VOICES OF DEMOCRACY
The State of Language Access in California’s November 2016 Elections

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Asian Law Caucus,

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Language Access Coverage in California (November 2016)

- 56 of 58 CA counties had language access requirements under either federal or state law
- English, Spanish, 8 Asian languages

Coverage under federal law:
- 27 counties w/ Spanish
- 8 w/ at least one Asian language

Coverage under state law:
- 50 counties
## Need for Language Assistance During Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CA Latinos</th>
<th>CA Asian Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak a language other than English at home</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English proficient (LEP)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advancing Justice - California’s Efforts in 2016

1. Community Education & Outreach

2. Meetings with Elections Officials & Advocacy for Best Practices

3. Poll Monitoring
1. Community Education and Outreach
Community Education and Outreach

Worked with 20 community partner organizations:

1. Distributed Know Your Voting Rights materials AAAJ-CA produced in 13 languages.
2. Hosted community workshops for first-time voters and LEP voters.
3. Consulted with elections officials about outreach, bilingual poll workers recruitment, etc.
4. Recruited bilingual poll workers and poll monitors.
Community Education and Outreach

Tips for approaching community organizations:

• Cultural and linguistic competency.
• Meet people where they are.
• Try to address specific needs of that community.
  – Example: Filipino community (lack of language need, “Filipino” vs. “Tagalog”)
  – Example: Punjabi community in Central CA
• Offer value.
  – Sometimes that means financial!
2. Meetings with Elections Officials & Advocacy for Best Practices
Meetings with Elections Officials & Advocacy for Best Practices

Met w/ elex officials in each county at least once.

• Brought long list of questions about details of compliance with language access requirements.

• Nudged where necessary.

• Gathered best practices from elections officials; acted as hub of a wheel.

• Created best practices package, multiple webinars, etc.
Addressing noncompliance – poll worker trainings

- Most Section 203 noncompliance in CA is poll worker-generated
- Asked to see poll worker training docs, attended poll worker trainings in 12+ counties
- Suggested additional emphasis where necessary, pointed to past data to be more persuasive
Meetings with Elections Officials & Advocacy for Best Practices

Addressing noncompliance - possibility of litigation

- Contemplated legal action against county that failed language access requirements in June 2016
- Wrote letter documenting failures
- Laid out actions they should take
- Laid out ways we could support

“We know you share our goal of elections that are fully accessible to all language communities. The collaboration we propose here can help us achieve that goal while also avoiding litigation that could otherwise be used to enforce the law in this area.”
3. Poll monitoring
### Where We Worked

**25 counties, 32.9 million people**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Pop.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>10,170,292</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>3,299,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County</td>
<td>3,169,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside County</td>
<td>2,361,026</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Bernardino County</td>
<td>2,128,133</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alameda County</td>
<td>1,918,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento County</td>
<td>1,638,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contra Costa County</td>
<td>1,501,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno County</td>
<td>974,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kern County</td>
<td>882,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco County</td>
<td>864,816</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Clara County</td>
<td>850,536</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Mateo County</td>
<td>765,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Joaquin County</td>
<td>726,106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanislaus County</td>
<td>538,388</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonoma County</td>
<td>502,146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulare County</td>
<td>459,863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara County</td>
<td>444,769</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solano County</td>
<td>436,092</td>
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576 volunteers
1,286 polling places
Report Links:
http://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/programs/voting-rights/

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Questions?