started working in elections under Secretary of State March Fong Eu, and I was in that office for 11 years. And then, I spent quite a few years, actually, in the private sector in elections, as well. So, I've seen it from the state. I had a brief tenure in the State Legislature as a Chief Consultant to the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee.

So, I've had, you know, a broad range of experience, but it's been really very interesting to be in San Diego County. San Diego

County actually has a population of over 3 million people, which is larger than 21 states. And we have a huge military installation. We -- our registered voter population is just about 1.5 million registered voters. And we have three major Marine stations, four Navy stations, Coast Guard, and Air and Space Naval Commands. So, the military population in San Diego is a major part of the population, the demographic and the economy.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. This is a great panel. We really have great representation of the stakeholders in this topic.

In systems work, and I know a couple of colleagues in the computer science field, we always begin with the definition of the problem, the requirements, the termination, and it helps us ensure that as we move towards solutions that we haven't lost sight of exactly what is the problem that we're seeking to solve here. That's where I'd like to start today. And I'd like to start with what may seem a really straightforward question, but I think for many election officials, their initial reaction to it might be mine, which is, I think I know what a veteran is, but I'm not really sure. And so, I'd like to start with that question.

And Laura, if you could lead off on that discussion, with, who are veterans? What are their demographics? What are their unique attributes that would be of interest to election officials as they begin to build strategies to serve this segment?

MS. BALUN:

You know, that's -- we serve veterans who are in the healthcare arena, and so, you know, I am not sure that I'm the right person to

answer this question. But, those eligible veterans for healthcare are those that have served honorably and have been honorably discharged from the service for 18 months or more. So, we serve a wide array of veterans.

When Ms. Miller talked about the 21.8 million veterans that are out there, from the statistics of the Census Bureau, then, of those 21.8 million veterans, there are 8.5 million veterans that we serve. And that is as of 2012. So, we serve a very small population of the veterans, and so, I'm not sure that I'm the right person...

DR. KING:

Um-hum.

MS. BALUN:

...to define, you know, what is a veteran. We have veterans that are -- that have a lot of disabilities; mental health disabilities, we have individuals that are homeless, we have individuals that come in for cardiac or, you know, different surgical interventions. So, you know, ours is a very specialized population of the veteran population.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Deborah?

MS. SEILER:

Yes, I had an interesting experience of speaking with a professor at the University of San Diego, which has just launched a legal clinic for veterans. And, it's really very interesting because San Diego is also home to several major universities, and most of them do have services for -- almost all of the major universities have services for

veterans, surrounding their educational benefits. And, it was really interesting talking with Dr. Muth from the University of San Diego, and when I asked this question of him, he said, well, that's really a very great question, he said, because so much of it is defined by benefits. And what Laura was saying was an 18-month requirement, but in his area of work, it was like a 90-day requirement, he said, for veterans to get 40 percent of the benefits and then it went up from there. So, so much of what we think of as a veteran is defined by the benefits they receive, but basically, he was saying to me, that anybody who has served 30 days or more, and was honorably discharged, is considered a veteran.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Deborah. Paul?

MR. LUX:

Well, and like you said Merle, you know, it's -- when you start thinking about the issue, you know, I mean, like you said, everybody kind of knows, in the back of their mind, what it is. And I got to thinking about it, and I was in the Army myself so, I mean, I have a reasonable idea of what happens to people when they get out of the service after just one term. And I did only serve four years. And so, I defined it, for myself, as someone who has completed or been released from at least one term of active military service, knowing that the minimum usually that you can sign up for is an 18-month stint. So -- but, you know, as Laura has said, you know, a lot of it is driven by benefits, and that's where the hook for whether you have been discharged with anything other than a dishonorable discharge. Now, of course, that doesn't negate their

ability to vote just because they were dishonorably discharged, which is why I left that qualifier out of my definition, but that's, you know, the veteran is someone who has served, you know, whether a Reservist, National Guard, basically, you know, those guys do, you know, you do a two-year tour, and you've done two weeks of active duty training as they're required to do once a year, you know. At the end of your two-year tour, even as a Reservist, you have your minimum of 30 days of service.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Brad?

DR. FAIN:

So, when we were researching this issue for the Military Heroes Initiative project, we had to define, very clearly, between active duty and what was considered a veteran, because that was our line that we were trying to understand.

One of the interesting things that we found, that even though, you know, someone is wounded and not actively participating in the war effort, they're under medical care or whatever, they may spend quite a bit of time in this transition period, where they're not with their unit, but they're in some medical facility. They're still considered active duty, but they may be in that position for 12 months, 18 months, while a decision is being made in order to transition them to inactive duty or discharge them from the military. So, that's kind of a grey area, between someone who is considered active duty deployed, essentially, and someone who is, essentially in limbo while their decision -- while their medical

decision is being made as to whether they should be discharged or not.

In general, what we found is there's a federal definition of what a veteran is, and then, there are state definitions of what veterans are. And the state definitions tend to depend on the benefits, or whatever. So, sometimes there's a number of days' qualification to the state definition of what a veteran is. The federal definition doesn't require a number of days of service, from what I understand. We also found that veterans tend to vote more often than the general population, so that's a defining characteristic. They tend to be male, as you might expect. Fewer female are enrolled in active duty, thus there are fewer veterans that are female.

But the number of veterans, overall, are declining, and if you look at the Census population. But there is a huge increase in the number of wounded veterans, veterans that have a service-related disability. 46 percent, I believe, since 1990, was the numbers that we uncovered. So, that's a huge change in what the demographics of the veteran populations are, and that is a concern.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Brad. Let me go back to something that Deborah introduced. And I think one of the services that these roundtables can provide to local election officials, and certainly the EAC's Clearinghouse, is what I like to call, you know, the first cup of coffee. So, if you're an election official and you're evaluating your various outreach strategies, and typically, we'll have an outreach strategy for different demographic groups for different initiatives

within the county or the state, but who would your first phone call be if you wanted to begin assessing your outreach strategy? And Deborah, if you could, talk just a little bit more about the Veterans Affairs Office within colleges and universities.

MS. SEILER:

Yes, primarily they've been established because so many of the veterans have educational benefits. I'm not an expert on, really, what those benefits are, but I know that they do have them. And so, -- and because we have such a large military population in San Diego, this is a real arm of the major universities. So, when you asked -- mentioned that first cup of coffee, and reaching out, and when I realized that this was really about veterans and not so much military, I had to do a little research. And so, my first cup of coffee really was starting with just going online. And to my surprise, I discovered that there are not only the major universities, but there are whole veteran coalitions, in the County of San Diego. And just local organizations, there are over 50 local organizations with multiple locations. So, there, literally, would be probably in the hundreds of locations that are out there to serve specifically veterans.

And the services range from financial services to helping with housing. We even have three county departments that offer services, property tax exemptions. The county animal shelter provides pet adoption services for veterans. Interestingly enough, nobody has ever contacted me regarding veterans voting issues, and I was surprised. And when I started reaching out in the community, people were very receptive, and I had a short time, so I

haven't been able to really make all of those contacts, but people were tremendously receptive, that they really hadn't thought of it.

Now, our office reaches out to veterans' organizations such as the veterans' hospital that we have locally. But we have actually reached out to -- attempted to reach out to other veterans organizations, veterans homes, and so forth, just to say, would you like a supply of voter registration forms, because we supply forms to over 500 locations throughout the county. And we've been turned down. So, I don't know, maybe we haven't been reaching out to the right people, maybe I haven't been making the right contacts. But that's been our limited experience, up until this point.

DR. KING:

Okay, Beth? I'm sorry, let me go to Beth first, and then I'll come to Laura.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

In the State of Alabama, we have the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, which is extremely active. That's our one-stop shopping, go-to, for all of our needs with regards to veterans. They have nine organizations that fall directly within their care, which are multiple bodies of each, but the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Military Officers Association of Alabama, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Marines Corps League, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart. And those are some of the examples of the groups I believe that Deborah mentioned and alluded to in your state. But they are the people who really assist

us in the pulse of the veterans' community, what their needs are, and they've been very helpful with us in our project.

DR. KING:

Okay. I think one of the threads that I'm picking up here, and Beth, particularly from your comment, is that it may not be a single cup of coffee, in that, there may be, just as we've talked about the diversity of the veteran community, there may be a diversity of organizations that election officials will need to interface with, and to reach out and make contacts with.

Laura?

MS. BALUN:

You know, I agree what you said about, it's not a single cup of coffee. We partner with about 7,400 organizations across the country, and so, to get anything for the veterans, you know, it's the 7,400 cups of coffee, if you will.

But, I wanted to go back to what you were saying, Deborah, about the Election Commission and that reach out. In 2008, we provided the VA Medical Centers points of contact to the Election Commission, and we also provided the points of contact for the Chiefs of Voluntary Service at every VA Medical Center, the Election Commission person in their area. So, I'd be glad to be able to connect you with the people in your area. That is certainly something that we're looking for.

We actually talked to Carol, who is doing the research for you for the Military Heroes research project. We asked that we have that, you know, list of election officials that we could provide to

our VA Medical Centers, now, so that we can do that reach out.
So, we'd love to have that.

MS. SEILER:

Yes, the one positive outreach that we did have was in 2008, and it was from our veterans' hospital.

MS. BALUN:

Oh, great.

MS. SEILER:

So your efforts worked.

MS. BALUN:

Good, that's good to know. Thank you.

DR. KING:

You know, the reference, in Alabama, to nine identified organizations, 7,400, the ones you mentioned, I wonder if there aren't some opportunities there for a reduction in duplication of effort, in that, those organizations might be very appreciative if state or local election officials reach out to them, because it may create more of a uniform statement of the services that are available, the location. But that's an enormous number of groups.

One thing I wanted to follow up on, too, for, many of our elections officials live in communities that may not have access to a major university, but community colleges, vocational-technical schools, all have Departments of Veterans Affairs. I think the challenge for election officials is identifying where that office is within that institution. Sometimes it will be imbedded in financial aid, sometimes in student services. And my suggestion would be, just call the president's office and the assistant there will be able to

direct you to the appropriate place on campus. But that is what those people do. And, as you pointed out, they provide more services than just financial aid. They're really looking at the whole student, and the issues that surround that student, so a very good suggestion.

Any other organizations that we want to talk about? Paul?

MR. LUX:

You mentioned Merle, you know, this idea of the potential duplication of effort and, you know, when you look at the fact that, you know, a lot of the organizations Secretary Chapman talked about, they do -- they all seem to be benefit driven, you know. Most of the outreach on colleges tends towards their education benefits. Although, like with things like the voc rehab programs and things like that, you know, there is some tie in to other things. But, you know, Veterans of Foreign Wars, DAVs, you know, they all -- it's really an odd way that they all seem to be -- when a veteran has a problem, you know, here's who they go to. But it really depends on the veteran's situation as to which organization sometimes can help them. So, for example, you may have served, you know, in wartime, but not actually be disabled or have a compensable disability from the military, which means the DAV is going to say, sorry, we can't help you even though it may be a service they would provide to a disabled veteran. So, maybe you need to go talk to the VFW or the American Legion or to some of these other organizations. And then, you know, we do have, even in Okaloosa County, a veterans' services office at the county level, that is a county department and their job is, you know, basically, a very wide

variety of outreach for all of the different veterans' issues, whether they be educational, whether it be a reevaluation of their medical status, et cetera.

So, there is a -- there seems to be a lot of duplication of effort on those services, but, you know, as kind of why we're here, not a lot in the, you know, are they having any problems accessing ballots, and what's the outreach that's being done for it.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Lee Page has joined us this morning. Lee, we know your experience in advocacy groups related to voting.

And what we've been talking about is what are the organizations that exist to assist veterans and how might election officials better interface and leverage those organizations in providing support for registration and voting for veterans.

MR. PAGE:

Thank you very much, and I apologize for being late.

But, like Paul said, there are a lots of different veterans' service organizations that assist veterans with disabilities. My organization, PVA, which is Paralyzed Veterans of America, have service officers in most of the states and different VA facilities across the country. And we assist a lot of our members when it comes to registration to vote, but then, also, especially those who are full-time in residence. A lot of times they have to be -- make that request to the VA for the ballot to come to them, and they then get assistance, actually, to vote. Some of our chapters have linked up with the League of Women Voters to go into, actually, some of the facilities and do registration, and then, assist when it comes to

voting. So, as Paul said, throughout the state there are different veterans' service organizations there to assist, but it's according to that type of membership.

Like I said, our members are PVA, and all of them are paralyzed, meaning with spinal cord injury. 99 percent of them use wheelchairs. So -- and there again, accessibility at the polling places as required by the ADA and other -- and HAVA, so you've got to ensure that all places are accessible, and the actual devices to cast the ballot.

DR. KING:

Okay, good, Steve?

MR. TROUT:

We've developed a good relationship with our National Guard. And, in Oregon we're all vote-by-mail, and so, really the most important thing we can do is get you registered. Once we get you registered to vote, then you're on the grid, so to speak, and you're going to get a ballot at every election and you're going to get our information that tells you, if you got a disability/accessibility need, whatever, that then we can provide whatever tools and we continue to add tools to be able to help there.

But I think that relationship with the National Guard is important and, you know, with any military unit, as people transition from active duty to veteran's status. I think we got a good definition earlier that that's an important time as a handoff to make sure they're registered and engaged there. We also use that as an opportunity for people that, you know, have been overseas, active service, and then coming home. Like, I've got a group coming

home, here, late September, that I've got to make sure that I'm interacting with the National Guard to make sure that I don't send ballots to them overseas, when they're going to be back home in September, and trying to keep track of them and identify where we can get their ballots. But I think if we can get them registered as they make that transition out of active duty, especially in a vote-by-mail state, which solves a lot of the problems that others have, that's the biggest advantage that we could have.

DR. KING:

Okay, Steve makes a really interesting point. Frequently, as a local election official, we're frustrated by statute and rules and regulations that exist that were either set in stone and time has moved past them or shift onerous work onto the locals. Deborah knows what I mean, as thus Paul. But I think what Oregon has done is really kind of recognized that working within your vote-by-mail strategy, which already exists for every citizen, but also your UOCAVA solution looks very much like it does for the citizens, but leveraging that existing statute infrastructure, and then making your approach complementary to it, rather than wrestling with it, as many of us attempt to do. So, that's a very interesting point.

Alice, I wonder if you could comment a little bit on some of the demographics. A couple of topics have come up here that I want to drill down deeper into and learn -- you mentioned homelessness as an issue, which, in election administration, that has its own challenges, in terms of registration. But we've talked about the survivability of injuries, now, on the battlefield, which is creating a larger group of voters with disabilities. And so, before

we kind of start to drill down into those specific challenges, I'd like Alice to talk a little bit about some of the demographics of veterans and disabilities.

MS. MILLER:

Right, what we have -- the information that we have from the U.S. Census Bureau is that 698,000 veterans have a rating of 70 percent or higher of a disability, 3.4 million we have as having some service-connected disability which I find interesting because Laura just indicated that they have 8 million or more that they serve with some kind of service-related disability. So,, there's a big discrepancy with those numbers.

MS. BALUN:

Well, now, these are veterans. It doesn't mean -- the 8.5 million was veterans that they served, so it doesn't mean...

MS. MILLER:

Okay.

MS. BALUN:

...you know...

MS. MILLER:

All right.

MS. BALUN:

...physical disabilities.

MS. MILLER:

Okay, and then, just a little bit more Merle, the number that we show are 9 million of that number are 65 and older. So that's, you know, we're hitting our seniors as we get into the numbers talking about veterans. 1.5 million, 35 or younger, and 4.5 million men and

women served during the Gulf War from 1990 to present. So that, again, gives you a little bit of the idea of the individuals that we're dealing with and the kinds of services that they need based on age, and as when they were considered disabled or leaving the military. So, one other stat that I'd like to put out there, there were 49,000 as of July 2012 men and women wounded in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. So that's a pretty large number.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you.

Lee, I'd like to start with you, if we could, to talk about some of the specific kinds of challenges that veterans might have. And you've already raised a very important point. Many of us who deal with the testing of voting systems, like myself, I often get tunnel vision and I think about accessibility at the device, accommodation of the disability. I don't think as much about curb cutouts and accessibility of the precinct. But let's start a discussion about those specific kinds of challenges that election officials might want to move to the top of their queue, in terms of looking at their polling places, looking at their training of poll workers, looking at all the thousands of moveable pieces that we put in play for an election, against these specific challenges.

MR. PAGE:

All right, like you said, there are lots of different issues. Veterans, especially coming out of foreign wars, have different types of catastrophic injuries, like I said, persons in wheelchairs that are full-time with spinal cord injury, but then you have others with -- who need prosthetics and orthotics, basically because of amputation,

whether they're missing legs, or especially arms, and then -- where they would use a prosthetic, which would also give them limited hand motion or arm motion when it comes to casting ballots, and then, especially those who are blind due to obviously IEDs have done a lot of damage to those veterans. Coming back, they're not considered a veteran until they're discharged from DOD, Department of Defense, because when they're in facilities like Walter Reed getting their rehab, they're still considered in the military. It's once they get to the VA is when they become a veteran.

The specific challenges at the polling place are all of the above. You need to have an accessible path of travel, which is kind of the main thing, and that's from parking to curb cuts, to the entrance, to the identification table where you're looking -- you know, looking up your residence and all that type of stuff, and then, casting the ballot, you know. In some cases, as you know, a person can bring an attendant or a family member or designate someone to assist them in the booth. And then, there are also another host of issues that could be specifically designed for that one single person, as in the case there's not any uniform issue across the board affecting multiple people, obviously.

So, training when it comes to poll workers, it's a little bit of a broad generalization for them to look out and see, you know, what the needs are of those veterans with disabilities. But it also, you know, comes full circle for anyone who has a disability who comes across. You were talking about veterans who are 65 and older and then younger veterans, a lot -- especially those who are from the

recent wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, you've got to realize those guys coming out of the wars are much younger. So, they are definitely used to technology, and also kind of demand technology, whether it's prosthetics or orthotics or just technology like cell phones. I mean, we're all used to cell phones, now, whereas somebody 65 and older might not be. So -- and a lot of times there's devices that help assist folks when it comes to voting.

So, there are those issues at the poll, and then also, as you know, mail-in, and that type of stuff.

DR. KING:

I think I heard two really important things, Lee, in your comments. One is that the expectations of the voters in this segment are very much age determined, and that rather than look at these voters as a monolithic group, get your jeweler's glass out and recognize that the younger voters may have expectations for technology assistance that might not only not be appropriate for older, but may actually be alienating, in some cases, if not properly presented at the polling place.

MR. PAGE:

Right.

DR. KING:

The second thing is, all of us have just gone through redistricting and there's a tendency towards collapsing of precincts and diminishing the number of precincts, which means that a lot of buildings are going to be in use in November that were not in use in the last general election in 2010, or in 2008, and encouraging local election officials, again, to get that jeweler's glass out, go look at

the new facilities, make sure they're compliant, make sure that all of the signage, the cutouts, all of that criteria for accessibility has been addressed in those new places. So, I think those are both good points.

Paul?

MR. LUX:

And Lee, you mentioned specifically poll worker training, and that can be one of the bigger challenges, you know. How do you train people to be receptive to the needs of the disability community as a whole? And, obviously, disabled veterans fit into that nicely.

And, like some of the training videos we have seen have increasingly gotten better over time. One of the most recent ones that we use now actually shows you -- puts you in the perspective of the voter with the disability. And so, one of the scenarios is a voter who is hard of hearing, and so, the audio of the poll workers that this camera is interacting with is muted and very distorted and hard to hear. The voter with low vision, it's very dark. And it really catches the poll worker's attention when they -- you know, because they're -- the video starts, and they're like, "Wait a minute, I can't hear it, I can't hear it." And it's like, exactly, that's the whole point. And even still, we had a speaker at one of our conferences, and I'd love to bring this group in for my poll workers, of course, money becomes a factor sometimes, that actually did exercises with supervisors and our staff who were in attendance, that, you know, looking at, here's a document, and then we put a mirror and now you have to read it backwards through the mirror. And this is what

a voter with this particular disability, this is what a ballot looks like to them, and how hard some of those things are for them.

And so, there -- we are making some good progress in better training aids for poll workers to put that handle on it, so that they have the ability to deal with it better.

DR. KING:

Paul, on developing your curriculum for poll workers, do you think it would be appropriate for election officials to reach out to some of these advocacy groups that were mentioned earlier, the nine that Beth mentioned, to help review the curriculum and maybe provide those kinds of insights, if a jurisdiction can't afford to produce a video, perhaps, at least they could have another set of eyes look at it?

MR. LUX:

Well, in our state -- now you mentioned the, you know, the fact that we get boxed in by laws sometimes and, of course, we have a state poll worker manual and, you know, many of us have departed -- not departed from it, let me make sure I make clear on that.

DR. KING:

Enhanced.

MR. LUX:

Enhanced, thank you, is a much better word.

[Laughter]

MR. LUX:

And added a lot more detail and specifics to it that they don't do. And we actually have poll workers who have gone -- who have become disabled who come back and help us. So, for example,

one of our poll workers who lost his sight to diabetes comes back periodically and, you know, we bring him in and he walks through the voting process with them, so that they can see what his challenges are. We have poll workers who are in wheelchairs who come in and, again, do the same thing. And so, we try to use as realistic training as possible to make that outreach more meaningful to the poll workers.

DR. KING:

And in the case that you mentioned, the advantages that the vision impaired poll worker brings was happenstance. Would you recommend that as being intentional; that election officials should look to recruit poll managers and poll workers who have these insights into accessibility issues, and may not only bring that to the precinct that they work in, but then be a resource for the election official to ping ideas off of and get feedback from?

MR. LUX:

Oh absolutely, absolutely.

DR. KING:

Okay, Deborah, and then Laura, and then Juan.

MS. SEILER:

In our county, we work -- we have monthly meetings with a group that we call our Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee. We call it a VAAC. And those are very helpful, because those folks come in and they have, of course, a broad spectrum of disabilities ranging from hearing, sight, mobility impairments, and so forth. And they have been very helpful to us in helping devise our training, but importantly, to evaluate some of our polling place and like our

voting booths, for example. So they have been extremely helpful to us.

DR. KING:

Could you talk about how you recruited that board and a little bit about your manage it? I think that's an excellent idea.

MS. SEILER:

Well, it's really evolved over the years. And we had to reach out to people. We just go to various organizations within the community, known members. Some of the members have come to us because they've had an interest in what we're doing. And, in large part, we reached out to those people when we were implementing our touch screen devices for the polling places, so some of those contacts were established back when we were making a change to our whole voting system.

DR. KING:

You raise a really good point. I think many of us, each time we go through the certification at the state level of voting systems, that we assemble a taskforce, and ideally that taskforce represents all the stakeholders involved, of which the accessibility community is an important one. But what you've done is you've made that a persistent influence into your administration of elections, and I think that's really something that jurisdictions ought to be looking at is not making these groups effervescent, where you bring them together and then you disband them, but how you can sustain that contribution, not only for the selection of your technology, but also for your operational refinement and your outreach strategy. That's really a good point.

I've got Laura, and then Juan, and then Steve.

MR. TROUT:

I've got a point.

DR. KING:

Okay, let me reinforce that and then we'll come to Laura.

MR. TROUT:

I'm sorry, just on that point, what we found valuable there, is, no matter what tools you establish to serve these voters, members of that group, that hopefully, you're maintaining throughout the year, are your biggest marketers. They're the ones that are going to let the voters that need these different tools to help them vote be able to come and use them. So, you know, I can develop, you know, thousands of different tablets and different tools and things for people to vote on, but unless they know about them it's not helping as many as it could. And so, using these different advocacy groups that you set up to be -- to take the news of the tools that you have out to their communities is a really valuable thing.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Laura, and then Juan.

MS. BALUN:

And I totally agree with that.

I want to go back to something Lee talked about, and that is the accessibility point. And, in 2008, when we assisted, you know, the veterans to be able to vote, we had off-station trips, and we took a group of disabled veterans from the VA Medical Centers to the polling places. And so, when we talk about training, it might be a great idea if you take an off-station trip, or a field trip, so to speak,

and train some of those workers, and then they would be able to see what kinds of things you need to be concerned with, and what kinds of things that they need to pay attention to. The curb cutouts, you know, is a great -- you know, until you have to go through it, you know, or until people experience it, they don't realize, you know, that you need the curb cutouts or you need, you know, bathrooms for people to be able to go into. Or -- so it might be great dry run to have -- invite, you know, the people to come out to help. And then you engage them. You engage them in helping them improve the process. So, you know, it might be a great idea if you would invite, you know, some of the people to come out and take off-station trips to train and to, you know, engage them.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MS. BALUN:

And, I can certainly give you some of the points of contacts for people that you can contact. We did that in Pennsylvania, and we did it in Texas, and it was a great opportunity for, not only the veterans to be able to vote, but to take a whole group and for the polling places to see, you know, the kinds of things that you need to pay attention to.

DR. KING:

Okay, let me pick up...

MR. PAGE:

Just a follow-up.

DR. KING:

...Lee's comment, and then, Paul's comment on that. And then Juan, I still have you.

MR. PAGE:

I was going to say just to follow-up on what Laura said. Taking the veteran, like, on a field trip, it really empowers them...

MS. BALUN:

Right.

MR. PAGE:

...because they may not even know that they can do that, you know. Even though they are registered to vote, it may be just the first time they've ever voted in their entire life. And so, getting them off campus not only shows them how to do it, but gives them a whole new insight as to what civic duty they can do, besides their service, really empowers them in the election process.

MS. BALUN:

Yes, it does.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Well, I'm going then to Juan, and then Paul, thank you.

DR. GILBERT:

I kind of want to connect a few dots going back to the poll worker training bit. So, we do research in this area, and so, I have a team of about 15 graduate students who are active in this area. And so, they would be very knowledgeable of things to look for. And we do these mock elections with different disability groups, and I'll talk about that later. And what I find interesting is that there's three components to the training that I think is necessary. One, we kind

of talk about etiquette, understanding the etiquette. Two is the technology, training the poll worker on how to set up appropriate technology and how it's used. And the obvious one we talked about is the environment. But then, there's the accumulation of the three together.

So, what I'm getting at, is, I have a group of people who are knowledgeable, trained in this area. We did an election on September 1st in Minnesota for "Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered." We had 278 people vote on our technology, Prime III, and they had -- they were demographics from all over the place; age, gender, ethnicity, and disability. And so, it was interesting to see the students who are very knowledgeable of the machine, somewhat of etiquette, and definitely of the environment, would come to me and say, "Well, we have a person with this disability and I'm not -- how would they do this?"

So, what's interesting, what I'm getting at, is even with the knowledge of proper appropriate etiquette, environment and the technology, there are cases that come up and you have to somewhat think on the fly of how to accommodate them or interact and understand that particular disability. And, I see that more so, in particular with the veteran community, because what I find is that in the research we're doing they tend to be more engaged. Like you were saying, the younger veterans, they'll come in and they have this expectation of the technology. And it's interesting to hear their stories where they say, "I can do it and I want to do it. You just show me where to go and I can -- I'll do it." And so, that etiquette interaction is very important. How do I -- the poll workers need to

understand how do I interface and what's the environment and how do I use the technology?

DR. KING:

That's a really good point. I wrote down here in my notes, Juan, that maybe a fourth attribute is the attitude. And rather than looking for a reason not to accommodate the voter, which, in many ways, might be more expedient in a very busy polling place, the attitude should be finding that flexibility within the rules of the polling place, in order to make that a good experience for the voter.

DR. GILBERT:

Yeah, and it's often the case that the escape clause, "Okay, let me help you." And what that means is, I'll vote for you, while you tell me what to do.

DR. KING:

Um-hum.

DR. GILBERT:

And that sometimes doesn't go over very well. We've seen cases where it went catastrophic in many ways, because they – again, it's self-advocates becoming empowered, individuals who want to do this themselves. So, that is very important.

DR. KING:

Yeah, it's an excellent point. Paul?

MR. LUX:

I just wanted to add a cautionary note about complacency, because, you know, we all, when we're getting a new polling place, we go through all of the checks to make sure we have the doorways are the right width and there's not thresholds that are

barriers and all of those things. But don't assume nothing changes. I had the -- we had a polling location that was formerly a DAV hall. So, I mean, in the back of your mind you think, well, it's a Disabled American Veterans' building so, obviously, it's going to be accessible to disabilities. And they sold the building and I went there one day, and I don't even remember what for, probably to check the phone lines for the modems, and I noticed that the church that had bought it had moved the doorway and didn't tell us. And so, now there was this nice ramp that went nowhere...

[Laughter]

MR. LUX:

...and a doorway that was no longer accessible. So, just a cautionary tale to, you know, don't become complacent and assume that because something was handicapped accessible for the last election, that it remains so for the coming election.

DR. KING:

Okay, Brad, I want to ask you a question. And I think Paul just identified a very broad issue for election officials, which is, normally as we're planning our election strategy, it's like sourdough bread, we go back and get a piece of the last one, and we make the new one out of it. So, there's a tendency to stand pat on a lot of issues, until we're surprised by, either complaints, or a last-minute awareness.

Have you seen a change in the kinds of disabilities that are occurring in veterans? I know we've heard a discussion here. Lee mentioned that younger veterans have a higher expectation of technology-driven solutions. But, maybe one of the problems that

we may have, as election officials, is that our own perception has become static about the kinds of challenges. If you could talk a little bit about the changes that your research has identified.

DR. FAIN:

Right, and particularly, the conflicts of most recent concern, Iraq and Afghanistan, the characteristic injuries of those conflicts are poly-trauma, meaning one or more limb is affected, and traumatic brain injuries, essentially, caused by an IED blast. We're still trying to understand what that means, in terms of what are the effects of TBI, long-term, on folks that have transitioned out of the military.

But we're finding a lot of the disabilities are hidden. They're not necessarily observable. And that is a challenge for poll workers when somebody comes in with a mild TBI, to moderate TBI injury, their disability isn't immediately apparent to those individuals. And so, how do we train the poll workers to try to pick up on the cues when someone does need an accommodation? And in some cases, the injury can be quite severe.

We -- in execution of the research for the Military Heroes Initiative, we went out with the FVAP and their subcontractor to treatment facilities around the United States and talked to individuals that have been wounded, either due to a blast or other injuries during war. And they recounted stories, you know, stories of confusion, stories of disorientation, stories of lapses of memory, stories of issues with paying attention, that just were really hard for us to understand that don't have those disabilities. One individual recounted hearing about a story about an individual that was driving and forgotten that they were driving, right, because of their

disability. And it was because of the nature of the injury is so severe to them, the changes that occur in the brain. So, you know, we really have to be aware of those things.

It is the nature, and you mentioned survivability as being -- it's a testament to the medical system that so many soldiers are surviving. 80 percent of those that passed away, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, would have passed away had their injury occurred in the lobby of Walter Reed, because that injury was so catastrophic. It was only 20 percent of those individuals that would potentially have survived had their injury -- had they gotten to them quicker, or had some kind of technology available at the scene of the injury. So, that means that most of the folks that are injured are actually surviving these injuries. And these injuries are catastrophic.

Previous research that I've done was executed before the Air Force Surgeon General, looking at how we should design the future expeditionary medical facilities. And I had to look at the kinds of cases that were being treated in these facilities. These are the most forward deployed surgical facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it is just amazing that soldiers survive. In fact, some of the research is telling us that the human physiology, the human body is not capable of dealing with the types of injuries that these soldiers are surviving, and therefore, having to deal with. In fact, their body is fighting against them in some cases. In some cases their muscles calcify, literally turn into bone, because of the systemic injuries they saw.

And so, these are different disabilities. These are different injuries than what we're used to seeing. It's not just somebody, you know, that happens to be in a wheelchair, or blind, or has a hearing issue. These are catastrophic injuries and they're often quite hidden. We have to figure out ways of dealing with that.

DR. KING:

Okay. I know later in our discussion we are going to come back and talk about some of the research initiatives that are going on and the challenges that these disabilities present, not only to election officials, but to manufactures of voting systems, and to the people who test those voting systems.

I'm going to go with Beth, and then Juan.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

I think we would be remiss to not call out some of the numbers to what you said really touched me and took me back to some of my notes. In January of 2011 there were 67,495 veterans who were homeless. And that number is just absolutely shocking to me. But a higher number even, 144,842 spend at least one night in an emergency shelter, at least one night. And there are different types of social injuries, as well, that these people bring home and emotional injuries. 720,000 of them are unemployed and 300,000, just from Iraq and Afghanistan, are suffering from severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

So, when these people go into a polling place, and we hope that they do, everything should be right for them, you know. There are not of these statistics that sound really good. And so, when they come to cast a vote, since they are the people who protected it

and preserved it and are providing it for future generations, the least we could do, as election officials, is to make it as easy and as seamless as possible for them to be able to cast their vote.

DR. KING:

I think everybody would agree that, Beth. It's well...

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

It's a moral obligation, yeah.

DR. KING:

...well said.

Juan?

DR. GILBERT:

I want to go to the other end of the spectrum. Brad talked a little bit about that younger veteran. I want to go to the opposite end.

So, one of the things that we've been seeing is that at that high end, I think Alice said it's 9 million, 65 and older, at that end, some of the things we're seeing is, as we change the way elections are operated, meaning technology and things like that, that really has an impact. So, I'll give you a simple example, a touch screen. So, at that younger age they know to touch the screen. But what we're seeing at that older age is, they don't touch the screen, they see it as a button. And what do you do to a button? You press it. And so, they actually press and hold and push rather than touching. So, that seems like a simple thing, but that is a major caveat, depending on how that technology is designed and how it behaves.

And so, what we're seeing is if you look at the distance between practicing at the practice of voting, and then the frequency which it changes from one medium or technology to another, that

has a severe impact in particular on this group who may not be used to using those cell phones or tablets, iPads and things. And then you go into the voting booth and now they're presented, for a lot of them the first time, with something they are very unfamiliar with. And so, that has some ramifications, going back to something what Beth is saying, dealing with a social implication, you know. They don't know how to use that and that interaction is different, now, with the poll worker, because there's a pride and sometimes they don't want you to show them. You're going back to that self-pride. So, that's something to consider in this training dealing with that population who may be interfacing with this technology. Whether it's paper or whether it's actually an electronic medium for the first time, that interaction is something to watch.

DR. KING:

Okay, Brad?

DR. FAIN:

Well, there's a related problem for those that are recently injured. What we found was if they've lost some ability, right, and they haven't -- are not familiar with the technologies designed to provide -- assistive technologies that are designed to provide capabilities to make up for that ability or to address that ability, they often go out into the world and they're ill equipped with dealing with how to interface with standard assistive technologies made available to people with disabilities that they're familiar with, because they've had the disability for a much longer time. And so, when they come across these metaphors of the screen reader or screen magnifier or other assistive technologies, they're just unfamiliar with those.

They haven't had the requisite experience in using those technologies. And some of those technologies are imbedded in the voting systems and we have to explain -- the poll worker has to explain how do we interact, how do we use that, what is the metaphor that you're dealing with, because they have no familiarity with that.

DR. KING:

Okay, I want to come back to a topic that Beth introduced. Years ago, I was driving around Chicago and I saw a black and white billboard that said, you know, "Remember that one-third of homeless men in Chicago are Vietnam vets." And I just remember being struck by that. And it helped change my perspective on the kinds of services that maybe as a community we ought to be providing to homeless people. But homelessness creates some unique challenges in the administration of election, in both registration and in delivering.

And, in Oregon, unique, vote-by-mail, so many of the issues that we deal with with homeless voters in conventional environments are really on the registration end, the actual ballot casting is pretty much standard. But in Oregon you have both issues to deal with. And if you could talk for a little bit about how you address that problem, in general, and maybe some advice that other jurisdictions could benefit from.

MR. TROUT:

Sure. And, I mean, the registration angle is no different than anybody else. It's, you know, where are these people? Where are they sleeping at night? How are we going to put them in a

precinct? Who are they entitled to vote for? And so, you know, whether you're polling place elections or vote-by-mail, I think, you know, the standards are out there. In Oregon, we have, you know, people who put down the best identifier that they can, of where this person lives, where their residence is, you know, whether it's this overpass, or this park, or this tree, or whatever best describes it. But then, for us, the complication is how do we get a ballot to them because they can't go to a polling place? And so, in those instances, we have them pick up the ballot at their county elections office, which, you know, is a little bit more difficult than where you have polling places because I don't have polling places, I've just got one county clerk's office and we got 36 counties. So, it could be a long way away. But most of our homeless people are in the urban population centers where we have -- where it's closer to a county elections office. So, we will have the ballot available for them there that they can come in anytime during an 18-day window, and say this is who I am, and get their ballot, mark it there, and then turn it back in. And if they need to update their address, for lack of a better term, because they've moved to a different area, then we can update that at the same time. But as far as getting them a ballot, once we get them registered it's something that they have to pick up at the county elections office.

DR. KING:

Does your strategy for outreach include working with social agencies that provide services to homeless? How do you go about identifying and reaching out to that community?

MR. TROUT:

Yeah, that's -- as with all special demographic groups, the hardest part is identifying them and where they are, you know. Where are our veterans, where are our disabled voters, where are our blind voters, where are our homeless voters, and so, identifying those. And so, with dwindling resources in our state elections office and our county elections office, it's there's not as much happening as there used to be. And so, we are having to rely on those advocacy groups, different social interest groups and, you know, trying to maintain those groups. As Deborah was talking about earlier, with veterans groups, just being able to keep in contact there, because we can't do it all, the counties can't do it all, and we need to rely on these other groups to help us to identify and keep these different populations informed of the tools that are available for them and what the process is.

DR. KING:

Okay, Paul, and then Deborah.

MR. LUX:

And one of the things that, in Florida, very similar to the homeless problem, at least as far as the challenges for what ballot style does this person get, what precinct does this person vote in, and the person who deals with it, probably the most, is my counterpart Harry Sawyer down in Monroe County, which is Key West, and that's the people who live on boats because, of course, the boats move around, every bit as much as homeless people do. And so, basically, you know, you end up with exactly what Steve said, you know, where did you sleep last night? Now, Florida allows us to, if a voter does not have a residence address, like an absent military

person, for example, who maybe lived at base housing when they registered, and then they've moved on, but they remain our voter, to assign them to our Courthouse address in the county seat. And so, we can provide a residence address for these people as far as voting purposes go.

But the real trick, as we've noted, is how do we reach those people? One of the things that they've started doing in our county, and one of our county judges was a general in the Army Reserve, and he was in an IED explosion and he spent a long time recovering at Walter Reed, and he's back at work and one of the hugest advocates for, we have what they call a veterans' expo annually, and they bring in legal services to provide legal advice, representatives from some of these other service agencies like the DAV and the VFW. And we try -- somehow they always schedule it when there's a conflict with us, but we do our best to also have voter registration at those events. And it is designed specifically for veterans who might not be able to obtain those services because, you know, they may be homeless or transient and moving around a lot. And so, our county does do this veterans' expo once a year, to say here's a chance for even homeless veterans to come and get legal advice about any claim status, or how do you file claims or who do you need to talk to, who do you call, those types of issues. And General Patt Maney is one of the big advocates for that.

DR. KING:

So maybe, again, for local election officials, is identifying if there's an equivalent of a veterans' expo that you could also exhibit at or be a part of may be another way to reach out.

MR. LUX:

Well. and I'm kind of fortunate, at least in my county, that the veterans' services officer for the county, that office that I mentioned earlier, actually used to be our NVRA coordinator. Once upon a time she worked for us. So. she certainly is every bit as still plugged into the election process. even in her new role as the veterans' service officer. So. she makes sure that they know when they come to see her if they have to register to vote, you know, where they can go and who they need to speak to.

DR. KING:

Okay. I've got Deborah. and then Lee.

MS. SEILER:

Go ahead Lee.

MR. PAGE:

I'd just like to follow-up on the homeless veteran and how they got there. One of the reasons is, obviously, they're very low income. And then, once they get out of the VA they don't have any family support of where to go or, you know, especially coming back. And, there again, some of those -- a lot of them have PTSD, in some cases brain injury, also. But then, the other thing is they're out of the VA and they don't even realize they still have services through the VA, especially the older veterans. They just assume it's a one-time shot and don't even realize that they can go back to the VA.

DR. KING:

Okay, Deborah, and Beth.

MS. SEILER:

Yeah, I think this entire conversation about homelessness is really very pertinent. But to me, it plays into a larger question, which, is for veterans, it's the whole issue of establishing residency, you know. After the return from service they're new to a community and they may be very transitional for a considerable period of time, maybe due to homelessness, but also, if they're going back to school. I know when I was a student, I moved on average of every six months. So, the -- you know the idea that these people are in transition, they may become veterans in San Diego County, but they may have come there, and they're establishing residency from another state with another set of laws, so -- and different rules for registering to vote, different rules for voting by mail, different rules for, you know, voting absentee. So, I think there's, you know, an important educational component that we all have to address the residency issue, first of all.

One of the tools that we have, and I think this is, you know, a growing tool for us now, is the use of online registration. And to the extent that we can share with all of these veterans advocacy groups the online registration, we were one of the first counties to just put our voter registration form online. It wasn't true online registration. The Secretary of State's Office, now, at the state level, is trying to get -- they've been trying for the last couple of weeks now, and it may be happening today, I don't know, but to try to get true online voter registration going where we could -- the person could go online, register to vote, and then, we'd pull that signature in from the Department of Motor Vehicles, and then, we would upload that information at the county level.

So, I think that these are really important tools to help overcome those general residency issues in addition to just the specific homelessness issue.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Beth?

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

We're obviously not lawmakers in this room, but I'm hearing all these statistics and rereading my own notes. There are over 853,000 backlog cases at VA, there are 100,000 more this time this year than there were last year, 500,000 more than there were three years ago. And I'm thinking about the motor voter law, as it's called, that was implemented years ago, and I'm asking myself if these veterans are going into Medicaid, if they're going for any reason to DHR, if they're going to some of these agencies, then they're being offered a voter registration form. But, I'm wondering how many of our VA hospitals and service centers, every time they see a veteran, they should be saying "Are you registered to vote? Would you like to vote?" And every one of our VA centers should be equipped with numbers of registration forms and information on how and where to vote. For instance, in our state, we have AlabamaVotes.gov, which we try to make sure our veterans are aware of. They come home, they type in their name, their birth date, they hit a button, it tells them if they're presently registered, it tells them where to vote, it gives them a map of how to get to their voting place. So, I think we need to work more with veterans' organizations to ensure that every veteran who has any need is immediately asked, just as people who apply for food stamps or

WIC, or any of those services, that we immediately ensure that they are registered to vote or that they at least have that opportunity.

MS. BALUN:

You know, keep in mind the statistics that Alice read, 21.8 million veterans, and in VA there are only 8.5 million that are registered, or, you know, that come through VA. So, it's a very small percentage, you know, of veterans that you have access to, through VA.

So, you know, I keep hearing the DAV, VFW, you know, American Legion, throughout each person's, you know, comments. So, to me that would seem like the point at which you would do that. And Deborah, your point about the online registration I think is excellent and then, you know, then they would have access to be able to register, you know, at any point at any time. So, I applaud you for that.

MS. SEILER:

Well, and I think it's a visible tool because there are so many different organizations -- as Beth was pointing out, there are so many organizations that I was surprised when I started researching it a little bit how many organizations there are. But they have Websites.

MS. BALUN:

Right.

MS. SEILER:

And if those Websites have a link to our online registration ability, I mean, there's a lot of knowledge and awareness that could be raised right at those Websites.

MS. BALUN:

Right, you know, the Website button that you're talking about, we certainly have done that. With NVA we've put a button for people to -- and it takes them directly to the Election Commission, so then they can select, you know, where -- what state they need to vote in. Because, you know, as we all know, every state is different, every county is different. So, they would need to be able to find out how it is they could vote within that state, within that county.

So, that's our challenge is that, you know, within each VA you may have people that come from four or five different states and different counties, and so, having everybody -- having the information at VA points, I'm not sure, is realistic, because there are so many different states and counties that you have to deal with. But I think the online registration is certainly the way to go.

DR. KING:

Paul, and then Lee.

MR. LUX:

And, you know, the services that became available for the active military as a result of the MOVE Act, the ability to look yourself up online and see if you're registered and where and the status of your absentee ballot, you know, we all have -- we've all implemented the MOVE Act at the local jurisdiction level and at the state level, so these services are available. And, of course, once you put it out there, I mean, we don't fine tune it so that it's only there for the military. So, of course, it becomes a benefit to all the voters regardless of their status. So disabled veterans, homeless veterans, et cetera, still have the same ability to use those tools to

find out if they're registered and where, from pretty much any computer they can get their hands on. So, I mean, it's out there, but it's almost more of an education issue, as you said, you know, if they would put a link on their Website to where, you know, these tools can be found just to help direct people.

MR. PAGE:

Just to follow-up...

DR. KING:

Lee.

MR. PAGE:

...on reach out, it's a very good priority and possibly one of your number one issues. But, a lot of veteran service organizations register to vote might not be one of their main priorities, because they've got other services they want to provide for their members or those veterans more in the way of other benefits or healthcare.

And the other thing is, there are a lot of small chapters where they're not -- they're all volunteers that are there, not paid staff, they might not have the capabilities or the understanding of how to do that, and so, yeah, that -- those are some main issues.

But then, the other thing is make sure you reach out to your state or local county disability organizations, because they will definitely be able to assist.

DR. KING:

Right, I think I've heard a couple of things that create a theme here, and one is that the jurisdiction -- the local election official really is an expert on their jurisdiction and they'll know a lot of these issues. What Paul and Deborah pointed out is that there are large

communities of veterans that congregate around military installations and that makes your installations unique. Steve pointed out that urban areas have a tendency to concentrate homeless veterans more than rural areas.

But I wanted to ask Deborah a question about what I thought was a really great idea, the Voting Accessibility Committee that you have. And I'd like both you and Steve to weigh in on this. Given what Beth pointed out is the large number of homeless veterans, and that intersection, having a homeless advocacy representative on that committee as a part of that invisible group, if you will, would that be worthwhile for a jurisdiction to look at, if it met the criteria?

MS. SEILER:

It's a very reasonable point, I think. And at this point I'm not -- some of our folks are very atune to the homeless issue, but I don't know that we have anybody right now who is specifically, I can't think, is specifically an advocate for homeless. So, I think that's a great suggestion.

DR. KING:

Another thing, that it's ironic, but often when jurisdictions create Web interfaces to accommodate accessibility, the Web interfaces aren't accessible. And I think one of the important things for all of us to remember is that the election systems that we use, the vote capture and vote tabulation, is only a part of that. But, for the disabled voter, that Web interface that leads them to that registration form or leads them to the services, that may be just as important as the vote capture part. And so, for local officials, if you have a vendor who builds your Website, pick up the phone and ask

them, has this been tested for full accessibility. And if your county IT is building your Website, you may have to ask them the question. But you may have to get them some help in testing it and ensuring. So, I think Laura, your point about looking at all of your information resources is critical. But recognize, as Paul has pointed out, that sighted individuals, mobile individuals, often lack the insight to test those devices, test those interfaces, in a meaningful way.

I wanted to, also, ask Juan a question about, you had raised earlier, the importance of recognizing age-determined behaviors in veterans, and in voting population in general, and that things that are very quickly adapted by younger voters may not be so by older, and vice versa. And when we were talking about using technology, like online registration, there's often some unstated assumptions about access to Internet connectivity, to computing, et cetera. Do you have any insights about what jurisdictions might want to be looking at as they're evaluating these technology solutions against these target populations that they're looking at?

DR. GILBERT:

Yeah, I would recommend that -- and actually, it's funny, when you ask me that because we kind of talked with Steve about this in Oregon -- in the county offices where you could set up a kiosk or -- so there's things you can do that people are going to come to register at the county office, or if they're going to visit some VA organization, they could potentially have kiosks or interfaces there, and I won't go into specifics, but they could have tools there that can help them register and access, you know. Get it easier in other words. So, I think making it accessible, not only means making it

accessible if I have a disability, of making it accessible for me to get it when I don't have it at home. And so, if you know I'm a frequent person to the VA, or wherever, can that resource be provided there in the county clerk's office? Can it be provided? Now, once you decide you're going to provide it there, the manifestation of that is a different story. And I use the word kiosk as a potential manifestation, but there's other ways to do that. Certainly there's phone interfaces, there's big screens, touch screens, there's different ways to do that and, obviously, paper and pen.

But I think that's the way you want to do it, because you do have that gap. I mean, you have a part of the population who hasn't experienced this technology at its fullest, and then, you have another part who has, and may be new to disability, but they still have that affinity for the technology. So, in order to accommodate both, you make it accessible on their terms, meaning the places they are.

DR. KING:

Okay, Steve?

MR. TROUT:

What we've learned is, there is no one size fits all solution here. Different people have different needs whether it's a disability, whether it's a preference, whether it's a way that they're comfortable doing things. And so, that's why we're trying to move into the direction of providing as many different tools as are out there. We also know there's people that have different disabilities that are very independent at home. They do everything on their computer, they've got their own tools, whether it's a joystick or

paddles or whatever accessible tool they have. We want to be able to use those tools that they use in their everyday life to be able to mark their ballots. And so, that's, you know, we have the ability to do that now. And so, trying to recognize that, okay, we're going to build this tool for people that have vision impairments, it's like, the intention there is good but, you know, the range of vision impairments is varied, and then, just their preferences in how they're going to interact with that are different. And then, my practical experience, there's no research study or anything with respect to older people using, you know, ten years ago, touch screens, when those were first implemented, or lately, with tablets is, you just put it in front of them, they can figure it out, and they make it work pretty easily. I really -- you know, there's an occasional person that needs some help or their finger doesn't make it work. I have one of those fingers.

But, you know, it's really, we're trying to make things as simple and as easy for as many people as possible and not targeting one specific group or disability or function and being able to -- and trying to be able to provide the ability to cast a ballot as easily as can be with tools that people are comfortable with and, you know, focusing more on the software and the ballot development than we are on the hardware that people are actually using to mark their ballot. And we've been having success with that and I think that's the wave of the future as we get away from single-purpose, you know, machines and pieces of hardware, and look to really serve the voters where they are, and with the tools that they already have. And I think that gets to the point of first-time voters. If they're

comfortable using the joystick that they have at home to do their banking or to read the paper, or whatever they're doing at home, then they're going to have a lot more comfort marking their ballot using that at home. And so, we want to take advantage of those tools that are already out there that people are already using in their daily lives instead of a couple times a year to cast a ballot.

DR. KING:

Okay, very good. Deborah?

MS. SEILER:

Well, one of the constraints that we have in being able to do what Steve suggests, and I totally agree with Steve, that, you know, we ought to be looking to commonly used tools, but we have major certification issues because, of course, the voting equipment has to be certified for use. And I know, not only at the national level, but also at the state level, there's been a lot of resistance to the certification of some of these tools that could be used. So, that's a problem.

But, I would emphasize what Steve said about the, you know, the adaptability of people. I was very surprised when we implemented touch screens that so many -- I expected it to be more popular, maybe, with the younger voters but, in fact, it was the elderly voters who gravitated towards them totally, because they could see the screen and they could mark it easily. They really enjoyed the usability of the devices. So -- and they didn't have any prior experience with it, but they gravitated towards it very comfortably.

DR. KING:

Paul?

MR. LUX:

And, you know, this year with the EASE grants that FVAP has put out, and of course, the main thrust of the projects that are being developed as part of this is absentee ballot delivery for absent military for that UOCAVA population. But in Florida we have secured the permission, both from FVAP and from the state, to be allowed to open the use of that online blank ballot delivery and online ballot marking system to the disability community. And so, although we're not, in my particular case, our project, we're not ready to roll it out for that -- for this election, if an emergency came up, if you will, I certainly have the ability to add that person onto the users' list, and have those disabled people log in and use that system to vote from home or from wherever they are using the Internet to help mark their ballot. And as you say, Merle, you know, and Steve, using whatever interface they're already most comfortable with, you know, they're already browsing the Internet and sending email and doing other things and we should be having the ability to make that available to them, and we're going to be doing that.

DR. KING:

Okay, last comment, Juan.

DR. GILBERT:

Yeah I wanted to say that, you know, we worked with Oregon and we found ways to deal with that certification issue, there's certain things you can do.

And I just would like to remind people one of the things that

we've been able to experience, being in this place of innovation and creating the technology, and then having people vote, and it's often the case where we'll have someone like we did in Oregon, they'll vote, and we have people who after they do it, they'll say, wow, that's the first time I've ever voted by myself. I mean, that is something that's very special to experience. And so, in particular, from my perspective of having a group of young people that are being educated and learning this, and they get to see that they were part of this experience that enabled a person who couldn't do something by themselves before, and for the first time were able to do it, that's a sight you have to see.

DR. KING:

Okay, we're right up at our hard break, and we'll come back in just a moment.

Before we do, though, I want to just kind of briefly summarize and set the table for our discussion when we return at 11. The beginning, this morning, was really looking at who are veterans, what are the issues that they face, what's the complexity of those issues, what are some of the emerging practices, procedures and technologies to address it. When we come back from break, we're going to talk about, what are the details of those research projects, what are some of the innovative programs that states and local jurisdictions have implemented, and what are some of the best practices that we can communicate, then, to the jurisdictions.

Steve brought up one point that I wanted to use to just summarize. Many of our medical innovations really derived out of

military applications, the need for trauma treatment, and by focusing first on the needs of the soldiers, sailors and airmen, we were able to then amplify those technologies and procedures back through the general population and everybody benefited. And I think what we're talking about with the veterans issues in voting are really the same; is that every time we make a polling precinct more accessible to a veteran in a wheelchair, it's more accessible to anybody, walking or in wheelchair. The better the usability of the system for a voting veteran, then the better it is for everybody. So, I don't want to lose sight of that, but I want to make sure that we really focus on the veterans issues when we come back and talk about these innovative programs.

I want to thank Laura. I understand that you need to leave at break, but thank you so much for coming today. And please continue to be engaged with this group and help us as we try to develop programs for the veterans. Thank you so much.

Let's take a 15 minute break and we'll re-adjourn right at 11.

[The roundtable panel at 10:45 a.m. and reconvened at 11:00 a.m.]

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you for rejoining us here on a roundtable to discuss issues related to veterans and voting in preparation for the November 6th election.

In this morning's session, we talked about who veterans are. We talked about the issues that they face, the complexity of those issues, the diversity of organizations that exist, and really, the

diversity of the veterans themselves and how non-monolithic the group is in both its constituency, but also in the challenges and the issues it faces.

What we want to talk about next are some of the innovative programs, research initiatives, things that may be plug-and-play now, and things that may be over the horizon that we should be looking at, evaluating and perhaps supporting. In preparation for that, though, I'd like to ask Alice to continue to kind of help us drill down through some of the statistics and some of the data. And then, I'd like to then go to Brad, I think, we'd like to start with you and talk about some of the research that's been done and innovations, but first Alice.

MS. MILLER:

Sure, thank you Merle. Before I do that, I just want to call attention to Merle's tie. I don't know if you all had an opportunity to look at it, but it seems to represent every branch of the military, I think, on that tie. And if that's not bringing home what we're doing, I don't know what is. So, you know, he clearly has the intent of what we're here for today. So -- I don't know where you got it from but it's...

DR. KING:

Like all fathers, I have a closet full of ties dating back to the '70s.

MS. MILLER:

Well, we're glad you pulled that one out today, and sure your sons or daughters, whoever gave it to you, are too.

Just to follow-up what you said, I want to mention the top three states for veteran population; California 2 million, Texas 1.6

million, and Florida 1.6 million. So, those are our top three states. I'm happy that we have two of the three states represented here today to talk a little bit about our issue. And just in terms of voting, in the percentages that we are showing from the 2008 election and the mid-term election, we had 15.8 million veterans that voted in 2008, which is 71 percent of the population and then 12.4 million veterans voted during the mid-term elections, a drop of 57 percent. So, still good numbers. In some, I guess, areas, you might say those numbers represent more than some jurisdictions would have had total, with their total population.

But -- so those stats are up for discussion Merle, and I want to put that on the record.

DR. KING:

Thank you. And I think at the conclusion of our roundtable today, one of the things that we're going to attempt to do is consolidate as much of these statistical data, the facts if you will, about veterans and voting and make sure that's available at the EAC Website. I mentioned to Alice that often at the local and even the state level, that many times before you begin an initiative, particularly if that initiative requires resources, you need data, you need facts to back-up your proposal. And perhaps this can be a part of what a jurisdiction can look at as they prepare proposals for their own strategies.

I want to turn now to Brad and ask him to talk about some of the research that's occurring. I think one of the challenges that folks, who don't work in the research community have, is really understanding the role of basic research and its evolution to applied

research and then its evolution to practical implementation. And it's a pipeline that, in the very beginning, there's a lot of experimentation, there's a lot of question asking, there's a lot of defining of the boundaries of the research project. And if you think of it as a funnel, the basic research identifies issues which -- of potential solutions which leads us to the applied approach and eventually will lead us, hopefully, to better implementations. And I think what's important about the kinds of solutions that Brad's group and Juan's group are looking at, is they're not only focusing on vote capture and vote tabulation systems, but they're also looking at the peripheral systems that are becoming just as important in election administration as the vote capture; the things like the use of the iPad for external use outside of the office, the Websites for registration and those kinds of things.

So, with that, Brad, I'll turn it over to you.

DR. FAIN:

Sure, sure. Well, when you approach this problem from a systems' engineering perspective you have a different, perhaps, way of thinking about the voting system as a system. It is truly a system. There are multiple components of that system. Those components have to come together and work in certain ways in order to achieve the desired outcome, which is a private, secure and independent vote.

There are many ways in which that system can break down, all right? It can break down early in the process, in the registration process, when someone is unable to obtain the proper materials from where they happen to be located. It can break down later in

the process, when they show up at the polling place. We have to consider each step in that process and evaluate each step as an important cog in that process.

So, in the most recent Military Heroes Initiative project, we went back and we tried to study and understand, from a systems perspective, what the issues were. We participated in a number of interviews with folks associated with the FVAP program, with CALIBRE being their subcontractor, and tried to understand what were the emergent needs of, at least, recently wounded veterans. And a couple of things emerged, some of which we've already spoken of today. There seems to be an overall reliance on technology in order to achieve and fill gaps in their abilities. And that came from use of cell phones and tablets to try to -- as memory aids, to using them as communication tools, or the use of prosthetics and wheelchairs in order to achieve their missing abilities.

But there was also situations that wasn't as obvious just by looking at them and they emerged after detailed interactions, in which there was a marked avoidance of social situations and crowds and a fear that going to a polling place might put them in a situation where they feel uncomfortable, it brings back memories that they're uncomfortable with and needing to be able to overcome that in order to make that first step toward the polling place. There is a sensitivity to over-stimulation, and that just might be the lighting in the facility itself was bright or the light emitted from the voting device itself was so bright that it over stimulated them in certain ways and that resulted in them needing to shut down.

It could be the ambient noise in the facility was so loud that it distracted them from their ability to complete the task. There was a loss of motivation. People just weren't as motivated as they were prior to their injury, mostly due to TBI or PTSD. As I mentioned before, difficulty in memory and concentration, limitations in endurance, either because of fatigue or pain issues, residual pain issues that they're dealing with, and, of course, a common hearing loss, as so many folks in the military have experienced due to exposure to loud noises during their career.

All those things, put together, means we need a comprehensive approach. There isn't a single one solution that's going to fit everyone. But -- and that means we have to design the polling place in order to accommodate those. We need to design the voting system. We need to design the information that they receive in such a way that it's more accessible to those that are veterans.

I've -- in our research, we divided it into three main areas. One is inaccessible polling places was a concern, the ballot design, including the instructions that are provided on the ballot itself in order to complete the ballot, and then, the voting technologies, the technologies that are there to support the completion of the ballot, as being the main issues.

In looking at that, we tried to define what requirements would be useful for veterans when thinking about those situations of a technology or a device. One of the most important characteristics that we determined was portability, the ability for the device to go to the veteran when they needed it to go to the veteran. And

certainly, it's fine, you know, to have a kiosk that the veteran goes to when he's able, but can we take a component of that and bring it to the veteran when we need to? So making it ability to be portable is something that is desired.

Flexible mounting options so the physical arrangement can change. If somebody needs to operate from a seated position, then that should be supported. If they need to be able to operate it from a standing position, for whatever reason, that should be supported as well, options for adding or adjusting controls to accommodate various individuals. So, there's a wide range of assistive technologies that people can interface with. And it really just depends on their abilities and their familiarity with that interface, whether it be a button control or a touch screen, or even the use of a sip-n-puff device, for example, for those with severe disabilities, designing it so that it is able to accommodate those technologies in a straightforward manner, and flex to the user as necessary, I think is important.

When it comes down to issues associated with the ballot interface, making sure that there's a sparse and consistent layout. I know that there's, certainly, a need to put as much information on the ballot as it needs to be given the complexity of some of the election materials that we're having to accommodate, but that works against those that have memory issues and commendation issues. So, finding the common ground and the balance between those are absolutely imperative. Making sure that the text is actually readable, and that has to do with the contrast and the font size, on everything, including the instructions that are provided to

how to use that. Using a simple linear progression, so that someone can move from one contest to another and understand where they are because, as I mentioned before, the lack of attention or the detriment in the ability to pay attention, people often get lost and they need to be able to recover wherever they are in the voting process. And then, the need to provide detailed summaries and reviews as they need it, so they can go back and get that situational awareness and better understanding of where they're at. And sometimes what they need is more time, you know. So being able to save their information and resume it at a later time, would definitely be beneficial for those that are under pressure and so forth. So, these are the types of things that we're looking at.

We've developed a test bed at Georgia Tech in order to address some of these issues in a more basic way. We're trying to figure out the gaps. The purpose of the test bed is to be able to integrate various control technologies, integrate various ballot design technologies, and look at the combination -- and hardware technologies and look at the combination in a flexible, consistent manner while recording metrics of performance, like how much time it takes to interact with a particular ballot design, where are their eyes at when they're gazing the ballot? Can we use scientific methods to get back to what you're referring to as the basic research and come up with quantifiable evidence of this works and this doesn't work? And that's where much of my research will focus on in the next couple of years is finding the gaps, collecting the data, and then providing evidence, not just antecedent evidence of

what seems to be working, but hard evidence as to how the performance of these systems stand up against the disabilities of veterans and the general population as a whole.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. One of the things that you mentioned, Brad, has to do with the clarity of the language on the ballot. And that is a very complicated issue because of statute, rules and regs and things beyond the control of both the vendor who constructs the system and defines the properties of the layout, and then, also the actual programmer who creates that particular ballot.

But in Oregon, Steve, and I notice the first thing, Brad, on your list was portability, which clearly your innovation with the iPad solution addresses that, but could you talk a little bit about how Oregon addresses that complexity of the ballot issue on that small template?

MR. TROUT:

Yeah, and it's difficult because a lot of it is out of our control. And, you know, in Oregon, we have a very active initiative process which, you know, will add -- this time I think we'll have eight measures added to the ballot with text to describe a "yes" and the "no" vote, and just the number of contests that are on there that really do complicate that. And so, what we've tried to do is to sit down with some of the people that are using the tool, just to watch them, how they go through it and what some of their frustrations are and what some of the, you know -- they seem to learn as they go throughout the ballot on how to navigate better and to learn that. Dr. Gilbert and his crew were out for our primary and, you know,

they were able to watch some of this process, too, to see just how people are navigating. But, you know, I really think that, you know, because of the number of candidates, the number of measures on our ballot, that it's not really something that we're able to control. But we are looking at ways that we can lay the ballot out, especially for use on whatever piece of hardware you use it, whether it's your PC at home, or whether it's iPad, or Windows tablet, or whatever, so that, you know, things line up and it's easy for them to tab, and imbedding tools within the ballot that help for accessible navigation that people are used to using. And so, we're, you know, we're starting to incorporate more of those, and as we move away from HTML to HTML 5, and more accessible features built into a lot of these tablets, I think a lot of that is being done for us by the vendors in help to navigate and to tab from one contest to the other and to be able to move around. But, you know, what we've really found is -- or what we've changed one of the things that we've discovered is on a lot of our measures, we'd have the measure laid out and then "yes" and then next to it "no," and people are missing the "no." They thought that there was just "yes." And so, we've moved everything over left justified, so we've got "yes" over "no," and it makes it much easier for people to navigate through that.

And so, just learning those different functional tools that are out there and how people that have these different needs use them is what we're having to learn. And, you know, I learned a lot the first time I proofed an audio ballot, just how complicated it is and how it all works, and that helped me have a greater understanding. But, then sitting down and watching someone navigate through one

of these ballots, you know, was ten times more valuable to see how they did that.

And so, I think earlier Lee was talking about field trips, you know. That would be the one thing that I would advise, you know, to my peers that are out there, is sit down and watch someone try to navigate your accessible ballot no matter who's using it, so that you can see where their frustrations are, where their excitement is, get feedback from them. And, again, there's going to be different feedback, because it's -- not everybody is the same and it's not a one size fits all, but just to see the different types of issues that, you know, we may have never realized or thought of because we don't have those challenges in our life.

DR. KING:

I want to come to Beth in just a moment, and what I want to do here at the beginning is kind of create a contrast between the theoretical, the pieces that Brad is working on, and then the practical, the pieces that a jurisdiction can put together immediately and go forward.

But I want to really commend Brad's group and the EAC and the ITIF for that initiative. What many people don't appreciate is that the window in which to create and insert innovations into voting systems is episodic. It does not occur every day and it's because of the certification, and it's also because of the need of jurisdictions to lock these systems down, encapsulate them, and then run them until the wheels fall off. And what I think is really opportune, Brad, about your project, is, I think we're approaching one of those windows where the manufacturers are going to be looking for

innovations to bring into their next certification suite. And I encourage you guys to put shoulder to the wheel on that, because the real tragedy would be for your research products to mature past that window, and then have to sit there and wait until the next iteration. So, it can't be overstated how important that is and how beneficial it's going to be the whole election community and to all the voters, but hurry. That's the thing.

All right, Beth?

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

Yes, I alluded earlier to "Veterans Who Vote" which is a program we started in Alabama prior to the last Presidential election, so it's been going on for quite awhile. It was a commonsense measure of how can we help our veterans, how can we better assist them. Some of the ways, you know, we talked about veterans being an older generation, the younger ones are computer savvy, but they're both civic minded. And that was the common thread that we found, they're very civic minded. The older ones may be more civic minded, the younger ones may be more responsible. They're all civic minded and innately would make excellent voters, poll watchers, poll workers. And we put all that together with the program.

Alice mentioned that 71 percent of veterans vote, but compared to 63 percent of non-veterans who vote, so we know that there's a huge number there. If veterans are likely -- more likely to vote, then so are their spouses, so are their children, so are their best friends and immediate family members. So, those were all

avenues by which to find poll workers and poll watchers. So that was a very successful thing we did.

The education of absentee ballots is extremely important with regard to the military, but also, to those who are disabled that are also veterans, to all people of disabilities, but since we're talking about veterans today, to realize that there's a huge number of them. We've already discussed who are disabled that that certainly meets their needs. The ability to be assisted in a polling place is something that we've made sure that our other veterans' organizations we work with know.

Ensuring that all polling places are properly accessible, that's been a huge issue here this morning. We've used a lot of HAVA money to ensure that polling places were updated, to ensure that there are ramps available, that the doors are the right size and that the two matched, by the way, Paul. So, we've used that.

Also transportation to and from the polls, it's not something we can provide, it's something that veterans groups can provide. We found that that was a huge issue with veterans was transportation to and from the polls.

Recruiting veterans to be poll watchers and poll workers, it's not only effective for those of us handling the elections, but do you know what a statement it makes to have a gentleman with a veteran's cap on standing in one of your polling places? Do you know that it adds, you know, just so much more pride and just makes people really aware of why they're there and how they got there and that freedom that we have? So, we've found that that's been very effective and had a lot of open comments about that.

People were very proud to see them there. So, we are on call with our veterans groups for any conferences that they may have to speak, always, and asking all of them to put a link on their site that does take them to "Veterans who "Vote.

When people leave, when our military leaves, the first thing we do is ensure that they're registered to vote. We work with our National Guard on that effort. When they return, we make sure that they have -- or that they have absentee ballots. Then when we return what we want to do when they make that transition from being soldier, sailor, airman or Marine, we want them to be an Alabama voter. So, we want to ensure that they've involved in our process and hopefully at some point will register on our site and become active in the Election Day procedures.

And the one thing that I said in a copy of a press release recently, also part of our Website that you have, is, who better to trust helping with your elections process on Election Day than the people who fought for that right?

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. You know, there's several things I really like about that project. And one -- earlier in our discussion today, we talked about the resources that are needed to provide the services that we do to all voters, but veterans, too. And what your program has done is kind of flipped that and said these folks can also be resources in that they can bring family members, poll workers and poll managers. And I really like that perspective.

And the second is the credibility. And I think what all of us who work in elections know is that the public confidence in what we

do is the most critical part of our job in earning that and preserving that. And so, looking at veterans as a strategic resource in organizing your elections I think is a really positive part of that program.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

Well, and just an interesting side note that does relate, this past weekend I was watching the U.S. Open and there was a veteran who is a ball boy for the U.S. Open who had prosthetic legs, both of his legs, and they asked him why he did it, how he got interested. He had never played tennis, had never been to a tennis tournament. He was looking for something to do. And I think that's so key, that innate desire in all of us to be involved in our community, to give back, to be a part of something bigger than us. And I thought about him and I thought how many veterans are out there that would be willing to do this that we as elections officials are not reaching out to.

DR. KING:

Okay good, thank you.

MR. LUX:

And Merle, we at the county level, you know, where I have to recruit poll workers and have to train poll workers, I can tell you that living in a community that is centered around a military installation, a community that's full of veterans, no better poll workers out there than the retired Colonels. I mean, you want to talk about retired Colonels, I have retired Generals, who I get to say go, do and, you know. That's what they're used to doing.

[Laughter]

MR. LUX:

But it's, you know, I mean, they really are such a dedicated group of people that their desire to continue to serve doesn't end when their service ends.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

That's right.

MR. LUX:

And so, they are constantly involved and they are some of my most reliable. And, of course, if you want to talk about someone who, you know, has to deal with an immediate problem and come up with an immediate solution like they do on Election Day all the time, get yourself a retired military person, because they'll find a way to fix it one way or the other.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Juan, let's hear about the kinds of things that your group is looking at in the area of accessibility, and then, how that might apply to veterans and voting.

DR. GILBERT:

Yeah, well, I'm going to quote you, Merle, from a number of years. Merle said -- one day in a panel, he said, "This is not rocket science, it's harder." And I have found that to be the case, because you're dealing with people. At least, in rocket science, I'm dealing with technology. It's a little easier.

And so, I start with that statement because the things we're working on are centered around people through this whole process. And so, some of the things we're working on, we're dealing with -- obviously, we talked about Prime III, we brought that up, which is

an accessible voting technology meant to work for everyone, independent of your ability or disability, meaning there is no accessible voting machine. Everyone votes on the same machine.

We have done several studies with that piece of equipment. We've done what we call demonstration projects for an election. I talked about, say, we work with Oregon in the primaries, and so, we've used in several different areas.

We're also looking at a new project. I won't talk much about it, but I will kind of like, preview it, Internet voting. And so, we have a process to do a form of Internet voting called tele-voting, which we'll have a report out next month showing something that no one has seen before.

We also are dealing with voter ID, as a project. This week, interesting in the news, some of you may know Jim Cramer who is CNBC's Mad Money. He is -- his father lives in Philadelphia, he's a veteran. And so, he tweeted, "My father would not be able to vote given the new voter ID law." Well, his father got the ID, but it begs the question, what happened to the other veterans that are his friends that don't have a famous son? So, we have ideas on how to address that.

You mentioned plain language. We have a project in which plain language is one of those things that everyone says they understand, but it's one of those things where you see it and you say, oh, that's it. But if you give a person a blank piece of paper and say give me something in plain language, you know, they don't know how to do it. So, we're looking at solutions to help enable poll workers and election officials to take the ballot measures and

actually convert them into plain language. Those are just a few of the projects we're looking at.

Poll worker training, we just had a study done where we used video with people with disabilities showing them how to use equipment in their actual district. And we have some results that we're releasing on our Website that shows that it took, for example, I think the large visual display, people who use that, it took them an average of six minutes to learn how to use that feature, so an individual with a disability that needs a large visual display. But then, once they learn how to use the feature, the time to complete a ballot, and I think it had seven contests on it, went up probably threefold. And about a quarter of them could not finish it.

So, there are things like that that we're observing, dealing with how do you train. So, we're dealing with training, the technology and some other components, communication as well, in our research. And some of those things you'll start to see next month.

DR. KING:

Okay, so we have to wait.

DR. GILBERT:

Well, yeah, you'll have to wait on a lot of those. We're releasing, like the tele-voting process, we're going to do a pilot. And we're kind of talking with Paul about that and FVAP knows about it. And we have a meeting with NIST. And that will be something, like I said, you've never seen before.

The voter ID project, we have studies underway with that technology right now. And so, what we're showing is that what our

research in that area is that dead people can't vote, and no person can vote more than once, and no one is disenfranchised, meaning everyone has access to voting. So, those are the things we're doing in research.

So, you brought up the point about that moving window of how to get this stuff out there. So, we're in a process where we get to work with people like Steve and -- that are out there practicing. And we find unique ways to demo and try this stuff. I'm so appreciative to Oregon, because, you know, Steve and his staff called us up and said let's try it. And we actually tried it. And so, that helps get closer to that window. When that time comes, we'll be ready.

DR. KING:

Okay. That's a good segue into a question that I want to ask Steve.

MR. TROUT:

I'll try it.

DR. KING:

It will be an easy question. The project in Oregon, with the use of the iPads for accessibility, is important really almost beyond my ability to state, in terms of really what is being benchmarked out there. In addition to the obvious things, which is the performance of the voter, ease of access, cost effectiveness, all those things, it's also introducing some bigger issues of the use of COTS products to support vote capture, the -- creating a seamless transition from UOCAVA vote-by-mail voters into resident vote-by-mail voters, and it's looking at creating a continuum in voting that right now doesn't exist in many jurisdictions where it's very fragmented; that what you

do for this group is different than what you do for this group, and that creates duplicity. So, there's a lot of folks that are looking at the Oregon project, not just for, can iPads work, but, really, the larger issues that are surrounding that.

And so -- and then, the last one that I want to really mention, and to come back to Juan, is to talk about the partnerships between jurisdictions and universities and how it benefits both. So, I'll come back to you on.

But tell us about that project.

MR. TROUT:

Well, and thanks for the opportunity, because that's really how we started looking at this was, okay, we know with the MOVE Act that we've got to serve our military and overseas voters. And it was really the same ballot that we were emailing and delivering to voters with disabilities, you know, things we've been doing for, you know, six or seven years. And it's like, well, why do we have separate processes and projects here? This could really be the same model. And so, that's what got us looking into the tablets to be able to use here, because we're clearly going to create a ballot that can be marked online for our military and overseas voters. Why can't we use that same ballot for people with disabilities and also with, you know, discussions of how long is the post office going to last, you know, down the road? That's my backup, if the post office goes away. And, you know, so I can see in the future people, you know, that are my neighbors that aren't military and overseas, don't have disabilities being able to go onto the Website

and downloading their ballot. And that will be able to, you know, significantly reduce costs associated with that.

But, in order to do that, the issue we have right now is all of these ballots have to be duplicated because the machines can't read that. But, as we look at, you know, COTS scanners that can take a digital picture of these ballots, I can see, maybe we'll have, you know, early next year I'll have more things to report I'm hoping, but the ability for voters to be able to mark their ballot, print it out and mail it in, so I've still got a paper trail, but then, to be able to tally those ballots without having to duplicate them. And that would significantly change elections in my state. And, you know, so this -- all of this provides the ability to move in that direction.

But at the same time with the tablets, we're able to serve anyone. As Dr. Gilbert said, it's not just for people with disabilities or people that are visually impaired or whatever their special needs are, we're trying to build a system that is as easy to use for anyone. And so, for a forum like this, how that's valuable is we take the tool that we currently have for our military and overseas voters and our disabled voters and it's not any really -- we don't have to build anything new to service our veteran voters with whatever their needs are. And so, it really takes our core ballot process and it enables us, with just a little bit of add on, to be able to serve multiple additional groups. And so, there's significant efficiencies there, consistencies as far as all of our voters are following the same processes so we don't get into, you know, well this person is having to vote a paper ballot, this person is having to vote on touch screen, this voter is having different ways. So, all of our voters are

pretty much voting on the same platform wherever they are in the world and we're able to provide tools for them to be able to do that with -- wherever they are in the world and whatever challenges or no challenges that they have. And so, it's really been exciting to see that happen.

But, as I mentioned a little bit earlier, now the challenge is getting word out to people that have these needs that this tool is there and that they can use it to be able to vote. And so, as the election administrator we can provide and create these tools, whether it's online registration, you know, tablet -- the ability to cast your ballot at home on a desktop or a tablet. But, you know, having these tools, we create them, and then we're able to use the different groups out there, the different advocacy groups, you know, political parties, campaigns, whoever, can take these tools, put them on their Website and link there. So, we don't -- that helps us in our outreach efforts. We don't have to be the ones that are doing the outreach because different groups are doing them, and by having an easy tool to provide, we don't get the accusations that we're favoring this one group over this other group or this, you know, this political philosophy over the other. We just create the tool and then make it available to everybody and they go out and use it. And then if they do better than their opponent, then that's because they used the tool better than their opponent.

But, it's really allowing us to be more consistent in the administration of our elections, but also to be more efficient and easier to innovate and adapt because of this platform to be able to add and serve different voters with different needs.

DR. KING:

Okay. I wanted to follow up with something that Brad said that -- near the top of your list, Brad, when you were identifying behaviors of the subjects in your study of wounded veterans. You identified avoidance of social engagements as one of the obstacles of voting. Could you talk about how your solution addresses that?

DR. FAIN:

Well, and again, if somebody is at home and doesn't want to leave their home, they can have that ballot emailed to them, or starting this election, they'll be able to go online and download their ballot, mark it and mail it back in. So, they don't have to interact with any human being. And yet, if there's somebody that really wants help or wants that social connection, we've got different -- the ability to take these portable tablets to any unit. We can take it to a VA hospital. We can take it to an assisted living center. We can take it to the state fair. We can take it anywhere either to register people, to have them learn information about the candidates from our voters' pamphlet that's online or to mark their ballot and print it out.

And, you know, where we're going -- you know, one of the values down the road here, is that we were at an assisted living center -- no, it wasn't the one that Dr. Gilbert was at, but a person came down with his own iPad and said can I use my own? And the answer is yes. So, we didn't even have to supply or provide that and they were able to go with access to that Website to download it, print it out. And, so that's the real beauty is that a lot of this, you know, most places that we would be going to have outreach to voters that would want to use this tool already have printers,

already have desktops or tablets, where people can use their own and they can bring up their ballot and mark it there, no matter which way that happens.

DR. KING:

Okay, yeah, I think -- and I hope there's an eventual write-up of your project, so that other jurisdictions can really understand how to put together a project like that and how to evaluate its implementation. But I think an important point that comes out of that project, though, is that diffusion of technology, it's a force of nature, in that you might think you're able to hold it back, but there is a million pathways in which people will seek to leverage technology for a variety of reasons.

So, Juan, if you could talk a little bit about for jurisdictions that might be interested in creating innovative solutions to assist veterans in voting, or accessibility in general, how might they interface with a university? How did you guys partner up?

DR. GILBERT:

Well, there's different ways, but in our case, we, as you know, had the grant from the EAC which empowers us to do this research. And so, as part of our team we have individuals like Jim Dixon on the team that makes connections to organizations and individuals, such as Steve and Don DeFord (ph). And what we do is we have an introduction, they tell us about how things operate currently. We share with them the innovations we have. And we figure out how to integrate it. So, in the case of Oregon they had a database with, how many ballots were in there, different ballots? It was...

MR. TROUT:

Thousands.

DR. GILBERT:

...thousands of them and they're all in this XML format. But -- so we have a team that was able to write software immediately to convert those into our ballot format. And so, it worked for all our machines instantly, because we had that expertise.

And so, I look at these partnerships as ways of, one, you can engage with a university, and the students get credit out of it. In our case they're being paid to do the research. But that engagement actually is meaningful for the student. It's meaningful for you. And it's easy to do if you just, you know, talk to us and we'll talk to you. I think in the case like with Oregon, we have ongoing -- well not so much right now, with the election 57 days away, but we have ongoing talks about how we can make things work. So, I would encourage you, you could reach out to us or other institute Georgia Tech. We work with Brad, and we're open to that.

The key thing is, as Merle said, there's that moving window of when these things can happen and we have to be ready for when that window, that opportunity comes. And in order to be ready I want to have confidence in whatever it is we're building actually works and is going to provide the usability, accessibility, privacy that we -- and security that we expect. And the only way to really do that is to test drive, and in order to test drive it we need you. So it's just helpful to do these pilots and these tests, so when that window comes, vendors can then look at this technology and they would be more willing to adopt it.

DR. KING:

Okay, Paul?

MR. LUX:

And when it comes to projects, and I mean in Okaloosa County we've, you know, again, in our outreach efforts to serve the UOCAVA community have been involved in Internet voting since the original 2000 voting over the Internet project, the SERVE project, the Okaloosa distance balloting project in 2008, which was an in-house thing in conjunction with Operation BRAVO.

And one of the things that I'm always concerned about is, you know, when you mentioned plain language, Brad and Juan, both, you know there's sometimes a technology gap that we encounter that's sort of an unintended consequence. So, for example, my touch screens, if I have a long amendment, and I'm not calling any legislators out, but we have 11 of them this time, one of which is 400 plus words, one of which is 500 plus words, and so, when that displays on a touch screen when the audio ballot is being read, if you move off of the initial screen, if it's displaying at the same time, it stops reading. So, you can't follow along with what's on the screen, because it's not reading the screen, it's reading from a file. And then, when you jump ahead, it thinks you're ready to vote, so it's presenting you your "yes/no." So, there's a technology gap there.

And the biggest fear with all of these projects, everyone wants to know, there's value for the money we're spending on this. This is -- and I'm not saying let's spend tax payers' money like it's going out of style but, you know, what did Edison learn from 99

failed attempts at the filament in the light bulb? What he learned was 99 ways you can't make a light bulb. So, there is always value in these projects. There's always something to learn. And that's -- my biggest fear is that people stop pushing for these projects because there's not enough return on their investment, if you will, from the money.

DR. KING:

I think, Paul, you raise a really good point, that often from a design perspective we do like starting with a clean sheet of paper, but in terms of requirements determination you need to understand the deficiencies of the current systems. And I think maybe that's something that jurisdictions should pay more attention to, as you pointed out. Many times I heard Steve say you've been through four cycles, four Presidential cycles. And Deborah I think you may be a few more than that.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

What election officials know is that anomalies don't appear in every election and that you may have a quirk in the system that's buried until some unusual ballot combination triggers it. And it's the documenting of those anomalies that gives the researchers the data that they need to identify what the next generation needs to resolve. So I appreciate you bringing up the point of the fact that what's driving innovative programs in Oregon is not just the goal of being better, but it's being better than this, better than the anomalies that we know that we're encountering.

MR. LUX:

Well, and when we did the Okaloosa distance balloting project in 2008, I made the comment then, and I continue to make it, you know, the traditional absentee process that we're doing right now is still the same way we've been doing it since the Civil War, you know. The soldier, sailor, airman sends me a letter and hopes I get it, asking for a ballot, I put a ballot in the mail to him and hope he gets it, and then he votes it and puts it back in the mail and hopes I get it in time to count it. And we've been doing this since the 1860s. And...

MS. SEILER:

If he's where he was when he requested it.

MR. LUX:

Yeah. And so, I mean, that's the -- you know, for me that's the driving push behind this is, you know, we've got to find a better way to reach people who are hardest to reach.

DR. KING:

Let's -- I'm sorry, go ahead Steve.

MR. TROUT:

And one point I just want to make on this. It's a lot easier to try something new and to continue to try to innovate when you have confidence in what you're doing. And so, when we had Dr. Gilbert out, we knew that even if it didn't work at all we were, you know, we were fairly confident that it was going to be a success and had done enough research to convince ourselves that we were highly confident that it was going to be a success. But even if it wasn't, we had our existing system to fall back on. And so that, you know, I really didn't see it as taking a risk. It was more of an investment to

see if this was something that could yield greater efficiencies and accessibility in the future. And so, I think that's the way to be able to test these as we go forward, is, we've got existing systems.

But, you know, I think Dr. Gilbert would probably agree that it doesn't matter how much you test it in the university or in the lab or wherever, it needs to get out with real voters in a real election to be able to get some feedback on how it's really working. And, you know, we've got to be willing to try those things on a test, you know, on a pilot project, or whatever, in order to continue to innovate and make greater use of the technology that's out there.

DR. KING:

I want to reinforce something that Steve said, and then Brad.

The point that Brad's making about the end user, which is, really the election official in an election context as being the beta tester, we often use that in a derogatory way. We say, well, you know, I'm ending up being a beta tester. But the reality is that's a normal part of technology innovation. But what is critical is that the feedback from that beta test gets looped back into the design and maintenance cycle, and that's often what we're missing is the collection of that data to feed the process. So again, that's why I'm hoping when you all are done Juan's team will write up a report and share it with the rest of the community.

Brad?

DR. FAIN:

And there's another important aspect of it, as well, and that's the education process. So, we can design, you know, the most accessible solutions that will work a hundred percent of the time,

you know, this is the perfect technology. But there will still be some that says, you know, well, it's too hard, because I don't know anything different. Based on my prior experience, the voting situation I went to last time it was just too hard, so I'm not going to try again. It's this kind of learned helplessness that goes on. Unless somebody gets out and demonstrates that it's possible and then educates those individuals that, hey, there's a new way of doing things, there's some new potential here that, perhaps, you ought to take advantage of, the technology isn't going to do you any good. It's just going to sit there unless you train people to do things.

Then, there's this perception of, you know, this back and forth that you had mentioned earlier, you know, maybe that you will get the letter, maybe you'll get the letter that I send back. There's got to be some confidence that's built in that system. I think that's - you know we've been kind of talking about it, dancing around it a little bit, but with the veterans, you know, maybe there's a lack of confidence in the system, and maybe technology is a potential solution to that, that you can come back and say, "Yes I received your vote, it will be counted," that you can't do through the mail system right now, at least not effectively. So I think, you know, both sides, you know, looking at, are there better ways that we can communicate that this technology is available, that it's gotten better than it used to be, and that your vote is important and it's been counted, I think that's important.

DR. KING:

Okay. Let's talk a little bit, at the local level, about things that are being done either in education or outreach or organization of resources.

And Paul or Deborah, can you -- Deborah?

MS. SEILER:

I'll say one thing, and this is not a technological issue. I envy the folks like Oregon who can move ahead with some of these technologies. We're very much tethered, in California, to federal certification and state certification, and so, we just don't have the opportunity to try some of these things. So, as much as we might like to be beta testers, we really don't have that opportunity.

But something at a local level that I think is a facet of our veterans that maybe we haven't really talked about yet today is the fact that, you know, many of the folks serving -- currently serving in the military or recently separated from the military are not citizens; that military service is a path to citizenship for very many people. We have -- in San Diego, we have a very large Filipino community, and many of them have come into our community through military service. And one of the things that we have started doing the last several years, we not only attend every Naturalization ceremony, we send our language coordinators out to every single Naturalization ceremony in the county. But there are special Naturalization ceremonies on the -- we're home port to like the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan and the Carl Vinson and so forth. There are Naturalization ceremonies specifically for members of the military.

And so, it's -- you know, it's constantly trying to reach out to people who are becoming citizens and making sure that we catch

up with them right away. And this extends, then, into the veteran community, because if we can get them signed up -- and we also push really -- in our county, we push the vote-by-mail for those people, because that sort of enables us to follow them. As we are mailing to them, we're getting information back, maybe, that we get forwarding address information, updated mail address information. It enables us to really chase, in effect, our voters. And our turnout, despite our large military and veteran population, our voter turnout in San Diego County is higher than the statewide average and higher than -- significantly higher than every other county in Southern California. So, yes, we have a very high military population. We, obviously, have a very high veteran population, but our turnout is high, too.

So I think, you know, through some of these programs, not technology, but through some of these types of programs we've been able to really serve that community.

DR. KING:

That's great. Juan?

DR. GILBERT:

Yeah, one way that we -- talking about local at the local level, one way we've been able to work with people, we haven't done one yet, but with people such as South Carolina, California, even Alabama, where it's a little harder to do a test like this, is school districts, those elections. We've been told that we could come in and do something like that. I don't know how true that is...

MS. SEILER:

Yeah, not in California.

DR. GILBERT:

...but...

MS. SEILER:

Maybe in South Carolina, but not California.

DR. GILBERT:

So, we've been told that there's certain types of elections that would involve people that we could do. So, that's the way. We just look for opportunities. And I don't know where that would exist, but these are just opportunities that we find.

MR. LUX:

And one of the things, too, Juan, that makes Florida such a great place to come to for this type of thing is we have offered for a number of years now, going all the way back to and perhaps even predating the original voting over the Internet project in 2000, the idea of provisional certification or provisional approval. So, for example, the current project I'm involved in is because it's a ballot marking device that renders a voters' choices but then have to be, as Steve talked about, transcribed onto a machine readable card that it doesn't require certification like a voting system requires certification. Don't get me wrong, there's still an approval process that you go through through the Florida Division of Elections, the Bureau of Voting System Certification, to make sure that, you know, your system is doing certain things that they kind of require out of voting systems but not wrapped into a whole voting system as a whole. And so, we've been able to do projects like the "Our Mission: Your Vote" project that we're doing right now, the one we did two years ago, which was in a very similar vein, plus the

Okaloosa Distance Balloting Pilot and the original VOI project, all under different levels of provisional certification or approval for that type of use.

And one of the things that we're trying to solve with this project, Steve, that you mentioned, is that, you know, now we've got to transcribe all of those votes. And we are this close to having the provisional approval to field test for the 20 -- for this year's general election, the 2-D barcode. So, if they use our online marking device, it prints a 2-D barcode that can be scanned that will render out of our ballot-on-demand printers a machine readable card that the Canvassing Board can then simply match the two together and put the cards through, and hopefully, be a more accurate and less time consuming way of dealing with that.

DR. KING:

Steve?

MR. TROUT:

And we tested that in the second half of our special election back in January and it worked really well. And the only reason we're not going forward with that is because I think those -- you know, as we move to a digital vote tally system, then the need for that ballot-on-demand printer won't be there, and so, I didn't want to invest the money in the ballot-on-demand printers knowing that we're going to end up with digital scanning machines that will allow us to have that very same effect. And then, once that happens, then I can open it up to a lot more people and we don't have that limit of having to duplicate ballots. So that's great.

And I just wanted to make one point. I don't -- nobody has accused me of it, but I'm not rogue out there and not using certified equipment. All of our systems are certified. But the tablets that we're using are, just as Paul described, they're just ballot marking devices. People mark their ballots, they print it out, and mail it in just like all of our other vote-by-mail ballots. And so, then we will duplicate those and run them through our certified voting system. So, you know, we've reviewed that, have confidence in it, but we don't see it as a voting system because no votes are being tallied on it. It's just a big pencil.

DR. KING:

Okay, Steve...

MR. TROUT:

It costs more than pencil.

DR. KING:

...Oregon is rogue.

[Laughter]

MR. LUX:

I was thinking about moving out there.

MR. TROUT:

All of the rogue technology is being developed.

DR. KING:

Apparently you'd better take your own fluoride out.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Inside joke.

MR. TROUT:

It comes from the sky.

DR. KING:

Yeah. Paul could you just briefly talk about your project there and kind of -- I think it ties into what Deborah said, is that, elections ultimately, it's a human experience, and the human factors are critical.

MR. LUX:

Absolutely, the "Our Mission: Your Vote" project and the Website that the voters are using as a portal is ourmissionyourvote.us. And it's a consortium of 13 Florida counties. We all got together and applied for one of the EASE grants through FVAP. And so, we've partnered with Democracy Live and Microsoft for this technology.

And basically, it is an online ballot access system. So, we -- as part of the system upload every military voter's name. So, I mean, if I know you're military, if you've got an APO address out there in my VR system, everyone's name goes in there. Logging into the system constitutes a request for an absentee ballot. And they have two pathways. Unfortunately, much like Steve, we're hampered with, we've got to have that piece of paper. And so, their pathways are, you can use this system to print a completely blank ballot, and then you can mark it by hand and mail it in, or fax it in if you're an overseas voter. Or you can use the ballot -- the online ballot marking tool which presents the races, and they can make their selections online, and when they're done it prints a marked ballot that then gets returned to us again either by mail or by fax.

And our biggest, hurdle, of course, is, you know, the guy in the foxhole in Afghanistan or Iraq doesn't have a fax machine. In

fact, most people don't have fax machines anymore, shouldn't come as a big surprise to anybody, as that technology is slowly, slowly drifting away. And so, what they do have is Internet access. What they do have is email. And so, I eventually would like to see this project, and I don't want to scare anybody, so I'm not going to go into the specifics of where I see this going in the near future, but the benefit to this project, that is -- that exceeds the other projects is the longevity issue here. Because what I saw in the VOI project in 2000, what I saw with SERVE, and then ODBP, is, we see a big push once every four years, and you talk about it Brad, it's that once it doesn't work, that learned helplessness, then they say, "You know what? Never mind, we'll just do it the other way." And so, this project provides the funding for us to continue the project through 2016. So, I don't have to worry about chasing it again in another two years or redeveloping or changing vendors or any of that stuff. We'll have that continuity for three general election cycles, '12, '14 and '16, to build a habit in the voters that this is -- I'm a remote voter or I'm -- and as you and I think spoke offline Merle, we're going to be able to offer this to voters with disabilities who are in county. So, it is not just for remote military voters. Don't worry, FVAP, the money -- that cost extra comes out of my pocket, not yours.

But, I mean, there will be a benefit to the disability community as part of this. And as this expands I think it's going to be a much -- a very widely used process. In fact, I've been fielding emails from -- pretty much since our August primary ended wondering why the ballots weren't up there yet, which is very

gratifying to know that they are visiting the site and they are saying, "Why isn't my ballot there yet?" And that was the whole point behind it, was, let's build that habit in then, that this is how we do this, so that for future projects it's all kind of self-encapsulated.

DR. KING:

Okay, well thank you. We're approaching the end of our roundtable and we have a tradition in the process in which I ask each of the participants to kind of summarize their takeaway, and in this case, perhaps that's the advice that you would give to your colleagues if you were to advise your counterpart in a county or a state or a researcher, on the one or two items to really focus on to get started, to find where they can get traction and make a difference.

And while you're gathering your thoughts, and Deborah, we're going to start with you, and we'll work our way around the table, and we have a new member that's joined us, Stacey, and that will be an opportunity for you to help guide election officials towards how they might get started.

But I heard a topic come up here about some of the impediments to innovation. And Deborah identified certification, and certainly, that can be an impediment to innovation, but there are other impediments. And one of them is the cost; that there are many jurisdictions in this country that they're furloughing election officials, there's no money in their budgets to innovate. Other reasons can be just the infrastructure, kind of an institutional stasis that makes innovation difficult. But one of the important functions that the EAC serves is to take innovative programs, and there's many of them and certainly, this is one of them, and to elevate that

to a point where states, like yours and mine that have a rigid certification structure, we can benefit from that research, fold it into our future plans. And so, I think that's an important, kind of, 10,000 foot view that the EAC provides that without events like this might go on and unless it blew up and we read about it in the newspaper, God forbid, we would never know about it.

So, with that, I'll start with Deborah. And we'll go around the table and I'll let Alice have the last word, as always.

MS. SEILER:

Okay. Well, first of all, thank you very much for inviting me. I really appreciated it. I think it was extremely valuable to me.

And I think that probably my biggest takeaway was that there are so many different ways in which we can really partner with our veterans organizations. I was really, truly unaware of the full spectrum of organizations out there that serve veterans in my own backyard. I tend to see the veteran community, because it's such a large community, because it covers all -- the full gamut of the population of voters that I have in the county, some have transitioned very well as veterans, some have special needs, physical needs, emotional needs, substance abuse needs, homelessness, you know, the whole range. And there's a whole range of organizations out there whose core business is to serve the veterans whatever need they particularly have. I'm very well aware that voting is not their core business, but I think that by doing more and working, perhaps, with the right organizations, not only the Veterans Administration hospital, but we do have a whole coalition of veterans in our county that, you know, by working more

closely with them we can raise awareness. And one way that I can do it effectively is through the voter registration process, and, by, you know, bringing some of the voter registration tools, encouraging people to vote by mail, I can bring them onto the rolls more effectively and I can keep them on the rolls by tracking them and keeping them up-to-date as they move.

So, I think that there's more that we can do to serve our veteran population.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Deborah. Brad?

DR. FAIN:

A couple of things emerged for me. One of the themes is this idea of universal design. I think the EAC should be commended in their certain focus on people with disabilities and veterans with disabilities on their recent programs that they have. But let's keep in mind that that's going to benefit everyone, right? If we address the needs of somebody that has cognitive disabilities, then we're going to make it easier for everybody to understand the ballot and respond in a more efficient manner. If we make it easier for those that have mobility/disabilities to be able to vote from the position they're most comfortable in, then that's going to make it easy for everybody else, especially people that might have difficulty because of their schedules or other commitments or times -- or time to be able to get out and actually start participating in that. And so, this diffusion of innovation I think is important.

The other thing that I think emerged from this is the need to address this on multiple fronts. It's not one solution fits all. It's not

going to be a technical solution totally that solves this problem. It's not just an educational problem. It's not just a policy problem. All three are going to have to come together in order to solve this problem. And some of the issues are quite difficult, you know. The issue associated with certification, the issue associated with policy, associated with ballot design, those are kind of the long poles in the tent that we need to deal with. But we need to deal with it on all fronts in order to be effective.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Brad. Paul?

MR. LUX:

And again, I'd like to mirror Deborah's comments thanking the EAC for – again, for hosting this and bringing us all out here, because it is an incredibly important issue.

And this group that we're talking about, the veterans, is such a widely disparate group of people from all walks of life. Like, I think I told you earlier, Merle, you know, you're really talking about - - and I did the math, you know, anyone really in an age range from 19 to 95, if there are any World War I veterans still out there, that would be about how old they would be that we're trying to reach. And as we've heard from Lee and from Brad, you know, the technology isn't necessarily always the answer. But, I really do think that the more proactive your outreach can be, the better certainly, to reach this group of people.

I talked about that veterans' expo that we have, and I wonder -- and one of the things that popped into my head as a what should we do going forward, was wondering what the possibility

would be for someone like the Veterans Administration, and while I realize that they don't come into contact with all of the veterans that are out there, of maybe having a similar program to devoting assistance officer program that the Department of Defense has in all their military units, right? I mean, every military unit from the company level to the brigade level to the battalion level, they all have a voting assistance officer and their job is to make sure that when it comes time, people are aware of what the deadlines are and making sure that people get registered who want to be registered. And I wonder if the VA would consider implementing some form of a voting assistance officer type of program among the VA facilities. Now, for myself, of course, even though we have the big military base, we have a small VA clinic and then most of the rest of our VA patients have to go all the way over to Mississippi. And so, we don't have a big facility for that type of thing. So again, it will be a little bit more challenging because they don't have the opportunities. As we've all said, you know, once they separate from service that's when the UOCAVA protection stops. So can they use an FPCA to register? Because if you're a Florida voter if you're in a facility in Mississippi why would you expect the Mississippi facility to have Florida voter registration forms? So, maybe we're going to have to come up with a more innovative solution at that level to try and reach, again, a fairly widely disparate group of people.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Paul. Stacey?

MS. CHILDS:

Good morning, this has been a very interesting forum and thank you for inviting us.

And, I guess what I'm basically hearing for the DCVA medical centers is that we need to step up our game in terms of the modern technology. We service, primarily, the inpatient residents and the domiciliary areas that's in the facility, but we just have a small, small portion of what we actually can assist with them. The state and the local officials that come in and the volunteers that assist us, we basically just make sure that they are registered, that they obtained their absentee ballot, and it's basically out of hands after that. So, for the most part, we do need to get a little bit more computer savvy and make sure that they at least have the accessibility in the facility, not only in our community living center but in the inpatient, as well, hospital in order for them to be able to solidify their vote.

DR. KING:

Okay good, thank you.

MS. CHILDS:

Thank you.

DR. KING:

Steve?

MR. TROUT:

Well I think, you know, one of the major things that I learned today is there is a large number of veterans out there and -- but they're a very diverse group. And so, just like the general population, there's a diversity to our veteran community, and so, we need to look at all of the tools that we have available to try and serve them as they

are. And so I think, you know, as we've discussed throughout this roundtable, the more that we can add on to our existing systems so our systems to serve military and overseas voters or disabled voters, we should be able to tweak those with just a minor tweak to be able to serve the needs of disabled veterans or others. And so, because of the diverse group, I think it's impossible to say, okay, we're going to have a veterans program. I mean, yeah, that program can have a whole bunch of parts and I agree with that, but there's not one solution that's going to take care of all veterans, and so, we need to incorporate how we're going to serve them as we are looking at serving all of our other different needs groups within our jurisdictions. But then, along with that comes the education responsibility and the outreach to these different groups to let them know of the services, the tools that we have available for them, and also to get their feedback on how our tools and resources are helping or not helping them, so that we can have them more a part of those advisory groups that we all have to help us to recognize the specific needs that a veteran may have that someone else may not have.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Steve. Juan?

DR. GILBERT:

I want to say thanks, first, for having this roundtable and inviting me. It's been very eye opening for me in many respects.

And things that I would like to summarize would be first and foremost is collaborate. It became clear to me that sharing of information and resources, just the things that I've learned here, is

going to have an impact on our research. And I think that comes from what I would call a data driven approach. Listening to the stats that Alice had shared with us were things that I was not aware of; that that definitely is going to play a role in some of the things we do. So, collaborating and working together and sharing information across the different, what are called silos, we use that all the time, but across election officials, poll workers, researchers, practitioners, Secretary of State, et cetera. Just hearing that information is very beneficial and ultimately that's going to help find solutions for this very diverse group, our veterans who need this and deserve it.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Juan. Secretary Chapman?

SECRETARY CHAPMAN:

I think, in closing, the couple of things that I would like to really tune in on are the things that we can do right now, and that is ensure that all of our veterans, and everyone, in general, is registered to vote; that all of our polling places are accessible, not just inside the polling place, but in the parking lots, so inside and outside of the polling place; and to recruit veterans to be a part of registering other veterans, to be a part of working the polls and being poll watchers.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. I'll let Alice, then, have the final word.

MS. MILLER:

Thank you. I think what this has done for us is call attention to our own -- I want to say our own process. We have about 21 Quick

Starts and those Quick Starts are short guides, information out for our election officials, anyone who can use them to help with their election process. While we have them from everything from absentee voting, vote-by-mail, uniformed and overseas voters, we do not have one for veterans. And certainly, you know, this certainly means that's something that we need to look at.

Obviously, that will not happen between now and November 6th, but down the road that's something that we need to do. We need to be putting together a Quick Start for our election officials on the outreach and information necessary to get veterans involved with voting. So, you know, you improve by looking in the mirror and you constructively criticize, and I think that's one thing that the EAC can be doing. And we will, of course, take that on in due time.

The other thing with respect to what we can do immediately, I think, for our constituency, which is generally our election officials, we can place a page on our Website, of information that you all have just shared with us. For example, you know, some of the best practices, and I was taking notes, recruitment of veterans as poll workers, educating them, and letting that program that San Diego has available, their VEP program, and put that up there and the iPad solution that Oregon has, field trip ideas. I mean, all of those things are just wonderful ideas that, obviously, it's a quick kind of reference guide, best practices and tips that we can use cumulating from what we've learned here today that can be easily done. And we'll get that up immediately.

I think the other thing that is relevant that I need to also make certain our election officials know, most of them do know, but

as you train your poll workers, again, not all disabilities are visible, not all of them are apparent, you know. There are just so many that are not immediately -- that you see immediately, you know, that exist and we need to reinforce that from the perspective of the training angle with poll workers, you know, through our election officials. And I think that is, again, information that we can put up.

So, through these sessions we learn, we learn a lot, and we cannot do it without the experts, and I mean true experts that we have around the table here. So, I want to sincerely thank you all again for agreeing to come, I mean, from as far as Oregon and California to be here with us today, to as close as Northwest D.C. so -- which we always say is a cheap date, so we appreciate that.

[Laughter]

MS. MILLER:

But, it's very important for us that we continue to have these sessions, that we continue to have these conversations. And we learn from them and from what we can better help the election officials who, you know, is our main -- primary constituency and they then reach out to their constituency, the voters, as well.

Before Merle takes off and literally closes out this round session, I do want to, as I normally do, say again, we can't do this alone. Nobody -- there's no such thing as a one-man show. I don't care how many folks like to say that, it just is not true. No one does anything alone. You all have been a sincere help to us and we, again, appreciate that.

Internally, I could not do this without the help and support of staff. Emily Jones, who is sitting back there, has got everybody

here, got travel taken care of, arranged. So, I want to thank her. Also, coordinating the Webcast for this, Jessica, who is sitting in the back on the Twitterfall was very, very busy today as you can hear her typing away and clicking away putting up everything that was going on. So, I want to thank her. I have some other staff members, Bryan Whitener, Karen Lynn-Dyson and Pat Leahy. Pat was responsible for pulling the statistics together for us, so I do want to focus on that and recognize him for that as well as contacting and getting a lot of you here. Bryan and Karen, as well as Pat, we sit down with Merle and we start these processes long, long ago to try to put these roundtables together. It's not something that happens overnight, much like an election, although people believe you wake up and go vote without doing anything else and then you just go home and do nothing else. We, of course, around this table, know much better than that. So, I want to also thank staff. Our IT folks, who, obviously, coordinate a lot of what's going on from the IT perspective, including assisting with making sure our Webcast is going, Mohammed Maeruf and Henry Batchway . So, if I've left anybody out, I'm sorry.

I want to highlight one more person, of course, and that's Merle King. Merle is fantastic. He has done these roundtables consistently, unselfishly, and without any expectation other than to have a good conversation and to promote good elections around the country. I'm glad he's done them with no cost because we couldn't afford him.

[Laughter]

MS. MILLER:

And I know that. So, we -- this roundtable, actually, will conclude the last of the series of three that we had scheduled for this year. We'll look to try to do some more next year. But, Merle has just been, as I said earlier, a true jewel and I want to thank him sincerely for always, always being here and always being available to us, not only to us, but to the election community, generally.

DR. KING:

Well, thank you. I want to thank the EAC and the participants today, really, not just for what you brought to share, which is important, but for the work that you do every day, every day to make elections work in this country. Your colleagues that may be viewing, your colleagues in your states, and your colleagues across the country appreciate your contribution.

With that, I will adjourn this roundtable and wish you all safe travels. And thank you again.

[Applause]

[The EAC Roundtable "Best Practices for Veterans Voting: Examining Election Operations, Procedures and Accessibility concluded at 12:26 p.m.]

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