



Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

DEAN C. LOGAN

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

August 31, 2020

**Korean American Coalition – Los Angeles**

Eunice Hur Song, Executive Director

**Korean American Bar Association**

Kay Suh, President

**Center for Asian Americans**

**United in Self Empowerment (CAUSE)**

Nancy Yap, Executive Directors

**Anti Defamation League**

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**Asian Americans Advancing Justice**

Connie Chung Joe, J.D., CEO

**ENSURING FAIR AND TRANSPARENT VOTING IN THE  
NOVEMBER 2020 ELECTIONS FOR KOREAN AMERICAN VOTERS**

Dear Community Partners:

This memorializes information shared in our meeting of August 18, 2020 responsive to your letter on the same date. In addition to the items discussed, this also expands on initiatives, services, and the commitment of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to ensure fair and transparent voting in the November 2020 General Election.

**March 2020 Presidential Primary Korean Language Sample Ballot Assembly Error**

In the meeting on August 18, we provided documentation from our multi-lingual vendor that described in detail what caused an error in the assembly of the Korean language sample ballots for a portion of the voters in one Ballot Group during the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election. That documentation (attached for reference) also addressed the corrective actions taken to ensure both that the impacted voters were provided corrected materials and that post-election proofing and verification procedures were implemented by the vendor to prevent recurrence.

We share your concern for the potential impact any error in election materials may have on voter confusion and/or participation. That is why our office acted quickly to provide notification of the issue and replacement materials to each impacted voter. Further steps were taken to ensure that official ballots (both mail ballots and the ballot styles on the Ballot Marking Devices used for in-person voting) were accurate and not impacted. Additionally, we required remediation by the vendor.

We have reviewed the voter participation data from the March 2020 election and that data indicates that of the 1,098 voters impacted and who received corrected Korean language sample ballots, 481 cast a ballot in the election. That represents a voter participation rate of 43.81% among the affected voters and compares to an overall voter participation rate of 35.88% in Los Angeles City Council District 10 and 38.5% voter participation countywide.

A prior issue with Korean language sample ballots in a Special Election conducted in 2017 was also discussed. Similar corrective actions were taken in response to that issue; however, the multi-lingual contract was held by a different vendor at that time. While it does not minimize the seriousness of the two referenced instances, several elections were conducted during the ensuing three-year period in which there were no issues with the language-specific sample ballots or voting materials.

At the end of the meeting, we were asked to follow-up on two additional issues:

**Explanation to why the Korean language instructions included with the vote by mail ballot failed to inform voters to “write the address” on the return envelope in the Presidential Primary Election**

In reviewing the vote by mail materials and instructions from the March election, we have been unable to identify the source of this concern. The return envelope for voted ballots – both in English and Korean – provides a space for the voter to indicate the “address as registered in Los Angeles County” below where the voter signs the envelope. Instructional inserts – in English and in translated materials – did not address completing the address portion of the envelope as it is not required.

Vote by mail ballots are processed by scanning the bar code found on the return envelope that includes voters’ address data. Ballots are processed even if voters do not hand-write their address in the space provided. The absence of the address has no impact and certainly did not restrict the right of any voter to select the candidate of their choice or the ability to vote freely.

If we have misunderstood the concern or if there is additional clarity about this issue, we welcome further discussion. We understand and agree that accurate and complete translation is important. Additional review of translations is currently being conducted for the General Election materials.

**Date by which voters who request Korean language material will receive their sample ballot for the November Election**

The date Korean language materials are finalized and sent to voters is dependent on finalizing all content and preparing the ballot layout. Material must first be produced in English and then translated. The Department is currently working on finalizing the English material, pending resolution of pending legal matters pertaining to ballot measures or candidate designations. All materials must then be translated into eighteen required languages under the Federal Voting Rights Act language provisions and/or under provisions of the California Elections Code.

We are committed to ensuring that all voting materials – including sample ballots and vote by mail ballots – are mailed within the required timeframes identified in the California Elections Code. Further, we will share a more detailed timeline on or before September 15, 2020 for the mailing of Korean language materials.

In addition to the information provided above, below are references to other services provided by the Department to ensure fairness and transparency for voters who have language needs in our community.

### **Vote by Mail Address Verification and Language Request Mailings**

For the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election, ballots will be mailed to all registered voters in Los Angeles County. In preparation for this expansion of vote by mail, our office sent two voter informational mailings to all registered voters. The first was an address-confirmation mailing informing voters when ballots will be mailed and providing the opportunity for voters to confirm or update their residency and mailing addresses. In-language versions of that mailing were in circulation beginning on July 30, 2020. Korean-language versions were mailed to 33,125 voters identified in our voter file as requesting Korean language voting materials.

The second mailing was specifically targeted to informing all Los Angeles County voters of their option to request and receive voting materials – including their vote by mail ballot for the November 3, 2020 General Election – in any of the eighteen languages aligned to the Federal Voting Rights Act language provisions and/or provisions of the California Elections Code. To date, responses to that mailing have resulted in 8,855 additional voters requesting Korean language ballots and voting materials.

While not legally required, the advance language request mailer represents our commitment to ensuring the diverse language needs of the Los Angeles County electorate are met. This will also minimize the number of voters seeking replacement in-language ballots.

### **Local Action Team**

Recognizing the ongoing need to offer safe in-person voting options for the November 3, 2020 General Election in response to the COVID-19 public health restrictions and to improve upon services offered in the March election, the Department assembled a Local Action Team comprised of a variety of community-based organizations to assist with Vote Center siting, Election Worker recruitment and Voter Education strategy.

The Local Action Team in collaboration with our office prefaced that work with the adoption of Principles of Equity and Inclusion. These principles (attached) speak to our commitment to linguistic equity and ensuring multi-lingual services and to placement of Vote Centers with more density in areas of the County with larger populations of non-English speakers.

### **Ethnic Media and Outreach**

Recognizing that outreach and voter education are paramount to ensuring the diverse needs of Los Angeles County's electorate are met for the 2020 General Election, we have allocated funding in our election budget specifically for ethnic and hyper-localized media. In addition to this being part of our overall paid media campaign, a separate allocation of \$500,000 has been made for an engagement with the Ethnic Media Round Table to address localized and language-specific outreach.

We respect and value our relationships with your organizations. The spirit of collaboration and partnership among this group has been pivotal to the unprecedented engagement employed in the design, testing, and development of the Voting Solutions for All People (VSAP) initiative. We

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are proud of the extensive work we did within the Korean speaking community on user testing and message development through the active participation of Asian Americans Advancing Justice on our VSAP Advisory Committee.

We look forward to a continuing partnership to ensure a successful General Election. Please direct any questions to Monica Flores, Manager of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at [mflores@rrcc.lacounty.gov](mailto:mflores@rrcc.lacounty.gov) or at (562) 462-2697.

Best regards,



DEAN C. LOGAN  
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Enclosures

c: Board of Supervisors  
Chief Executive Officer