

BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)  
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2010  
1:00 P.M.

Reported by:  
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Kerri Spano, Panel Member

Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

Candidates

Evelyn Gadia Zneimer

Michael David Gabriel

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's one o'clock and Candidate Evelyn Zneimer is not yet here. We'll wait up to 15 minutes at the most and after that I suppose we'll have to ask her if she'd like a shorter interview or whether we're going to determine the facts and make a decision as to whether or not we should reschedule. I don't know whether -- I have no information with regard to the facts and circumstances, so I hope she's okay.

So, we'll stand at ease until Ms. Zneimer arrives or we hear something.

(Off the record at 1:01 p.m.)

(Back on the record at 1:13 p.m.)

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, it's 1:13, we're on record, our Applicant has just arrived. It is 13 minutes into the schedule so we have to get started immediately.

Are you ready to begin?

MS. ZNEIMER: Yes, I am.

MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do you possess? Which do you not possess and how will you compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a Commissioner?

1 MS. ZNEIMER: A good Commissioner must have  
2 analytical skills, being impartial, ability to understand  
3 and appreciate California's diversity, population diverse,  
4 and ability to work with other Commissioners.

5 Of those skills that I possess are the following;  
6 analytical skills acquired through my educational  
7 training. In my profession, as a scientist, I analyze  
8 empirical data and employ various statistical methods to  
9 validate my data. And that resulted in publication, two  
10 scientific publication and a trip to Atlanta, Georgia to  
11 present my research in a science convention.

12 And as a trial attorney and appellate lawyer I do  
13 a lot of reading and research to prepare for briefings and  
14 oral arguments, and I am able to -- I was able to argue in  
15 the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Circuits, that resulted in two publications  
16 of my cases, which I prevailed in 2004.

17 I am impartial and I utilize this skill when I sit  
18 as a judge pro tem and I analyze all evidence and oral  
19 testimonies before me, and other mitigating circumstances  
20 and apply them to the laws without injecting my personal  
21 biases and prejudices in order to achieve a sound and  
22 well-reasoned decision.

23 Another situation that showed that I have an  
24 impartial ability was in 2006 I had the honor to be  
25 nominated by Governor Davis and appointed by President

1 Clinton, both Democrats, to the Board of U.S. Selective  
2 Service System, a branch of the U.S. military, as a  
3 volunteer board member.

4 Being a Republican, that appointment means a lot  
5 to me because I believe that I bridged the two political  
6 party and it didn't matter whether I was a Republican, but  
7 they have achieved their common goal to appoint a  
8 qualified board member.

9 That board, essentially, is in charge of hearing  
10 appellate cases if the draft is activated by the  
11 President.

12 Every year we are -- the board is presented by  
13 high political cases, case that are representative of  
14 cases that we would encounter if the draft is activated.  
15 And we would have a mock hearing and each board member  
16 will cast its vote depending on the case and evidence  
17 presented before me, before all the board members.

18 And the cases would be coming from conscientious  
19 objectors and other -- and other non-combatants who do not  
20 want to serve in the military, but is drafted.

21 The selection of the board member was very  
22 competitive because we had a military recruiter that came  
23 to the L.A. County and they had a position in a Number 120  
24 local board.

25 And one of the council members informed me that

1 there's a position open, and being that I'm a second  
2 generation serving the U.S. military, I applied for a  
3 position.

4 I also understand and appreciate the diversity of  
5 the California population. Being an Angelino, I have  
6 encountered and collaborated with various ethnic groups  
7 during my volunteer activities with various civic  
8 organization and local governments.

9 Being a Judge pro tem I also encounter different  
10 races and ethnic people and as I sit in different  
11 courtrooms in the County of Los Angeles, because I sit  
12 in -- whenever I'm needed, I sit in Los Angeles, Alhambra,  
13 different cities in the whole County of Los Angeles.

14 I have the ability to work with other  
15 Commissioners, as proven in my tenure as I served two  
16 commissions in our city, on the Natural Resources  
17 Commission. I was serving as the secretary and vice chair  
18 and this position is also selected by the Commissioner's,  
19 themselves.

20 Being a commission is appointed by the mayor, but  
21 the selection competitive that it is coming from the whole  
22 population. The application is available for the whole  
23 26,000 population, registered voters in our city.

24 And I also am in my fourth year as a commissioner  
25 for the Parks and Recreation Commission and I served as a

1 chair.

2 Which qualities I don't possess? I believe that I  
3 possess all four of them but, however, I have not  
4 encountered every ethnic groups in Los Angeles or in the  
5 State of California. So, probably by based on my  
6 experience meeting a lot of minority groups, I would be  
7 compensating my shortcomings by gathering information and  
8 understanding and listening to the voices of these new  
9 groups that I have not had the opportunity to interact.

10 And to the present there is none in my life that  
11 would prohibit my ability to perform as a Commissioner.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: With 13 minutes remaining,  
13 describe a circumstance from your personal experience  
14 where you had to work with others to resolve a conflict or  
15 difference of opinion. Please describe the issue, and  
16 explain your role in addressing and resolving the  
17 conflict. If you are selected to serve on the Citizens  
18 Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would resolve  
19 conflicts that may arise among the Commissioners?

20 MS. ZNEIMER: The conflict that I was involved was  
21 during my first year as a commissioner on this South  
22 Pasadena Parks and Recreation Commission there was a youth  
23 house that burned down three times and had to be rebuilt.  
24 And the city wanted to name the youth house and so there  
25 was a public hearing before our commission.

1           But there was a group that had put an application  
2 that said that a donor wanted to donate \$50,000, but in a  
3 proviso that the youth house will be named after him.

4           The public was divided and so did the commission.  
5 The contribution that I gave was that I cited a provision  
6 in our city's municipal code detailing the criteria of  
7 naming a city-owned structure. And in the end it was a  
8 five-zero, unanimous vote rejecting the application to  
9 name the youth house for a donor and the commission ended  
10 up recommending the name that was voted the most, which  
11 was Garfield Youth House, because the structure was  
12 located inside a park, which met one of the criteria.

13           And if I'm selected to be in the Redistricting  
14 Commission, I would resolve the conflict among  
15 Commissioners by, number one, listening and respecting the  
16 opinions of other Commissioners.

17           And, also, it depends on what kind of conflicts  
18 that exist. If it's a person conflict then we would  
19 probably appoint a mediator that's neutral to each party  
20 to resolve a fair and reasonable dispute resolution.

21           But if the conflict emanates from our duties to  
22 discharge, as Commissioners, we probably will have to  
23 consult the guidelines as defined by the Article 21, of  
24 the Constitution governing redistricting.

25           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's

1 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
2 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
3 the Commission's work to harm the State and, if so, in  
4 what ways?

5 MS. ZNEIMER: The Commission's work will  
6 definitely change the districts and hopefully the voters  
7 will reflect all members of the community.

8 Which of these will impact the most is if the  
9 Commission work, if done properly, will give the voice of  
10 the minority groups in the electoral process and the  
11 interests of the minority voters are protected.

12 It will also eliminate partisan domination and  
13 incumbency protection.

14 It would also allow for public input,  
15 opportunities of public input since their elected  
16 officials will be able to represent their district's needs  
17 and interests.

18 The potential harm that can do to the State is if  
19 personal biases and interference from special interest  
20 groups, including partisanship and incumbency protection,  
21 are allowed to influence the decision of the Commissioners  
22 then that will harm the State because it will negate the  
23 intent of Prop. 11.

24 If the Commissioners are not cognizant of some  
25 factors in the Census data that dilute the minority voting

1 strength, such as the miscount -- Census miscount of  
2 prisoners and felon disenfranchisement laws then this will  
3 also harm the State because the interests of the minority  
4 voters would not be protected.

5           Census miscount artificially inflates the  
6 populations of districts where prisons and jails are  
7 located. At the same time, districts where prisoners  
8 lived prior to their incarcerations are artificially  
9 deflated.

10           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
11 you have had to work as part of a group to achieve a  
12 common goal? Tell us about the goal; describe your role  
13 within the group and tell us how the group worked or did  
14 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal? If you are  
15 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
16 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
17 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
18 Commission meets its legal deadlines?

19           MS. ZNEIMER: This would be my volunteer work  
20 before, the American Cancer Society. We have a fund-  
21 raising event once a year, which is called Relay for Life,  
22 and it's a 24-hour fund-raising event where the city forms  
23 teams and each team has to walk 24 hours on a track and  
24 each member of the team must walk during the 24-hour  
25 period.

1 I have never had the experience or involvement  
2 with the American Cancer Society, but I couldn't say no to  
3 the founder of Relay for Life in our city because he was  
4 also our former mayor.

5 So, with six months left to the actual event I  
6 said yes, but the founders and the committee -- committees  
7 from the previous years were really, really helpful and  
8 provided me with all the materials that I needed to  
9 identify and achieve our goal, which was to increase  
10 public awareness about cancer prevention and help in  
11 services to the public. And also to increase the fund-  
12 raising, which was to beat the 95,000 that they achieved  
13 the previous year.

14 The committee were very, very collaboratively  
15 working with each other, there was a lot of synergy and as  
16 a result it was a very positive experience for me and I  
17 developed life-long experiences.

18 I found out that a positive reinforcements and  
19 civility really would foster cooperation and synergy  
20 amount our committee members. And in the end we were able  
21 to accomplish our goal. We doubled the attendance in the  
22 public and we also raised in excess of 125,000 in 2006.  
23 And in 2007, when I said yes again to being the event  
24 chair, we raised it to 150,000.

25 And as a result, the Relay for Life for the

1 American Cancer Society became part of the city's annual  
2 calendar event.

3 And if I were selected to serve on the Commission  
4 I will foster the collaboration between the Commissioners  
5 by respecting the opinions of my fellow Commissioners and  
6 letting them know that whatever is said during the process  
7 and the discharge of our duties should not be taken  
8 personally.

9 And I will also encourage civility, which means  
10 that no matter how hot the topic will be there will be no  
11 screaming or calling names, and we must carry ourselves in  
12 a dignified manner before the public and inside our  
13 conference rooms.

14 And I also found out that positive reinforcements  
15 and positive comments are better than negative criticisms  
16 and negative comments.

17 And I want to make sure that to ensure that the  
18 Commission meets the deadline, that I will have a clear  
19 schedule of -- and identify various different states of  
20 the process, and have regular meeting, meet in person  
21 even, or telephone to make sure that everyone is current.

22 And those Commissioners who need help should be  
23 provided assistance that they need.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Five minutes.

25 MS. ZNEIMER: Thank you.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
2 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
3 from all over California who come from very different  
4 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
5 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
6 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
7 in interacting with the public?

8 MS. ZNEIMER: I was born in the Philippines and I  
9 acquired U.S. citizenship because my dad is a Dutch  
10 Hawaiian, born in Hawaii, and my mom was born in the  
11 Philippines of Spaniard and Filipino ancestry.

12 I came here when I was already a teenager and I  
13 directly enrolled to UCLA for my college education and it  
14 was a cultural shock but I had to adjust so quickly, and  
15 overcome the language barrier, and also assimilate the  
16 western culture.

17 Through my educational and professional career I  
18 had the opportunity in meeting a lot of people in  
19 different walks of life, and I'm able to understand people  
20 from different culture because I was in that place. And,  
21 also, I understand people with different perspectives  
22 because it would not be a diverse population if everybody  
23 is of the same -- sharing the same perspective.

24 I also recognize that I have the ability to lead  
25 and I am comfortable dealing and interacting with the

1 public, and I have no problems in communicating what I  
2 want to communicate be it social, civil or political  
3 functions.

4           And one of the most important skill that I've  
5 acquired is to listen to the public. By listening to the  
6 voices of the public I would be able to understand their  
7 interests, their commonalities, and their needs. And by  
8 also accepting that there is no perfect solution, I learn  
9 how to compromise and be able to understand better the  
10 other people's perspective.

11           I am very passionate about this Commission because  
12 I sincerely believe that the voting process should reflect  
13 the voice of the people and to bring more minority groups  
14 into the political voting arena.

15           And I also believe that a lot of diverse groups in  
16 the population, in the different communities, should be  
17 involved in this political process because a vote means  
18 something and every vote should matter, and every voter  
19 should be -- should have a connection to their  
20 representative or elected official in their community.

21           And redistricting is one of the most important  
22 events in our democracy as it determines the allocation of  
23 political power. Participating in this process is vital  
24 and providing public input ensures that our interests are  
25 being heard by the representative and our public official.

1 And, hopefully, that public official represents our  
2 community. Thank you.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon,  
5 Ms. Zneimer.

6 MS. ZNEIMER: Good afternoon.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: In response to question one you  
8 mentioned a number of commissions and boards that you were  
9 serving. In your application, when I look at the  
10 employment history you're listed as self-employed since  
11 '97. So, are all those activities with the boards and  
12 commissions within the Los Angeles area, as you mentioned,  
13 as part of -- you had a contract with the city or county?

14 MS. ZNEIMER: No, they're all volunteers.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: They're all volunteers?

16 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

18 And none of those commissions or committees have  
19 appointed positions; correct?

20 MS. ZNEIMER: They are -- ultimately, they're  
21 appointed, but we go through a selection process, like an  
22 application from the public and then --

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

24 MS. ZNEIMER: -- ultimately, the most qualified is  
25 appointed by, you know, whoever is in charge of the --

1 CHAIR AHMADI: By the local government, like the  
2 county or city?

3 MS. ZNEIMER: Right.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

5 Can you tell us how various communities in  
6 California may be quite different and how those  
7 differences will have an impact on the people's choices or  
8 preferences to vote?

9 MS. ZNEIMER: Compared to the present boundary  
10 lines and what it would be, it would be reflected of the  
11 different population in the community. Like in Los  
12 Angeles we have a section in East Los Angeles that is  
13 composed of mainly Hispanic. Their culture and their  
14 values are different and understanding how they  
15 participate -- they could participate in the political  
16 process is very vital because if they are not given then  
17 change then -- then there would be -- their voice would  
18 not be heard in the political process.

19 And also, in Gardena, we call it the Hawaiian  
20 Gardens, it's mainly Pacific Islanders and Hawaiians, and  
21 I could relate to them because my father is Hawaiian. And  
22 the culture is so much different from the western, like  
23 the Americans.

24 So, recognizing that there are differences in  
25 cultures and even how they participate in local government

1 is very essential for a Commissioner to be able to  
2 understand how to draw the lines because they have  
3 different commonalities and needs than the Hispanics or  
4 the African American population in Compton. It differs  
5 from the white population, mainly Anglo Saxon in San  
6 Marino or the southern -- the South Pasadena, also, where  
7 I come from, from the city, it's mainly 60 percent white,  
8 Anglo Saxon.

9           So, it's -- there are lots of pockets of different  
10 ethnicities that have different interests and  
11 commonalities. And by the Commissioner understanding what  
12 they are, they would be able to effectively draw the lines  
13 to satisfy the needs of this diverse population in Los  
14 Angeles or in California.

15           CHAIR AHMADI: Beside ethnicity and geographic  
16 location, as you mentioned, what other factors do you  
17 think are contributing to the political preferences of the  
18 residents?

19           MS. ZNEIMER: Well, it would be the socioeconomic  
20 statuses and the educational background. Some are limited  
21 in English proficiency and, of course, if they wanted to  
22 participate in the electoral process, some help should be  
23 given to them so that they can participate in voting, such  
24 as understanding the voting materials. Which means that  
25 we need to publish materials in their language, that they

1 can understand.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Should you be selected as a  
3 Commissioner what data do you think the Commission will  
4 need to fulfill its responsibility?

5 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, it would be the different --  
6 number one, the different races, the ethnic background,  
7 and the age, the socioeconomic of each class or each race,  
8 the educational background, and also the ages. Some are  
9 young enough to be able to be educated faster than the  
10 older people, who are already fixed in their understanding  
11 of what, you know, a language is and it's very hard for  
12 them to understand or learn any language.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: So, in what ways do you think age  
14 information or information for the age of the population  
15 will be necessary of help -- or help the Commission in  
16 drawing these lines?

17 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, for example, in -- I think in  
18 2009 the statistics shows that there's about five million  
19 disabled people in the State of California and that spans  
20 from age five and up.

21 So, they make a difference because, for example,  
22 if these group of disabled citizens are of voting age and  
23 transport to the polling polls or to the meeting halls are  
24 necessary then that should be provided by the State.

25 And also, high schoolers, who are -- who have

1 achieved the 18 years of voting age, also there should be  
2 like an outreach, an educational outreach to let them know  
3 that their vote counts.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Right, right, but I guess my question  
5 was -- I'm just trying to make sure that I understood and  
6 I may not have been clear in my question, so let me repeat  
7 that.

8 Let's say you gather information on the age of the  
9 population in California, how would you use that to help  
10 you redraw the lines? In what way are you going to use  
11 that information?

12 MS. ZNEIMER: That's tough. I would cite the  
13 healthcare issues --

14 CHAIR AHMADI: And just to clarify, I'm sorry for  
15 interrupting you, I'm asking this question because I heard  
16 you saying that -- in response to my first question, what  
17 data would you need, and I think you said age information.  
18 So, that's why I wanted to make sure that I understand how  
19 are you going to use the age information.

20 MS. ZNEIMER: Right. Well, the age information  
21 would reflect the different needs in the community, if  
22 it's an older population versus a younger population, what  
23 kind of -- the Commissioners should identify the needs of  
24 that community, if it's a younger community or an older  
25 community.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

2 MS. ZNEIMER: And that would also kind of, in our  
3 present day, the healthcare reform, it's affected who is  
4 the representative, can the representative who they  
5 elected represent their needs in this particular age  
6 group.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So, do you see it possible  
8 to create a district for elderly versus create a district  
9 for the youngsters or how -- I'm still not clear on your  
10 response?

11 MS. ZNEIMER: Probably not. Probably not. It's  
12 kind of homogeneous. But some communities are younger  
13 communities than other retirement communities like --

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Can you name some of those  
15 communities?

16 MS. ZNEIMER: Our -- like South Pasadena has more  
17 older people than younger people.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

19 MS. ZNEIMER: So, we have more voters, too,  
20 because most of the younger kids are in college and away  
21 from their parents' house -- homes.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I don't have any other  
23 questions at this point. Thank you.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

1 Hello, Ms. Zneimer?

2 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You were on the board of the  
4 South Pasadena Preservation Foundation and South Pasadena  
5 Educational Foundation.

6 How and for what purpose did you interact with all  
7 those various groups that you listed in your application  
8 and what did you learn that would be applicable to the  
9 Commission?

10 MS. ZNEIMER: There are two different groups. The  
11 South Pasadena Educational Foundation mainly supports the  
12 schools, which means parents and we have the students, the  
13 elementary schools, and the middle school, and the high  
14 school.

15 We mainly fund-raise and also support programs,  
16 after-school programs.

17 And my role there was I was the vice chair of the  
18 bylaws, they had the bylaws for the nonprofit  
19 organization, where we could have our criteria, especially  
20 for the grant writing committee, so we can raise more  
21 funds.

22 For the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation,  
23 that mainly the mission is to preserve the historical  
24 buildings in our community.

25 And I am able to interact with a much older and

1 different segment of the community because these people  
2 have different interests. Most of them are engineers and  
3 developers, and also preservationists that preserve the  
4 historical aspects of a building.

5           And sometimes we interact with the design board of  
6 the city when there's an issue of refurbishing a house  
7 that was designated as a historical house.

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In your application you said  
9 that you often -- with these boards you "often interacted  
10 with different ethnic and socioeconomic groups in your  
11 community, such as the Chinese American clubs,  
12 parent/teacher associations, students and parents in  
13 various socioeconomic status, the Latino groups, the gay  
14 and lesbian" and some other things.

15           So, how did you interact with those various groups  
16 and how would that information and that knowledge be  
17 applicable to the Commission?

18           MS. ZNEIMER: It would be applicable to the  
19 Commission, while I interacted with them when I  
20 functioned -- specifically, when I functioned as a fund-  
21 raiser for the SPEF, the South Pasadena Educational  
22 Foundation.

23           And in our district we have three different  
24 schools and one of the schools is clearly the affluent  
25 side of the community, the other one is like the middle,

1 and the third one is the lower income bracket of our  
2 community.

3 And you could see the separation of races,  
4 particularly in the one elementary school has mostly white  
5 and it's a more affluent section of the community.

6 The middle school -- the other school has mostly  
7 60 percent Asian and 40 percent -- or 30 percent white,  
8 and other races, like we have a few Pacific Islanders and  
9 Hawaiians in our community, and Filipinos.

10 And the other elementary school clearly fell below  
11 the median income of South Pasadena, our city. So, by  
12 combining them together I know how to reach them, you  
13 know, when I ask for donations, because I have to be  
14 sensitive in what their ability to give.

15 And so I would tailor the ask in a different way  
16 so that they would not be left out, also, so everybody has  
17 a chance to contribute.

18 And it is -- it is vital for the Commission to  
19 know that there are -- these subgroups exist in even one  
20 community, a small community, so that the lines can be  
21 drawn so that the elected officials would represent the  
22 needs of these community that's composed of different  
23 subgroups.

24 It's a little bit complicated, but I don't know if  
25 you -- if I am able to convey it to you.

1           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With these subgroups, various  
2 -- go ahead, take a drink.

3           With these various subgroups within this South  
4 Pasadena, would there be a reason to maybe split South  
5 Pasadena into various districts and, if so, why?

6           MS. ZNEIMER: It's probably not good. The  
7 population is about 25,000 and it shows that in the last  
8 five years it's been decreasing, the population growth is  
9 minus one percent. So, because it's so little, probably  
10 it's not good to split the district. Right now we're  
11 under district -- under Portantino, and the federal  
12 district is number 29, which is Congressman Schiff.

13           It's a very small community and probably splitting  
14 the district there would be -- well, there would be  
15 different strategy for the Commission in such a way that  
16 we have to identify the language that we need to publish  
17 in terms of election materials because some groups live in  
18 a certain parts of the city and some ethnic groups live in  
19 the north side of the city. There is a -- unfortunately,  
20 there are places where these different ethnics congregate  
21 and it is really vital for this community to -- this is a  
22 unique community and this is what makes the community  
23 unique because of the little subgroups that make it  
24 interesting.

25           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Would you describe

1 your pro bono work for the Volunteers Lawyers Project and  
2 is there any applicability to your likely work on the  
3 Commission?

4 MS. ZNEIMER: In there I represented pro bono with  
5 regards to domestic violence. I help women with children  
6 in the legal system, like applying for child support, in  
7 like restraining orders, and also giving them moral  
8 support and directing them to various organizations that  
9 could help them, like psychological counseling. And also,  
10 helping them to be able to support themselves, like  
11 directing them to placement centers where they could be --  
12 they could rehabilitate and be self-sufficient.

13 As a Commissioner, I was exposed to a different  
14 segment of the society because these are poor -- in the  
15 poor neighborhood, mainly, and we should have a  
16 representative that can connect to the needs of these  
17 particular community.

18 In Los Angeles, where my district was located, it  
19 was mainly poor people and so the representative that  
20 should be elected official should be able to discern the  
21 needs of this community, which is probably unique than the  
22 needs of Beverly Hills or somewhere like that.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. As you kind of  
24 suggested, you were a little bit of a -- I think a  
25 scientist?

1 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes, I was. I was a scientists.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, as a biologist you  
3 learned to analyze empirical data and draw objective  
4 conclusions by employing several mathematical tests to  
5 prove the validity of your data.

6 Could you use a mathematical test that you  
7 learned, as a biologist, on the data you will be receiving  
8 as a Commissioner; why or why not?

9 MS. ZNEIMER: Probably I could use to understand  
10 data, if there's a model, to analyze the different data  
11 using statistical methods. It would not be so different  
12 than an empirical data because there are numbers, you just  
13 have to categorize them and understand what the parameters  
14 are in each category.

15 And in that way, by analyzing using statistical  
16 methods, that you can draw a more objective conclusion,  
17 rather than subjective.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last  
19 question.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good morning. I mean good  
22 afternoon, sorry.

23 MS. ZNEIMER: Good afternoon.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, you started out  
25 originally as a scientist, biology major in behavioral and

1 molecular genetics, like Mary was referring to. I'm  
2 curious what got you interested in this field of work?

3 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, I actually -- my parents  
4 wanted me to be a nurse, but I didn't want to, so the  
5 closest thing that I wanted to be was a bacteriologist.  
6 So, and then I took my masters in Cal State L.A., where I  
7 was paired up with two geneticists and that started my  
8 interest in molecular genetics, it was quite interesting.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, how did you go from there  
10 to your career as a biologist to becoming an attorney?

11 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, long story short, when during  
12 my divorce proceedings in 1988 I was kind of scared that I  
13 didn't know, really, what my rights were. So, I didn't  
14 intend to practice law, I just wanted to study law so I  
15 would understand what's going on in the courtroom. But  
16 one of my girlfriends got divorced and she said you must  
17 help me.

18 So, then one girlfriend and another girlfriend  
19 said that and that was the end, I found myself  
20 representing them in court, so that was it.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, that's interesting.

22 What do you enjoy about your work as an attorney  
23 that was lacking in your career as a biologist?

24 MS. ZNEIMER: As an attorney I was able to  
25 interact more with the public, which I really like, and

1 I'm able to make a difference. Not that as a biologist I  
2 wasn't able to, but to me it's much more tangible.

3 Because when I walk out of the courtroom and I  
4 help this mother, with three children, it's gratifying.  
5 And it's probably -- and also I do a lot of immigration  
6 work and appellate work and if I'm able to change laws,  
7 and challenge laws that I think it's not applicable to the  
8 current issues at hand, then I like that, that kind forum,  
9 that I'm able to be out there in the public.

10 When I was a scientist I was in a room doing  
11 research, and I rarely got out.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Well, you'll be able to get  
13 out as a Commissioner, I'm sure. But you'll have your  
14 fair share of research, also, so I hope you're comfortable  
15 with that.

16 MS. ZNEIMER: I am.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'd like to talk about your  
18 work as a trial attorney, litigating immigration laws,  
19 family law, criminal defense and civil litigation. What  
20 types of cases do you handle?

21 MS. ZNEIMER: I specialize in cases with a  
22 combination of criminal and family law issues. It's a  
23 little bit complicated and there's just certain attorneys  
24 that do that. And it's very challenging because the  
25 immigration laws are very complex and it changes every

1 day. And so, I find it very challenging and it stimulates  
2 my interest.

3 And also, I find that helping immigrants, and I  
4 was an immigrant, too, I could relate to it. Again, it's  
5 gratifying.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, great. What are the  
7 nuances that make it so unique? You said there's not a  
8 lot of attorneys that practice in this area?

9 MS. ZNEIMER: Because it is dynamic. Today it's  
10 different and then tomorrow the U.S. Court of Appeals can  
11 decide a case which is totally different, the holdings or  
12 the decision will be different from yesterday and then you  
13 would have to find the nuances why it's different. And we  
14 have to distinguish, even though they seem to be the same,  
15 the conclusion, but you can distinguish them from one of  
16 the other by little nuances, like issues that are not  
17 present in the other case.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, it's constantly changing?

19 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And does it require a lot of  
21 judgment on your part in interpreting that law?

22 MS. ZNEIMER: As an advocate, yes. You can  
23 only -- well, I advocate for the immigrants. But I --  
24 when I do the immigration cases the opposition is the  
25 government, the U.S. government. So, I have to be

1 cognizant of the existing laws and how to improve them,  
2 probably change them to reflect the needs of the people  
3 that needed them, i.e. the immigrants.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What immigrant populations do  
5 you serve?

6 MS. ZNEIMER: Particularly, I serve about 60  
7 percent Hispanics, from Latin America, and I have a lot of  
8 cases that I've argued and been very, very successful in  
9 the U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. Districts.

10 And again, it's very -- it's helpful to everyone  
11 to be able to change one law to benefit that particular  
12 segment of the American population.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And when you're trying to  
14 service the needs of your clients, knowing how diverse it  
15 is, but you said it's mostly Hispanic, how do the needs of  
16 these groups and people differ by demographic breakdown,  
17 like socioeconomic, age, race?

18 MS. ZNEIMER: Socioeconomically, the immigrants  
19 that are coming from, say, Guatemala, El Salvador or  
20 Mexico, most of them have limited educational background  
21 and they are limited in English proficiency. And a lot of  
22 work has to be -- when I have a case, I always have an  
23 interpreter with me because I'm not proficient in Spanish,  
24 although I could understand. But these are legal  
25 proceedings and I wanted them to understand every facet.

1 I involve them in my case because I know that I can only  
2 win for them if they understand and they can help me win  
3 their case.

4 I make sure that that's part of every case that I  
5 handle.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is there a common theme  
7 amongst the types of case, criminal and family law cases  
8 that you're getting?

9 MS. ZNEIMER: The most common thing is most of  
10 them come here illegally to work and that's been a big  
11 issue. Under our rules and regulations, immigration laws  
12 that prohibit them from working without our permission,  
13 but authorization to work, but we're able to sometimes  
14 work with the U.S. government in some ways, learn how to  
15 compromise.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What changes in your areas of  
17 practice have you noticed between 1997 and now?

18 MS. ZNEIMER: Primarily, I started as a family law  
19 practitioner and then I moved to civil litigation and  
20 immigration. And when I started immigration I found it  
21 very fascinating because the law changes almost every day.  
22 And I find that there is a need for a reform of our  
23 immigration laws and it's been a big, hot topic, and I  
24 find that very interesting.

25 It also relates to -- it also relates to business

1 because I represent -- probably ten percent of my  
2 immigration is entertainment law. I represent actors,  
3 directors from foreign countries, like one of them will  
4 be -- I think was Matrix, where I was sent to Australia to  
5 do contracts and also do the visas for actors that were  
6 hired to come to the U.S. to do the shooting here, of the  
7 movie. So, there's different.

8 And also interpreters, like business visas. So,  
9 there's little litigation for that, the most interesting  
10 part is when I'm in the courtroom.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How often are you in the  
12 courtroom?

13 MS. ZNEIMER: A lot.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you learn about the  
15 needs of your clients that could assist you in the  
16 Commission in understanding this segment of California?

17 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, for the Hispanic people I  
18 learned that they're actually very shy and if they're not  
19 comfortable and they don't know what's going on, they  
20 really rarely participate.

21 Like in the community, in South Pasadena, we have  
22 a four percent of them are Hispanics. And one thing that  
23 I got them involved was got them to dance their native  
24 dance with Mariachis.

25 So, getting them involved. But if you don't

1 encourage them, they're really shy, so understanding where  
2 they come from and their culture, sometimes they're very  
3 hesitant to participate, you know, in the community.

4           So, I think as a Commissioner, if we're sensitive  
5 to their needs, you know, there will be a better  
6 understanding of how to draw the lines and getting a  
7 better representative that could reach the needs of these  
8 minority groups.

9           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And why is that so important  
10 to you, to reach the needs of minority groups over others?

11           MS. ZNEIMER: Because, historically, they've  
12 been -- they are not -- they were not a part of these  
13 electoral political process, they're just in the  
14 background. And there's a lot of them here and I think it  
15 should change because they are here and their voices must  
16 be heard. And if they can vote, then their vote should  
17 count.

18           And if we allow gerrymandering and incumbency  
19 protection, and partisan domination then these minority  
20 groups will never be able to participate in this political  
21 voting process and probably they'll never be able to  
22 understand the vote, and they'll never be able to  
23 understand what they're voting for.

24           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is the language barrier  
25 significant to that, in understanding the culture?

1 MS. ZNEIMER: A lot of language barriers and also  
2 the need to understand their other commonalities, their --  
3 if you understand them, it's different to be included in  
4 their community. Because when they open up, they're  
5 really different people, as if you're viewing them from  
6 the outside.

7 I guess that's true for every culture. So, if we  
8 find a representative, we draw the lines sensitive to the  
9 needs of these minority groups and they are better served,  
10 I think that's the main aim to serve the minority groups  
11 that have not had the opportunity to participate in our  
12 political process.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you believe that the  
14 redistricting effort can address these needs and satisfy  
15 that? I know earlier you said that they -- that it could  
16 satisfy the different interests and communities of these  
17 minorities groups?

18 MS. ZNEIMER: There is no perfect solution but  
19 compromise can be made. And having this Commission is  
20 really a big step to change the boundaries so that the  
21 needs of these people are beginning to be recognized and  
22 they are served, and they are introduced, and they are  
23 able to participate in this political process. Which,  
24 probably, they would like to had we -- you know, we are  
25 able to reach them or make them understand that their

1 voices count.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What are the challenges you  
3 believe a Commissioner will face in L.A., in the L.A.  
4 region.

5 MS. ZNEIMER: A lot. There's a lot of special  
6 interest group and there's a lot of diverse groups. It  
7 will be a challenge probably because -- especially  
8 California is now becoming a Democratic State, so having  
9 independent, nonpartisan voters and not allowing one party  
10 to dominate over the other, probably it's a better  
11 solution, but nothing is perfect. Maybe this is a big  
12 step to make a better, you know, representation to the  
13 needs of Californians.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thanks. You mention in your  
15 application that you have an understanding as to  
16 California's diverse population, which comprises various  
17 individuals possessing distinct characteristics, such as  
18 political affiliations, race, ethno cultural, gender,  
19 sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

20 Is diversity only expressed as an individual or do  
21 groups and communities also comprise California's  
22 diversity?

23 MS. ZNEIMER: I think it's both. As a group, as  
24 an individual, some groups, they identify to an individual  
25 and some communities, the whole community act as one. So,

1 it really, it depends on the community you're referring  
2 to.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why do you think the Voters  
4 Rights Act discusses groups and communities instead of  
5 only individuals?

6 MS. ZNEIMER: Because the community is served by  
7 the vote of the eligible voters and these -- the needs of  
8 the communities should be served by the elected official  
9 in that district.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is there any danger in  
11 understanding public comments as expressions of  
12 individuals, instead of determining whether a group or  
13 community interest is being expressed?

14 MS. ZNEIMER: I don't know how to answer this  
15 question but if -- it really depends on how -- we probably  
16 have a guidance as to how to treat public comments. It  
17 depends on what kind of public comments that comes the --  
18 comes our way.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you belong to any clubs,  
20 organizations or groups that would benefit in any way by  
21 you being named to the Citizens Redistricting Commission?

22 MS. ZNEIMER: Right now I don't -- I don't think  
23 so. Even though I'm a Republican, honestly, I vote  
24 sometimes a democrat when I strongly believe that that  
25 person is more suitable than a Republican candidate.

1 That's just my personal conviction.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you have any interaction  
3 with elected officials?

4 MS. ZNEIMER: Only at the city council in a way  
5 that I represent the public. I liaison with the public,  
6 what they need, if they need more parking, you know, we  
7 put that in the commission. If they need more parks, we  
8 put that in the commission. If groups, AYSL soccer and  
9 baseball need more park space, then we put that in the  
10 commission. That's how I interact with the city council.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No personal --

12 MS. ZNEIMER: None, I don't have anything in South  
13 Pasadena.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Strictly through the  
15 commission work?

16 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And what was that commission,  
18 again?

19 MS. ZNEIMER: The Parks and Recreation Commission.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Parks and rec, okay.

21 How many more minutes do I have?

22 MS. HAMEL: A minute and a half.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me a little bit  
24 about what you meant by saying, "moreover", in your  
25 application, "I understand that I have to work with

1 various Californians having different levels of  
2 intelligence, having different interests, different  
3 educational and political backgrounds and different  
4 religious convictions”?

5 Can you tell me how this affects their political  
6 preferences and ability to participate in the process?

7 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, I think a more educated a  
8 Commission is, you know, I have yet to educate myself in a  
9 lot of things, they would know more and they would have  
10 more information that probably could guide Commissioners,  
11 other Commissioners that have less understanding of a  
12 political issue, and that goes to the intelligence. And  
13 nothing personal or anything, but it’s just a public fact  
14 that people who work in the political arena are more savvy  
15 than me, working in a legal field.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are there follow-up  
18 questions, Panelists?

19 CHAIR AHMADI: I don’t have any.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I just have a couple for  
22 you. Is it Ms. Zneimer?

23 MS. ZNEIMER: Zneimer.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Zneimer, okay. I didn’t  
25 have time to ask you before we started, which leads me to

1 my first question, what happened, why were you late today?

2 MS. ZNEIMER: Oh, I thought it was 1:30. I'm  
3 sorry.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you were early in your  
5 own mind?

6 MS. ZNEIMER: I thought I was early.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
8 about your position on the Parks and Rec. Commission. How  
9 were you -- how did you get that position?

10 MS. ZNEIMER: The commissioners elected me.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, the commissioners on  
12 the Parks and Rec.?

13 MS. ZNEIMER: Right.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you're a citizens  
15 representative?

16 MS. ZNEIMER: Right.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And are the Parks and Rec.  
18 commissioners elected officials?

19 MS. ZNEIMER: No.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: They're all appointed?

21 MS. ZNEIMER: We're all appointed. We fill out an  
22 application, which is open to the 25,000 registered voters  
23 in South Pasadena and we go through the process of who's  
24 qualified, and it gets sifted through the city council.  
25 They determine which person is -- which qualification is

1 better suited to sit in which commission.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, the city council  
3 appoints you or those who are on the Parks and Rec.  
4 Commission?

5 MS. ZNEIMER: For being a commissioner it goes  
6 through several process and ultimately the city council  
7 would nominate and the mayor appoints. But the position,  
8 like chair, vice chair, secretary is elected among the  
9 commissioners among the commission. Like there's five of  
10 us and the four would vote, would nominate me on the floor  
11 for a chair position, or a vice chair, or a secretary,  
12 something like that.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. So, I'm still not  
14 getting it and it's probably -- it's probably me, it's not  
15 you.

16 MS. ZNEIMER: I'm sorry.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I just wonder, were you  
18 appointed to that position by any elected local official?

19 MS. ZNEIMER: Not really. It's a process of  
20 filling out an application, open to the public, and it's  
21 the panel of -- it happens to be the city council that  
22 decides who is best suited to sit on that commission, so  
23 it goes through a process of elimination.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you fill out an  
25 application, the city council reviews all applications,

1 let's say they have a hundred, and the city council  
2 chooses which person from that 100 sits on the Parks and  
3 Rec. Commission?

4 MS. ZNEIMER: Correct.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. So, as you may or  
6 may not know, the Bureau's in the process of promulgating  
7 some new regulations that would interpret a provision of  
8 the Voters First Act that prohibits certain positions  
9 being held by a Commissioner for different lengths of  
10 time, depending upon what kind of position it is.

11 For appointed positions it's a five-year period  
12 and for elected officials it's a ten-year period.

13 So, I'm not sure whether the facts of your  
14 circumstances would require you to make a choice. It  
15 wouldn't disqualify you from being on the Commission.

16 But my -- if you're selected to serve on the  
17 Commission, it might require you to make a choice between  
18 working in your position for the Parks and Rec. Commission  
19 and serving on the Citizens Redistricting Commission.

20 MS. ZNEIMER: Oh.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And so, I need to know  
22 whether, in the event your name is pulled out of the  
23 hopper or the first eight select you, you're willing to  
24 give up your Parks and Rec. position to serve on the  
25 Citizens Redistricting Commission?

1 MS. ZNEIMER: Yes, I've already notified them that  
2 maybe --

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay.

4 MS. ZNEIMER: -- if in the event that I -- I've  
5 already had -- there's already one person that's been  
6 groomed to be the chair.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, very good.

8 I also read in your application that you have done  
9 some lobbying on the -- well, you've meet with Legislators  
10 on the State and Federal level regarding certain  
11 legislation backed by the American Cancer Society. And  
12 Ms. Spano touched on it a little bit, but I'm wondering  
13 whether you still have those professional connections with  
14 any member of Congress or any member of the State  
15 Legislator?

16 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, actually, what we do for  
17 American Cancer Society is they appoint a team leader and  
18 I'm the Legislative Ambassador or the team leader.

19 What I do is I go to the Congressmen or Senator's  
20 office as a constituent. I gather other constituents who,  
21 for example, are cancer survivors and we tell stories  
22 about their personal lives, how they are touched by  
23 cancer.

24 And as constituents, we go there as constituents,  
25 and we tell them that we support this particular bill.

1 And, but we are volunteers, also, for American Cancer  
2 Society.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Yeah.

4 MS. ZNEIMER: So, I gather my constituents from  
5 the pool of American Cancer Society volunteers, so that we  
6 go to the offices of the State and the Federal as  
7 constituents, but not as lobbyists. It's kind of loosely,  
8 we're actually advocating as constituents.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I understand. You're not a  
10 paid lobbyist --

11 MS. ZNEIMER: No.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: -- you're not registered  
13 with any particular organization or entity as being a  
14 registered lobbyist. I get that.

15 My question is really more what is the extent of  
16 any relationships that you may have with your elected  
17 officials?

18 MS. ZNEIMER: I don't really have one, I'm sorry.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. You talked in your  
20 application about how when you serve as a Judge pro tem  
21 you spend a great deal of time assessing a case to  
22 determine whether you have a bias and either whether you  
23 can set aside a bias or whether you need to recuse  
24 yourself.

25 You know, the interesting thing about the

1 Commission is there's no opportunity for recusal. So, I'm  
2 wondering, if you encountered a situation where you felt  
3 that you may have a bias how would you set that aside in  
4 order to do your work impartially?

5 MS. ZNEIMER: That's going to be hard. But being  
6 that I'm trained professionally to set aside biases and  
7 prejudices, even though I have a strong conviction I would  
8 not let that interfere with my work as a Commissioner, and  
9 I'm able to compartmentalize that part of it so that I  
10 would be able to discharge my duty as a Commissioner.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I was listening to you tell  
12 the story about how you came to practice law, which I  
13 thought was very interesting. And so, how did you do  
14 that, I mean the practice of -- it takes three years to  
15 get through law school. Did you master that before your  
16 own legal proceedings resolved or how did -- were you  
17 going at night, how did you do that?

18 MS. ZNEIMER: I was -- that was tough because I  
19 had two kids, I had -- my kids were two and five at that  
20 time. I was going both day and night in law school.

21 But I was able to finish it in three years with  
22 hard work.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. Very good.

24 I don't have additional questions.

25 Panelists, do you have any?

1 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. We have some time  
4 remaining on the clock if you care to make a closing  
5 statement?

6 MS. ZNEIMER: Well, I am very, very passionate to  
7 be involved in this Commission and I hope that I'll be  
8 given a chance to participate.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for  
13 coming to see us today.

14 MS. ZNEIMER: Thank you.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We will recess until 2:44.

16 (Off the record at 2:21 p.m.)

17 (Back on the record at 2:44 p.m.)

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's 2:44, let's go on  
19 record.

20 First, Panelists, I'd like to announce that our  
21 4:30 appointment with Conny McCormack has been canceled.  
22 She will not attend, she has requested to withdraw from  
23 the pool.

24 And you can't take action on that matter today but  
25 at a later meeting with Applicant reductions have been

1 agendized, at that point you can take that issue up.

2 Our next Applicant is here, however, Mr. Michael  
3 Gabriel.

4 Mr. Gabriel, are you ready to begin?

5 MR. GABRIEL: I am ready.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

7 What specific skills do you believe a good  
8 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills which do you  
9 possess? Which do you not possess and how will you  
10 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that  
11 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of  
12 the duties of a Commissioner?

13 MR. GABRIEL: Well, first I'd like to take the  
14 opportunity to say hello and to thank you for me being  
15 here, for me getting this far in the process, that's very  
16 exciting and very stimulating.

17 I heard about the process on a radio ad, although  
18 I was quite aware of it. And my interest has grown  
19 exponentially since I first heard that radio ad.

20 In terms of skills, I think they fall into two  
21 distinct areas; technical skills and leadership skills.

22 In the area of technical skills, of course you  
23 need to be very familiar with Proposition 11, because  
24 that's what we're working on. But it circles back to the  
25 Voters Rights Act of 1965 and any applicable case law

1 that's followed.

2           There's concepts that have come out of that Voters  
3 Rights Act that we'd have to pay attention to and I'd have  
4 to come up to speed with. One of which would be  
5 communities of interest, one would be the no notion of  
6 standard deviation, and compactness of districts.

7           There's a number of technical terms that all make  
8 a little bit of sense to me, but I'd have to really become  
9 a lot more familiar with them and that's one of the key  
10 technical areas that a Commissioner would need.

11           In the matter of demography, and statistical  
12 analysis, land use regulation, then building on basic  
13 office skills, basic office software skills of course  
14 would be needed, the ability to connect through e-mail and  
15 modern technology. Of course, that's sort of a given.

16           Web-based applications, maybe Survey Monkey, webinars I  
17 think would also be a useful technical area.

18           And I guess on the higher end of technical it  
19 would be great if one had the ability to generate  
20 statistical redistricting, you know, computer-based  
21 statistical redistricting models or they could manipulate  
22 software in order to draw a model that would be a great  
23 skill for a Commissioner to have. I'm not sure that we'll  
24 find that.

25           On the area of leadership, which is sort of the

1 other side of the same equation, I feel like humility,  
2 sense of humor are up there. The Commissioners will be  
3 the face of the process so they need to be comfortable  
4 dealing with highly charged political environments.

5 They need to have -- they need to be comfortable  
6 in public forums, comfortable with people from different  
7 backgrounds.

8 Just group facilitation and consensus building I  
9 think will be critical in this role.

10 They'll need to be able to manage consultants or  
11 at least consultant information. I imagine there will be  
12 a number of consultants hired to help us pull together the  
13 information that's needed.

14 And being able to pay some attention to scope of  
15 work all the way through evaluation of consultants I think  
16 is a critical skill.

17 Obviously, to be able to assimilate a lot of new  
18 information in a fairly short period of time.

19 I did have the chance to take sort of a quick peek  
20 at the reapportionment puzzle books, so there's a lot of  
21 different books that we could get our heads into, I could  
22 get my head into.

23 I was a little reluctant to go too far because I  
24 don't want to taint my opinions in any way, but I think I  
25 would want to prepare. That sort of speaks to some of the

1 areas I would do to bolster.

2 I don't expect that I'll become a computer  
3 software expert in redistricting or be able to do high  
4 level statistical analysis, but I do think those skills  
5 would be great to see, brought to the bear, but I don't  
6 think that would be something that I would have or that I  
7 would expect to have.

8 Having said that, I would heavily rely on legal  
9 counsel and technical counsel for their opinions.  
10 However, I would weigh those opinions very -- I wouldn't  
11 take them at face value, I'd weigh them against my  
12 experience and knowledge.

13 I guess on that topic the Commissioners need to be  
14 able to defend and need to be able to be comfortable  
15 defending their decisions to all audiences, despite  
16 partisan pressure and all types of other pressures and,  
17 again, recognize that they are the face of the  
18 redistricting process.

19 Skills I don't possess, I think I covered that.  
20 Compensate, know what you know, know what you don't know,  
21 ask clarifying questions. Work hard, put in the time.

22 And I think the last piece of your questions is  
23 anything that would prohibit me from doing it and being  
24 able to do the role. And I would say no, although time is  
25 always a consideration. I think I'd really need to be

1 clear on the time commitments that are needed and see how  
2 that fits into my world of commitments.

3 I hope I covered that?

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I think you did.

5 Describe a circumstance from your personal  
6 experience where you had to work with others to resolve a  
7 conflict or difference of opinion? Please describe the  
8 issue and explain your role in addressing and resolving  
9 the conflict? If you are selected to serve on the  
10 Citizens Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would  
11 resolve conflicts that may arise among the Commissioners?

12 MR. GABRIEL: Okay. There are a lot of different  
13 examples that I could pull from and I kind of went over  
14 and over which one would be useful for you to hear. A lot  
15 of them are linked to my professional life, so I pulled  
16 one that was strictly from my volunteer life, so that the  
17 volunteer parallel would be there.

18 This example comes from my capacity of  
19 neighborhood association president, President of the  
20 Glenview Neighborhood Association, in Oakland.

21 We had, in our neighborhood, a gas station that's  
22 been there before zoning in Oakland, it predates zoning,  
23 and it was generally a problem. It was a problem in the  
24 sense that it was exerting -- it was spilling out over the  
25 neighborhood, it was on a very small lot, a number of

1 complaints came from neighbors and we kind of just didn't  
2 like it.

3           However, they had the right to be there, they were  
4 grandfathered in, we worked with them to improve.

5           Here comes Loma Prieta earthquake, the gas station  
6 suddenly closes and neighbors were focused on many other  
7 things in the Bay Area, other than that little gas station  
8 and it wasn't for a number of years -- I'm sorry, a number  
9 of months that a neighbor -- I heard through the rumor  
10 mill that one of the ladies at the church smelled gasoline  
11 in her basement, and that was the beginning of the  
12 Neighborhood Association's role in trying to resolve this  
13 issue.

14           Well, it turns out that there was a spill that  
15 came from the gas station, that resulted somehow from the  
16 Loma Prieta quake, and it was affecting our neighborhood  
17 in a way that we just didn't know. We knew that people  
18 were smelling it in their basement.

19           So, I was thrust into the situation, as President,  
20 although I really had strong feelings against this gas  
21 station. So, I was thrown into a situation of having to  
22 weigh my personal opinion, which actually was linked to my  
23 investment head because I had property one block away and  
24 I thought this corner lot was, you know, a detriment to my  
25 property.

1           So, I had to weigh my personal interests, my  
2 professional interests, my interests has a neighborhood  
3 leader with that of the property owner, the city and  
4 county regulatory agencies and such. Those were all the  
5 stakeholders that needed to be cared for, nurtured, taken  
6 care of in this process.

7           This story went on for like, you know, 12 years,  
8 so I'm going to have to move it along to keep it within my  
9 time constraints. Somewhere in the process it became  
10 really clear to me that figuring out how to deal with this  
11 issue, because of the nature of the spill, was well beyond  
12 my technical expertise.

13           I called a good friend of mine, one of my  
14 references by the way, Jim Levine, who's very familiar  
15 with hydrology and environmental spill issues and he gave  
16 me a little counsel.

17           But, ultimately, I found a neighbor who was  
18 qualified to do the work, he was a hydrologist and an  
19 urban groundwater expert. He was a neighbor. And so, we  
20 recruited him to come and help us, help us work with the  
21 county and figure out what was really going on.

22           And what we determined through the county's work  
23 and through my recruit, who was monitoring this, was that  
24 the plume had in fact gone beyond the limits of the gas  
25 station property and was adjoining -- it was going into

1 adjoining properties.

2           The county came out and did an investigation, they  
3 came up with a mitigation plan.

4           Long story short, they initially did not require  
5 that the lot be cleaned up to residential standards, they  
6 required that it be cleaned up to commercial standards.

7           At one of our public hearings, the importance of  
8 public hearings, a neighbor said that there's no way that  
9 the gasoline is going to stop at a property line.

10           The spirit and purity of her comment really was  
11 the energy that carried the day through the rest of our  
12 work.

13           That was the issue that we basically took to the  
14 city council, to the planning commission, and ultimately  
15 to the court of appeal, that while there were rights that  
16 the owner had to use this property, the rights of the  
17 adjoining property owners were being diminished by its  
18 use.

19           Ultimately, the court of -- we lost at all the  
20 municipal levels, for a variety of reasons, and finally  
21 the court of appeal, to our surprise, ended up denying the  
22 application not around the mitigation issue, but they  
23 denied it around the fact that the grandfathered use had  
24 ceased and so they could no longer continue to operate a  
25 gas station there.

1           Once the gas station was taken out of the equation  
2 the owners were no longer interested in the property,  
3 ended up selling it. It's still on the top ten county's  
4 list, or at least somewhere on their list as not  
5 completely been mitigation.

6           But I think, in summation, the Neighborhood  
7 Association felt that it would have been a worse problem  
8 to put a gas station back on top of a lot that had not  
9 been cleaned to a baseline standard and it would rather  
10 have -- would rather be patient and wait for the right use  
11 than to risk the wrong use going in.

12           So, my role was balancing all the stakeholders,  
13 being fair in the process, listening and helping to come  
14 to a conclusion that may not necessarily be my personal  
15 best choice, but it was a choice that's best given all the  
16 information and circumstances.

17           I think there was another part of this question,  
18 conflict resolution part.

19           I've done a lot of conflict resolution in my years  
20 in the nonprofit sector. As a consultant, a lot of times  
21 I'm brought into organizations to do what they call team  
22 building. My internal flag goes up whenever I hear team  
23 building because it's often a veiled way of talking about  
24 we have a real problem with staff, we have people that  
25 aren't getting along, we have conflict. And then they

1 need to build the team, as opposed to building it on the  
2 front end. My bias.

3 Well, it is my bias. I feel and my experience has  
4 taught me that a best way to limit crisis, to limit  
5 conflict is to spend time at the beginning of a workgroup  
6 for people to get to know each other beyond the capacity  
7 that they present in whatever panel or group they're in.

8 Now, this doesn't mean that we're going to become  
9 personal friends or necessarily sing Kumbaya, but it does  
10 mean that we end some type of a get-to-know-you process,  
11 be it a retreat or something of that nature, knowing  
12 something about the person's work style, thinking style,  
13 how they view the world, how they make decisions, and why  
14 they're there.

15 What I also find in crisis is that the issues  
16 become highly personalized and so it becomes more about  
17 who said it and what's behind it, than the issue, itself.

18 So, in terms of my typical process for conflict  
19 resolution, I get the group to agree to enter into a  
20 discussion, that could be a long process in and of itself,  
21 get them to agree to enter into a discussion and get them  
22 to agree that they have a willingness to resolve the  
23 issue.

24 Each one of these are checkpoints. If they can't  
25 agree to talk and can't agree that they want to try to

1 resolve it, then there's not going to be any conflict  
2 resolution, that's step one.

3 Clarify -- identify and clarify the source of the  
4 conflict and get common consensus on that. As I said, de-  
5 personalize the issue.

6 Determine if the issue really impacts the primary  
7 function of the group. Sometimes collateral issues are  
8 brought to the table that really don't have direct bearing  
9 on the work of the group, so clarify that this is an issue  
10 that this group needs to resolve to move forward. If not,  
11 it could be put to the side.

12 Once we get through those initial steps then,  
13 either working in small groups or small body, come up with  
14 a number of different -- oh, one last thing I should say,  
15 before we get into working on compromise we need to  
16 identify whether the issue is around a core or cherished  
17 belief that someone in the group has.

18 If it's a core or cherished belief then it  
19 increases the -- it likely increases the time that you  
20 need to spend to seek resolution, or it might mean that  
21 you won't be able to seek resolution.

22 If someone thinks the world is flat, that's their  
23 core belief, it may be difficult to convince them  
24 otherwise, to use a somewhat silly example.

25 Assuming we can get through the steps, identify

1 one or more responses or compromises, offer those to the  
2 group, see if the group's willing to take any of those  
3 compromises or any piece of those compromises, and/or  
4 decide that there's no way that we can resolve this, that  
5 no action can be taken, and then the discussion turns to  
6 what can we continue to do as a group and still hold this  
7 conflict to the side.

8           So, a couple checkpoints, resolve it through  
9 compromise, or determine that we can't move on it but  
10 we're going to move on our primary function, anyway. And  
11 then, finally, memorialize the action so that it won't  
12 come back again the next meeting, like a fresh issue, that  
13 you memorialize what you did with it, where it is, and how  
14 you've decided to treat it.

15           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: With about six minutes  
16 remaining; how will the Commission's work impact the  
17 State? Which of these impacts will improve the State the  
18 most? Is there any potential for the Commission's work to  
19 harm the State and, if so, in what ways?

20           MR. GABRIEL: An interesting question. I went  
21 around and around in scenarios of what might happen and,  
22 ultimately, I think we're moving into a period of  
23 uncertainty.

24           Now, that period of uncertainty is heightened  
25 because of Propositions 20, which basically repeals the

1 work of 11, and then 27 which adds the whole dynamic of  
2 Congressional redistricting to the bailiwick.

3 Those two items, alone, increase the scrutiny that  
4 I think this group will be under and will increase the  
5 scrutiny of the work that will come from this body, should  
6 the body remain intact.

7 All of those scenarios, I think, will create  
8 suspicious, scenario projections, even possible political  
9 maneuvering, anticipation of what the final districts will  
10 look like.

11 Well, we don't know what the districts will look  
12 like. We only know that the citizens have asked to find a  
13 new way of determining those districts. They didn't say  
14 what that determination would look like, but they clearly  
15 said we don't want it to be done the way it's been done.

16 So, I think the price for that is going to be a  
17 period of uncertainty.

18 And that's the backdrop with which the Commission  
19 will begin its work --

20 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

21 MR. GABRIEL: Thank you.

22 The Commission will need to build confidence and  
23 recognize that this is an unprecedented effort in  
24 California.

25 Improve the State? Hopefully, we can engage new

1 people, we can get young people inspired, we can get  
2 people that have not been interested involved in some way,  
3 like this might signal a higher level involvement. And  
4 the measure would be increased voter participation.

5 My hope is that through this process will actually  
6 result in increased voter participation. That will be the  
7 measure, in my opinion, of the success and then could be  
8 the greatest improvement to the State.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
10 you've had to work as part of a group to achieve a common  
11 goal? Tell us about the goal, describe your role within  
12 the group, and tell us how the group worked or did not  
13 work collaboratively to achieve this goal? If you are  
14 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
15 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
16 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
17 Commission meets its legal deadlines?

18 MR. GABRIEL: For 25 years I've worked for a  
19 national nonprofit organization and during my tenure we've  
20 passed out, if you will, granted, over a hundred million  
21 dollars in grant funds. Over 25 years, two team meetings  
22 per year, we've had a lot of discussion, a lot of  
23 conflict, a lot of different procedures on how to  
24 determine what's best to -- what the best way is to get  
25 our dollars out.

1           Sometimes we find that there are core beliefs that  
2 people have that make it difficult. Some people believe  
3 that money should always go to the most needy, some people  
4 feel that money should go to those that produce the most.

5           Ultimately, what I've tried to do as a leader,  
6 because I'm a leader by virtue of my years on staff, I'm a  
7 senior member there, is to look for that middle place  
8 where we can satisfy both needs, where we can find a way  
9 to fund the group that's productive and perhaps have the  
10 productive group teach the less productive group how to be  
11 more productive, but that there is, in fact, a place where  
12 we can satisfy the needs of all parties.

13           The focus should be on the big picture that we're  
14 there to make funding available, affordable housing  
15 funding available to those that need it. And with that  
16 focus, I think we can resolve some of the minor issues  
17 that come up.

18           In terms of meeting legal deadlines, I think we  
19 all look at time differently. I know when I work in  
20 Hawaii, and in Alaska, and L.A., and the Inland Empire,  
21 they all have a different view of time. Some of them are  
22 worried about traffic, some of them are just more laid  
23 back.

24           We have to pay attention to where people are  
25 coming from on time.

1           Having said that, I think it makes sense to  
2 empower those that are highly focused on deadlines to  
3 lead, to be the ones to develop charts, for an example, to  
4 be the ones to remind the group that that's an important  
5 aspect of the work.

6           I think working in small groups can help a group  
7 to work to meet deadlines, if we create workgroups where  
8 some of the members on the group are particularly known  
9 for their promptitude, mixing those people with perhaps  
10 those that are less known for their promptitude to balance  
11 out the work team in a way that's more casual and perhaps  
12 less heavy.

13           I think I've covered that. Obviously, I'm a  
14 little bit concerned about time.

15           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Should we extend three  
16 minutes or so?

17           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

18           CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah.

19           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. So you'll have about  
20 four minutes.

21           A considerable amount of the Commission's work  
22 will involve meeting with people from all over California,  
23 who come from very different backgrounds and very  
24 different perspectives. If you are selected to serve on  
25 the Commission, tell us about the specific skills you

1 possess that will make you effective in interacting with  
2 the public?

3 MR. GABRIEL: I was born ten years after the  
4 Voters Rights Act into a neighborhood that was very  
5 integrated and I never knew why until later life. It  
6 turns out my parents moved into a neighborhood that was  
7 part of a HUD project, it was one of the first  
8 neighborhoods in Richmond, California that used what was  
9 called, then, an open sales policy.

10 And I thought to myself, hmmm, open to what?  
11 Well, looking back at a time when many of our  
12 neighborhoods were segregated and steering was common  
13 practice, it was open to all races, colors and creeds.

14 And so, I grew up in a neighborhood where my best  
15 friend was Chinese, the neighbors on either side were of  
16 different races, my brother's best friend was Jewish,  
17 around the corner was this, around the corner was that.  
18 That was my norm.

19 And it wasn't until later life that I realized  
20 that neighborhoods were not like that, that people were  
21 sometimes discriminatory.

22 And it gives me a different perspective and I have  
23 to accept that my perspective is different. Because  
24 sometimes I still wonder what it is all this fuss is  
25 about?

1 Well, truly, I've found out more as I've grown up  
2 about discrimination and all of its -- and all of its  
3 ilk's.

4 Just a quick example, I took a trip of teenagers  
5 to Japan, I was a chaperone, and it was on a cultural  
6 exchange trip, and it was one of the most interesting  
7 experiences of my life as it related to learning new  
8 cultures because it was such a different culture.

9 There we participated in hours of translated  
10 discussion groups around racial relations in the United  
11 States. And to my surprise I found that in Japan they  
12 too, even though it's a -- seen as a homogeneous society,  
13 they in fact have a caste system, they in fact have issues  
14 around inter-cultural marriages and their traditional  
15 group that's discriminated against, the Baraku.

16 Interesting, from seeing discrimination from afar  
17 helps you to understand your discrimination in your own  
18 backyard, and that was a very enlightening experience.

19 Just to say, quickly, in my work with Neighbor  
20 Works America I've been all over the State and all over  
21 the country working with varying types of groups, whether  
22 they be native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians, Native  
23 Americans, working in the inter city Oakland, intercity  
24 Los Angeles, with Hispanic groups in San Jose, the Inland  
25 Empire, Asian groups in San Francisco, I don't know that

1 there's a group that I have worked with, right, in terms  
2 of names of groups.

3 I'll just close with one comment and it's just a  
4 personal bias, I often hear the notion that groups should  
5 be tolerant of differences. I take real issue with that,  
6 I guess in large part because my oldest son has a  
7 disability, my youngest son is gay, and I don't tolerate  
8 them, I accept them.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon,  
11 Mr. Gabriel.

12 MR. GABRIEL: Good afternoon.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much.

14 Let me just start with the obvious question. In  
15 response to question number one you mentioned about your  
16 concern about the time involvement should you be selected  
17 as a Commissioner. Could you please tell the Panel a  
18 little more about your availability or what concerns you?

19 MR. GABRIEL: I have a full time job. However, my  
20 job has a good amount of flexibility. I work from home,  
21 which is just where I work from, that's my work station.  
22 I have a work station in town, but I largely work from  
23 home.

24 I imagine that there will be a series of public  
25 hearings and a series of meetings that I would need to

1 participate in.

2           And while the public hearings, in my experience,  
3 are typically held at off-work hours, I assume some of the  
4 other meetings would be held during work hours.

5           So, my availability is -- let me say this, I've  
6 researched, we do have a fairly liberal volunteer program,  
7 volunteer release program for my company, but I don't know  
8 if it's quite liberal enough because I don't know the  
9 actual needs.

10           I could clearly grab a couple days a month from my  
11 schedule and I could -- you know, in terms of what's  
12 allowed under my provision, but I don't know how much more  
13 I could grab.

14           I could grab more in terms of my ability to juggle  
15 things, but I just need to get a better handle on the  
16 expectations and the time blocks, because I may be able to  
17 get a lot more time when we're not in grant season, than  
18 when we're in grant season, if you will?

19           CHAIR AHMADI: When is the grant season?

20           MR. GABRIEL: Grant season basically runs October  
21 through January.

22           CHAIR AHMADI: October through January.

23           MR. GABRIEL: Yeah.

24           CHAIR AHMADI: And then from January to October  
25 it's non-grant season, so that's when --

1 MR. GABRIEL: We have a lot of other things that  
2 we do, this is on the record.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Well --

4 MR. GABRIEL: Trust me, we have a year-round worth  
5 of work. But, yeah, we have heightened work during that  
6 time of year. We go into more of an evaluative mode and  
7 there's other functions that are just less intense.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, but even when it's not the  
9 grant season you're working every day of the month, you  
10 said, you're working every day?

11 MR. GABRIEL: Basically, a five-day-a-week?

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Five-day week?

13 MR. GABRIEL: Yeah, five-day-a-week job, yes.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: And you can grab, you said, two  
15 days in a month?

16 MR. GABRIEL: Yeah, minimum. I'm trying to think  
17 of -- I don't want to overstate it and I don't want to  
18 understate it.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: But a minimum, what do you mean,  
20 like that's the maximum or --

21 MR. GABRIEL: No, I mean that would be the minimum  
22 that I -- I think I can do the two a month within the  
23 provisions that allow for me to get release time for  
24 volunteer work.

25 Now, I haven't touched vacation time, I haven't

1 touched other things that I can touch, if you follow my --

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Got you.

3 MR. GABRIEL: I could also use vacation time, I  
4 could use -- but those are the two I think I can  
5 clearly --

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, okay, got you. So, it's  
7 contingent upon approval from the board or the --

8 MR. GABRIEL: On my side or are you referring to  
9 your side?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: On your side?

11 MR. GABRIEL: I've used the volunteer release and  
12 it's really not approval, it's just you advise them of  
13 what volunteer effort you're going to participate in.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

15 And while we're on that topic, so you have --  
16 you're self-employed; correct?

17 MR. GABRIEL: No, I work for a national housing  
18 nonprofit.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Because in your application  
20 it says from 1985 to date you are working for Senior  
21 Management Consultants?

22 MR. GABRIEL: Yeah, that's my title.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: That's your title?

24 MR. GABRIEL: But the employer's Neighbor Works  
25 America.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: And you're the Relationship  
2 Manager, just to make sure that I'm looking at the same --

3 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

5 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct. Believe me, over  
6 the 25 years I've been on staff my title has changed five  
7 times. So, work has stayed the same.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So, but this is where you  
9 work, right?

10 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Who are the clients for this  
12 organization?

13 MR. GABRIEL: The clients -- well, I just have  
14 to -- it will take a few words. We're publicly funded by  
15 Congress and we support over 300 member organizations all  
16 across the United States.

17 Those member organizations, in turn, provide  
18 direct services to residents of neighborhoods.

19 So, our clients, in large part, are the 300 member  
20 organizations and their clients are, in fact, people,  
21 deserving individuals in neighborhoods all over America.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. And you said that you are  
23 funded by the Congress?

24 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So, what are the typical type of

1 projects that you guys work on?

2 MR. GABRIEL: Typical types of projects, again, I  
3 need to separate between what we do as a funder and what  
4 our member organizations do as service providers.

5 We provide two types of grants per year, plus  
6 technical assistance and training. The first grants types  
7 are capital, which are for real estate development or  
8 lending, and expendable grants are for operating expenses.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

10 MR. GABRIEL: So, those are the two -- and with  
11 those grants our membership organizations do a wide  
12 variety of great things. For an example, they'll build a  
13 tax credit affordable housing project in a neighborhood,  
14 or they'll fund first-time home buyer learning centers, or  
15 they'll fund foreclosure mitigation programs. Any of the  
16 hot issues in housing, one or more of our organizations is  
17 working on or is a leader in.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Are any of these organizations  
19 involved with lobbying activities?

20 MR. GABRIEL: Our member organizations certainly  
21 have the right to lobby, unlike us, so they're separate,  
22 501(c)(3) independent organizations. And so, I'm not  
23 at -- I'm not in a position to answer that question  
24 because I don't know definitively.

25 I will tell you this, though, that our corporation

1 is clearly prohibited from lobbying and we do lobby.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

3 MR. GABRIEL: So, again, remember, the funding,  
4 recipient of funds, which is the two separate. So, they  
5 tend to get lumped into one because we all consider  
6 ourselves one network but in fact we have the grantor and  
7 the grantee.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So, it sounds to me, just to  
9 make sure that I got it correct, it sounds to me like your  
10 organization is kind of like a middle man for service --

11 MR. GABRIEL: Intermediary.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you.

13 MR. GABRIEL: That's the vernacular.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: That was the wrong word, I'm sorry.

15 But it's an intermediary for service organizations  
16 to receive their funding from the U.S. government?

17 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct?

19 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: And they're involved with, it  
21 sounds to me, like community help type work?

22 MR. GABRIEL: All around housing.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Around housing?

24 MR. GABRIEL: Yeah, all linked back to housing.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Like low-income family housing and

1 --

2 MR. GABRIEL: Low income, middle income. No high  
3 income.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, okay.

5 MR. GABRIEL: Teachers, firemen, police,  
6 librarians.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I may come back and follow  
8 up on this, but I want to use my time wisely, so I have a  
9 few other follow-up questions.

10 MR. GABRIEL: Thank you.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: No problem. Thank you, sir.

12 In response to question number one you also  
13 mentioned about your reliance on the legal counsel should  
14 you be selected as a Commissioner. Excuse me. How would  
15 you gauge or judge the opinions that will be given to the  
16 Commission by the legal counsels? Are you feeling  
17 comfortable with analyzing or assessing the validity of  
18 the opinions that the legal counsel will provide or you  
19 are just rely on whatever they say?

20 MR. GABRIEL: Well, it would certainly be the  
21 former. I've worked with legal counsel over the years in  
22 many different capacities, in fact my brother's an  
23 attorney. We debate vigorously all manner of issues. So,  
24 I'm not inclined to just take anyone's opinion at face  
25 value.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

2 MR. GABRIEL: Having said that, if a legal  
3 representative comes before me, who has great detailed  
4 experience in the field that I'm interested in, I would  
5 certainly give him or her a second listen because this is  
6 something that I've requested.

7 Oftentimes it can be useful to have more than one  
8 legal opinion, that way I can balance those opinions one  
9 versus another.

10 But in either case, it's taking the legal  
11 information and balancing it against other information  
12 that I will have or presumably on my plate, information  
13 that comes from testimony at public hearings, information  
14 regarding the current state of matters and how we got  
15 there. I would really be looking to counsel to help the  
16 Commission craft a plan that would stand up to legal  
17 scrutiny. That's, in the back of my mind, where we would  
18 be checking in.

19 They wouldn't be so much telling us what we would  
20 do, perhaps more telling us what we can't do.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

22 Could you please also clarify, if I heard you  
23 correctly, you mentioned something about -- about the fact  
24 that the Commission's work will be highly politically  
25 charged environment. What do you mean by that?

1 MR. GABRIEL: Well, I think there will be a lot of  
2 eyes looking at the work of the Commission.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh-hum.

4 MR. GABRIEL: Obviously, there are the typical  
5 political observers that may comment on many things,  
6 everything, and then I think there will be the average  
7 citizen that voted for Prop. 11 and want to know how it  
8 plays out in reality.

9 And I think in that sense -- and then -- then you  
10 overlay that with the opposition that's already come, the  
11 Prop. 20 that's trying to get rid of the Commission before  
12 it's even seated, that adds another element of interest  
13 and charge, and then 27 which would expand the power of  
14 the Commission.

15 To me, as I said earlier, those things not only  
16 create uncertainty, but they create what you might call a  
17 fishbowl dynamic. The fishbowl is the process and  
18 everybody's looking into the fishbowl, I call that a  
19 highly charged political environment.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: So, to what extent that will have  
21 an impact on the Commission's decisions?

22 MR. GABRIEL: I don't know that it would impact  
23 the decisions per se, I think that it might impact the  
24 attention that the process gets and that the individual  
25 Commissioners get. If the process is under scrutiny, it

1 often follows that the individuals are then scrutinized or  
2 some -- or the reverse order.

3 I think because of the -- should 20 and 27 not  
4 have been in play, just to give you a contrast, I think  
5 the political dynamic would have been considerably less  
6 potentially volatile.

7 But because of those two additional elements, one  
8 that questions the very legitimacy of the work and one  
9 that expands it, this creates a -- now, how the Commission  
10 will respond to that is, I think, a different matter. But  
11 to think that we could ignore it, I think would be a  
12 mistake. I think we need to recognize that that's the  
13 environment, that's the context in which the work will be  
14 made, that we'll be watched.

15 It may be simply as recognizing that we'll be  
16 watched and scrutinized, which perhaps would mean we'll  
17 walk a little more lightly and step a little bit more  
18 carefully.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: So, should you be selected as a  
20 Commissioner what should you do to eliminate or prevent  
21 any legal consequences that comes from that? What are  
22 some of the steps that the Commission has to take to  
23 prevent any unwanted consequences for the Commission's  
24 work or legal challenges, for example?

25 MR. GABRIEL: I was going to -- when you asked me

1 what was I was going to do individually, but you really  
2 want the answer to the group. Okay.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Within the context of your  
4 discussion that this is a political -- the environment is  
5 that there are some eyes watching, I think that's what you  
6 said?

7 MR. GABRIEL: I think there may be a role for the  
8 Department of Justice in assisting the Commission in, if  
9 you will, staying out of trouble.

10 I don't know that there's anything that will -- I  
11 don't think there is anything that will guarantee that our  
12 decision -- that the decision, if you will, will not be  
13 challenged. I think it's likely that it will be  
14 challenged.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Right, but --

16 MR. GABRIEL: But I think we'll do due diligence,  
17 we'll have a process that's transparent, fully documented,  
18 available to the public. We'll seek input from vetted  
19 attorneys, we'll run it by the Department of Justice,  
20 should that make sense, compared to, perhaps, what's going  
21 on in some other states for guidance, look for best  
22 practices, make that a very public process.

23 I think all those things will decrease the  
24 likelihood of challenge, but I don't think they will  
25 eliminate it.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

2 I had a question that I was planning to ask you,  
3 so maybe it's a good time to go over that question. It's  
4 based on your application material and let me just read it  
5 to you so I can get it correct.

6 You mentioned that "Recent experience working with  
7 diverse community-based groups where you combine  
8 traditional community outreach methods with new  
9 technology-based approaches."

10 What do you consider traditional outreach methods?  
11 And if selected, what are some of the methods you would  
12 employ to encourage community participation in the public  
13 meetings or hearings?

14 MR. GABRIEL: Well, traditional organizing or  
15 outreach in the old school was what we used to call door  
16 knocking. We actually, knock, knock, knock, I'm Michael  
17 Gabriel, I'm representing, can I share some information  
18 with you?

19 I don't know that we have the time, when I looked  
20 at the constraints, I don't know that we have the time to  
21 do that level of traditional outreach, so that would be  
22 the traditional, the hardcore, old-fashioned, if you will.

23 Short of that, I think we would need to work  
24 through existing institutions, be they religious, social,  
25 somehow as nonpartisan as possible, but find entities

1 within each community that provides a certain level of  
2 legitimacy for the work, that invites the Commissioners in  
3 as guests and creates a neutral place where citizens feel  
4 comfortable coming to speak their peace about the process.

5           Yeah, I think there is a -- perhaps a body of  
6 individuals, both that applied for the Commission, that  
7 might also be a resource for us. I don't know if there's  
8 any constraints on getting back in touch with those  
9 individuals, but they clearly -- there's 20,000 or better  
10 of them that I think has expressed an interest in this  
11 work, so I think that might be another body of individuals  
12 that we could touch.

13           But I think we'll have to come up with a very  
14 effective and aggressive plan that somehow is not door  
15 knocking, but it's not just, you know, dropping leaflets  
16 from airplanes. I think there has to be a human element  
17 in there that touches people.

18           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir. No more  
19 questions at this point.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho?

21           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Mr.  
22 Gabriel.

23           MR. GABRIEL: Good afternoon.

24           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Your area of expertise is  
25 organizational development?

1 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Given your background, what  
3 would be your initial actions moving the Commission  
4 through its first three months?

5 MR. GABRIEL: Well, as I said earlier, I think  
6 it's critical that anybody, any workgroup, any work body  
7 spends some time getting to know one another and I think  
8 that should happen at the very beginning of the process.

9 There's a number of different ways to do that and  
10 I know many, although I would expect as a member I would  
11 not be facilitating, I would be participating.

12 But there are a number of different methods. One  
13 that I really like is from the Lakota Indians, where you  
14 look at personality types in terms of nature. I won't go  
15 into it. But there are many, in strike contrast to Myers-  
16 Briggs and more sophisticated analysis.

17 I would tend to lean toward a little bit more  
18 generalized getting to know your function.

19 But what I really would like to see the Commission  
20 do and I know this sounds a little bit, perhaps, over-  
21 simplified, but I would like to take a baseline look at  
22 the current districts, look for standard deviation, what  
23 do we got, what does it look like today? What clearly  
24 jumps out as just way off base and what's maybe not so far  
25 from equal population distribution, as opposed to throwing

1 out everything and starting with a blank map on the wall.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Would there be anything else  
3 in that first three months that, as a Commissioner, you  
4 think should be done?

5 MR. GABRIEL: There are a number of -- besides the  
6 logistical matters which are kind of, you know, we've got  
7 to work through that, I think we would need to find our  
8 value statement as a body. I think we would need to find  
9 our ground rules as a body. We would need to get some  
10 clarity around public statements and how we present  
11 ourselves as a group, the rules of working as a group.

12 One of the very simple that I often say is the  
13 group's only the group when they're the group. So, that  
14 has something to do with people speaking, perhaps when  
15 they're not in body, and being perceived as speaking for  
16 the body. Just sort of there are a number of different  
17 sort of ground rules that I've experienced and have a lot  
18 of experience with that help to keep the group -- to  
19 separate the group of individuals and to set up rules and  
20 expectations for the group function.

21 And I think, as I said earlier, if those are clear  
22 and if we spend sufficient time getting to know you,  
23 finding the ground rules, finding the rules of operating  
24 for the group, then we're less likely to find conflict  
25 later on, or the conflict would be more focused on issue

1 and less on personality.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You talked about the  
3 300-member -- or about 300 member organizations that work  
4 with the Neighborhood Works of America that you're  
5 involved with.

6 Is there any granting requirements that are set up  
7 to these 300 member organizations to make sure that they  
8 provide services to a diverse group and, if so, how is it  
9 done?

10 MR. GABRIEL: Two steps. In our founding  
11 philosophy, Neighbor Works America, commonly called  
12 Neighborhood Works America, but we're Neighbor Works  
13 America, has a philosophical commitment to resident  
14 empowerment.

15 All of our member organizations have to have a  
16 resident or user membership on the board. It used to be  
17 that we required 51 percent of every board to be residents  
18 or people that qualified for services. Now, we've sort of  
19 slipped to a little bit more than 30 percent, following  
20 the CHDO requirements. I don't want to get into shop talk  
21 but, basically, residents must have a place on the board.

22 However, having said that, the individual  
23 organizations, we have no requirement that they serve X  
24 percentage of this race, X percentage of that race, X of  
25 this race, but we do have requirements that they're

1 serving individuals within certain income bands.  
2 Typically, they're serving groups that are 120 percent or  
3 less of the median income for that county.

4 So, more often than not, but not necessarily, that  
5 includes a variety of different ethnic groups. But, quite  
6 honestly, we're more focused on the income than the  
7 ethnicity.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How do the member  
9 organizations show Neighborhood Works of America that  
10 they're meeting those obligations for those economic  
11 diversity?

12 MR. GABRIEL: We require quarterly reports from  
13 all of our sub-grantees, those roll up into an annual  
14 report, and based on that and we do -- every other year --  
15 I'm sorry, every two years we do an on-site audit, it's a  
16 financial and program audit. And based on the audit  
17 function each organization's given a ranking, and the  
18 ranking's linked to their eligibility for grant funding.

19 So, to answer your question more directly, we look  
20 at the quarterly reports and the quarterly reports show  
21 just exactly what the product is.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: One of the requirements to be  
23 a Commissioner is you're going to be going out to public  
24 meetings, as you know, and you're going to be having  
25 Commission meetings. What type of public speaking have

1 you done that could be applicable to the Commission's  
2 work?

3 MR. GABRIEL: Well, I've done a lot of public  
4 speaking, been before audiences ever since I was a kid. I  
5 was talking to my mom last night and she was reminding me  
6 of that. I was in the San Francisco Boys Chorus on stage.  
7 And I said, but Mom, every time I do public speaking I  
8 still get a little nervous, I'm just used to being a  
9 little nervous.

10 So, that's kind of my comment on public speaking.  
11 I'm comfortable with it, I do it, I talk to people as  
12 people. I try not to get too stuffy or fluffy. I don't  
13 know what else to tell you. It's an area that I am  
14 comfortable in and I grow in.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

16 With the organization Home Ownership of San  
17 Francisco, how did you reach out to the various interested  
18 communities?

19 MR. GABRIEL: In Home Ownership of San Francisco,  
20 again, just to clarify the role, we're the funder, we  
21 funded the group in San Francisco and with my assistance  
22 we created a collaborative of five other organizations,  
23 all service providers. They all work in different  
24 communities in San Francisco, they happen to represent  
25 different ethnic groups, Hispanic, African American, Asian

1 American, one is everybody else and then there's one  
2 that -- there's five of them.

3           Those groups have deep connections into the  
4 communities that they serve, that they've garnered from  
5 years of working in those communities. So, it wasn't  
6 difficult for us to, through them, be sure that  
7 communities that were being reached.

8           They have a waiting list of individuals, they do  
9 regular outreach efforts by phone, by mailing, by press of  
10 various languages.

11           So, we really piggy-backed on their connections to  
12 the community in order to make sure that our standards, if  
13 you will, were going to be met.

14           They came to us and said we'd like to join your  
15 organization and we said, well, here's the framework.  
16 And, basically, before they were invited to submit their  
17 application we found out that there was a match in terms  
18 of philosophy and their outreach efforts.

19           So, just to be clear, as the funder we're not  
20 doing the door knocking. I've done door knocking in my  
21 life, I've done a number of different projects where --  
22 that's in my -- I need to separate out my volunteer life  
23 and my professional life because in my professional life  
24 I've been at the funder level. Although, I have to say,  
25 there have been times when I've actually gone door to door

1 in my 25 years.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With these five  
3 organizations, they came to your -- this organization.  
4 Were there other organizations that came or did you need  
5 to bring any other types to hit a broader marketplace for  
6 this organization?

7 MR. GABRIEL: Basically, the answer is yes. The  
8 five organizations, some of the -- some members -- I  
9 should say, there's five different organizations. Some of  
10 them had applied for membership with our network in the  
11 past and because of low productivity had been denied, just  
12 to give you a shorthand.

13 So, part of the brilliance was to make a  
14 collaborative of the five that would have enough  
15 production to meet our standards and that would also touch  
16 five different neighborhoods that we would never get from  
17 one organization.

18 Now, in the process of pulling those five  
19 together, this is San Francisco, mind you, yes, there were  
20 other groups that said, well, what about us? And one of  
21 the groups was gay and lesbians that wanted a presence.

22 And so, the five groups basically outreached to  
23 other groups and said, you know, can we -- can you sort of  
24 funnel your concerns through us? And for the most part  
25 the answer was yes.

1           We felt like at this point it's still open to more  
2 than five members, there's no restriction that it has to  
3 be only a five-member collaborative, but in terms of  
4 organizing and building the body we felt that that was  
5 the -- those were the founding members and in the future  
6 they may determine that they want to bring additional  
7 members on.

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You state in your  
9 application that your analytical and technical skills  
10 support your philosophy of transparent stakeholder  
11 engagement. Could you describe what this means and how it  
12 will be relevant to the Commission?

13           MR. GABRIEL: Let me find my own quote.

14           (Laughter.)

15           MR. GABRIEL: What it means really is that I think  
16 the anecdote to apathy is engagement. And I think to the  
17 extent to which people feel like someone has either asked  
18 them to be involved, invited them to be involved, or they  
19 were actually involved or they know someone involved that  
20 gets them that much closer to feeling like this is  
21 something that they own, and this is something that they  
22 care about and that they want to participate in.

23           And so, I think to the extent that people are  
24 watching something and seeing that, well, this seems  
25 reasonable to me, I think most people follow politics way

1 less than political observers and way less than, perhaps,  
2 myself, so their touch is perhaps a lighter touch.

3 But the outreach effort, the intentionality of  
4 outreach I think speaks volumes to those that are on --  
5 that are teetering on apathy.

6 The analytical side is how to do it, how to do it  
7 strategically. Again, you can't just drop it from  
8 airplanes, you have to figure out where I can go, where I  
9 can't go given my time constraints, and where I can get  
10 the most impact, and that's where the analytical part  
11 comes in.

12 And messaging is also part of the analytical part,  
13 what are you saying? So, if you go and tell people this  
14 is how it's going to be, then you're not going to get  
15 active engagement.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, you're saying how to talk  
17 to the individuals out in the public may be different  
18 based on their needs?

19 MR. GABRIEL: I would say it's more -- it's  
20 different -- I've actually found a commonality of needs  
21 across diverse groups. I think the nuance becomes more of  
22 their self-perception, their history and the credibility  
23 of the group that's before them. I think those are more  
24 operative, how can you get resources to them, how can they  
25 become accepting of resources, how do they feel that these

1 resources apply to them, I think is more the nuance of  
2 just having resources is not enough.

3 But when I'm in Hawaii working with a group they  
4 have a very different set of expectations and a different  
5 view of the world than in Los Angeles, for example, and I  
6 need to be sensitive to that and meet them where they are.  
7 And I may not -- I may have to modulate my expectations  
8 because I may have California, Oakland type expectations.  
9 But since I'm a guest, I have to act like a guest and  
10 accept them where they are and take the process as far as  
11 it can go within the context of where I am.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last  
13 question.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano?

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

16 MR. GABRIEL: Good afternoon.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I want to go to your City of  
18 Piedmont and City of Oakland city planning experience.

19 MR. GABRIEL: Yes.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What got you interested in  
21 city planning?

22 MR. GABRIEL: Well, I was really interested in  
23 land use from a fairly early age, and real estate, and  
24 they kind of link closely to one another. And it was an  
25 opportunity for me to enter the work at an entry level and

1 working for a small city I knew I would touch many  
2 different functions. The staff consisted of like three  
3 people. And I found that to be the case.

4 Piedmont is just about a hundred percent built out  
5 so we didn't see a lot of -- we saw very little ground up  
6 construction, but we saw a lot of remodel.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

8 MR. GABRIEL: And so, it was an interesting  
9 opportunity and it led pretty quickly to my move to the  
10 City of Oakland Planning Zone Departments where I grew and  
11 learned a lot more instantly, because Oakland's just a  
12 much more complicated city, they have a lot, much more  
13 like industrial zones. Piedmont has no industrial zones,  
14 for an example.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh.

16 MR. GABRIEL: So, all of the sudden we're looking  
17 at industrial zones, commercial zones, residential zones,  
18 multi-family zones, stuff like there, but I really got off  
19 and running working for the City of Oakland.

20 But it was in line with my interest and, quite  
21 honestly, I had a young family, I needed a job.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I know that feeling.

23 Okay. Describe the differences between Piedmont  
24 and Oakland in terms of their communities and issues?

25 MR. GABRIEL: I laugh because it was such a

1 difference. In my work for the City of Piedmont  
2 oftentimes -- sometimes we wouldn't see the homeowner,  
3 we'd see the homeowner's representative in the form of an  
4 attorney or an architect that would come and say, oh, we  
5 want to remodel our kitchen and we wanted to expand the  
6 bathroom and what are the zoning regs?

7 So, you'd lay the zoning regs out, describe the  
8 process, take the fee.

9 Then you might have the neighbor come and say,  
10 bring his attorney and say, well, this new addition's  
11 going to block my solar rights, going to block the sun.  
12 So, then you'd bring in the city attorney, you'd bring  
13 in -- so, it layers, it layers in the City of Piedmont  
14 because it's different considerations, different income  
15 groups.

16 City of Oakland, I took an application for  
17 expansion of a junkyard, it was on a brown paper bag. He  
18 brought it to the counter. I looked at it, broke out my  
19 scale, measured it, it was drawn to scale. I accepted the  
20 application. I wouldn't have seen that in the City of  
21 Piedmont.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Brown paper bag.

23 MR. GABRIEL: Brown paper bag. My job, though,  
24 was I see my job and saw my job not as a gatekeeper, but  
25 as more of a librarian, sharing information, sharing

1 process, taking the application, given the rules and regs  
2 and helping the resident in either case, whether it's an  
3 attorney or a guy with a brown paper bag, worked through  
4 these rules and regs.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are they pretty much -- how  
6 far is Piedmont from Oakland?

7 MR. GABRIEL: Piedmont is surrounding by Oakland,  
8 it's a little donut hole in the foothills of what would be  
9 Oakland. It's an interesting story.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Tell me about it?

11 MR. GABRIEL: The residents of this small, sort of  
12 vacation village, spa, vacation village, which was the  
13 City of Piedmont, which was Piedmont before it became a  
14 city, when they saw Oakland was incorporating they quickly  
15 decided that they didn't want to be in Oakland for a  
16 variety of reasons. And so, they basically needed to get  
17 some land descriptions and they needed them real fast, so  
18 they found meets and bounds descriptions -- meets and  
19 bounds descriptions of sewer lines. They found them and  
20 they made a big circle out of them and those were the  
21 original land descriptions for the borders of the City of  
22 Piedmont.

23 That's why we have houses that are half in  
24 Piedmont, half in Oakland, lots where half the people are  
25 half in Oakland and that's where the sewer line went.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Ah, interesting.

2 MR. GABRIEL: Now they have their own school --  
3 you know, they have schools and police, they're a separate  
4 city.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, okay. Oh, that is  
6 interesting.

7 MR. GABRIEL: But they're right in the middle of  
8 Oakland.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, you've got Oakland and  
10 you've got Piedmont.

11 MR. GABRIEL: Right, right.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Borders are the sewer lines,  
13 basically.

14 MR. GABRIEL: The original description, yes.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, I guess you can't really  
16 see that visibly on a map, huh?

17 MR. GABRIEL: No, you really can't. You know, it  
18 plays out right, but it was a way to get lines quickly  
19 without having to get a surveyor.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Different -- definitely  
21 different communities of interest, you believe?

22 MR. GABRIEL: Definitely -- I mean, definitely  
23 different communities of interest.

24 Piedmont's a very affluent city. It actually is a  
25 fairly liberal affluent city, as affluent cities go.

1           Oakland has a much broader and deeper base of  
2 diversity, much broader income disparity.

3           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What's the demographic  
4 breakdown of the Piedmont area?

5           MR. GABRIEL: It's predominantly European  
6 American.

7           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: European American?

8           MR. GABRIEL: Uh-hum.

9           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh.

10          MR. GABRIEL: Probably Asian would be the -- it  
11 might be running neck and neck African American and Asian  
12 American for the second. But --

13          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Not the newer citizens?

14          MR. GABRIEL: Pardon me?

15          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Not newer citizens or newer  
16 Californians, people newer to California?

17          MR. GABRIEL: Perhaps on the upper corporate end,  
18 but certainly not on the immigrant end.

19          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Seeing that more in  
20 Oakland?

21          MR. GABRIEL: I think it's leveled off in Oakland,  
22 quite honestly, in terms of -- well, it's hard to say,  
23 it's hard to say.

24                 And Oakland is the home for immigrant groups  
25 coming from El Salvador, and South and Central America,

1 and we have immigrant groups coming from Southeast Asia.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-hum.

3 MR. GABRIEL: I think there was an initial larger  
4 volume and I guess what I'm seeing in Oakland is that  
5 newer groups are just integrated into the community so I  
6 don't -- I guess I don't see them as new anymore. I see  
7 them as one more good restaurant.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you learn about the  
9 needs of these communities that would assist you on the  
10 commission in understanding this segment of California?

11 MR. GABRIEL: Did you say where or --

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you learn about the  
13 needs --

14 MR. GABRIEL: Oh, what?

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: -- yeah, of these  
16 communities, that would assist you, on the commission, in  
17 understanding this segment of California?

18 MR. GABRIEL: Well, a lot of the work that I do is  
19 centered around eligibility for home ownership services,  
20 so we look at -- obviously, we look at tracts. And I  
21 should say, the other piece that I'm doing for the  
22 corporation, which is a new job for me is I'm -- for the  
23 district, I'm going to be heading up the growth section.  
24 When we grow our network, I'll be the person that will be  
25 looking at new applicants and potential new geographic

1 areas that we'll expand our services to.

2 So, we look at the demographics of an area, we  
3 look at race, income, ethnicity, we look at housing  
4 condition, we look at housing age, we look at primary land  
5 use, whether it be agricultural, commercial/industrial,  
6 pretty much the snapshot.

7 What we look -- try to do is have what we call an  
8 environmental scan of that neighborhood. We're also  
9 looking for other service providers, other places people  
10 can get these other services. The role that local  
11 municipalities have at the county -- at the city and  
12 county levels.

13 So, it pretty -- you know, an assessment of an  
14 area that we look pretty thoroughly at what's going on in  
15 a community.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, that would require you to  
17 also survey the public, maybe, and get their input?

18 MR. GABRIEL: In terms of -- yes, is the short  
19 answer.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-huh.

21 MR. GABRIEL: We tend to not do that until we're a  
22 little bit further down the road because we don't want to  
23 raise expectations inappropriately by asking people what  
24 do they want and then we say, well, we're not going to be  
25 here to give it to you. But yes, absolutely.

1           And that's really where the resident voice comes  
2 in, that I spoke of earlier, we speak to residents about  
3 how and what services make sense for you and what services  
4 make sense for your neighbor.

5           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, there are areas of  
6 growth?

7           MR. GABRIEL: Absolutely. Absolutely.

8           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And what areas are you  
9 looking at, I'm just curious?

10          MR. GABRIEL: Fresno, that's the San Joaquin  
11 Valley, Central.

12          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

13          MR. GABRIEL: I just came back from San Luis  
14 Obispo, in what they call the Five City area there, we're  
15 looking at possibly growing there.

16                 We've grown significantly in San Francisco over  
17 the last few years, which is sort of ironic that we hadn't  
18 been there in the past.

19          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In San Francisco, what areas?

20          MR. GABRIEL: Tenderloin, Chinatown, and the five  
21 groups that I'd mentioned were at Hunter's Point, that  
22 area, that corridor.

23          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Quite a difference between  
24 Fresno and SLO San Luis Obispo.

25          MR. GABRIEL: Quite a difference.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

2 MR. GABRIEL: Quite a difference. I had to -- I  
3 just got SLO. I got it.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, sorry, that's my  
5 abbreviation.

6 MR. GABRIEL: I got it, I got it, I got it. No,  
7 no, you're right. I just got it when I was down there  
8 because people kept saying it and I go what is this SLO,  
9 what is this SLO.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you hear that?

11 MR. GABRIEL: San Luis Obispo.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah. When you were looking  
13 at these different areas did you notice distinct  
14 differences in terms of, I don't know if you'd notice,  
15 their political preferences and ability to participate in  
16 the political process?

17 MR. GABRIEL: I would be speculating, quite  
18 honestly.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

20 MR. GABRIEL: I do know that in the Five Cities  
21 area, San Luis Obispo area, there are a number of farm  
22 worker -- I mean, there's a fairly large farm worker  
23 community. It's a more transitioning from farm worker to  
24 other types of employment, but there aren't a lot of  
25 employers in that area.

1           And so, I don't know the extent to which they're  
2 engage in the political process, the traditional -- the  
3 residents that have been there a long time, and the newer  
4 residents and the farm worker residents, I don't know. In  
5 fact, I would just be speculating.

6           I could tell you more about who was there than  
7 about how they acting in terms of voting or what their  
8 partisan preferences are.

9           We're a nonpartisan group so we don't really  
10 analyze it.

11           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You never explore that,  
12 right.

13           MR. GABRIEL: No, we clearly don't analyze it.

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: It's about growth.

15           MR. GABRIEL: It's about growth, it's about need.

16           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, just thought I'd ask.

17           You mentioned in your application a geocoded  
18 demographic database analysis. Can you tell me what you  
19 mean by this term?

20           MR. GABRIEL: Well, one of the tools that I'm  
21 getting my head into for my new job is this program called  
22 MapPoint.

23           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: MapPoint?

24           MR. GABRIEL: Yeah, M-a-p-P-o-i-n-t.

25           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

1           MR. GABRIEL: And best I can tell, because I'm  
2 pretty new to the technology, it breaks -- you know, it's  
3 a visual map, but it breaks out demographics by county.  
4 It's kind of like taking Census information and posting it  
5 on a map and then you can, apparently, from all  
6 indications, you can then look for areas -- you can  
7 look -- you can sort by demographic information. In other  
8 words, if I want to find all the counties where the  
9 average income is under X, I can sort using that map and  
10 that software for just those counties.

11           And so, for my work immediately I can start to see  
12 what parts of Plumas County, what parts of El Dorado  
13 County are the ones that have need. Then we can overlay  
14 where we have services.

15           So, for us it jumps out, oh, we have nothing in  
16 the northwest or we have nothing over in Fresno, and then  
17 we can sort of -- so that's my touch on those.

18           And I would image there's a lot more -- there are  
19 many more products of that nature that might be useful to  
20 this work.

21           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did you do it before,  
22 without geocoded demographic databases analysis; all by  
23 hand?

24           MR. GABRIEL: Well, I remember doing -- when we  
25 did an expansion into San Jose I had a map very similar to

1 that, but it was just San Jose and we had, you know,  
2 circles.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

4 MR. GABRIEL: A protractor and circles, and the  
5 old-fashioned way, we had the volume of -- you know, we  
6 would find out where the tracts are, visually.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-huh.

8 MR. GABRIEL: It's funny, I'm laughing on the  
9 inside of my head because that's the way I did it the  
10 majority of my career, and this new way I have probably  
11 less ability to explain, but the new way's so much easier.

12 But, no, we basically looked tract by tract by  
13 tract and saw where they were on a map. The same process  
14 but we did it manually.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And do you suggest using this  
16 for Commission work?

17 MR. GABRIEL: Absolutely.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Something similar?

19 MR. GABRIEL: Absolutely, I think it would be  
20 critical that we use that kind of a tool, absolutely.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you have any ideas of  
22 what other mapping tools to use, now that you've kind of  
23 explored this?

24 MR. GABRIEL: Actually, I don't. I mean, I came  
25 across a few names in the course of my research, I didn't

1 even jot them down because I thought that was ahead of  
2 the -- you know, a little bit ahead of myself.

3 But in the course of reading there are --  
4 apparently, there are a number of different redistricting  
5 software products that have been put out there with  
6 various success rates.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: With your geocoded  
8 demographic database analysis, with the use of that, did  
9 you find any challenges or nuances with it that you want  
10 to share?

11 MR. GABRIEL: Well, you know, what it doesn't tell  
12 you is what you can only find out on the ground. I mean,  
13 when I did the work in looking at the northwest part of --  
14 actually, it was Oregon.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh-huh.

16 MR. GABRIEL: You know, I looked at the numbers  
17 and I looked at where there was need. But I know that  
18 there's, you know, a lumber yard that closed and I know  
19 that there's, you know, 3,500 people that were laid off in  
20 that county. And I know certain pieces of information  
21 that are qualitative and I know that the X factory only  
22 hires part-timers, so they have no health benefits.

23 So, certain things only come from the qualitative  
24 side. It gives you very good blocks of data, but you can  
25 only fill it -- round it out, if you will, by having some

1 on-the-ground contact, what I call qualitative  
2 information.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Qualitative, right.

4 MR. GABRIEL: It gives you quantitative  
5 information, which is very, very useful. And the great  
6 thing is you can do it faster. You can get that stuff  
7 fast and it opens up time to do the qualitative, whereas  
8 before that took so long that everything took so long.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes.

10 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

12 Do you find it's going to be difficult for the  
13 task of the Commission to integrate all the qualitative  
14 aspect with the quantitative and then drawing the lines,  
15 and determining the boundaries?

16 MR. GABRIEL: Well, I'd have to say yes.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah. I mean knowing what  
18 you have --

19 MR. GABRIEL: I don't think it's impossible. I  
20 think the technology is going to make it easier than it  
21 could ever have been.

22 The problem with technology, my experience, is  
23 that you end up -- whereas you would have just been happy  
24 to get a couple of scenarios, with technology it's easy to  
25 get five scenarios or ten scenarios because all you've got

1 to do is just do a couple clicks.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

3 MR. GABRIEL: So, I think, you know, shrinking  
4 back the world of possibilities is going to be part of the  
5 challenge of the Commission.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure.

7 MR. GABRIEL: And scoping that within what we  
8 learned from the qualitative work I think will be  
9 challenging, but I think it is the task and I don't think  
10 we have a choice other than to approach it that way.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you think that may be the  
12 most challenging aspect of the Commission's work?

13 MR. GABRIEL: I think the challenging aspect is  
14 going to be interface with legal counsel as it relates to  
15 existing case work, case law. That's just my guess. You  
16 know, this is new to me but I just have this sense that to  
17 come up with a proposal it will need to be tested against  
18 existing case law, minimally, and I'm -- I'm just  
19 projecting that that may be where we get into some sticky  
20 areas.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So, meeting the legal  
22 requirements is going to be pretty tough?

23 MR. GABRIEL: That's correct.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, it's pretty time  
25 consuming.

1           MR. GABRIEL: I mean, you know, in the best of  
2 worlds we would take the population and divide it up on  
3 equal numbers, but we all know that doesn't work. I mean,  
4 apparently that was tried at some point and it resulted in  
5 unintended consequences.

6           So, the nuanced approach, which is to look at the  
7 raw data and then nuance it with what we know from  
8 qualitative work I think is just where we get into areas  
9 of potential challenge.

10           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You have a son with Down's  
11 Syndrome?

12           MR. GABRIEL: Yes.

13           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What has this experience  
14 taught you about the needs of families with children  
15 diagnosed with a developmental disability?

16           MR. GABRIEL: The primary thing that it's taught  
17 me is that it does the child a disservice to limit your  
18 personal sense of his potential.

19           I know that's complicated, but I think the  
20 tendency, certainly from my wife and I as young parents,  
21 we were worried about what he would not be able to do.  
22 He's not going to be able to read, he's not going to be  
23 able to do this, he's not going to be able to do that.  
24 And we had to actively let go of all those things, all  
25 those fears, all those notions about what he could do

1 because he's a new person and we're first-timers at this.

2 And we set our sights, set our bars pretty high.

3 I don't know how. I guess we both came from families  
4 where we were the sort of the -- we weren't the youngest,  
5 so we had younger people below us, right, so we had some  
6 experience in that nurturing thing.

7 And so, we set the bars high for Patrick and  
8 didn't tell him, but we certainly didn't tell him that --  
9 you know, when it was homework time for he and his brother  
10 it was homework time, and it didn't matter what he was  
11 working on, it was homework time and there were just no  
12 excuses. And I know that sounds a little like, you know,  
13 militaristic, but it was just -- it does a child a  
14 disservice not to treat him the same way you would treat  
15 another child and have high expectations.

16 They may be different expectations, but they're  
17 high expectations.

18 And so, he reads, he surfs online, he has a job at  
19 Peet's Coffee, he has more stability than his brother in  
20 terms of job. He saves money, he had his hobbies. He's  
21 frustrating, he has a disability and it can be frustrating  
22 to live with somebody with a disability.

23 But that's my message is just really keep your  
24 mind open and don't look to others to tell you what your  
25 child can be and what your child can do.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And how do you feel that  
2 these experiences will benefit you in your work as a  
3 Commissioner?

4           MR. GABRIEL: Well, I've just continuously been  
5 blessed, if you will, with the experiences that continue  
6 to just open my mind to the realities of the world.

7           And again I go back to the -- it's not about  
8 tolerance. I don't tolerate people, I accept people from  
9 where they're coming from, where they are. And that's  
10 just the way I live, that's my personal philosophy of life  
11 and it's just been -- I didn't seek it out, I'm not a  
12 crusader here on that, I didn't seek it out, but it sought  
13 me.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Time.

15           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are there follow-up  
17 questions, Panelists?

18           CHAIR AHMADI: No.

19           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Not at this time.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Gabriel, you -- I was  
21 reading in your application you had a 2006 mayoral  
22 appointment to the Civic Engagement Task Force?

23           MR. GABRIEL: Yes.

24           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are you still serving in  
25 that capacity?

1 MR. GABRIEL: No, the task force has pretty much  
2 completed its work and we're done.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What did you -- well, maybe  
4 I should ask what was your job on that task force?

5 MR. GABRIEL: This was a task for that Mayor Ron  
6 Dellums organized when he first came into office, as a way  
7 of really engaging -- giving citizens an opportunity to  
8 engage government, with the idea that we could reshape  
9 government.

10 We were really, pretty much, given a blank slate  
11 about what civic engagement could look like and what it  
12 could be.

13 So, we ended up looking in large part at how the  
14 public interfaces with the city, and a lot of the  
15 interfaces around problems and issues. And so, a lot of  
16 our work ended up focusing on how we can better -- there  
17 was a sort of an information number, how we can get that  
18 number to provide better service, more direct service,  
19 higher quality, less referrals. That was a lot of the  
20 work.

21 Then we had some special projects. And the  
22 special project that I worked on and that I proposed to  
23 the city was a mini, m-i-n-i, mini grant program, where  
24 small grants, two or three thousand dollars grants could  
25 be given to community -- to unincorporated community-based

1 groups to do things like beautification, newsletter,  
2 whatever they came up with that was community building,  
3 block parties. But small amounts of money that could fund  
4 things that just weren't going to happen, particularly in  
5 lower income communities.

6 I had experience doing this in the City of San  
7 Jose, with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and we  
8 found an amazing amount of work came out of these two,  
9 three, and four, five thousand dollar grants. They were  
10 the seeds for organizations that went on to do greater and  
11 bigger things.

12 So, that was the idea that I was promoting my  
13 whole time. It didn't happen, I was a little  
14 disappointed, but I did get a chance to sort of share the  
15 concept and the mayor said he was going to think about and  
16 maybe he's taken some pieces of it. So, that was a large  
17 part of it.

18 Some people argued that the task forces were  
19 window dressing. I saw it as an opportunity to influence  
20 a new mayor and that's why I joined. I was invited to  
21 join, I should say. I applied and was invited to join.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, what does -- what did  
23 you learn from your assignment or your invitation for this  
24 Civic Engagement Task Force that would help the  
25 Commission?

1           MR. GABRIEL: I would scope the work a lot more  
2 tightly. I would have a visual representation -- I mean,  
3 this is just textbook, I'm sorry. A visual representation  
4 of the process, so you could look up on a reader board at  
5 any time and say here's where we are, here's where we're  
6 going.

7           I would spend more time on the getting to know you  
8 function of the body, because we were from very, very  
9 different backgrounds and we spent almost no time with  
10 that getting-to-know-you piece.

11           And I would, on the front end, try to delineate at  
12 least one or two specific products that would come of the  
13 work, so that it wouldn't -- so we wouldn't have so much  
14 open-ended time.

15           I think people tend to feel that their use -- that  
16 their time is more greatly respected when they know sort  
17 of the parameters within which they're working.

18           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did it teach you anything  
19 about reaching either under-represented or disinterested  
20 groups of people?

21           MR. GABRIEL: To the extent that the mayor did an  
22 open call to citizens to get involved and to the extent  
23 that the people that were at the table were very, very --  
24 from very different backgrounds, I would say it was  
25 effective in that manner, in the sense that, you know,

1 we're working with people from all different parts of  
2 time, that had just different interests, interest groups.

3 So, I have to attribute that to the outreach and  
4 selection process. It can be done, but it's -- to me,  
5 it's more about once you get the people in the room what  
6 do you do with them?

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, that's kind of my  
8 question, how do you get the people in the room?

9 MR. GABRIEL: How do you get them in the room? I  
10 would say that, and this is sort of looking back and doing  
11 a bit of an evaluation, there was a pretty good amount of  
12 goodwill with Mayor Dellums coming into Oakland, and a  
13 good amount of interest in what he might bring to the  
14 table. And I think he capitalized on that in terms of  
15 saying, broadly, you know, to the city, you are in fact  
16 invited to be on this commission.

17 And then there was a team that vetted down the  
18 participants, but it was a large body of individuals.

19 What made them come to meetings, I think they  
20 really saw this -- and some people, I remember people  
21 having heard -- saying, this is the first time I've been  
22 to a meeting like this, I didn't know I was welcome here.

23 So, to the extent, again, I'm back to an  
24 invitation that said you are welcome and we're going to  
25 have a place for you at the table, as opposed to that's

1 what happens down there at city hall, and I've never been  
2 there and I don't know anybody who's been there.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You have a letter of  
4 recommendation from someone who discusses the fact that he  
5 worked for a constitutional officer, who's a retired peace  
6 officer now.

7 MR. GABRIEL: Yes.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And you also reference in  
9 your application that you co-authored draft language for  
10 AB 3243.

11 MR. GABRIEL: Yes.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And those two things just  
13 made me think I better ask, you know, do you have  
14 relationships with our elected officials, the Legislature,  
15 members of the Board of Equalization, Governor, or their  
16 staff?

17 MR. GABRIEL: No, is the short answer. I was  
18 trying to think what you mean by relationships. I don't  
19 know that by any definition I would say I have  
20 relationships with elected officials.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. I don't think I have  
22 any further questions for you.

23 Panelists, do you have any?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I have one. Mr. Gabriel, you  
25 were talking to Ms. Spano about going and having public

1 discussions at Fresno and San Luis Obispo. Did you do  
2 these discussions or was this just surveys where they  
3 could respond?

4 MR. GABRIEL: Let me clarify.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay.

6 MR. GABRIEL: In Fresno two things are happening,  
7 our organization is looking to expand services in that  
8 part of San Joaquin Valley, so I've looked at grant  
9 applications and had interviews with the service provider.

10 The other thing I did in Fresno is I served as  
11 a -- I sat at an exit table -- now, I need to back up. We  
12 sponsored a foreclosure mitigation event. Lenders and  
13 servicers all set up tables. Citizens came in to try to  
14 get help.

15 And then we had an exit table for those that  
16 wanted to participate in exit interviews. Well,  
17 typically, the exit interview people are those that  
18 weren't happy, so I sat for a day listening people exit  
19 interview from Fresno around what wasn't working for them  
20 as it relates to foreclosure issues.

21 So, that was kind of my most recent -- so, it  
22 wasn't a public hearing, per se, by any stretch, I don't  
23 want to -- I hope I didn't mislead you to think that it  
24 was a public hearing. But that was my touch with the  
25 residents in Fresno and it was fascinating to hear what

1 was going on. Anything from -- well, I talked to a family  
2 that had been advised on a product -- it was a Southeast  
3 Asian family, and a Southeast Asian broker had represented  
4 the product and it was not such a good product.

5 And so, they shared with me that a lot of ethnic  
6 to ethnic, if you will -- I don't want to say cheating,  
7 but I'll say questionable transactions and questionable  
8 referrals were happening.

9 So, there are groups, you know, there are groups  
10 and subgroups that I've seen operative in different parts  
11 of the State.

12 In terms of San Luis Obispo, we were doing a  
13 preliminary assessment -- we were doing a final assessment  
14 of this organization's eligibility to join our network. 1

15 So, in meeting with the board, that's got about a  
16 third residents, I was particularly interested in hearing  
17 the residents' voice.

18 We also saw some tenants of property that they own  
19 and manage and I was particularly interested on their  
20 perspective on the service providers.

21 And one of the questions I ask of property owners  
22 that have property adjoining one of our member  
23 organization's projects, if you will, is are they a good  
24 neighbor, and that usually solicits a lot of conversation  
25 about what they hope to get and what their -- public

1 housing has a -- still has sort of a connotation in some  
2 people's minds. It's changing, but it has a negative  
3 connotation, so I'm really trying to expand what a good  
4 neighbor would be and what it would look like for your  
5 public housing neighbor to meet the community standards,  
6 and that's been really interesting.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay.

8 MR. GABRIEL: A little bit of a segue away, I'm  
9 sorry.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, no, that answers it. And  
11 so, basically, in Fresno you did listen to the people that  
12 -- for these exit interviews and you had to deal with  
13 individuals that had some issues and you dealt with them  
14 effectively and they were heard. How did you do that?

15 MR. GABRIEL: Well, there were -- I had a couple  
16 resources. I had the district attorney, someone from the  
17 district attorney's office right next to me at the table.  
18 So, some of them that seemed like they were possible legal  
19 violations got an immediate referral, and that was really  
20 nice to have that resource.

21 And in some cases it was just a questioning of  
22 listening and confirming the information that they'd  
23 already been given, reinforcing the information or  
24 explaining to them maybe further steps that they could  
25 take based on what they just learned from a servicer or

1 loan provider.

2 Quite honestly, in numerous cases mistakes had  
3 been made that were bad business decisions. And being  
4 honest and clear that, from my perspective and experience,  
5 this is the -- this was the source of your problem, and  
6 many people just respected the fact that there's no going  
7 to fix it later, no more applications. You know, this  
8 guy, who's experience in housing, is just being real  
9 candid that you're unemployed, your wife's unemployed, you  
10 have no income, it's very unlikely that you'll be able to  
11 get a modification based on what I know about it.

12 So, just, you know, counsel, direct counsel. So,  
13 that's what I did.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, thank you. Thank you  
15 very much. That was my only question.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Any other questions?

17 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have about seven minutes  
19 on the clock if you'd like to make a closing statement?

20 MR. GABRIEL: Well, it's been a wonderful  
21 experience. I hope that I've been able to get beyond the  
22 written in terms of my responses to you. I know I've kind  
23 of wandered all around the place, but I hope that that  
24 hasn't been too confusing.

25 I noticed some note taking, so that's good, I

1 think that's a good sign.

2 I did have a few questions for the group, though.  
3 And it sort of goes back to the pending proposition and,  
4 actually, I heard there was another proposition that was  
5 in the thinking stages that would make it impossible for  
6 voters to undo Proposition 11. I don't know if you heard  
7 about that one? I read about that one.

8 But in any case is there anything that this body  
9 is going to do in anticipation of the pending 20 and 27?

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: No.

11 MR. GABRIEL: Or is it just sort of ride it out?

12 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: No, we're prohibited, we're  
14 a government agency, we can't participate in any sort of  
15 election matters.

16 So, we, like all of our Applicants, wait and see,  
17 and adjust when the law is changed, if it is changed.

18 MR. GABRIEL: So, just parallel work.

19 I touched the time commitment. I guess I should  
20 ask it, for the record, what time commitment do you  
21 anticipate is needed by Commissioners?

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We don't know the answer to  
23 that question. Largely, it's up to the Commission. We  
24 don't know the extent to which they will decide to do  
25 their work in subgroups, if they can legally, we don't

1 know how many meetings they'll care to hold, we don't know  
2 if they'll choose to do the nights and weekends. That's  
3 really -- if you're a Commissioner, that's really in part  
4 up to you.

5 We've advised all of our applicants that it could  
6 be very time consuming, we expect that it will be, but we  
7 don't know when that time will be required of you.

8 MR. GABRIEL: And so, I'm assuming from counsel  
9 that there are no legal requirements on frequency of  
10 meetings or --

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, there are certain  
12 legal requirements. The Commission is, in fact, required  
13 to engage the public with regard to the map-making process  
14 both before the maps are drawn and then once the maps are  
15 drawn, and there are some drafts to consider, the  
16 Commission is again required to go forth with the public.

17 There's also language in the Act, if I'm not  
18 getting confused, that requires public engagement and  
19 opportunity to use software to make maps, have -- the  
20 software needs to be available to the public.

21 MR. GABRIEL: Oh.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you know, we -- again,  
23 we don't necessarily know what the time commitment will  
24 be. We anticipate and expect that there will be many  
25 meetings. But, again, it's up to the Commission.

1           MR. GABRIEL: Okay. I know we're facing -- we,  
2 the State, are facing budget deficits, unprecedented, and  
3 I assume this budget's already been approved, and I just  
4 wondered if, in the assumptions that pulled together the  
5 budget, whether they included a process consultant, or  
6 facilitation, and what about the legal counsel piece, and  
7 the district map modeling? I mean, I just -- I don't know  
8 if you know the answer, but is there money for those  
9 things?

10           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't know the answer.

11           MR. GABRIEL: I thought you'd say that.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: In fact, you know, once the  
13 Bureau of State Audits transitions you to a full team of  
14 14, at that point the Secretary of State's Office is  
15 responsible for assisting you in setting up your offices,  
16 staffing and the like until you get a full composition of  
17 assistance.

18           We don't know what the funding levels will be. We  
19 know that the Act specifies \$3 million, but also provides  
20 for adjustments as the Commission deems appropriate.

21           What funds will be available, what the Legislature  
22 can and will give, we don't know the answer to that, yet.

23           MR. GABRIEL: So, that sort of -- I think you  
24 touched my next question, which is whether or not we'd  
25 have access to staff report, and I think you said the

1 Secretary of State's Office until such time as we get our  
2 own?

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Correct. What happens is  
4 the first eight, the State Auditor will draw the names for  
5 the first eight and then, as you likely know, the first  
6 eight are required to choose the next six.

7 So, during that period of transition, the Bureau  
8 of promulgating regulations that will soon be finalized,  
9 wherein we're required to assist the Commissioners, the  
10 first eight in getting to the full 14. And at that point  
11 the law provides that the Secretary of State's Office will  
12 then take over some of those functions.

13 And so, we're in the process of working together  
14 to make sure there's a smooth transition and I think  
15 everyone's committed to it. It just hasn't been done yet,  
16 before, and so much is still in the works.

17 MR. GABRIEL: And just to make my notation, is  
18 there any -- I think I know the answer to this one, but is  
19 there any flexibility on the dates, on the due dates for  
20 various things, it's all statutory.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You can go early.

22 (Laughter.)

23 MR. GABRIEL: That's a wrap.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Thank you so much  
25 for coming to see us, Mr. Gabriel.

1 MR. GABRIEL: Thank you so much.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

4 MR. GABRIEL: Thank all of you very much.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We'll recess tomorrow until

6 9:14 because, again, our 4:30 will not be joining us

7 today.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

9 (Recess at 4:13 p.m.)

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