

DRAFT
Summary of Uniform Voting System Public Participation Panel meeting
July 31, 2013 - Pueblo, Colorado

This meeting was held at the Colorado State University Campus Library in Pueblo.

Chair Clarissa Thomas called the meeting to order at 1:14 p.m.

Those attending in person or by phone included: Carol Tone, Chris Murray, Evelyn Tileston, Harvie Branscomb, Kim Ferguson, Micki Wadhams, Martha Tierney and Patrick Davis. Faith Gross attended as liaison from the Uniform Voting System Advisory Committee. Al Davidson, UVS Project Lead attended as Committee Staff.

The panel discussed the draft summary of the June 26, 2013 meeting, and accepted a number of revisions suggested by Member Branscomb. The Panel approved the summary with the recommended changes as discussed. (A revised version of the minutes is posted on the Secretary of State's website under voting systems/uniform voting systems.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment.

Douglas Towne, CEO of DRG Disability Relations Group, of Largo, Florida testified on the issue of accessibility for voters with disabilities.

- Towne said that Colorado has an opportunity to advance accessibility progress beyond what was made following the 2000 General Election.
- He questioned how Colorado intends to make the mail ballot accessible, now that all voters will be mailed their ballot. He said requiring disabled, particularly blind voters, to go to a Voter Service Polling Center, violates the Federal Help America Vote Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, since no other voters are required to go to a center to vote a ballot without assistance.
- Towne said that Colorado is in a position to write standards for mail ballot accessibility and demand that vendors respond in the RFP process for a Uniform Voting System.
- Towne and Panel members held a lengthy discussion covering the history of accessibility for blind voters and a number of systems that have been tried over a period of time in an attempt to address this issue including telephone voting, internet voting and ballot marking devices available at voting sites.
- Towne advocated adopting a Uniform Voting System that is a "universal" system, meaning all voters vote on the same system and there are not just a few devices specified for use by voters with disabilities.
- Towne and Panel members discussed the potential for innovation in this area in the next several years.

No other members of the public appeared before the Panel.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SCHEDULE CHANGE

Panel members discussed the authorization by Secretary of State Gessler, at the request of the Uniform Voting System Advisory Committee, to delay the issue date of the Request for Proposal from August 1 to October 1, 2013.

Some members expressed the view that the delay is not long enough and the reasons expressed by the UVSAC in requesting the delay were not valid.

Other members noted that the Secretary had previously taken a position of not approving any delay in the process.

Concern was expressed that the new issue date comes during an election period when election officials and vendors may be too involved to focus on the RFP.

COLORADO VOTER ACCESS AND MODERNIZED ELECTION COMMISSION (1303 COMMISSION)

The Chair reported that she and the Chair of the UVS Advisory Committee, Debra Johnson, Denver County Clerk and Recorder, were invited to join the Colorado Voter Access and Modernized Elections Commission at the Commission's weekly meeting to discuss the working relationships that may exist among the three groups.

The Commission wants to make use of the work already done by the UVS Advisory Committee and the UVS Public Participation Panel.

A discussion of the new election model required by HB 1303 ensued. Points made include:

- Knowing how Clerks conduct the 2013 election would be valuable in the UVS process, but the timeline does not fit well.
- Past practices still are relevant.
- Not all counties have conducted all mail ballot elections.
- Some counties are still using Windows 2000 as operating system. Member Branscomb stated this should not be a concern.
- There will be a bill from the special districts and municipalities to amend 1303.
- There are press reports that recall elections could be impacted by 1303 because people can vote in counties if they intend to move there. The point was made that this part of the election law has not changed and it is still illegal to falsify registration residency information and violators should be turned over to the District Attorney for prosecution.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIFORM VOTING SYSTEM PROCESS

The Committee discussed the lack of participation by members of the public at its meetings. Points included:

- The public is not aware of the Panel and its mission.
- We need a better effort to contact people who work on elections as citizens in the counties.
- Members of the Panel need to have personal contact with people to get them involved or get their perspectives.
- Collecting public input is the duty of each member both in and out of the Panel meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS FOR RFP SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The Committee discussed the public comment period for the system requirements portion of the Request for Proposal. Points made included:

- We need a better method of collecting and posting public comments submitted.
- This should be an interactive process so commenters can see other commenter's suggestions and comment on them.
- Member Branscomb will work with staff to develop a process that allows nearly real time posting of all comments and an intermediate posting of the system requirements that reflect public comments submitted.
- Staff will work with the Department of State IT Department to get all emails sent to the Public Participation Panel email address (publicparticipationpanel@sos.state.co.us) to automatically forward to all Panel members.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m. in response to a fire alarm in the building.

An audio recording of this meeting is available at:

http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/info_center/audioArchives.html