NEVADA LEGISLATURE
JOINT INTERIM STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS

(*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] 218E.320)

MINUTES

April 17, 2026

The second meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections for the 2025–2026 Interim was held on Friday, April 17, 2026, at 1 p.m. in Room 165, Nevada Legislature Office Building, 7230 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3137, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and video recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's meeting page. The video recording may also be found at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/. Copies of the video record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Assemblymember Cecelia González, Chair
Senator James Ohrenschall, Vice Chair
Senator John C. Steinbeck
Assemblymember Brian Hibbetts
Assemblymember Cinthia Zermeño Moore
Assemblymember Erica Mosca

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Skip Daly
Assemblymember Jill Dickman

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer A. Sturm-Gahner, Deputy Research Director, Research Division
Haley Proehl, Senior Principal Policy Analyst/Geographic Information Specialist, Research Division
Timothy Gibbs, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division
Kelsey DeLozier, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Aaron MacDonald, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Nancy Morris, Principal Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order. [Indicates clarification.]

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair González:

Good afternoon and welcome to the second meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections for the 2025–2026 Interim. Mr. Gibbs, can you please call the roll?

[Roll call was taken and reflected in Members Present.]

Thank you so much. I do know that members are running late but should all be present, so can you please mark them present when they arrive? Members who are joining us on Zoom, please remember to keep your video on and your microphone off when you are not speaking, and please remember to use the chat feature only for technical assistance from our AVH [Audio, Visual, and Hearings] staff.

Before we begin, I would like to remind us of a few housekeeping announcements. Please silence all electronic devices, including your cell phones. When speaking, please turn the microphone off each time you are done speaking. Agenda items may be taken out of order, combined, or postponed. Members of the public, if you would like to receive email notifications when meeting materials—including agendas—are posted on the Committee's web page. You can sign up for notifications on the Nevada Legislature's website. Meeting materials received prior to the meeting have been uploaded to the Committee's web page. Finally, you might see some of us on our phones and laptops following along with presentations and taking notes; please do not take this as a sign of disrespect.

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair González:

We will start with our first agenda item today, which is public comment. Members of the public can provide testimony in person, over the phone, via email, or by mail. Instructions are provided on the agenda. If you are testifying in person, please remember to sign in at the table by the door, and please remember to clearly state and spell your name before you begin and limit your comment to two minutes. Staff will time each speaker during public comment to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to speak. If you would like to provide public comment over the phone, the number is (888) 475-4499, and the meeting ID for today is 834 582 70496, and then press the pound key.

We will start in Las Vegas. If anybody would like to make public comment, please come to the table now.

Not seeing anyone, is there anyone wishing to provide public comment in Carson City?

Also not seeing anyone, AVH, let us go to the phones. Is there anybody who wishes to make public comment on the phone?

AVH:

Thank you, Chair. If you would like to participate in public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Ellen Gifford:

Good afternoon. Nevada's Secretary of State stated, "It will still give me chills." This bill was passed with urgency when addressing NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] 293.705 in 2024. In part, the law reads it is unlawful for any person to use or threaten or attempt to use any force, intimidation, coercion, violence, restraint, or undue influence with the intent to interfere with the performance of the duties of any elections official. Violators of this law are guilty of a Category E felony. In his description of the bill in February 2025, the Secretary of State said there was a sharp decline in the threat and harassment that election officials experienced in the 2024 election cycle, inferring this was due to the new law. A Nevada voter curious about what prompted the need for such a law sent a FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] request to the Secretary of State in each Nevada county, asking for any records documenting incidents such as those listed in the law. Fifteen recipients responded they had no such records; two recipients responded they had a few threatening emails and phone calls, hardly warranting a law that puts every voter at risk of being accused of a felony. Ironically, the Secretary of State has been sending regular memorandums to the requester since December 2023, two and a half years, saying they need more time to provide evidence of the incidents that have been giving the Secretary of State chills.

We must ask, was there evidence that warranted a caustic law that puts all voters at risk? If so, are they ever going to share it with the public? Nevadans deserve to exercise their right to vote in a patriotic, friendly atmosphere. This law discourages such an atmosphere, and there appears to be no justification for its existence. Thank you.

Chair González:

Thank you so much. Thank you, I appreciate it. AVH, next caller, please.

Oscar Williams, Resident, Reno, Nevada:

Good afternoon. This is Oscar Williams, calling from Reno. Hello, I want to— I sent you guys an email yesterday. It has got four points. I do not want to belabor everybody with it, but I want to just highlight one thing. There is— You know, we have changed our method of voting, where before we were using direct recording equipment with a little voter's verifiable audit paper trail tape add-on, right? And now, we have the statewide, the ballot marking device with a precinct scanner. There is a lot of laws on the books right now that refer to the obsolete, direct recording equipment, and so I implore this Board and Secretary of State to do a little homework to clean up these old laws, and I will give you two real quick to sort of give you an example of it—NRS 293.3677, standards for counting votes regulations, let us see, "Shall adopt regulations," "Statewide standards for counting a vote cast," for each method of voting, not describing subsection 2, without limitation of vote cast on a mechanical recording device which directly records the votes electronically. That is the DRE, right, that we no longer have. NRS 293B.033, mechanical voting system defined—0.1. On a device which mechanically or electronically compiles a total of the number of votes cast. Again, that refers to the DRE, which is now obsolete. So, there is a lot of this that is now garbage in our laws that has to be cleaned out, otherwise it is fairly incomprehensible when we talk about ballot-marking devices and increasing scanners—the language gets very confused by these latent terms. That is all I wanted to highlight at this time. I may make some comment at the end. Thank you for your time. (Agenda Item II)

Chair González:

Thank you. AVH, are there any more callers?

AVH:

Chair, you have no more callers wishing to participate at this time.

Chair González:

Thank you so much. Seeing no more public comment, we will now move on to our next agenda item, which is approval of the minutes from our meeting on February 20, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 20, 2026

Chair González:

Committee members, you have all had time to review the minutes. Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none, I will accept a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting on February 20, 2026.

> VICE CHAIR OHRENSCHALL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 20, 2026.
>
> ASSEMBLYMEMBER MOORE SECONDED THE MOTION.

Chair González:

Thank you. Any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

> THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (ASSEMBLYMEMBER HIBBETTS WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE).

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Chair González:

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATION ON THE STATUS OF PREPARING FOR PRIMARIES

Chair González:

Next, I would like to invite our representatives of the Office of the Secretary of State to the table to provide information on the status of preparing for our upcoming primaries. Mr. Secretary, whenever you are ready, please go ahead.

Francisco Aguilar, Secretary of State (SOS), Office of the SOS:

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair González and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for having us here today to talk about our preparations for the June Primary. Before Chief Deputy Murphy Hebert and Deputy Mark Wlaschin take over to discuss how our state, county, and city election officials are preparing, I wanted to talk with you about a number of initiatives we have taken to encourage people to vote and increase the trust with the public. Elections officials have been getting ready for the upcoming election since the day after the election in 2024. This preparation does not start at the beginning of the election year; it is ongoing. The work to keep our elections safe, secure, and accessible is a year-round job, and I am very proud to work alongside the SOS team and election workers

in the state to run some of the best elections in the country. Across every initiative in our Office, we focus on three main goals; modernization, innovation, and transparency. I am excited for Deputy Wlaschin to show you a glimpse of the new dashboard we are creating for voters to significantly increase the transparency in Nevada. I have said it before, and it seems to be very simple, but voters should be able to track their ballots like they do a pizza. We know where a pizza is every step of the way, from when it is being prepared, when it is put in the oven, and when it is being delivered. People demand that kind of information in real time.

I want to highlight two efforts to increase transparency into our mail ballots. One is the dashboard, which will give us real-time data on the status of mail ballots across the state; how many ballots have been sent out by the counties; how many have been accepted for counting; how many have signature career issues; and more. The data will be able to be broken down by party and county. Deputy Wlaschin will give a more in-depth breakdown in just a few minutes. We are also launching myballot.nv.gov for voters to directly track their ballot. We have offered ballot tracking for the last couple of cycles, but this year we are working to give voters more information about the status of their ballot, including if it needs to be cured. This has been a big focus of ours—to try to decrease the number of ballots that eligible voters cast but do not end up being counted because they do not cure it with the local election office. Deputy Wlaschin will also discuss our voter education and outreach preparation when it comes to the possible changes to elections processes this year and address a number of questions and misinformation being spread about our elections. He will discuss our efforts to encourage voters to make a plan and get their ballots in the mail at least a week before Election Day or use a drop box on Election Day as we approach changes with the United States Postal Service.

I want to briefly address the noise and misinformation that counting continues to spread. Nevada is preparing for the elections as usual, focused on following state law to serve the best interests of every eligible voter across Nevada. Our state is very diverse, as you know. We have a 24/7 economy—many very rural communities and diverse populations. Accessibility to the ballot box is key to our success as a state. In 2024, Nye County and Douglas County adopted mail ballots at the highest rates, and 86 percent of all current active registered voters have used a mail ballot since 2022. Our office and election offices in every community are dedicated to protecting the security of our mail ballots and ensuring that voters can make their voices heard in a way that works for them.

The chaos and questions that surround the security of our elections is meant to confuse and intimidate voters from participating. They have too many competing priorities going on in their lives, and if they do not understand what is going on or changing with our elections, they will self-select out. Voters do not deserve the chaos; they deserve leadership. I urge you all as elected officials to take this responsibility seriously and reassure your constituents of the safety and security of Nevada's elections. Before I pass it over to our team, I want to emphasize the hard work that our counties are doing. Election workers are the unsung heroes of our democracy. We need to give election officials every chance to succeed. That means more resources to do their jobs. As we look ahead to the legislative session, more consistent funding and resources will be crucial. I will now hand it over to Deputy for Elections, Mark Wlaschin. Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

Mark Wlaschin, Deputy SOS for Elections, Office of the SOS:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. Over the next 13 slides, we will talk a little bit about the status of the preparations that have been going on relating to the conduct of the primary election. I have a slight or light agenda, but we will basically provide an overview at first, and then dive into some specifics, some of which will be amplified by presentations later today as well. (Agenda Item IV A)

Starting with the executive summary—and I think this is a key point to make—from a very broad stance, the preparations to conduct state and federal elections are going as expected and required by state and federal law. That work, as the Secretary mentioned, began prior to the—I am sorry; the day after the General Election in 2024, and continued today. If you have seen and remember our election calendar, it is a massive, eight-point font, two-page calendar that lays out every statutory and regulatory requirement. We continue to use that as a checklist to make sure that we are hitting every wicket as appropriate. Where we are at now in the elections calendar specifically—and we will talk to this in a moment also, but the candidate filing periods of course are over, and we are rapidly approaching the first votes to be cast by our voters, which will likely happen next week. Again, we will speak to the timelines here too.

Lastly, the Secretary mentioned voter education outreach. It is an interesting, unique feature, I think, of the elections in the 2020s, starting really after the 2020 election cycle. Based on legislative mandate, by appropriating funding to support the Secretary's outreach and education efforts, we have continued to provide outreach and education to voters. There is some uniqueness to the 2026 election cycle that we will talk to as well—different things that we want to make sure that you are aware of, that we are not only thinking about how to address in the events that they pass, but also how we have been answering the questions from your constituents.

So, to start with the discussion about the candidate filing period, I want to provide a little bit of an overview. Again, there were roughly 1,100 candidates through the judicial and nonjudicial filing periods that filed for office. Across our 36 filing offices—the 36 being of course the Secretary of State's office, our 17 county offices, and then the 18 city offices as well. I have got the statistics for not only our representatives in Congress, constitutional officers, and Legislature on the next slide, but a couple of things just to highlight of note that the numbers in bold on this slide indicate that there is going to be a primary election, of course with our constitutional officers. Not every individual that filed for office— This is something that oftentimes we get questions about already. Not every single individual that filed, for example, for CD2 [Congressional District 2] goes on a primary ballot. As you can see, we have four no-political party candidates who are independent candidates for partisan office who have filed for office, and they of course go directly to the General Election ballot. Constitutional officers—very similar in regards to the number of candidates from the election cycle four years ago as well. Again, also with the bold, indicating they are going to the primary.

For the legislative seats, I did not break down all of the Assembly seats or the 11 State Senate seats that are on the ballot as well. We have that information, of course, on our website. I do want to flag though that when it comes to the constitutional officers in the Legislature—legislative candidates rather—we do get questions from constituents asking how they can learn more about each candidate. That is information, of course, that is not housed on the Office of the Secretary of State page, and we continue as appropriately to direct those individuals to either the candidates themselves or to the political parties to provide additional information on the candidates' positions on various topics. But again, those questions come up, but we simply redirect away from our information.

Regarding the sample ballot timelines, there was a recent change to Assembly Bill 148 that was passed in the last legislative session. As a reminder, that bill requires that all sample ballots be sent prior to the deadlines established for mail ballots. There are three categories of voters that are identified under NRS 293.269911 as receiving a ballot at different time periods. I have them listed on the slide. The first ones, as I mentioned, will be getting their mail ballots sent to them, and their sample ballots as well, starting next week. The military and overseas citizens, those voters who are covered under the Uniform and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act, the Federal Act, or are identified as covered voters under NRS 293D , again, as being military overseas citizens—sample ballots go out next week. Out of state, five days later for those deadlines, and then in state, shortly thereafter. You will notice that there is a range of dates—again, not only are those range of dates lined up so that the sample ballots are going across the state out prior to the mail ballots being shipped. They are slightly different, in part due to different vendors for different sample ballots in different counties, and there is also— It is kind of interesting just a little bit of behind the scenes—a bit of a sweet spot when it comes to sending sample ballots or mail ballots. Truth be told, not every voter in our state is aware that it is an election year; some of them may not have taken time to update their voter registrations. At the county level—again, knowing their electorate best, there is sort of a balance where they try to wait until the last minute so that voters can update their registrations and are aware of the election so that way they are not wasting county or state money sending sample ballots and ballots to the incorrect addresses, while also still of course complying with the statutory requirements and deadlines. So, there is an outreach balance and a timing piece to make sure that voters are aware of the election and update their registration so that sample ballots and mail ballots are being sent to the proper addresses and not needing to be reissued or canceled. The note there about the sample ballots not being required for newly registered voters after May 21— Of note and of one clarification, it is not required, but you will notice also that the in-state sample ballots— Again, at the county level, I will tell you that the county election officials are keenly aware of the importance of sample ballots to our voters, which is why even as late as May 9, individuals will be getting sample ballots, and we of course provide them online as well, so it is not that newly registered voters after the 21st of May are not getting anything; they are still online and opportunities for them to be able to see that the sample ballot, review it, and consider it as appropriate.

Mail ballot timelines, again very similarly, and again, to be just perfectly clear about it, nobody is holding up the sending of mail ballots by design at all. The intent is so that the mail ballot timelines are really the key date, and then sample ballots are of course going to be sent before that, but there is a sequencing issue. I think it is also worthy to note that that we have identified that given some of the challenges that the U.S. Postal Service is going through this year, there is always the possibility—and this is something that we have we have basically taken into consideration—that a sample ballot that is sent first and a mail ballot that is sent a couple days later may still arrive at the voter's house in the opposite order. Again, something that we are trying to watch very closely of. We are very aware of the statutory requirements, but doing basically as much as we can to separate the two, so sample ballots go out long enough before mail ballots so that if there are issues from the Postal Service perspective, that does not somehow inhibit the voter from getting a sample ballot before a mail ballot. Still, that being said, if it happens one-in-a-million times, then at least twice in our state, which is not ideal, but something that we have already taken into consideration and started discussing that we are going to watch closely on. The mail ballot timelines—again, slightly different of course, but I have included the deadlines on here as well so that you can see when those mail ballots will be going out. Again, the variation of course being, as I mentioned, that sort of sweet spot that the county election officials are trying to hit so that voters can update their registrations while meeting, of course, the statutory deadlines and timelines.

The Nevada EASE system, our effective absentee system for elections required by federal law that we distribute our UOCAVA [Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act] military and overseas ballots not later than the 45th day before the election. UOCAVA Saturday, as it is called, is not this Saturday but next. The Friday before that under state law is actually the 46th day before the election, and that is the deadline for our military and overseas ballots to be sent. The NVEASE system uses that same deadline, and will be turned on ultimately next week. And again, we have noticed historically that that EASE system, which is intended for use by military and overseas voters as well under state law, voters with a disability, and tribal voters who live on a colony or reservation. The voters who have used it historically are oftentimes big fans, and I suspect that within— Historically, it has been within about a half hour of us turning it on that the first voter has voted using that system, casting their ballots so that it ends up at the county for duplication in the beginning of the processing period. But again, the EASE system will be turned on essentially next week. We are getting some questions for clarification about who can use it—trying to understand. You know, voters have heard that state laws has expanded its use in the last few elections—I am sorry, legislative sessions—which is true from starting back in 2021. For clarification, again, it is the active-duty members of the uniformed services, and I think that confuses some individuals. It is not strictly individuals who are in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Space Force that are on active duty, but for example, activated guards members are absolutely allowed to use it once they are on active orders. It is also open for use by members of the Merchant Marine. They fall under the uniformed services umbrella, as does the commissioned Corps of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency—NOAA, and the Public Health Service, which is really interesting. We have actually conducted some outreach to inform Nevadan voters who are members of the Public Health Service, the Commission Corps of the Public Health Service, who are eligible to use the system— As I recall, between four and ten individuals that we identified. It is also eligible for use by voters who are overseas citizens, and then as I mentioned, Nevada voters who have a disability, and lastly tribal voters who live on a colony or reservation as well in Nevada.

In regards to the polling place update, I will start with the polling place update and then very similarly shift to a mail ballot drop box update on the next slide. We are at a point now where the county election officials are basically just about done finalizing their list of polling places; some actually have done it since the slide deck was provided to the LCB staff. Again, keeping in mind, and just to highlight what that process looks like— The polling places across the state, and we get questions about this too; why they change sometimes. Well, it is important to note that a lot of those who are established are not a county or a city office; they are established through contracts. Certain locations—there was a grocery store, for example, in one of our counties that had about nine polling places a couple of years ago, and then just decided they did not want to support polling places anymore. I am specifically not calling them out—but maybe I should—but that sort of decision happens across our state. Oftentimes from an election-administrator standpoint, we are keenly aware that folks like the consistency of going to vote in the same place, and when polling places change, that can cause confusion, frustration, which is very much understandable. So, to try to mitigate that, the county election officials will put the list of polling places into sample ballots. It will also be on state, county, and city websites to make sure that individuals know where their nearest polling place is at as they get ready to vote in person if that is what they desire to do.

There is also a question about turnout when it comes to a midterm election. When you look at turnout overall, historically, midterm elections have the lowest turnout and historically, a primary election of a midterm year has the extreme lowest turnout unfortunately of all of our elections. That being said, this year, after a lot of discussion, our county election

officials have indicated that they are not going to reduce— They do not, from what I am aware of, anticipate reducing the number of polling places. Given a lot of the interest voters have shown in the last few election cycles, it seems like there is still likely going to be pretty high turnout this year, both in the primary and general elections, so again, better to be prepared and have the polling places to support the electorate. So, our number of polling places will likely—again when I get it, I will certainly provide that—be closer to a general election of a presidential year than you might normally expect.

We also— I will talk a little bit about the extensive analysis and trends following the primary and general here in a minute, but I did want to provide— You will notice the chart on the slide. This is actually from the 2024 Federal Election Administration and Voting Survey, the EAVS report as it is affectionately known. These are the specific numbers that we report to the federal government about how many polling places, and the counties provide data that gets aggregated about the number of poll workers—and we will talk about poll workers shortly also. I provided this simply to give you a little bit of context as to where we fall amongst our neighbors, and there is some interesting points of view here. One, again, our friends to the West—a vast number of polling places; larger population; increased number of poll workers, but really the comparison I think that it is important is that the decisions that are made relating to the polling places are driven by our county election officials, who as I will continue to say, truly know their electorate and understand where the population centers are—where people have voted historically. Is there room for improvement and further discussion—certainly. As our state continues to grow— I mean, we were 1.4 million registered voters even just a couple of years ago, and now we are up to over 2 million—absolutely, and we anticipate that those number of polling places will continue to be reviewed and discussed to make sure that we are meeting voters where they are at.

We have talked about, not only in this Committee and during the legislative session, how voters like using mail ballots. A sizable percentage of our electorate votes by mail, but we still have a lot of voters that vote in person during the in-person period for early voting, as well as during the 12 hours on Election Day. And again, the goal as I understand it, from the legislative intent as I listened closely to the discussions, is to make sure that we enable voters to vote how they choose. To that end, again, the number of polling places; the locations of polling places; population centers; and otherwise will continue to be assessed and discussed. I do want to call out also just to save anybody the phone call or email—Oregon, of course, is 100 percent vote by mail. They do have 36 counties, which is why they have 36 polling places. Kind of an interesting aside.

For the mail ballot drop boxes, again very similar. Under Nevada law, every polling place must have a drop box, but county election officials are able to establish additional drop boxes at additional locations that are not a polling place. So because of that, again, here is some statistics out of the EAVS report from 2024. Again, I know firsthand that our county election officials are looking very closely at where ballot drop boxes are, how they can be positioned to best meet the needs of the electorate—oftentimes comparing them to public transportation routes and other type locations to make sure that where the electorate is and transits through are supported by drop boxes, which is very much the intent.

The extensive analysis and voting trends, and then perhaps I will get a little bit ahead of myself here. Well, I will tell you what. I will wait until the dashboard slide. I am excited about that one. Okay, voter education outreach. As the Secretary mentioned, a lot of time and effort has been spent on voter education and outreach. This is something we have talked about over the years—has been supported very much and appreciated by the Legislature and the Governor. You may remember back as recently as 2020, the Elections Division budget for voter education outreach was $0. It has grown since then, and in the 2023 Session, it was $877,000. In the 2025 Session, we were appropriated

$1.4 million. Again, these are decisions that the Legislature has made, and the Governor supported through his budget to make sure that voters have truthful information that are just the facts. Again, as I stressed from the start, this is not partisan discussions about candidates or ballot questions; this is strictly information about how our laws work, the audits that we conduct, how the systems are reviewed and approved before they get to you, the voter, at a polling place—all of those things to make sure that the electorate has an opportunity across every corner of our state to understand it. So to that end, again, and recognizing the importance and the care that we put into using any single tax dollar, period, for anything, we have been making some significant efforts to inform the electorate about how our elections are conducted, while also addressing a lot of the questions that they bring to us.

The first one that I want to talk about is actually the one I mentioned before—the U.S. Postal Service. They have come out even fairly recently and identified that they may be completely bankrupt possibly next year, maybe by the end of this year. That by itself has caused a lot of questions and concerns that I know our federal delegation are aware of as well, given the importance of mail ballot voting to essentially voters in all of our counties. Again, it is not just one or a select few, but understanding the impact of the Postal Service's budgetary stress has certainly led to a lot of ongoing conversations when you think about the Postal Service and their reliance on vehicles to bring mail pieces, ballots, and sample ballots, and understanding the rising costs of gas, and how that impacts their budget. You know, we are now taking the position that we very much encourage voters to use a mail ballot drop box at a polling place, or if you are going to mail a ballot back, to do it—as the Secretary mentioned—not later than one week beforehand. There is a couple of different pieces of that calculus that are kind of coming together to lead to that sort of recommendation, but the bottom line is a U.S. citizen, Nevada voter, who is a registered voter, who wants to vote by mail, has the ability to use the Postal Service, but given some of the questions about timing to get that ballot from the voter to their county election official is a bit alarming. There were some recent—very recent, in fact—studies done on California just recently in some of their elections since the U.S. Postal Service transitioned to their Regional Transportation Optimization Plan, the RTO Plan. Upwards of four times as many ballots were being rejected because of late delivery, in part because of some of these federal decisions that were being made in regards to what the Postal Service has available to them from a capabilities and budgetary standpoint. So again, when in doubt, we encourage voters to bring their mail ballot to the county election official office or to use a mail ballot drop box at a polling place, or if they are going to mail it back, we encourage them to mail it back no later than one week before Election Day to ensure that ballot arrives.

We get questions about *Watson v. Republican National Convention (2026)*. This is a lawsuit that is at the U.S. Supreme Court now. The main question—and again, just a reminder, I am not a lawyer—of this lawsuit, is it constitutional for a mail ballot to be received after Election Day? We anticipate the decision coming from that in late June, and we have had numerous discussions on basically the 'what ifs' in both direction. If the Supreme Court says, "Yes it is acceptable. It has been acceptable for a number of years," and they continue that decision, then everything will remain as is, but still informing the voters about that is important. But if the Supreme Court comes back and says that it is illegal, or unconstitutional, rather, to accept a mail ballot after Election Day, we have started to discuss what that would look like from an outreach standpoint as well. Again, the timing there is key. Late June, so this would of course be after the Primary. If they surprise us and issue their decision in the first week of June, that will create additional confusion and opportunities for us to stress our outreach efforts to get information to voters. But again, it

is, I think, safely assessed that it will be coming in late June. So again, one way or the other, informing voters of that decision prior to the General Election will be crucial.

There was an Executive Order that the President signed also just a few months ago. We continue to get questions about that—if it has been implemented yet if it has not. There were questions about how that would go. Again, to be perfectly clear, the Executive Order is not in force or in execution. It is my understanding that there are some lawsuits against different provisions that have or will be filed. There is actually one I know for a fact that our state has filed. So again, the questions about the Executive Order—it was interesting. There was an overlap here in Carson City, in fact. A voter reached out the other day. Carson City has a really unique—and this is not at all a problem; it is just a super interesting situation where because of which candidates filed for office in Carson City, Carson City does not have a nonpartisan ballot this year. One candidate filed for office. Others, they did not have anyone, and went to an appointee—that sort of thing. But for the 14,800 nonpartisan voters in Carson City, myself included for example, we do not get a mail ballot for the Primary because there simply is not a race at all to have on a ballot. But we got questions from at least one or two—that I can recall—individuals asking if that was somehow related to either the executive order or the Supreme Court. So again, trying to clarify that this is simply how the state law works, and the number of candidates that filed in Carson City. We continue to work very closely with Clerk Hoen and his team to provide that information to the voters in Carson City, the nonpartisan folks, because you can imagine also, for the 14,800 nonpartisan voters in Carson, if they show up to vote in person on Election Day or during early voting, it is not that they are being denied the ability to vote; there is just simply no ballot for which they can vote without changing their political party. So, trying to clarify that and make sure they understand that the nuance of state law and the options they have available to them will continue to be a challenge as well.

We have gotten questions also about Question 7. Question 7 is a ballot question, of course. It was a constitutional initiative petition originally on our General Election ballot in November of 2024. When it passed in November of 2024, we have gotten questions, "Why are not you doing it yet?" Again, we have been working to explain to voters that do ask about that, again, those sorts of constitutional petitions have to be on the General Election ballot twice, and the timing for that—the idea that because it passed in November of 2024, it will be on the ballot again in November of 2026, and then if it does not pass that vote by the voters, it simply dies. If it does pass that vote by the voters, it will go to the 2027 Legislative Session for further discussion and creation of a statutory structure for implementation prior to the 2028 election cycle. We continue to inform voters about just the nature of statutory and constitutional initiative ballot questions and petitions in general. We continue, also on top of those questions just that are perhaps more routine about dates, times, and methods to update voter registrations. Again, we are consistently reminded about the transient nature of our state, and how many folks across the country and world really are continuing to make the excellent decision to move to Nevada and move out of what other state or country they had been in previously, and that continues to lead to a lot of questions about just how our electoral process works—that again, we know our county and city partners continue to answer questions, as well as at the state, as we lead up to the June 9th Primary.

That strategic planning of communication, one of the bottom bullet points also—the way we do that, and again, this really speaks to the careful use of the budget, and I know this is not the budget committee, but just so that you are aware, we are very careful on how we are communicating and who and where. Ideally, we are communicating directly with voters; that will, and it remains always the best option—meeting voters where they are at, in person, being able to ask questions, to not speak in a kind of even something as simple as a

monotone voice talking about the dates and times of— When you talk about elections, you got to be into it. You got to want to talk about it, otherwise you are going to put everybody to sleep. So, trying to meet voters where they are at so you can answer questions, bring up topics, and be approachable. That is, again, truly one of the best benefits that we have with our county and city election partners who know their communities and who are out there, very much working side by side with advocate groups and others to get answers to voters about how things function. We at the state continue to do so as well also—North, South, East, and West, engaging through community leaders and events, large and small, to make sure that, every opportunity that we have, whether it is a 90-plus-year-old voter in one corner of the state or somebody who just turned 18 yesterday and is curious about how the process works and how to register or pre-register for 17-year-olds. Again, there is no end to the amount of information we can provide and should to make sure that the electorate is informed and prepared for the election cycle.

We are also exploring this time—and this is another one of Secretary Aguilar's initiatives relating to modernization and innovation—the use of email and text campaigns. We have also looked very closely and had a number of different discussions about what are the right ways to conduct an email or text campaign to maximize the effect. I think we all get messages, but the goal is to make sure that the right messages are going to the right voters. So, there is a number of outreach efforts that we are looking at to make sure that voters understand how to update voter registrations—where they can ask questions. The Carson City example about nonpartisan ballots and not having one for the Primary is a good example. There is a lot of ongoing discussion and collaboration with the Carson City Clerk about how we can communicate that to voters so they know and understand what they can expect when they do show up to the polls in a few very short weeks.

Our dashboard—very excited to talk about this. When we talk about the dashboard, I cannot help but start by talking about the VREMS [Voter Registration and Election Management Solutions] Project. The VREMS Project was originally passed as a piece of legislation in 2021—Assembly Bill 422 really is the root that has grown into the tree that is now this dashboard, and here is why. We have talked with this body in the Legislature about the utility of the VREMS project—how by incorporating everybody onto a single, statewide, top-down, centralized system, there is security; there is voter lists enhancements; and numbers of other opportunities in fact that we will be covering in a follow-up presentation to this one. All of those are 100 percent true. But there is another component to this that we have been working on behind the scenes. The simple fact of the matter is that we now have, at the state, insight into voter registrations in a way that simply we never have at a state level ever before. With Clark County now joining also—and so all 17 counties are on a unified database—the state has the ability to in real time see, for example, if a voter walks into a polling place in Elko, checks in at the poll pad at the desk in Elko, the state will be able to see through our system in real time when that voter has checked in to vote and has gotten vote credit. At the same time, in real time, when a voter goes into Lander County and hands their mail ballot to the Clerk and the Clerk and her team scan the back of that ballot envelope and mark that ballot as having been received, in real time now, the state has the ability to see that.

As all 2.1 million voters across our state are voting by mail, in person, during early voting, or on Election Day, all of that data is at the Secretary's fingertips. His direction to the team has been if he has access to this information, why would not the public? This will help voters understand what is going on. It will give them real-time confidence to see what is going on. Shifting away rather from a once-a-day snapshot of in-person voter turnout or, "Where are we with mail ballots," manually gathering—which I will tell you takes hours and hours to compile as the counties send to the state, and then my team aggregates that data. Instead

of having that once-a-day type snapshot, the ability to have it in real time is something that frankly we have not seen and gives us options that are frankly earth-shattering, and maybe it is just me because I am an election official and kind of a dork on this stuff perhaps, but I think you all will appreciate the information as well.

The first mail dashboard— And here is the other thing too; it is not even this is something we are working on for the 2030 election. We are going to be releasing these in the next couple weeks. The first dashboard will be focused on mail ballots, and again, it is not a concern about a question of conflict between county data and the state data. We are simply taking the numbers from the centralized database, and you will see— I guess in retrospect, maybe the slide is a bit smaller than I had hoped, but when you see it on your web browser, your Internet browser, it is simply the aggregated data that we have from our database in real time. Across the top, I am looking at that left thumbnail—I now realize which is far smaller than I intended; it will have for example the number of total ballots sent across the state. This will reflect all ballots sent, including the reissues. I mentioned that there is a bit of a balance between allowing and waiting for voters to update their registration. Truth be told, we are not going to wait for everyone to update it. Some voters will update their registrations after mail ballots are sent. They will not get their mail ballot. The previous one will either get returned to sender or will oftentimes be destroyed by the now-tenants of their previous residence. So, they will contact the clerk or registrar and ask for another ballot. That ticker will continue to move in real time as ballots are sent to voters across the state. As the sent ballot, the next line over is received. This simply indicates that a ballot has been received at the county office. When it gets scanned at the county seat—again, this is just the envelope; just simply now in the possession of the county election official—the received line will go up. Has not gone through the signature cure process; has not started tabulation; has not done any of those other processing pieces. It is simply in the county's possession at the county seat and has been scanned, so that the voter has started that process with that ballot.

The next one over—also a little bit small, but as I recall, that is the accepted. So, when a ballot is received and it is scanned, it starts going through the process. That process looks similar to validating that the voter has not voted in person or voted twice by another mail ballot. If that is the case, the next thing is to review the signature on the ballot envelope. If that signature matches the ballot envelope, then it gets moved into the accepted, where from that point the ballot gets deconstructed; if it needs to go to duplication; if it has got mac and cheese on the ballot—which happens—or other substances, then it cannot be tabulated. It will go to duplication; otherwise it will work its way over to tabulation.

The fourth box on the right over there is the number of cures. This is in real time as a ballot is identified for any signature cure. We are also going to have a toggle to identify how many ballots have been cured. And again, it is not estimates. This is not county election officials in the state late at night making phone calls. This is simply if in the system, it says that this is how many ballots need a cure, period. And then, the far right is the outstanding—the remaining number of ballots out there. Because this is our database and because it is tied so closely to what we do across the state, when a voter checks in-person in Eureka to vote in-person, the system instantly cancels their mail ballot. The outstanding ballots on this dashboard then will tick down one—their ballot is no longer outstanding. They voted in person; they do not have a mail ballot that is going to be tabulated. It will either have been surrendered by the voter or is not votable. So again, that information starting with that across the top dashboard going down into details simply reflecting the county data in a way that frankly will enable them to focus more on supporting the needs of the voters and the election in front of them, but also ensuring that the public, the press, the parties, and everybody across the board, across our state will have access to information. Again, that is

not an estimation; is not a state-level guess. It is simply taking the data that the VREMS project has made possible in providing that to you, the voter. We are starting small, with the intent to build to the General.

There is a number of other dashboards that we are looking very closely at as well, and actually are under development. There is also an EASE submissions dashboard that will reflect— In this one, the mail ballot one does as well. If you scroll down a little bit, you will see it actually breaks it down by county, by party as well, with the two major parties and then the nonpartisan and other minor parties also getting aggregated together so that you can see those statistics. Again, this is just simply right out of the database, but we will have an EASE ballot submissions dashboard is the second one. That will also have it broken down by active-duty military and spouses, voters with a disability, tribal voters who live on a colony or reservation. The third one, we also are going to have an in-person turnout one—very similar to the in-person turnout dashboards that you have seen before. Again, just simply reflecting by party who in the counties has voted.

Then, there is two other dashboards that we are looking at that really are not related to the election I will say. But again, in the interest of transparency, looking closely at having—you know, this is probably, truth be told, post-General Election—a list maintenance dashboard so you can see in real time the incredible amount of work that our county clerks and registrars are doing for list maintenance, as well as voter statistics. The idea that we right now do a monthly snapshot, but we have the ability to show you in real time how many people voted—I am sorry, how many people registered to vote by party in every county across the state. Again, a lot of this really just goes back to the idea that we have data available that is, as you can see, statistics that is truly statewide, down to the county and really precinct-level data, and the goal from the Secretary through our staff is to make sure that that data is reflected and available so that basically the entirety of the electorate—but also those who are not voters—can look at it and understand not only the nature of how Nevadans vote, but when; and the how—of course, is our election results, but like when, where, all of these different things; it also enables our county election officials too.

In closing here because I can probably talk about this for the better part of a couple of hours. But when you think about the analysis, we talked about the importance of polling places. They are going to be able to see which polling places do get used, which contracts maybe do not need to be nearly as much as they could be, or what, where, are the hot spots across the precincts that we want to identify additional polling places—maybe just for early voting. It is really going to give a lot of insight into the election administration across our state, so that administrators can have serious conversations using data to back up budgetary requests when appropriate, but otherwise meeting the needs of the electorate so that they can vote however they choose to under our state and federal laws.

Secretary Aguilar:

Thank you, Mark, Madam Chair, and members of the Committee. Happy to answer any questions.

Chair González:

It is this microphone, or maybe it is user error. I do know that members have questions. We will start in the North with Senator Daly.

Senator Daly:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and couple of questions. Just want to make sure I am clear. I think you have communicated a great deal of information, and it all—to me at least—seems relatively clear. What I want to kind of know is, and I know there is like three Executive Orders out there from the President, the most recent one, but we are currently going to be following state law as it exists in Nevada, absent one Supreme Court decision you expect after the Primary Election. To my knowledge, Congress has not taken any action that would take some of that authority to the feds that is still left to the states per the *United States Constitution*, and we are going to be just following state law up until somebody tells us we cannot anymore and there is actually action by Congress or a court case that changes our process. Is that correct?

Secretary Aguilar:

You are correct, Senator. Nevada is engaged in litigation on both Executive Orders, and so will continue to operate under current state law and federal law. Once the Supreme Court hands down its opinion in June, depending on what that opinion says, that is the final law of the land, and we will implement it here in Nevada. But it does not mean we have not started preparations for one way or the other. We want to make sure we implement as smoothly as possible to lessen the impact on voters across the state.

Senator Daly:

Yeah. Understood. The other half of the question and the other question has to do with a different Executive Order. My understanding—the *Constitution* says the states do the election law. State has its election law; Congress has taken no action to change that. So, the Executive Orders really have no enforcement ability—basically. How do I want to say it? You know, I am not always kind, but the deranged rantings of a madman, right? All that stuff aside, how is the one Executive Order, if any impact at all, where it says we are supposed to validate these people—we are supposed to turn over voter information to the feds? I know the state has said we are not doing that, and they are in litigation over that. They are suing us, actually, to get that information. So, we are going to follow our state laws; we are going to mail it to every registered voter. Is the post office or is the Postal Service going to accept all of the ballots that we send, or is there going to be some type of an issue where they said, "Well, we have not verified this, so we are not going to accept your ballots and process them?" Or is the post office indicating that, "All of that is pending, and we are going to stay the course and follow what the rules are now."

Secretary Aguilar:

The United States Postal Service will continue to operate as it has operated in previous elections until told otherwise by law, or individuals, or court cases. We have been in constant contact with the United States Postal Service. We have continued to work with them. Just a point of information on the second Executive Order as it relates to the United States Postal Service. Nevada is in compliance with the majority of those requests that are in the Executive Order. Every single mail ballot in Nevada has a unique identifier that is identified to that ballot. It is part of the security of the overall system, and we do work with the Postal Service on the actual design of the mail ballot because we want to make sure that we are as efficient with them as they are with us, so we can continue to see— We want mail ballots to get where they are intended to go, and we want them to be returned in a way that we can track them, which is also part of the security to ensure that we are as transparent with Nevada voters as possible. The post office will continue to operate as they have until they are told otherwise. They have not informed us of any

operational changes. There is actually a conference that is taking place in Phoenix in early May with election leaders and elections administrators to continue to talk about the ways that we can work together to build efficiencies in the process. The only change that we are experiencing with the United States Postal Service, at the moment, is the postmark, and which we have already continued to work with our Office, the local county clerks, and city clerks to ensure that we are messaging to voters the appropriate message that, "If you are going to mail your ballot, mail it in early. If you are going to wait until Election Day to use a mail ballot, drop it off at a polling location in a drop box."

Senator Daly:

Thank you for that. I just wanted to make sure that for people, anybody listening, nothing has really changed despite the Executive Orders because the states under the *Constitution* have the authority. We have our laws. There has been no court decisions on that, and much of what was in the Executive Orders—they are not valid. They do not have any teeth, because the President unilaterally is not Congress. He cannot do it.

I know the postmark issue. I think we had a presentation on it last meeting, working through there are other ways for you to figure out when it came into the possession at the post office, and then of course pending the Supreme Court decision. I think that is all of my questions, Madam Chair. I just wanted to be clear on that. I wanted everybody else to be clear that we have a system that has worked well. We have a process that has been vetted and been used many times and constantly improving in compliance with all state and federal laws, and they should have confidence in what the State of Nevada is doing in our election process and the outcomes therefrom.

Chair González:

Thank you so much. Our next question comes from Assemblymember Mosca.

Assemblymember Mosca:

Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you so much, Secretary and the team. I think these dashboards are going to make a huge difference for everybody in our state, and I believe because it is on VREMS, it is not more work for our clerks because it automatically comes up with the top-down system, so I think that is really exciting. My question was really around— I know yesterday we had a long conversation about the HAVA [Help America Vote Act] Grant at Interim Finance Committee (IFC), and thank you for the updates on the federal side. Just wanted to know if there was any other examples of the federal government trying to take our funds when it comes to elections.

Secretary Aguilar:

Thank you for the question. You are absolutely correct. The whole point of this is to build transparency into the process. We are doing demos with folks. I encourage you, if you would like to see the system live before it goes out publicly, we would love your feedback. We would love your perspective. We are meeting with outside groups on both sides of the aisle to get their feedback, because we do want this to be a good tool. We want it to be a useful tool and have the information that people want. Again, one of the data points that I want in there is mail ballots are in the possession of the United States Postal Service as well, so people can see where the ballots are as they lead up to the actual processing at the counties.

As far as the HAVA Grant, it is unfortunate what happened yesterday. I thought it was pretty detrimental to the State of Nevada—the decisions that IFC made on that issue. That is money that was given to us by the federal government. Unfortunately, it was not our Office that made the error; it was another state agency that made an error, and it cost our Office and voters access to those resources. Not having that access to those resources at this point in time, I think, is pretty detrimental to the voting public in Nevada, and I think it was a bad decision by IFC to not grant those funds to the Secretary of State's Office, because again, it was not the Secretary of State's Office's fault on that issue, nor was it the federal government's fault on that issue. It was the agency who failed to comply with the federal grants that cost the Secretary of State's Office those funds, and therefore the voting public.

Mr. Wlaschin:

Mr. Secretary, there is one additional—if I may add to the Assemblymember's question. The Homeland Security grant program, to your point, Mr. Secretary, has also unfortunately become unavailable too. Historically we have used— Let me back up. So, the Homeland Security grant program, because it is related to critical infrastructure, has had a requirement for the last few years where a certain percentage had to go to election purposes. The latest version of the grant required 3 percent, so approximately $130,000 was supposed to be dedicated to elections and supporting physical and cybersecurity of elections across the state—really across the states as it is a federal grant. Unfortunately, there were some additional requirements levied on that grant, such that we are not legally able to accept that $130,000. One of which the provisions was a requirement to enroll in the SAVE [Safeguard American Voter Eligibility] program, which would have meant sending all voter private data to a federal entity who has admitted that they maybe struggle with data security. So, that I think, Assemblymember, is one that I wanted to flag for your awareness.

Assemblymember Mosca:

Thank you, Chair. I know that there is a lot of talk about everything happening in the federal government, and how the cuts are impacting us; so I think that is important to get on the record, so thank you.

Chair González:

Thank you so much for the question. Next, we will go to Senator Steinbeck.

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and the last information we just got actually gave me two questions if that is okay with you. Thank you so much. Let me touch first on the grant question because I used to run the Homeland Security grants here in Nevada in my former position, and so that really interests me. When you say there was a 3 percent requirement and we cannot legally apply for that at that point in time, does that put the rest of the grant in jeopardy because you do have to make those allocations to the areas that the grant requires for the entire Homeland Security grant. If it says that you have to do 3 percent towards elections—or in different years has been 5 or 10 percent—you have to make those qualifications to accept the entire grant. Is there any more information on that?

Mr. Wlaschin:

Thank you for the question, Senator. That is an excellent concern that we brought up immediately as well. It is my understanding, again, the Office of Emergency Management is the entity that manages that grant. Our accounting team reached out to them as soon as we got confirmation from our legal team that the recommendation was that this would not be possible for us to pursue. We made them aware. I do not have an update on that. I can get you one though, and we will make sure that the Committee has that as soon as possible (Agenda Item IV B).

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you, and I will check some other avenues for that information as well and see how I could possibly assist. But on my other question, I will start with, great presentation; excited about the dashboard. I am curious about the mail-in ballots, and one question that I have on them is—and this could be ballpark—but how many mail-in ballots that are not including the absentee that you discussed do we actually send to out-of-state addresses?

Mr. Wlaschin:

Thank you for the question, Senator. I am sorry; I do not have that. Roughly out of state?

Senator Steinbeck:

Just rough, yeah. A guess would be great, yeah, and if you cannot, I understand too.

Mr. Wlaschin:

I apologize.

Secretary Aguilar:

I think one thing we have to be careful about that number two—it is a great question. You always have really strong questions. I appreciate it because it makes us think about these things even more—is the number of military voters who are on active duty, and so what that percentage is probably significant in the overall out-of-state voters that we know them.

Senator Steinbeck:

But those would be absentees, right?

Secretary Aguilar:

Oh, well, they are the same. It is all universal mail ballot.

Senator Steinbeck:

Okay, alright. The reason that I bring it up is that at my house, I have been getting a California mail-in ballot for five years for a relative. It really brings concerns to me about this, right? I mean, he has lived in Nevada for over five years, and they continue to mail these ballots to our house, and he has no residency in any way, so I am concerned about those types of issues happening in Nevada in the opposite direction.

Secretary Aguilar:

I assume you are talking about a California ballot and not a Nevada ballot.

Senator Steinbeck:

Yes, sir. I am definitely not saying that.

Secretary Aguilar:

My response would be, I wish California was part of the ERIC [Electronic Registration Information Center] system, which helps us do the voter maintenance and voter roll updates that we need to do. The fact that California is probably not in ERIC creates some of those types of issues. However, I think the fact that Nevada remains a part of ERIC helps us do that, but also too, with the new VREM system, the top-down voter registration system, we are getting more consistent in our voter roll maintenance to address some of those issues. I think you saw over the last few months a significant amount of voter roll maintenance that has gone through, and the fact that we get challenges from the public on some voters on the voter roll—and to check that against our actual processes under state and federal law and to see that we are addressing most of those challenges already—shows that the system is working as intended. As I said before, we are always looking for ways to get better at what we are doing, to get more consistent across all 17 counties, but to do it under state and be compliant with state and federal law.

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you. Last follow up, if I may.

Chair González:

Sure.

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you. Then, so if it went to an out-of-state address over multiple years, would that trigger further exploration on that as far as residency requirements back to Nevada?

Secretary Aguilar:

I will let Mark answer that question because he can give you the direct feedback on that.

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you so much.

Mr. Wlaschin:

Thank you for the question, Senator. The list maintenance process depends heavily on not only the Postal Service, but also really voter awareness. When a ballot is sent, if it arrives at an address that somebody has moved from, if the voter ideally puts "return to sender," and it comes back, it initiates that—under statute and federal law—list maintenance process. We are looking very closely at other options though, and there is actually a thing that we are planning on doing—a new process that stays within the confines of existing state and federal law that will enable county election officials to clean their rolls even more frequently without necessarily waiting years and years for a voter to write "return to sender." Again, truth be told, a lot of Nevadans do not realize that you can write "return to sender" on a ballot these days, so there is a new process that we are looking at implementing after the 2026 election cycle that will enable a voter who has had no activity in their voter registration, has not voted in the previous two years, for the election official to send a

notice to them to initiate the inactivation process. Not cancellation. Cancellation means something very different, but it would simply remove them from the active roles, so they would not be sent a mail ballot, which I think gets to your point.

Senator Steinbeck:

It does, and that would be great. Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Madam Chair.

Secretary Aguilar:

Again, the "return to sender" is important, and we try to tell voters that all the time. If you do receive a ballot that is not intended for you at your address, please write "return to sender" on it because then that lets the county clerks know that they need to start the process on it. It is just an additional step that brings another awareness to the process.

Senator Steinbeck:

We will help get that message out.

Secretary Aguilar:

Thank you.

Chair González:

Thank you. I also did not know you could write "return to sender" on there, so we definitely got to do more to get that information out, or maybe we can even print it on there and have people circle it and mail it back—although I know with vendors, putting the change of a word can cost a lot of money. So, definitely looking forward to those conversations. We do have some final questions from our Vice Chair, Senator Ohrenschall.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, Secretary. Thank you, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin, Chief Deputy, for the presentation, and thank you for fighting so hard for the top-down system. I know we have been hearing about it for years and hearing that we need it, and your office made it happen and has made it possible for us to have this kind of tracking and accuracy, so I want to appreciate that. I talked to a lot of constituents who are seniors, and are handicapped, and like vote by mail, and like that they can just have it in their mailbox and not have to worry about getting a ride if they do not have transportation. Some of the things coming out of Washington, whether it is what you discussed with the Postal Service or the Executive Orders and who knows what may be coming down, are scaring a lot of my constituents as to whether their vote will count—whether the election is going to happen. I just wonder; what do you think, Mr. Secretary, we can tell our constituents to reassure them that their vote will count, there will be an election this year, and regardless of what next Executive Order might come or next policy that might thwart the ballots being turned in, that people can feel safe that their ballots are going to be counted?

Secretary Aguilar:

Thank you for that question. That is a conversation that is taking place across many communities in this state, and I can tell you that we are confident—as the Secretary of State, as county clerks and city clerks—we are going to have an election. Again, it is very clear in the *United States Constitution* that states are responsible for managing elections,

and until we are told to not do so by the courts; or the United States Supreme Court; or there is a change in Congress, we will continue to do as we have done them in the past and continue to do them until told otherwise. So one, I can tell you that as a Secretary of State and understanding that I do not think Nevadans want our elections nationalized; they want to ensure that they continue to operate at the state and local level, and the local piece is the really critical piece. It is the 17 clerks across the state and city, both at the county and city level, that are the ones that actually execute the elections. They live in these communities. They understand their voters. They are our neighbors. They want to ensure that people have a voice. We do not care what political party you vote for. What we care about is the fact that you continue to participate in the process and the system.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

I appreciate that answer. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Aguilar:

One other comment is, again, I think it is important for all of you, as members of this Committee, to remain confident in that process and to reassure your constituents that we will continue to do as we have done them before, and that we will continue to ensure their voice is heard.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Chair.

Chair González:

Thank you so much for the presentation. I am also looking forward to the tracking system. I track it on the system we have now, which can use improvements, which is what we are doing, so thank you.

AGENDA ITEM V—UPDATE ON THE VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTION MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Chair González:

We will move on to our next agenda item, which is an update on the voter registration and election management solutions.

Mr. Wlaschin, previously identified:

Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Appreciate your opportunity to provide this testimony in regards to an update on the Voter Registration Election Management Solution, or VREMS project. Again, relatively short agenda—also 12 slides total, which I preface just so that you are aware, and then we will go to questions, and the last slide of course is the question slide. (Agenda Item V)

So, from an executive summary standpoint, and again, I will probably say this a couple of times during this presentation—and I know this is not the fiscal committee, but I understand that there is a hefty fiscal component to this project.

Overall, the VREMS project is directed by Assembly Bill 422 in the 2021 Legislative Session is on-time and on-budget. Phase two from a big picture is complete, and phase three is ongoing. Again, we will talk a little bit about the details of what that meant; how we got

here; and what the project is, but I think from a starting point that is an important thing to note. On the staffing side, no issues. We are appropriately staffed; you can see the numbers there. It does involve a fairly hefty project team of 26 contractors, as well as a number of my permanent staff in the Elections Division that work, either in part- or full-time, focusing on this project to make sure that it has gone as necessary to the success and benefit of the voters—and those benefits, specifically, they really will continue to be realized. You know, we talked previously and at times about security and the benefits to voter list maintenance of a top-down system, but then also even just today, this discussion about the dashboard that we mentioned a moment ago. There really will be a continuing series of benefits to voters that will cover both now, and then you will start to see over the next approximately 12-to-24 months as well.

A little bit about the background on the project. Again, I mentioned that there was a bill that directed it in 2021, but even before that, this idea of a centralized voter registration database ties back to one of the most influential federal acts relating to the improvement of elections, the Help America Vote Act, of course, of 2002. That requires states to develop a computerized, statewide voter registration list. We were in compliance with that, of course, after that Act passed, but there are a number of different ways that it could be done, and until the passage of Assembly Bill 422 in 2021, our state was a bottom-up system. What does that mean? Each of our 17 county election officials had their own database, so that if you registered to vote in Elko, for example, they created a voter registration for you in Elko. You voted there, and then when you eventually moved from Elko to a different county, they would go through the list maintenance process, as directed by state and federal law, and then after a series of federal elections where you did not update your registration; or vote; or do anything, only then could you be canceled, and then from Elko's point of view, you were a canceled voter, and you were off their rolls, but you would have moved to a new place and had a brand-new voter registration startup.

That system of 17 isolated databases was compliant with the federal HAVA requirement only because on a daily basis, each of our 17 counties sent what amounted to the lowest common denominator of data to the Secretary of State's office. That nightly file that was sent through a secure FTP [file transfer protocol] server in process was a one-time snapshot of what voters had registered, or been removed, or inactivated, or updates to that county voter rolls that came to the state, and then were aggregated together. There were a number of other checks that process enabled by sending the county lists to the state to aggregate, you could then check to see, "Oh wait a minute, there was a voter in one county who now appears to have moved to another. There is a voter who is attempting to register in two different counties," or perhaps other updates as applicable and other checks and balances that you could do. The state would also then take that master statewide voter registration list and compare it to Social Security Administration databases as well, and see if there were names on the list of individuals who had died and it matched their name' birth date; last four, then we would know that—essentially, the state would notify the county, and they would begin the cancellation process for a deceased voter. So, the process was compliant up to the passage of the top-down bill, AB 422 in 2021, but the idea of transitioning to a centralized database makes sense for a number of different reasons.

Now, again, the way the system works and since the implementation, we are on a singular database. This singular database means that if that same—kind of using the example of a voter in Elko registers to vote, but if that voter moves from Elko to a different county, say 20-30 years after starting their voting experience process, of course hitting the age of 18 in other words, their voter record would essentially be able to go with them to the new. county. This means all of their vote history; their signatures; all of the things that identify who they are as a voter that enable the security of that voter's record would carry with

them, and it would not be separate databases with a separate isolated voter roll lists. Now, it is still a county-managed voter roll, albeit as part of the statewide secretary system and voter registration database. Again, a number of accuracy or improvements to the process that you can see in the top-down benefits on the slide—everything from reporting and data accuracy to list maintenance, as I mentioned.

There is far more security as well, and I hate to even bring it up, but even just a few months ago when our state suffered a pretty painful cyberattack. Because we were on a top-down system that was isolated and dedicated from the rest of the state government systems, your voter registration information was protected. It was not touched, or altered, or messed with at all because of the nature of this program and this system. Centralization also allows the use of increased resources for security and protection of that data, as was shown.

Another unique factor in the before times when we were a bottom-up state is that all of our 17 counties had the ability to use a different election management system or voter registration database, so there were a number of different vendors across the state as well supporting county voter data rules. Because we transitioned to a singular database with a singular vendor, there are significant enhancements to the training opportunities, as you can imagine. Now all 17 counties, because they are using the same system, have the ability to work together or with the state's training team, or with a singular vendor to identify improvements to the user manuals—to ask questions when it comes time for enhancements to the system because of either statutory changes perhaps, or even with the user interface. If somebody says, "I just really need it to be Helvitica," we now have the ability to make a singular change that impacts and benefits across the 17 counties in a way that before, each of the 17 counties individually would have had to budget for; request; and try to work to get implemented, which frankly was challenging at times.

The phased approach that we have worked with initially is 16 counties in phase one—that was possible in part because Clark County was also on the same system essentially in parallel, so all 17 counties were on the system, albeit not in the fully-integrated mode yet. Phase two was the integration, so now we are at a point where all 17 counties in the full database now compares the counties for that sort of cross-county mover and those sorts of things also. In phase three, as I mentioned, there is a number of different benefits that we will speak to here in a minute.

A little bit of an eye chart, I apologize. But again, really since the session, a number of different things that I would like to flag have continued to occur. Not only the Clark integration as mentioned, but also additional training opportunities that stem from that benefit of being on the same system using the same vendor. When two or more counties identify an opportunity for improvement—and that is not just necessarily Clark and Washoe, of course, our largest counties—but if two of our smaller ones identify an improvement that would benefit them, that gets discussed across the state. This whole process, by the way—heavy involvement from county election officials and their teams, as they are the primary ones using the database and election management system. We can work then directly with the vendor. The contract with the vendor is at the state level, which is also beneficial, so that when it comes from a contractual compliance standpoint, it is the Secretary's Office—us—that gets to ensure that it is being enforced so that county election officials identify challenges, issues, will work across the state to validate and to get details, and then the state helps work to get those corrections made through our project team while working very closely hand-in-hand with the vendor so that those identified changes or issues can be addressed. That process has really grown and matured over the last few years, which has been amazing to see and be a part of.

I also want to flag, and this touches on that a little bit and maybe it is just more of a flow chart to highlight it, but the idea of this bug-enhancement model. Previously, a county identified a bug— When it was just their own system, they would have to work directly with the vendor; vendor may have charged them; that may have resulted in changes that would have made their system different from even adjacent counties with the same vendor. But now, because it is the Secretary's top-down system, as directed by state law, of course like I said I am going to continue to stress the heavy involvement from county election officials as the clerks and registrars identify issues—whether it is a technical or an interface, or an opportunity for an enhancement and improvement. We have got a streamlined process for validation, review, and then ultimately implementation, to the benefit of election officials, and we will have something similar as we continue to move forward, and as I mentioned, we continue to realize the opportunities for enhancements from a public-facing standpoint as well.

Not a financial committee; I am just going to say that again real quick before anybody cuts me off, but the operational impact, of course, would not be possible without the finances, so I am merely including this because from a transparency standpoint, there are operational considerations and policy considerations about how the budget is being spent. In the Secretary's interests of transparency, this slide that I am now going to move past, and then also the next slide, we included because one, if there is a policy question about the budget that you all have—eager to answer questions about it, or if you would like to discuss it later, or from a public standpoint, if there is questions about how and why this— The things I talked about are only possible because of the financial piece, but if you have questions on the policy—eager to explain and discuss that. Okay, we are past the financial piece now, but if you have questions, again, wanted to make sure that we had that on the record in case it does come up.

The way forward. These sorts of statewide, massive IT projects—I will tell you; you know, in my experience here at the state and since this project started with the passage of the bill in 2021—are absolutely not easy. Our state has done very well comparatively to some of the other states out there trying to make this transition. A number of states that do not need to be named have started a transition to a top-down system and failed; have started a transition—gone years into putting funding into different processes and just were unable to cross the finish line. I am firmly basically an advocate of— I preach that the reason we were able to do this is a fewfold. One: again, not a financial committee, but without the financial support from the Legislature and the Governor, the project simply could not have happened. That enabled us to hire a project team that has just exceptionally talented individuals who have done large, statewide national projects, and new issues, and how to anticipate and mitigate those risks. Of course, and as the Secretary said too, our county and city election officials—their teams—the fact that they all collectively recognize the importance and the benefits and have pulled no punches in not only identifying issues, but working hand-in-hand with us at the state to make sure this project was successful. Could not have been done without our county and city partners as well, and a huge amount of the credit goes to them for their work. But this massive project, I want to clarify, is not over. Like any sort of—again, and I think this is perfectly indicative—your iPhone, Windows, right? It seems like every other day we have got a new update you got to do and reset your computer or it just kind of randomly resets to implement a security update. In a very real sense, this sort of project has that level of engagement. There are continuously things that we are looking to enhance with security that we will continue to do so. We are always trying to stay one step ahead of foreign and domestic actors, from a cyberthreat perspective. From a user interface, there continues to be turnover at county, and state, and city election offices. Trying to set it up so that it is as intuitive as possible, so that a new staff member in

a county office who is learning about how to be a clerk of the court, and clerk of a board, and a public administrator now also has to learn how to register voters and update. We want that to be an easy process, so we are going to continue to work on it—on refining it and making it better in the manuals as clear as possible.

And then lastly, there is some enhancements that we continue to look at. When you look at the phase three scope on the slide. Again, there is this simulation, the idea that— You may remember when a number of our county election officials came here to Carson City to practice using an election together in the same room. That sort of opportunity and experience simply would not have been possible under the previous model, where many of them had different vendors, and it would not have even made sense—kind of a Mac and PC type of interface that would not have enabled that sort of shoulder-to-shoulder discussion that really enhanced their new staff members' learning and validation of the system.

There is additional petitions. We have a number of statewide initiative petitions, and there is Independent Candidate for Partisan Office petitions. The system has a petitions' module to make sure that it is in compliance with state law. That has been implemented and tested very much in part because a number of our counties—especially the larger ones, Clark and Washoe in particular, and Douglas—who use that module and want to make sure that it is done right. Again, the level of engagement cannot be left unsaid. A transition from the ability to candidate filing in the Aurora system, that you may remember, and being able to transition and import that information into total vote the system, to essentially build the ballots that get sent and work with our vendors to create the mail ballots on the timeline. Seems like candidate filing just ended yesterday, basically, and now sample ballots have to go out again next week. That short timeline was in-part possible because of the system.

Looking to the future, there is public portal enhancements when you go to vote.nv.gov to update or register to vote for the first time. That system, that public-facing portal, we have identified as in need of improvement, and very similar to the information we have in our dashboard, if we have access to it, why not make it so that a voter who registers can see all those same things, but even at a greater level of depth? The dashboard, right? Aggregated data. But for a voter, why would they not be able to see their whole voter registration—absolutely should be able to. All of their signatures on file, so they can look and say, "Oh yeah, here is how my signatures changed over the years," or "Maybe I want to update it," and now that flags that opportunity for the voter instead of just a single signature that we currently have. A number of opportunities, including change logs and, "When did I update my email address?" and you can see the exact date and the exact number and time, and those sorts of changes happen. We are going to be working on a public-facing portal here in the near future. We hope to get that in front of voters too.

Ballot scout. The idea of ballot tracking integration— Again, as a parent of three teenagers myself, it seems like the school may have like 15 different apps—one for the classroom; one for the sports teams. The Secretary's vision is to have a single place. Voters should be able to go to a single place, look at their voter registration, track their ballot, update their registration, and look at their sample ballot all in one portal without having to jump between 15 different applications. So, integrating that information into a centralized, single place for the benefit of the voter continues to be the goal and the focus.

Operational and additional functionality. Of course, working through additional bugs and enhancements that are— Again, county and city election officials and our team at the state. As they find them, we identify them; log them; prioritize them; and get them addressed. That is going to continue into the future as well, but making sure we are addressing those in a mature and systematic fashion, so it is not just a list of bugs 400 deep, but that there is progress in identifying and working through challenges that our county election officials

identify in their day-to-day use. Really, the operational model in the sustainment piece. Twenty-six contractors is a lot of contractors. They are not going to be here forever; we understand that, but as we—in the last session and possibly in the next session, depending on decisions—request to try to convert contractor positions that have proved to be exceptionally valuable to this project and to voters across our state into full-time-equivalent employees of the state, that discussion will continue to be had in future legislative sessions as well.

Then lastly, the training. Talked about it earlier, but the fact that we now have a singular system so that every one of the roughly 150 election officials across the state have the ability to reach out to a help desk and ask questions that is run by the Secretary's Office; to be able to identify improvements and talk with their counterparts across the counties. There is so much merit from a training perspective when it comes to building experience because it may be a little bit obvious, but just to say it, the more experienced and the easier the system is for our county, state, and city election officials to use, that means less chance of errors—of human error. That means an increased ability for tasks to be done in a timely manner, so that when voters have questions, or there is a competing clerk of the court responsibility, or one of the multitude of other requirements or tasks, that means that the work can still get done to make sure that our voter lists are clean—like our counties, cities, and state want them to be. Like you want them to be. Like I want them to be. The training element and that consistency by having a unified system, a standardized system, is really a valuable part of this whole thing.

There is a number of other opportunities, including expanding some of— This ties into other legislative requests that have been approved in the last session. You know, the idea of a training lab. Again, building a— In my military background, calling it a boot camp is something that is easy for me, but also probably sends the wrong message. There is no yelling. I do not want anyone to think that, but having like a boot camp here in Carson City where any county can send their election officials on a legislatively approved budget. We have got appropriated funding for the per diem and the travel to attend training, so that they can come to Carson and go through a three-day boot camp; one-day boot camp on the system, on voting machines, so they can go back to their county with the capability and the ability to set up a polling place and understanding ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] compliance. It only benefits voters in a way that is very much a different change from 15-20 years ago.

Lastly, as we look to the future, more on our plate. The tabletop exercise discussions; physical cybersecurity enhancements; further other discussions that tie into the VREMS project; making sure that we continue to stay at the cutting edge of discussions about the cyberthreat best-practices well within the confines of our state and federal laws for voter registrations and communicating with voters; how we tie that all together and keep it in a database that the county officials can talk to their voters about, but also that the state has the visibility on to ensure compliance. Transparency just continues to be a very powerful thing in the position that we are in now. Again, going back to the passage of Assembly Bill 422 in 2021. At this time, are there any questions for me?

Chair González:

Thank you so much for your presentation. Members, any questions? Any questions up North? Senator Daly.

Senator Daly:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Just following up from I think our last presentation—is everybody still resistant to AI [artificial intelligence] having control over some of the registration data and various things? I hope that does not come up on, "Hey, we can fix this," and you guys talk about it and implement it. I still think it is a bad idea because Skynet is coming. You cannot control that stuff.

Mr. Wlaschin:

Thank you for the question, Senator. I will be frank; AI does come up in discussions a lot, but so far not to touch the voter registration databases. We have considered its use as part of our modernization and innovation for chatbots to try to help explain, to validate some of the documents that were translated by our—again, we are required to use state-approved contracts, so we are trying to look very carefully, and I know there is a number of national level discussions about the use of AI when it comes to how to better communicate and inform voters, but rest assured, there has not been any discussion about integrating AI into any part of what I just talked about from an election management standpoint or touching on the voter registration database.

Senator Daly:

Thank you. We will see what we can do to keep it that way when we get back to session.

Chair González:

Thank you so much.

AGENDA ITEM VI—PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING ELECTION WORKERS AND PROTECTION OF ELECTION WORKERS

Chair González:

We will now move to our next agenda item, progress and challenges in recruiting and retaining election workers and protection of election workers. We will hear from the Secretary of State's Office and city and county clerks on these challenges. Please proceed whenever you are ready.

Mr. Wlaschin, previously identified:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to start; just to preface this next agenda item (Agenda Item VI A) with a very brief overview. Truth be told, I am very excited to hear from my colleagues across the three counties who are going to present with far more interesting data, I suspect, than I have been providing so far. Again, just a quick overview, and then I will turn it over to my colleagues—we have Clark County down South, and then Washoe and Elko up here as well.

Starting with a little bit of historical perspective, and then we will talk a little bit about the 2026 requirements, and then I will quickly turn it over to them. First, when we talk about poll workers, just to be clear, from a pure, technical standpoint, according to our statutes, we are talking about election board officers. That is simply the technical term, and you will see that come up repeatedly, but a poll worker is an election board officer. The statute, created in 1960, has not been touched since because it is pretty straightforward—a person appointed to assist in the conduct of an election. You will notice that there are different

variety of roles that you will hear about today, and depending on where you are at across our state, there is a lot of that; there is a reason for that. One, again, bigger populations allow for specialization. Smaller counties, of course, will train individuals because you may have two or three that need to do multiple different jobs. You may have individuals who are expected to do Job A, but then if that person does not show up, you may need to get somebody else from Job B to do Job A. So, the smaller the county, generally speaking, there is a little bit more generalization. You can see at the bottom there, and this is historic, so if the roles have changed—this is simply because it is perhaps old information—but these are some of the roles, for example, that Clark County has used that encompass, or fall under that umbrella rather, of an election board officer or poll worker.

The requirements. This statute in particular—293.217. There is a number of other different requirements to talk about. The requirements for poll workers— You will hear today, I suspect, about the required to be a registered voter in the state. Some counties, if you have a requirement to be a registered voter in that county. This is also an important time to differentiate between a poll worker who is working the election and an election observer who is allowed to watch. A poll worker must be a registered voter of Nevada, unless you are preregistered or a 16-year-old, and we will talk about that in a second, but an election observer can be anyone. We have international observers that come to our state to watch how we conduct elections. High school students from adjacent states come to Nevada to observe elections. Those observers, and oftentimes you will hear concerns or questions about, "I saw a bus from California that came with people." They may just be wanting to watch or observe, but to be a poll worker, to work the election, we have statutory requirements. I have highlighted a part of the statute that talks about the importance of not being all of the same political party. You will likely hear some of the challenges of that today also; that is very much by design. It does not mean necessarily that it must be a Republican or a Democratically-aligned voter, but also nonpartisan and minor parties. Again, this is something that our county election officials take seriously and look very closely at.

I mentioned pupils or high school students. Again, we have a statute that allows high school students of the age of 16 to be able to get involved in their county elections. You know, when you ask, not every county necessarily is able to use them—high school students—in every polling place. Again, just given some of the physical distance between some of our high schools and some of the polling places, that may not be practical—certainly do not want 16-year-old drivers necessarily driving late at night for hundreds of miles after working 12 hours a day. That sort of thing also, so there is a safety concern. But it is something truly that we, and I know the counties especially, have really pushed—informing and involving high school students in the process. Having them see how it works is just an eye-opening experience and truly helps inform them, so that as they get closer to voting age, they have got a leg up in understanding what goes on behind the scenes, so it is certainly something that we encourage. I would ask that if you know any educators as well, please encourage it in the high schools as well because it is such a great opportunity.

A couple more stats that I want to touch on. Security. The security of poll workers—also very much a priority. There was a bill passed, Senate Bill 406 in 2023 that was codified as NRS 293.705. This statute actually talks specifically about the protection of election officials and poll workers. It does encompass temporary poll workers as well—unique in the nation to the best of my knowledge and the research I have done, because it identifies it as a felony to threaten, harass, or dox even a poll worker, an election official, and try to prevent them from doing their jobs. Not only at the polling place, but also off duty depending on the situation circumstances. I also want to clarify, though, and this is I think equally important as I remember from the discussion, that bill also clarifies that it does not infringe upon the ability for somebody under law to observe; take notes; and it lays out the other statutes as

well, like it does not reduce or otherwise interfere with. The observation piece is critical to our democracy, and understanding there is election observers now—absolutely can still do what they need to do—take notes, observe polling places, and otherwise. The statute clarifies that that is also very much protected and not limited.

This bill, I think there was kind of a historic challenge following maybe in the last six or so years give or take trying to recruit poll workers, and I think maybe you will hear some about that discussion today from the county election officials, but I personally believe that this bill— And whenever folks have expressed concern about being a poll worker, we stress that this law passed unanimously, signed by the Governor, sends a very clear legislative message to election officials and poll workers alike that regardless of party affiliation, we recognize that poll workers are an essential part of the process and should be protected. Passing out an "I voted" sticker, or being involved in duplication, or tabulation, or any part of the process does not somehow entitle you to be abused or attacked by anyone, which I think has helped them supporting recruitment efforts over the last few years.

Also again from the *EAVS report* in 2024, this is the number of polling places. This time, I want to stress the number of poll workers—that right column. Approximately 4,000 for a General Election year. Again, it varies of course by county. You may be wondering what the breakdown looks like—that is here. Also from the *2024 EAVS report*, showing that there is kind of a really wide disparity across the counties. Clark County, in case it is too small, 2,833 were reported; down to Pershing who has got 14; Esmeralda had 9 poll workers, so varying challenges across the state. But like I said, between Carson, Washoe, and Elko Counties, I am excited to hear their conversations about how they address some of those challenges today.

Last slide, then I am going to eagerly stand up and walk away from the dais. The requirements for 2026, as I mentioned—keenly aware that voter turnout will be assumed to be lower. In discussions, we do not expect it. In the two stats there in the middle, you can see the 2018 Primary, 2022 Primary. The total turnouts respectively were just below 23 percent and a little above 25 percent, respectively. I do not think that is going to be the turnout in the 2026 June Primary—just given a lot of the voter engagement over the last couple of years. We assessed that it is going to be big, which means that of course you need more poll workers to support the electorate. But again, poll worker recruitment in certain locations—kind of challenging depending on demographic shifts. As the state continues to grow and folks move in different places, that part of it will continue to be challenging. At the end of the day, though, I always try to leave and encourage people, like when in doubt, just please recognize that we need people to be poll workers and very much that means you, everybody. Not just assuming someone else is going to do it, but we tell folks we need everyone to be engaged in our process to make sure that we have got enough people, and then it moves freely. But then also, the more you do it, the more you understand what is behind the scenes and how it functions, and that eliminates a lot of the mystery behind the electoral process as well. But that being said, unless there is any questions, I will turn it over first maybe to Ashley down South, and then I will turn it over to Registrar McDonald up here, and then Clerk Plunkett.

Chair González:

Thank you so much. At this time, I am going to hand the meeting over to our Vice Chair. Thank you all so much, and you all can start when you are ready.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much, Chair, and I think we will start down here in southern Nevada. Thank you, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin for the excellent presentation—really a lot of valuable information. We appreciate all the work the Secretary's Office is doing. Members, we will be at ease for just a moment. Good afternoon, Ms. Kennedy. Thank you so much for joining us today. We appreciate you taking the time to educate us about what Clark County is doing in anticipation of the upcoming elections, so please begin whenever you are ready.

Ashley Kennedy, Principal Management Analyst for Government Affairs, Clark County:

Thank you, Vice Chair Ohrenschall and members of the Committee. Here on behalf of the Clark County Election Department. I am sorry that Registrar Portillo cannot be here today; she had a conflict, and I hope I can do this presentation justice for her. But, go through a little bit of what we are doing. The Clark County Election Department, we are a team of 52 permanent staff members. We have 6 divisions. Today, I am going to be talking primarily about our Training and Recruitment Division. We serve, as most of you know, almost 1.5 million registered voters. We cover 8,000 square miles, which is roughly the size of New Jersey, and we have more than 900 precincts. (Agenda Item VI B)

In preparation for the 2026 Primary Election, our goal is to recruit, hire, and train 4,000 election workers. That will support 23 long-term voting sites, 69 short-term early voting sites, and 137 election day vote centers. We did already finalize all of our sites, so that QR code will take you to what is posted on our website currently. I also did want to note—if you are not aware, long-term voting sites are sites that are usually open most of early voting. Our short-term sites are ones that are temporary. So for example, you might see us at a grocery store for a few days, and then we might be at a different spot for another few days—so encompassing that 69 short-term sites. Also included in the short-term early voting sites are voting sites exclusively for senior communities, and then on our election day vote centers, that number also includes a voting site at the Clark County Detention Center and the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Training and Recruitment Division. They are a full-time permanent team of 5 people, and we have 12 seasonal recruiters and 20 seasonal trainers that are working with us right now. They are seasonal because they are with us during the course of the election cycle. To date, we have 3,000 election workers currently trained or scheduled to be trained here soon. We hold training classes six days a week, including in our outlying areas. Again, we are a pretty large geographic county; we have election needs at election sites and election worker needs in all the outlying areas like Laughlin, Moapa, Searchlight, et cetera, and so not only do we have training classes in urban Clark County at our training facility, but we also bring our training to our outlying areas, and we have more than 340 classes.

A little bit about our timeline. I appreciate that the Secretary of State's Office mentioned how much goes into planning for the election. In the spring of last year, we started conducting test elections, and you can probably anticipate exactly what that is. We plan and, we prepare for the election. We are prepared of all the possible contingencies. It is also a way for us to test any new equipment, and we really go through the motions of an actual election on a small scale. We actually have some of our longstanding team leaders ,which are the team leaders are the supervisors of our voting sites that support us during these test elections. Since May of 2025, we have gone through seven test elections already. With that, going through those motions also helps us prepare our training materials, so by the end of last year, we were already finalizing our training materials—all of our manuals and presentations that go into training that amount of election workers. In January of this year,

our trainers and recruiters started. A recruiter is, as I imagine what you probably can assume, the folks that are getting election workers scheduled and assigned to voting sites, and our trainers are giving them all they need to succeed at a site. We started training in the first week of March this year in preparation for the primary.

Deputy Wlaschin talked about our voting sites—our positions at our voting sites. The other thing that I wanted to include in here that maybe was not listed on his slide was a Knight Rider and a Rover, but I will go through the different positions. A Poll Pad Operator is very much what you can anticipate; it is the person who is checking in voters when they arrive at a voting site. A Voting Machine Monitor is helping voters understand how to use the equipment—navigate them through the voting site. The Line Monitor is monitoring the line outside; making sure signs are still standing; the pathway to the voting site still accessible; people are not electioneering where they are not supposed to be. Our Mail Ballot Clerk, similar to what was said previously, we have a mail ballot drop box at every site, so there is somebody that is supervising that the mail ballot drop box and making sure voters signed their ballot and sealed it.

The two positions that I wanted to highlight are our Knight Rider and our Rover. A Knight Rider is somebody who goes out to our outlying sites, and they are paired with a Metro [Las Vegas Metropolitan Police] officer. So, normally our team leader, after the election sites close, they are gathering all the election materials, and they are coming back to our headquarters. For outlying areas like Laughlin, over nearly 2 hours away from us, having someone work a 14 hour day, and then drive to Clark County, and then back home is a lot, so we have people that will go and pick up the materials from outlying areas with Metro. Then, a Rover is somebody who helps— Normally, what we do is we assign Rovers to different geographic areas, so they might be assigned to, let us just say, the northwest end of the county, and they are responsible for rovering between the different voting sites and providing support. They are well-trained; they can probably step into any position if they needed to, but they are really to provide support—make sure that any team leader or voting site that is low on supplies that they are bringing that, et cetera, and they are constantly just very close by.

A little demographic from the 2024 general. I did want to put together the average age of an election worker. As you can see, a majority of them are over the age of 40, and then last general, we had 1,300 folks support us during early voting and 2,500 on election day.

I wanted to highlight some of our key successes. For those of you who have been to our headquarters before or have potentially seen our training facility that we share with Task Force One, but in preparation for the 2022 election, we moved into a new training facility. We used to have our training classes at our headquarters, our election warehouse, and we just simply outgrew it with the volume of election workers that we were training. So, we moved across the street, and we have 5 classrooms that are really good size, and we also have a call center that supports over 100 call center employees. During the election, we have multiple hotlines going at once. We have hotlines available to voters, where they need to answer if they have any various election-related questions, but we also have hotlines that support our election workers, and that is something that is really important to us is that we are—for any person who is coming to work at a voting site, it is a temporary thing that you are doing for early voting and election day, and then you may not think about it until the next election. And so, it is important that we always have a resource just a call away. We will have hotlines that support, for example, a registration hotline, so any voter issue related to someone's voter registration, there is a hotline to support those questions; an IT [information technology] hotline; an administrative hotline; and so forth.

I am really excited this year. We have also done some enhancement to our training programs. We are always looking for ways to improve, so we have tried to standardize lesson plans; really create a more robust train-the-trainer program; and then we have incorporated student feedback on our classes. As of date, we have received a nine out of ten, so I think that is pretty good. We have increased the number of recruiters. We can only train the people that come in who want to be election workers, and so we have increased our recruiters that are helping us, and we have also done a lot of voter outreach and demonstrations to get out into the community to not only show our voting equipment, but also to recruit people to be election workers.

One other program that I think we are always really excited about is the support that we get from Clark County employees. So, the county has a long tradition over the last several decades for county management, County Commission, to support Clark County employees working with us during the election. As you can imagine, with the amount of scale that we are growing for the election, we need all the help that we can get. We have a lot of county employees who are not volunteers; they are still getting paid by their department, and their department is graciously lending them to us for election day. During the general election, we had over 350 county employees support us, and to date, we have over 400 supporting us for the primary. And then also recently, we have implemented a new election worker management system, which is integrated with TotalVote—our registration system—and it has been wonderful, because it is a one-system database that can track our election workers, assigning them to vote sites, and also managing our training schedule.

I wanted to go through some areas of opportunities. I think ongoing challenges that we always face every election is last-minute cancellations before election day. I think we anticipate that we will train, and have, and lose maybe 40 percent of our election workers because maybe we recruited them in February; they came to our training in March; and life changes and they can no longer help us once it gets closer to election day. With that being said, we are training months in advance of the election, and the reason being, with the volume that we are training, and the number of space that we have, we are kind of assessing backwards—so, how many do we need to get; how many can we do in a week; and so when do we have to start that; and that puts us months in advance. The other thing that I would highlight is—feedback that we have received—election day is a really long day. Polls are open from 7 to 7, and election workers are arriving at 5:30 a.m., and they are likely not leaving until well after 8 p.m. It is a really long day, and I think sometimes that can be a hindrance for folks. In this year in particular, we do have new election equipment. I do not know if anybody has seen us out in the community at any events, or have done a tour with us, but we do have new election equipment that will be new this year, and with that, all of our training materials that we previously had are now outdated, and so we had to recreate a lot of things to account for those changes. That also increased our recruitment needs. We recognize that new sometimes can be a challenge for folks—they expected one way and then they come in like, "This looks completely different than what I anticipated." We are anticipating those needs and recruiting a lot more people to support us.

If any of your constituencies are interested in becoming an election worker, I would not be doing my job if I did not encourage you to scan this QR code and send it to folks. It is obviously a paid position; it is not a volunteer position. Granted, there are volunteer opportunities, but it is a paid gig, and we are still looking for folks to join us.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much for that excellent presentation; appreciate everything Clark County Election Department is doing to make sure that our constituents can participate and have a smooth voting experience—whether it is mail ballots; early voting; or election day voting. Members, any questions for Ms. Kennedy from Clark County? Up North in Carson City, any questions? I do not see—Senator Steinbeck.

Senator Steinbeck:

Thank you for the presentation. I just have a quick comment. When I go in to vote, I am always so impressed with the demeanor, and the excitement, and the attitude of the workers there. I just want to pass that on. It is just really nice. I know people like to do the mail-in ballots, but the workers that are there—they are excited to be there, and they are excited when you walk in, and they are excited to help guide you through the process. So, my compliments on that.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Appreciate that. Thank you very much, Senator Steinbeck. I am not seeing any other questions or comments.

We will go a bit back to Carson City where we have representatives from Washoe County and Elko County. Whoever would like to begin, and thank you very much, Ms. Kennedy from Clark County.

Andrew McDonald, Registrar of Voters, Washoe County:

Good afternoon, Chair González, Vice Chair Ohrenschall, and Committee members. Today, I will be presenting on election worker recruitment and training. I might be interchanging the term poll worker with election worker, but for this presentation specifically, they mean the same thing. (Agenda Item VI C) Just a little bit about Washoe County. Washoe County covers about 6,540 square miles in total. In fact, our county goes all the way up to the Oregon border. We have about 500,000 residents and about 316,000 active registered voters at this time. We are the second largest voting bloc in Nevada, with about 15 percent of the voter turnout in the state, and is largely known as a swing county in a swing state. For our staff, we have 18 full-time staff members, fairly small, with 3 permanent staff members actually recruiting over 500 poll workers for the election. Twenty-two early voting locations will be happening for this primary and 50 election day vote centers. That is nearly double of what the NRS actually requires, and we want to ensure that there is no long lines on election day or early voting—so we go above and beyond there. Mail ballot processing, only three permanent staff members to process all those ballots, so we require or ask for—voluntold if you will—county staff to help us out. Up to 25 staff members in the mail ballot operation at the height of our operation will be working for us there from the county. We utilize a tool called Microsoft Teams Shifts, and that allows us not to have to specifically manage a calendar. They come in; and they will sign up for a shift, a county worker; and they will work blocks of four-hour times.

I was asked to present on recruitment—some of the challenges and opportunities. However, my staff is very new. I think there is only one person that has been around from the 2018-to-2022 cycle; therefore, we did not have a lot of information here to present to you, but what we do have is the positions of poll workers. We definitely have, as Mark and my previous colleague mentioned, vote center managers; assistant managers; greeters; poll pad operators; clerks; ballot runners; supply runners; technical runners. Our county is

very diverse. It is a very large county to support. Around that time, from what I am understanding from the people that were here, we had very limited institutional knowledge to carry on from election to election, but we did have a strong base of returning poll workers, which is great. So, we roughly have about seven poll workers per vote center location.

Some of the recruitment challenges and opportunities in 2024—that is when I came to Washoe County. Some of the challenges were the Presidential Preference Primary (PPP), and that was prior. I mean, I had not been there at that point in time yet, but it was difficult to recruit bipartisan teams. So, each vote center, we have bipartisan teams of Democrats, Republicans, nonpartisan folks, but for the reason of the caucus going on, I guess a lot of the Republicans did not help out so much in the Presidential Preference Primary to volunteer for us to work. Also, due to the new election format, they had already preexisting commitments from voters who would normally—or poll workers—work for us. They ended up having vacation schedules and just not being so much aware of the PPP that was scheduled. Internally, we had some overlapping of recruitment with training and reducing some of our efficiencies internally, and we had a higher-than-normal poll worker dropout rate. Again, this was due to some of the harassment that was happening to poll workers at the time and some of the political rhetoric that was going on.

Some of the opportunities. We pay well above minimum wage. It is competitive if you want to come work for us for a few weeks. We also increase reliance on student workers that have proved effective. We started a high school program to have student workers work election day for us—high school students. We also heard the opportunity from the public that they were a little bit scared or nervous to work election day or the election. Therefore, we implemented this thing called panic buttons. At each one of our vote centers on early voting on election day, each site manager has a panic button that they can press, and when they press that button, it automatically calls local authorities and it geolocates that specific location, and so they would arrive within minutes if that panic button is pressed. Some of the compensation that we have for early voting, we pay a manager $18 an hour, assistant manager $17, and the rest of the staff $16. For election day folks, it is a stipend at $225; assistant manager $200; and an associate at $175. We also pay for training; $35 for training, $25 actually to set up the election equipment for election eve, if you will, and we pay runners $16 an hour plus mileage reimbursement, and $5 a day if they are using their own cell phone.

Some of the recruitment challenges in 2026. Early voting election day recruitment impacted by our vote center. So, after the 2024 General Election, we lost all of our 79 vote centers, meaning all the contracts expired after the general election, which was great because we had a blank slate to go out and get new ones; and look at the community; and see did we place these in the right locations. However, in the 2024 primary, the DOJ [Department of Justice] came and surveyed 10 of our 55 election day locations for ADA compliance, and we failed all 10 locations. Therefore, we had a settlement with the DOJ, and we decided a renewed focus on ADA compliance was very necessary. In doing so, we were looking for 100 percent compliant locations for this election, this cycle, and unfortunately we were not finding hardly any. Very hard to find. Time was slipping away as recruitment needed to happen, because we cannot recruit without assigning people to a location. Therefore, enough was enough. Election must go on, so I decided to actually work with our voting system vendor and put in the first ever State of Nevada ADA Curbside Voting Program. How am I able to do that? Title II of ADA says I can modify a location as long as I have curbside voting in the state in my county. So, to assist voters who cannot get out of their car—had a heart attack, a stroke, we do not ask why; we are not supposed to ask why—but we are allowing folks to vote in the comfort of their vehicle because most of the problems is the

path of travel to get into the vote center, and that is why we failed a lot of the DOJ survey. We are allowing them to vote in the comfort of their car. It is no different than walking in or wheelchairing into a location. They will still have to check in. They still have to register, et cetera. We verify who they are, and then they would cast a ballot right there on the spot, and we will put that in a secrecy sleeve form, and we will walk in their ballot for them and actually cast it in the vote center on their behalf.

By implementing this program, we were able to start signing votes in our contracts—all the ones that had expired—and meet our timelines. Also some of the challenges, we had an aging population in Washoe County, and we are using more and more technology in elections, and so that does prove to be some challenges. Not all aging folks have a problem with technology, but there are some. We also have late outreach resulting in worker unavailability. Again, preset plans because we were delayed on getting votes in our contracts, so people moved on with their life. We had to kind of dig deeper in our election database to find poll workers. Again, difficult to recruit Republican poll workers in the primary. I have been working with the Chair of the Republican Party trying to find additional poll workers, site managers, and assistant site managers for our teams, and they are definitely trying to help. And then, we had unfortunately minimal high school recruitment this cycle, but in 2026, the November general, we will push very hard to have the high school folks come and work for us. We did that in 2024 November, and we had I think 20 high school students come work for us, and it was very fruitful.

Recruitment. It is not just; we recruit poll workers at our 72 vote centers; we actually recruit our own Washoe County staff to assist in carrying out the election through mail ballot processing duties and election day duties. What you see on the screen is some of the stipends or enhancements to participate; if you will. So, employees who work for us directly, for Registrar of Voters—who work 8 to 15 hours—earn 4 hours of personal leave; 16 to 24 hours—they earn 12 hours of personal leave; and anybody who works 25 hours or more for us will earn 16 hours of personal leave. We also now have changed our policy to pay overtime. Prior to this year, we were saying to the departments, "If you are going to let your staff come work for us but they work over, you are going to cover their overtime." Well, that did not work out well, and we did not have a high participation. Now we, the Registrar of Voters, will cover their overtime, so we are getting more and more people signing up, which is fantastic. I also have met with 11 of the department heads of Washoe County and asked, "Please participate. Please help me out," and the reason I did is because the elected officials. There is a lot of elected officials on ballot this specific election, and therefore in the past, we were not able to use their staff if they had competition. Looking through the ballot now, we know who filed for candidacy. There is not a lot of competition for certain Washoe County-elected positions. Therefore, we will be able to utilize some of their staff if they are uncontested on the ballot, so that is great news. As I mentioned, we only have a staff of three dedicated people working mail ballot processing, so without this internal help, we really would struggle. I mean, we already work a lot of overtime, but we really would not be able to pull off the election without them.

Training over the years; this is one of the questions I was asked to present. Again, we did not have a ton of information on this, but from what we could glean, there was no major challenges on training from 2018 to 2022; it was well organized, efficiently organized, and conducted centrally. In 2024, due to VREMS—which was great. It is a great system; however, it was kind of put in a little bit more last minute, and therefore we had a lot of changes up until early voting and election day, which led to quite a lot more supplemental information that we needed to kind of hand out and give to all the workers at the vote centers last minute. We also were addressing a 30 percent vacancy rate in my department at the time, which led to a lot of staff burnout; people quitting; finding other jobs. We also

had a lack of trainers. We only had 1 trainer to do 32 trainings over a month period. So, every day they were training, they were losing their voice, et cetera. Therefore, what I did is engaged HR [Human Resources]—our own internal staff from the HR department of the county—and said, "I need your help. You already have trainers; can you help us train some of these folks?" And so, they are engaging with us now and helping us train for 2026. In 2024, again, there was a lot of major technical challenges that came about, and we are just hoping in 2026, as it is going on, that less and less— As Mark said, that system, the VREMS system, is never fully going to be baked, but it is better and better every year and therefore less changes coming into an election is better for our staff, and the state, and the voters.

Training challenges in 2026. Due to changes in VREMS, moving also to new voting equipment such as about marking devices and the vote center scanners, we had to redo our election worker manual, so we have a 160-plus page election worker manual. We had to take new screenshots, new pictures, new updates to train all these new folks on how to utilize that equipment. We have about 35 training days, and so a lot of the folks that want to work for us already have day jobs. Therefore, we have to train sometimes at night, weekends, and we have make-up labs for folks who did not really understand the material or want a refresher. We do that on the weekends also to have make-up labs.

I mentioned new voting equipment. We also have a new one-hour ADA video because the DOJ settlement, so we wanted to put our best foot forward to ensure that not only do we—staff know, but all the election workers and poll workers know, that ADA is a very needed for voting hot topic, and that we want to provide as much ADA compliance as possible for the voters of Washoe County. We have procedural updates and occurring after the trainings. Still right now, today, there is still VREMS changes that we are making, and so our training material is changing slightly day to day as needed. Our initial trainings were a little unstructured. We have new employees coming in that I have never really trained before and therefore, they are a little unstructured, but we quickly— I sat in the first few days and course-corrected to ensure that those trainers were actually giving the right information for all Washoe County vote centers.

Another thing was our training facility readiness was uncertain. So, what does that mean? We have only one training facility. Unfortunately, we are not Clark County and have all those resources, but we have one training facility to train all these poll workers—500 poll workers. It was under construction at the time—promised to kind of be ready. Unfortunately, those deadlines were not met, so we had to move our training to different locations for the first week or so. Now, we are in full swing. That training room has been built out, has all the right resources, big enough. We can train lots of people at one time, so that is fantastic. On top of that, I am not sure if you have heard, but the Washoe County Registrar of Voters in 2027-slash-2028, we will be moving our headquarters to a brand-new facility; new headquarters, new warehouse, and also a new training facility inside that warehouse. So in 2028, we will be more geared up and have a better training facility for us that is dedicated to Registrar of Voters.

Some of the rewards and recognitions for 2026. We are creating a brand-new program—it is a lapel pin—for poll workers to recognize that they worked that election. We will be giving that out to all poll workers and staff, and so that is going to—one, create a reward to them; two, make them want to come back. The county that I used to work in prior to this in Southern California did an excellent job of this and made sure they had a specific pin for every single election they worked at. And what did they do? They put that around their lapel or their lanyards, and they wanted to show the pride of working each election and how many elections they had worked in, so that brings back the same people over and over. We do pay well, I think, and so we also increased our pay for the training day since we added more time to training, and since we have more technical equipment, we need more time to

train. I mentioned the county staff incentives. We pay overtime and personal leave. One of the things— A suggestion from Commissioner Hill of Washoe County said, "You know, we recognize we cannot pull off elections without a lot of these city locations, rec centers, Save Marts, et cetera, grocery stores. We should have a Patriot Award for businesses that actually volunteer their vote centers because we do not pay anything to them." Therefore, we are trying to put a program together for a Patriot Award where these businesses can come, receive an award from the Commissioners and myself as a thank you to them for being patriots in the community. With that, I would answer any question you might have. Thank you.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much, Registrar McDonald, for the presentation. One question I have, do you think you will have enough poll workers for the upcoming primary and the general in Washoe County?

Mr. McDonald:

Thank you, Vice Chair Ohrenschall. Yes, we do. We are on track right now with recruiting to have enough poll workers for this primary election. We are very fortunate to have a very long database—a very deep database—of folks that have worked for us in the past, and we are calling all those folks, and we are I would say roughly about 85 to 90 percent totally recruited at this point.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Okay, thank you very much, Registrar. With that, members, I would like to go to Carson City first and see if Senator Daly and Assemblymember Dickman have any questions, and I will come back to Las Vegas. Any questions in Carson City? I am not seeing any, then we will come back down to Las Vegas. Assemblymember Mosca.

Assemblymember Mosca:

Thank you. Not a question, just a comment. I just wanted to thank you for all you do. Assemblymember Dickman and I got to do a tour last year, and I think it is very different—each county, but it was helpful to see how it works there and just thank you for everything that you and your staff do.

Mr. McDonald:

Thank you, Assemblymember Mosca.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Yes, thank you very much, Assemblymember Mosca. Any additional questions, members down here in Las Vegas? Cannot see any. Thank you very much, Registrar McDonald. Thank you for all your hard work and the excellent presentation.

Mr. McDonald:

Thank you, Vice Chair Ohrenschall and Committee members.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you so much. With that, I would like to turn it over to our Elko County Clerk, Rebecca Plunkett. Thank you so much for joining us and making that long trip to Carson City to present today. Thank you.

Rebecca Plunkett, County Clerk, Elko County:

Good afternoon. I am from Elko County, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you guys today. I just want to introduce myself. I was appointed in 2023 as Elko County Clerk. I have been working in elections since 2013, so I have some knowledge of what has been going on in Elko County. I am also an Elko County native.

I wanted to give some stats on all the poll recruitment we have had in Elko County. (Agenda Item VI D) I started in 2014. I had some earlier data, but it was not as good as 2014. I just want to let you know that we have 41 precincts in Elko County. As of now, we have nine early day election day polling locations and three early voting locations as of now. When we first started back in 2014, we did not have as many polling locations. We have grown in the last few years, which is very helpful. We also are a big county. We are like the second one in Nevada. We also have three borders towns that we deal with for election day. We have the Owyhee Reservations that borders Idaho. We have Jackpot, Nevada—that also borders Idaho, and then West Wendover that borders Utah. Actually, all of those three locations are in a different time zone, so that has a little bit of a challenge as well—it is Mountain Time Zone. And then, with Wendover, Jackpot, and Owyhee, that is about a two and a half hour drive from Elko County, so some of the logistics of getting poll workers or getting the results back from those locations— Some of us were waiting for a few hours for those results at night.

In Elko County, we have training subjects. The subjects are the HR. We do HR orientations. All of our workers go through the HR process. We have to be Elko County employees, so that takes a little bit. We are the group workers. Our polling place rules. We do our poll pad, check-ins, regular voters, same day registrations, provisional ballots, observers, and then we do signature verification video from the Secretary of State's Office. We also have the mail ballot drop-off clerk, and then we also have somebody for our line to just keep our line going on our busier locations. Our team leaders are the same as the group workers, but they also do the opening and closing of the polls on the voting machines; the opening and closing of the polls on our tabulator that we received this year; verifying the seals of the machines; and making sure all the voted ballots in the ballot boxes are surrender ballots and all of our results are in a transport bag so they can be transported to the Clerk's office at the end of the day.

I wanted to also let you know that on our smaller locations, we may only have three poll workers working the site in our rural areas like in Jiggs, or in Carlin and Wells, and so it is really nice to get those workers out there. I wanted to— This year, we are having some election worker challenges. Our pay is low. I am in the process of, right now, working with our County Commissioners to try to up our pay to help get more recruitment for the general election. Some of our workers have faced some harassment or threats, and so they did not want to work anymore from the last election. Many of our workers are older, and so they have decided they did not want to do it anymore because of the technology that we have as well. I know other counties are facing the same.

There are actually some communities that have little community involvement or interests. There is some polling locations that we are trying really hard to try to get poll workers and so, if we cannot get them, we are going to have to work on getting some extra poll workers

to travel into our more rural areas, like up in Owyhee or in Wendover, to get those polling locations to be staffed. Our HR requirements can be complicated. Everything is online for their HR, between the application process and their onboarding process, including getting all their forms signed for the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] and everything, so that may take time, and not everybody has access to computers, and not everybody has access to the Internet, so some of them just do not want to have to go through that process.

The training also takes time. We are starting training actually in the next week for our poll workers. We do at least three or four hours, and some of them are not able to do three or four hours during that time. We try to do it at least different days so they can do it, but it is—not everybody can do that. And of course, the hours on election day are long, and so for working for 12 hours a day, or even 14 or 16 sometimes is a long day for them. I just wanted to say, Elko County— Lost my train of thought. You guys have any questions?

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Clerk Plunkett, thank you so much for the presentation. Thank you again for making the long trip to Carson City to present, and to bring us an update on what is going on in Elko. One question I have, and then I will go to members. Are you planning on having polling places on any of the tribal lands in Elko County this year, and do you think you have the staffing for those polling places?

Ms. Plunkett:

Thank you for the question. We do have two tribal locations that are going to have polling locations up in Owyhee Reservation Colony, and then over in Elko, we have an Indian Colony in Elko. We have early voting days, and then we will have a ballot drop box for election day. Owyhee has three early voting days, and election day drop off. The other Tribes and Colonies opted out this year.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much, Clerk Plunkett. Thanks for that information. I am going to go to Carson City to see if Senator Daly or Assemblymember Dickman have any questions.

Assemblymember Dickman:

I think we are good. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you, Assemblymember Dickman. I will come back down here to Las Vegas. Members, any questions? Assemblymember Mosca.

Assemblymember Mosca:

I wanted to thank you so much, Clerk, for all that you do. Sorry to hear about how hard it is to recruit. Just wanted to know, is that typical for all the rurals? Is it just the Elko? Just for context, would love to know if that is a general thing that we are seeing in the rurals.

Ms. Plunkett:

I think for some of the more smaller counties there are. I just have noticed the past few years with poll recruitment—with everything going on in the world, it is really difficult to get some poll workers.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Any follow up, Assemblymember Mosca? [There was none.] Members, any additional questions? Not seeing any, thank you so much, Clerk Plunkett for your presentation. Have a safe drive back to Elko. Thank you.

Were there any questions for Deputy Secretary Wlaschin who presented? Members, down South or up North? No? Thank you, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin for your excellent presentation. We really appreciate it. It was very informative. Is there— Oh yes, Assemblymember Mosca has a question. Thank you, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin.

Assemblymember Mosca:

Sorry Mr. Vice Chair; sorry to take up so much airtime, but there was a great article in the Las Vegas Sun about Mr. Wlaschin, so I will encourage everyone to check it out.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much, Assemblymember Mosca. I appreciate that, and thank you, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin. Really appreciate your presentation and all your hard work.

AGENDA ITEM VII—PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

With that, not seeing any other questions, the last item on our agenda is public comment. I will start down here in Las Vegas. If anyone wishes to make public comment, please come forward. We are limiting public comment to two minutes per speaker. I do not see anyone down here in Las Vegas. Up in Carson City, is there anyone wishing to make public comment? I do not see anyone in Carson City. Broadcasting, is there anyone on the phone lines who wishes to make public comment?

AVH:

Thank you, Vice Chair. If you would like to provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Mr. Williams, previously identified:

Good afternoon, this is Oscar Williams again. I want to alert your attention to a recent change to regulation of NAC [Nevada Administrative Code] 293.338, Regulation R090-25RP1. Section 7 does a radical change on what is otherwise regarded as the hardening of the election system against cyberattack, where the language was before, "An electronic device that is used to verify signatures on mail ballots may only be connected to a computer network for maintenance and support." "For maintenance and support" has been removed through R090-25RP1, Section 7. I think we are going the wrong way on cybersecurity by doing this. If you are not aware of this, please be aware, and I would recommend that that be repealed by this Committee.

Moving on, I have a concern about— I go to the polls. I get a paper ballot, and by the way, this is a wonderful thing that we have paper ballots at the polls now. The problem is, we—The counting board is required to count the paper ballots after all ballots have been accounted for. The problem is with the precinct scanner tabulator that I am forced to use, even though I have not been asked if I want to use it. It digitizes the ballot, so what the counting board gets is not the paper ballot. The precinct scanner tabulator violates

NRS 293.365. Furthermore, I believe it also infringes on— Well, you know, Mr. McDonald just explained the wonders of curbside voting and that the voter can hand their ballot off to the election worker. And by the way, he mischaracterized "cast." Casting a ballot is the marking of a ballot, not handing it off to an election worker who then brings it into for processing. That is handing off a ballot, not casting a ballot, but here he has explained how there is a unique system for somebody at the curb. If that person was to walk inside, they would not be afforded that same opportunity.

All I want is to have the counting board count my paper ballot. I do not want to scan and tabulate my own ballot. There is no provision in law that provides that, and I do believe it violates the law. I think that needs to be looked at. Give me a ballot box. Have the ballots treated like every other mail ballot and prisoner ballot that is eventually transported by a ballot bag to central processing. That a unified, statewide standard of counting, that is my right as a voter, and I would like to see that happen. Thank you for your time. Those are my comments. Appreciate it.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you, Mr. Williams. Broadcasting, is there anyone else on the line who wishes to make public comment?

AVH:

You have no more callers on the line at this time.

Vice Chair Ohrenschall:

Thank you very much. Thank you members, and thank you to our clerks, our registrars, our Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary Wlaschin. Thank you for all the tremendous presentations. With that, members we are adjourned.

The following written public comment was received from:

- Donald Lykke, Resident, Winnemucca, Nevada (Agenda Item VII)

AGENDA ITEM VIII—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy Gibbs
Research Policy Assistant

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Jennifer A. Sturm-Gahner
Deputy Research Director

APPROVED BY:

_____

Assemblymember Cecelia González, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item II	Oscar Williams, Resident, Reno, Nevada	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IV A	Francisco Aguilar, Secretary of State (SOS), Office of SOS Mark Wlaschin, Deputy Secretary of State for Elections, Office of SOS	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IV B	Francisco Aguilar, Secretary of State (SOS), Office of SOS Mark Wlaschin, Deputy Secretary of State for Elections, Office of SOS	Follow-up Information
Agenda Item V	Mark Wlaschin, Deputy SOS for Elections, Office of SOS	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI A	Mark Wlaschin, Deputy SOS for Elections, Office of SOS	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI B	Ashley Kennedy, Principal Management Analyst for Government Affairs, Clark County	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI C	Andrew McDonald, Registrar of Voters, Washoe County	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI D	Rebecca Plunkett, County Clerk, Elko County	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII	Donald Lykke, Resident, Winnemucca, Nevada	Written Public Comment

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