

VRA Subcommittee Update Memo

California Citizen's Redistricting Commission

Commissioners Russell Yee & Sara Sadhwani

January 8, 2020

1. **VRA & Litigation RFIs:** These requests for information are out! Please be sure to promote these to your networks. We hope to receive a wide pool of expert attorneys and litigators. The deadline to apply is January 29th. Link to posting: https://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/job_opportunities/
2. **Update on "Stage 1" Analysis:** We have been in touch with Eric McGhee of the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). He will be preparing a report detailing key population changes from 2010 to now using data from the American Community Survey (ACS). We hope to have that report ready and to have him present it to the Commission in early to mid-February. While we had previously recommended an early-stage analysis of racially polarized voting (RPV) in the state, due to the cost of such a report we recommend waiting until we have VRA Counsel selected and approved before advancing any RPV analysis. The PPIC report will be completed with no charge to the Commission, therefore no action is needed by the commission, as was previously placed on the agenda.
3. **Legal Affairs Committee:** We ask the chair for the addition of Commissioner Pedro Toledo to join us in a legal affairs committee to publicly review all of the applicants and make a formal recommendation to the commission of top candidates. The legal affairs committee will meet publicly on February 10th and 18th.
4. **VRA Training:** The recent elections have created a scenario in which new/modernized Voting Rights Act (VRA) legislation may be advanced in the next several months. Such legislation could be a reintroduction or adaptation of 2019's H.R. 4/S.4263, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. While we had originally planned to develop a briefing book based on existing law drawn from contributions of legal and policy experts, such documentation may no longer be applicable if a new law should pass.

Instead, we are planning for a training and a panel during the upcoming meetings on January 26-28th. Invited speakers include: (1) VRA litigation attorney and co-director of the Voting Rights Project at UCLA Chad Dunn, to provide a training on key VRA cases and lessons learned as they pertain to redistricting; (2) A panel of community representatives to share their perspective on the creation of section 2 districts for their respective communities and/or their insights on advocacy for new VRA litigation, this includes representatives from the Black Census and Redistricting Hub, NALEO Educational Fund, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice. As always, this is not our only opportunity for training, but simply a next step.