out of recess.

I want to make sure that -- Mr. Coe, are you on line?

PANEL MEMBER COE: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison? Ms. Dickison, you're on the line?

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I am here. Thank you.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Great.

I want to welcome Antonio Le Mons. Antonio, can you hear us?

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Excellent. We're going to have Mr. Dawson read the standard five questions.

MR. LE MONS: Okay.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Le Mons, I'm going to read you five standard questions that the panel has requested each Applicant address. Are you ready, sir?

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

MR. DAWSON: First question: What skills and attributes should all Commissioners possess? What skills or competencies should the Commission possess collectively? Of the skills, attributes and competencies that each Commissioner should possess, which do you possess? In summary, how will you contribute to the success of the

Commission?

MR. LE MONS: I think that all Commissioners should possess analytical skills, communication skills, empathy, objectivity, the ability to engage openly, and the ability to see beyond oneself.

I feel like I personally possess the aforementioned skills, and the way I would contribute to the success of the mission would be to bring those skills to bear at all times, and to remind my fellow Commissioners of our commitment to them if we venture off course.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question two: Work on the Commission requires members of different political backgrounds to work together. Since the 2010 Commission was selected and formed, the American political conversation has become increasingly polarized, whether in the press, on social media, and even in our own families.

What characteristics do you possess, and what characteristics should your fellow Commissioners possess, that will protect against hyper-partisanship? What will you do to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as polarized or hyper-partisan, and avoid perceptions of political bias and conflict?

MR. LE MONS: As I mentioned earlier, I think the ability to engage openly and the ability to see beyond one's self will be very important in avoiding hyper-

partisanship.

Of course, each Commissioner will bring with them their personal political beliefs, and probably a commitment to those beliefs and values on some level. However, it will be important to remember the task at hand requires an interest beyond our personal political leanings, and I think modeling that in my participation, as well as reminding and inviting fellow Commissioners to do the same, would be my approach.

In order to ensure that the work of the Commission is not seen as polarized or hyper-partisan, I would, one, commit to open communication and support improved communication among Commissioners when needed. I would lean on my neutral facilitation skills in terms of both my participation in maintaining respectful interaction, and encourage that to fellow Commissioners, and take every opportunity to help facilitate and build trust among the Commissioners, and, finally, always look for the common ground by focusing on the strengths of the middle, the nonpolarized middle, as opposed to the outer frames. That's where people tend to go when hyper-partisanship is at play.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question three: What is the greatest problem the Commission could encounter, and what actions would you take to avoid or respond to this

problem?

MR. LE MONS: I think, internally, a failure to perform my duties in a way that meets the desired objective would be the biggest internal problem. Externally, I think, would be unhappiness with the outcome as either perceived by community members or special interest groups, that we, as a Commission, somehow failed to do our job fairly and accurately.

How I would avoid that is to consistently remind myself of the importance and the profound impact of what we're there to do, and the greater public good versus my personal interests would be my primary focus of concern, and I think, as the group, how we respond is by having transparency and solid documentation of our process, so that that can live up and address -- that lives up to the expectations, of course, of the Commission, and that can be used as evidence to support at least a process that -- no one is every going to be absolutely happy.

So, if you can at least show your transparency, through your documentation process, that you have followed the guidelines and rules of the process, you have delivered the objective as designed by the criteria, and be able to provide that to those that I would consider to be people who may be upset, then that would be the best that we really could do.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question four: If you are selected, you will be one of 14 members of the Commission, which is charged with working together to create maps of the new districts. Please describe a situation where you had to work collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a common goal.

Tell us the goal of the project, what your role in the group was, and how the group worked through any conflicts that arose. What lessons would you take from this group experience to the Commission, if selected?

MR. LE MONS: What comes to mind is being a part of a jury, and I've actually had two opportunities to participate in that process, and the goal in both of those processes were to determine the guilt or innocence of a defendant in felony cases.

My role in one of the cases was the jury foreman, and my role in the second example was -- what's interesting about that role is, I was a juror who brought leadership and support to a reluctant jury foreman, and what I mean by that is, the person who -- when we went in to start deliberations, the first thing you do is decide who the jury foreman would be, and someone recommended right off the start that the jury foreman should be a woman. That was the opening statement, the jury foreman should be a woman.

So there was, I think, four women as a part of the jury, and there was a librarian who a subset of the group had, I guess, predetermined that she would be a good jury foreman. So she was nominated.

Before she was nominated, another individual was identified, and that person declined, and then, when the librarian was nominated, she reluctantly accepted, and she stopped and she looked at me and said, "I was thinking you should be the jury foreman."

I asked her what her concerns were about being the jury foreman, which she shared, and I said, "Well, we'll be here to support you." And so she took the role, and what I realized in the process is that, having had some previous experience of being the foreman, I was there to -- was able to be able to support her, and at the conclusion of us coming up with the verdict and completing our task as a jury, she commented about how much she appreciated that support.

So I think that's an example of where that could have been a conflict. We could have argued about whether it should really be a woman or not, or, you know, any number of things could have happened around that simple declaration to derail the process, but what I recognized is that we were there for something bigger, and so I stayed focused on that, and tried to use every opportunity in the

process to keep us going in that direction.

So, of course, in the jury process, people bring their own personal experiences, as much as the prosecution and the defense attorneys try to manage for that in terms of the jury selection process, which the last one I was on, it took five days just for selection, which was like, "Oh, my God." But, as much as they try to manage for that, the reality is, we all bring our own biases, etcetera, to an experience.

So that was the biggest, I guess, challenge in that group in terms of conflict, people who had really strong opinions about guilt and what constituted guilt, but we also had a set of guidelines that identified what guilt looked like, so that might be different than how we felt, versus the law.

So how we worked through that conflict was through facilitated engagement, with respect, and a real high-end commitment to empathy, and I think that was really the hallmark, is being very respectful and allowing people to express themselves. I think the lesson was that common ground could be found, and in doing so, no one had to be diminished or vilified.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Question five: A considerable amount of the Commission's work will involve meeting with people from all over California who come from

very different backgrounds and a wide variety of perspectives.

If you are selected as a Commissioner, what skills and attributes will make you effective at interacting with people from different backgrounds and who will have a variety of perspectives?

What experiences have you had that will help you be effective at understanding and appreciating people and communities of different backgrounds and who have a variety of perspectives?

MR. LE MONS: So, in my experience as a former therapist, I have experience of engaging and supporting people from all kind of different backgrounds and diverse perspectives. I think my training in that area allows me to be present to another person and be focused on that individual, their belief system, their perspective, and not look at it through the filter of my own.

The key attributes that I have that make me effective is, I believe, my genuine curiosity and interest in those who are different from me, and a belief that our value is intrinsic rather than based on external factors like race, class, gender, geography, to name a few.

A particular experience that comes to mind beyond my private psychotherapy practice was my role as the coordinator and facilitator of a state advisory board on

HIV and AIDS that was made up of representatives from all of the public health jurisdictions across the state of California, which represented, of course, a large and diverse population across a vast geographic area.

My approach, and the tactics that were used -- well, before I get into that, the issue of HIV and AIDS was very controversial at the time. The needs of the diverse communities across the state was vast, and we had to come up with strategies that had to respect the needs of the various counties throughout the state when they have varying needs.

So, oftentimes, the board was faced with coming up with creative and innovative ways of meeting the local communities' needs, as well as meeting the public health crisis that was being faced at the time, and I think the way we got there was a commitment and demand for respect and openness, and support for communities that were not necessarily like our own.

I think that was a really, really important point because, oftentimes, when you sit on an advisory board, you're coming to represent a constituency. You are there to advocate -- or your belief is that you're there to advocate for them in some kind of way, and if that's your sole focus, and you're not also as committed to the outcome supporting those beyond your constituency, it creates a

kind of environment for conflict, wheels to grind to a halt, and you not get where you need to get.

So some of those earlier commitments of the group was really around getting to that place where yes, we're here to advocate for respect, have respect for the constituencies that we represent in our own communities, but we also want to be looking at it through the larger context, and make sure that, while that may not be how we would do it in this particular county, that county really needs that, and I can support their needs for that, and I think that was very productive for the process.

I actually was on that -- facilitated and participated in that board for, I think it was, like three and a half years, also as a member of an institutional review board for the protection of human subjects, which I did for five and a half years, a different board, similarly bringing together very talented people of varying expertise, and getting people to look beyond their expertise, be open, and listen to what the other members around the table are there to bring, and to really value that input, and have it be a true part of your consideration set, rather than just "Okay. Each person gets their turn to say what they need to say."

So those are some of the experiences that I've had in my career that I think position me to be able to

participate in processes that require an outcome that has to serve diverse, vastly diverse, populations, and both of those experiences were here in California. So I've been able to appreciate and experience that diversity.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

At this point, we will go to Panel questions. Each Panel Member will have 20 minutes to ask his or her questions, and we will start with the Chair, Mr. Belnap.

CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

Mr. Le Mons, you touched on your time with a state advisory board. I understand it was the California AIDS Clearinghouse.

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

CHAIR BELNAP: In your application, you indicate you were a deputy director. Can you tell me about your role in that organization?

MR. LE MONS: Yes. So the California AIDS Clearinghouse was the state depository for HIV prevention/education materials, and so what the organization's responsibility was, was development, the housing of materials that were made available to all of the public health departments across the state of California, as well as local community-based organizations.

My role as the deputy director is I oversaw those processes. So, I managed a staff that handled our

warehousing, our acquiring of materials from commercial producers like Achaemenid (phonetic) or something like that, our development teams in-house, our writers, our graphics people, production, and training, in particular.

So one of the things I'd like to, if I can, share about that process -- because, also, bringing direction to vision and innovation as well -- so one of the challenges I mentioned earlier about the state being so diverse, and what would happen is, by the time you start out with a particular product, and by the time it got usable, it was diluted, many communities felt were very diluted, and not a good, solid product for them.

So what I remember is, in the earlier days, before the California AIDS Clearinghouse existed, before these particular processes existed, these things were being developed at the community level, and so I thought, "Well, we have our standard fare. We have what we can purchase, which is very similar to the standard fare, because it goes to the same kind of development process. Why not create an opportunity where we train local entities to be able to design things that will be outside of the box, but will be more intentional to their community?"

We were able to do that, and the first training, we did a small pilot in Los Angeles, and, based on that training, we were provided 1.2 million dollars to do that

training statewide, and so we did. Now we're on Zoom. You know, back at that time, this type of engagement wasn't as commonplace, but we engaged a communications company to actually do a multi-site training simultaneously, quite like we're experiencing right here, where we moved between Los Angeles, Alameda County, and San Diego, and was able to train the local communities, and then offer mini-grants to them, to allow them to be able to have the funding to be able to actually produce the product that they ultimately create.

I was very proud of that. That was something that was my vision, and, fortunately, because of my role with the California AIDS Clearinghouse, and my position, I was in a position to put both the resources and the expertise to bear to bring that program forward.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. Out of curiosity, how was it that the materials came to be diluted over time as they went through the process? I'm not understanding that part.

MR. LE MONS: Okay. So let's say you have -- well, just say you have five people who have different needs, and you divide focus on the needs of person one. It doesn't meet the needs of persons two, three, and four. So, if I choose any of those particular people to focus on their needs directly, by the time you get to something that meets

all five of those people's needs, they don't feel like it meets their needs at all, because it had to take too many other considerations in. So that's what I mean by it became diluted to the point of not usable, in some communities' minds.

CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you. You mentioned three locations that you traveled to. How broad or how far were your travels in that role?

MR. LE MONS: So the three I mentioned, that was just that training.

CHAIR BELNAP: Yes.

MR. LE MONS: Because of the -- with the advisory board, we hosted it in various counties throughout the state. So it might be Yolo -- and we met four times a year. So we'd go to Yolo. We'd go to the small counties as well as the large counties, so that we would be on the ground and have a full experience, and when I would go to the counties, it wasn't just flying in or driving in for the meeting. It was to really be able to also have an opportunity to meet with some of the local CBOs, to have a real feel for the environment.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. In those travels, I'd like you to describe some of the experiences you had in your role as deputy director of the AIDS Clearinghouse that increased your appreciation and understanding of

California's diversity.

MR. LE MONS: I think going to Santa Barbara was one that was very interesting. So I live in L.A. County. My perception -- I've been to Santa Barbara many times. I've gone to Santa Barbara socially, though. So what was very striking is the difference in an experience socially.

So let's say -- well, I had a perception of what Santa Barbara was like, based on my social interactions in Santa Barbara, but when I was there in a professional context, completely different, and completely different in that I got to appreciate it's a much more conservative environment that I was able to see as a, quote/unquote, tourist in Santa Barbara. There were certain things that I learned that we needed to be mindful of and appreciative of. So that's one small example.

Another example would be some of the more rural counties. Again, because I'm naturally a curious person, I think, when I'm engaged in interacting, there's a compare and contrast that's sort of automatically happening, and then seeing where "Wow. I mean, that's powerful. That's interesting," so going to some of the rural environments, and just how the pace -- you expect, "It's rural. It might be a different pace." But really seeing the impact of pace was something that I remember standing out for me, and you might think that you can just get something done, done,

done, like that, in certain environments. In other environments, that's not the case.

So, even when you're putting time lines together, particularly when you're talking about reaching out to communities for testimony and feedback, you've got to really be willing to go in and understand how the community works, so that you can get there that much faster, in terms of what -- what I mean by "faster," in what it is you're trying to accomplish. You don't make the kind of mistakes of making a ton of assumptions.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you. How many years were you on UCLA's institutional review board?

MR. LE MONS: Five and a half.

CHAIR BELNAP: Five and a half. And what was your role?

MR. LE MONS: A member.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. And what does a member do for the review board?

MR. LE MONS: So I was on the medical IRB. So there are multiple IRBs at UCLA, and so meaning I would review medical research, devices, and drugs, et cetera. I represented the community. I'm not an MD. I wasn't there -- at the time, I wasn't a therapist. So I was there as a community member. I shared the board membership with MDs and psychologists, but that was the makeup of that

particular board.

What we would get is proposed research that was to be done in a community, whether that be a drug or a device, and we had to review the protocol. We had to make sure that the protection of human subjects was happening, that there was not undue influence in state compensation that might induce people to participate in something that wasn't in their best interest because the compensation was placed too high. We had to look at whether or not the research protocol as laid out by the researcher made sound sense, and that was the board responsibility.

So, as a member of that board, I was required to read the entire protocol, and the protocol could be 100 pages, be 150 pages, and I would have to go through and understand what they wanted to do, understand who the target was, understand that the waivers that are there for people to sign acknowledging their participation were accurate and included all of the things that were in the protocol, because oftentimes what will happen is something might get left out that might scare people from participating that would conveniently not be in the disclosure, so making sure that those things were there, and then voting on whether or not we should proceed with a particular -- whether we would approve a particular protocol or send it back for additional information, and

then have that rotate back into our caseload, and the caseload may be -- I might have anywhere from, you know, 50 protocols to read and be prepared for, for the meeting.

CHAIR BELNAP: So I noted that you didn't use this particular example in your essay on impartiality, but I wanted to give you the opportunity to talk about how you need to exercise impartiality on this particular review board.

MR. LE MONS: Well, I think the first thing in terms of being impartial is to examine where you see conflicts of interest. So I think that's important, because I think sometimes you may not understand -- you may have a blind spot in that area.

So I think that's the first step of personally committing to impartiality, is looking and seeing "Is there a conflict?," whether that's a belief conflict, whether that's an affiliation conflict, whatever, and, with that said, when you go in, objectivity on something like this is crucial.

So the way you ensure impartiality is to -- in the case of the board, it really isn't about my personal point of view. I mean, that just doesn't come to bear there. So I can acknowledge if I have a personal point of view, to myself or even to my colleagues, but what I also respect is that it's not about my personal point of view.

So what I need to be evaluating this on is based on a very clear set of criteria that I fully understand, and if I don't understand that criteria, my commitment is to inquire and get clarity with fellow board members and those that also govern our board as well, to ensure that that's how I'm approaching it. So I think impartiality is a commitment. It's ability to recognize where you may be impartial, and then to know how to manage for that.

CHAIR BELNAP: All right. Thank you. You indicated in your application that you have had some data mapping experience. Can you describe what that experience was?

MR. LE MONS: Yeah. So, when I worked for the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center as a director of HIV prevention, I worked in consort with the health department, the local health departments, and a lot of data mapping was being done, of course, to track transmission, where there are clusters and things of that nature. So, while I didn't, as a research, do the actual data mapping, I was a part of teams and processes that supported that work being done, as well as being able to receive and review and understand those reports as they were done and distributed.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LE MONS: You're welcome.

CHAIR BELNAP: I don't have any further questions

at this time. Mr. Coe, if you want to take over, that would be great.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. Le Mons. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today.

MR. LE MONS: Of course. Thanks for having me.

PANEL MEMBER COE: In your final essay, you state that you have a passion for maximizing human potential, and you've spent your career dedicated to improving the quality of life and well being for all, especially those that are vulnerable or in underserved communities. Where do you think that this passion comes from?

MR. LE MONS: That's a good question. So, as you were asking me that question, I smiled a little bit, and it kind of took me back to -- I'll tell a quick little story.

So, when I was a freshman in undergraduate, I went to school -- my major was business/pre-law when I enrolled, and I remember coming home for the first break, and my grandfather, who was a physician, was asking me, querying me about, you know, my career trajectory, et cetera, and so I had to tell him that I wasn't as certain as I thought I was, because initially it was "He's a doctor, so I don't want to do that. I'll be a lawyer." That was sort of the motivation.

So he was already not happy with me because of that

choice, and then now I wasn't so sure that that was my choice. So what I realized is, I had made that choice really in reaction to him, and not really because that's what I wanted to do.

My childhood best friend, who I hadn't seen since the sixth grade, I had ran into someone freshman year at school who had his picture in a yearbook kind of thing, and I'd gotten his phone number. So, on this break, I gave him a call, and, like I said, we hadn't seen each other or talked to each other since we were 12, and we were on the phone with each other from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., catching up, like eight hours of phone conversation.

In that phone conversation, he said -- just let me preface this with one thing. My mother was asking, "Well, what do you want to do?" And I said, "I don't know." That was where we kind of left that. So back to the conversation. In the course of the conversation, he said to me, "Antonio, I want to thank you." And I said, "For what?" He said, "You were the only person who believed in me."

I had no idea what this person was talking about, and he said, "Do you remember when we were in Ms. Hawkins' class? That was third grade." I said, "Yes. Of course I remember Ms. Hawkins." He said, "You remember I was a D and F student?" "Yes, I remember you were a D and F

student." He said, "No one believed in me, including my family," he said, "but you used to always say to me, 'Don't listen to them. You can be anything you want to be,' and I carried your voice with me, and today I'm a freshman at" -- whatever university he was at. He was a pre-med student.

I remember just starting to cry, literally tears just -- and I'm not quick to emotion like that, generally. And I harkened back to the question my mother had asked me, what did I want to do, and in that moment, it just was clear to me that I want to help people see the best in themselves, and in doing that, when people see the best in themselves, and they're bringing their best to whatever the situation is, that is the epitome of maximizing human potential.

So that's why I think I do what -- it triggered something in me, and maybe, as a kid -- I'm the oldest, and I didn't really have anybody to follow. I had to figure it out on my own, so to speak, and I remember telling my dad that if I had half a road map, oh my God, what could have been possible, or what could be possible, and, I mean, I'm a pretty successful guy.

So it's that kind of people seeing you, people holding you up and encouraging you, is something that really touches my heart, and that's what I do in anything I

do, is really look for that opportunity to be that person for someone else.

PANEL MEMBER COE: How do you -- with that experience, that perspective, that passion, how do you think that can help you be an ideal Commissioner for the work of this Commission?

MR. LE MONS: I think the greatest thing we all want to do is be witnessed, and I think I do that. I know I do it. I mean, it's just who I am. And I think, when people feel seen, it helps them not feel as defensive. I think, as a Commissioner, that will be great. If you don't have 14 defensive people trying to get a job done, you have a better environment for cooperation.

I think my ability to express empathy is very strong. I think that's also very important, but I'm also very logical and very analytical, so it's this sort of balance of being able to be both of those things. I think those would be the kinds of things that would help have us be a successful Commission if I were a member.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. In the same essay that we were just talking about, you also -- your career to the ability to listen, synthesize the information received from multiple contributors, clearly and succinctly help to find objectives and develop comprehensive plans. Can you provide us with a specific example of a time where you have

done this?

MR. LE MONS: Can you repeat that, please? The first part of what you said I didn't hear, unfortunately. It kind of was --

PANEL MEMBER COE: Sure. Okay. Yes. In the same essay that we were just talking about, you attribute the success of your career to your ability to listen, synthesize the information received from multiple contributors, clearly and succinctly help define objectives and develop comprehensive plans, and I'm wondering if you can give us an example of that.

MR. LE MONS: Sure. So, well, I talked about the advisory board, so I'll talk about a different -- because that was a great example of that, actually, but, also, as the executive vice-president at FAME Assistance Corporation, we had diverse departments and divisions, so everything from property management to nutrition to tobacco control, transportation, like, all these units with different agendas, with different needs, different expectations.

So, as the EVP, I'm responsible for resource distribution. I'm responsible for operations and support of all of these different divisions, and what I believe is, when I bring my teams together, my first order of business is to hear them, is to truly hear them. Like, I hold the

vision and the mission and all that. Yes, I got that. But my goal isn't to go in trying to bend someone to that. It's "Okay. The way we achieve that is through this collective process."

So I have to understand what each of these individuals need, and I have to understand very clearly what the obstacles are, because, in my role, what I'm responsible for is mitigating those obstacles, and so whether that is in, you know, a team of professionals who have a common objective but different paths to get there, whether that is sitting with a person in the therapy room and having a very clear understanding of what they've expressed their objective is, and being able to see, by listening, where the obstacles are for them, where the development needs to happen for them in order to meet those objectives.

So, once I hear that information, I litmus it to "Where is it that we're trying to go? What is it that we're trying to achieve?" And through that, bringing those two pieces together, I'm able to see pathways to those objectives, and then offer those pathways up for consideration with the people that I'm talking to. So it isn't just me saying, "This is how you do it." It's "How about this?" And then that begins to open up where we find agreement and consensus, and then how we go about moving

forward. So that would be an example.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. One of the biggest tasks in front of this Commission is going to be identifying communities of interest across the state. Some of those communities are easier defined and located than others, and some of them are less engaged and harder to identify. How would you go about, if you were a Commissioner, having the Commission find communities of interest, particularly those that might be harder to locate?

MR. LE MONS: Well, I would begin with being on the -- not necessarily physically saying "on the ground," but reaching out initially to people who are on the ground, who understand the community, particularly if it's a community that I'm not familiar with, and understanding from those individuals who engage with the community, who understand how the community behaves in terms of movement, communication, communication channels that work best for them, et cetera, first getting that understanding.

So it would be partnering with local community, and "local" could be anything from the neighborhood council organizations that are high-profile in those particular areas, and then, once you have an understanding of kind of who's in the field, the first question I always ask a group of people when I bring them together is "Who is missing?

Who is not here?" So that's really important. I'm really big on -- you don't start setting the table and then invite people.

Before you start setting it, understand who is not in the room, and so is there a way to get them in the room? Is there a way to get in contact with those representatives as well? So making sure that inclusion happens, and then, you know, once that has happened, then they'll teach you how to reach the community. That's really what it's going to come down to. They'll tell you how to reach the community.

I've been involved in community participatory research for many, many years, and, you know, as a community first model, it is all about going to the community respectfully, in the very beginning, and asking the community, partnering with the community toward your goal, not using the community, because most of our models do just that. We use the community for our own benefit, say, "We want to do such-and-such. We want to target that group. Let's go" -- they have no -- they weren't a part of the design. None of their needs were taken into consideration.

So community participatory research is a fundamentally different philosophy about how you approach and engage community from the beginning, and I would lean

on that experience and those skill sets in order to reach communities.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you. Kind of to dovetail off that, some residents or some communities are less engaged with government and governmental activity than other communities, and that's for various reasons, and because of that, their influences and their perspectives may be harder to come by and harder to find.

Do you think that your background as a therapist could help encourage some of these communities that are less engaged, or would be concerned about engaging for one reason or another -- do you think your background can help encourage them to get involved in the redistricting process?

MR. LE MONS: Sure. I don't think it rises and falls on my therapeutic background, actually, but, as you were saying it, I was thinking about, well, the first thing would just be to understand what the barrier is of engagement for those communities, so, A, if we can access them, and then query, genuinely speaking, you know, with real curiosity, as to why don't they participate, and then look at the reasons why they -- and can we affect why they don't participate, because that's really what it comes down to.

If we can't affect why they don't participate, then

where we may be left is just documenting that "We have individuals that, for these reasons, aren't ready to be engaged or aren't prepared to be engaged. However, here's recommendations on how you prepare these communities for future engagement." You know, don't stop at "Well, you know, they're not" -- it could be any number of things. It could be language. It could be fear of government. It could be immigration status.

I mean, it could be all kinds of things that individuals are like, "I don't want any part of that," and you may not be able to move the needle on that in this particular process, based on its time line. However, I think we would do ourselves a disservice if we aren't documenting that, and then coming up with recommendations so, next time around, we have more people engaged. That would be how I would conceptualize it.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you.

MS. PELLMAN: We have six minutes and four seconds remaining.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you for that.

Mr. Le Mons, if you were to be appointed to the Commission, which aspects of that role do you think that you would enjoy the most, and, conversely, which aspects of that role do you think you might perhaps struggle with a little bit?

MR. LE MONS: I think I would enjoy engaging with the community and getting their, you know, contributions. I would enjoy the engagement with the fellow Commissioners as well. I'd enjoy the analysis of the data collection that we would be acquiring. I think the thing that I would -- I'm trying to think of what I would like least. I would like least having to constantly have Commissioners off task and off mission. I would enjoy that the least, especially as grueling as this process has been. I would hope that there would be a group of people that were up for the task. So I think that would be, probably, what would be most disappointing, but, as far as the tasks at hand, I think I would enjoy all of them, for different reasons, because I loved puzzles as a kid, so those would all be pieces of the puzzle. So that part would be exciting to me, and it's like bringing all those pieces together. I guess that's what I would like most, is bringing all of those pieces together and, at the end, saying that we had a phenomenal outcome. So that would probably be my answer to that.

PANEL MEMBER COE: Thank you, Mr. Le Mons.

No further questions, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Coe.

We'll turn the time over to you, Ms. Dickison.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Good afternoon, Mr. Le

Mons. Give me just a minute. Some of my questions have been answered, so let me just look really quickly, here.

MR. LE MONS: Good afternoon to you as well.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: So something you talked about is your training as a psychotherapist, and I know that, in your impartiality essay, that you talked about some of this training has taught you how to recognize biases, including your own. What are you biases, and how will you ensure they don't influence your decisions?

MR. LE MONS: Okay. So my positive bias is toward people who are confident and driven. So I know I have that bias, like, I privilege that. And so, going into a situation, understanding that, what I have to be mindful of, like in a therapeutic situation, would be the very fact that they're there working on something may have them present as not confident, and you have to be mindful of that. Like, you can't just cheer the finish line. You've got to cheer the whole journey, and, of course, I do. I mean, I'm about the whole journey. But I know that my bias is toward those that really want to work.

So where that could be frustrating is if I have a client who's canceling and missing their sessions, they're late. So that, for me, it's like the person is not there to work and get the job done. So I know that about myself, and so, while it's not just knowing it, it's about -- so

say, for example, I have a client -- and I've had this situation, where I have a client that fits that profile, where they're constantly canceling or coming up with excuses to be late for session.

It is to feel like the sensory part of that, like, "Oh, okay," be aware of how that triggers me, and so be extra mindful in my communication with them, that I would go back and re-read a communication in that case, to make sure that I haven't shown up in that communication influenced by my reaction to what they're doing, as opposed to understanding it clinically as very appropriate, what they're doing, based on where they are. So that would be a practical example of how I would recognize my bias, be present to it, but then also know how to manage for it in real time.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. So, thinking about that training, and your understanding on that, do you have tips and tricks that you could share with other Commissioners that could help the Commission in its goals?

MR. LE MONS: I'm sure I do, absolutely. I mean, I don't have, like, something right at this moment that I would go, "Yes, we'd do that." I think, just in how I would be on the Commission, and the commitment with my fellow Commissioners. Those things would come automatically. I'm not a -- so I'm a little bit of a

storyteller, but I do want to tell this little quick story that I hope gets to that point.

I was a part of a Rand study on the force of homelessness for L.A. County a couple decades ago, and I was someone -- it was a longitudinal study, where we tracked cohorts of homeless people for two and a half years. So I had a cohort of about 80-something respondents that I had to keep up with and interview every month for two and a half years, and one might think that keeping up with homeless people was easy. It's not.

So one of the things that would come up time and time again our debriefs was -- I had the highest retention rate of any of my colleagues, fellow researchers, and the question would always be "Antonio, what are you doing? What are you doing?" And I was like, "I don't know." I really didn't. I mean, it's like, I have no idea what I'm doing, or why I'm able to find my people, why they show up, because one of the things that was different for me is I didn't have to find a lot of my people. My people showed up.

At the end of the two and a half years, when we were doing the exit interviews, it was at that time I discovered why I was able to be successful with having maintained throughout the project the highest retention rates, and it came accidentally. I was doing these exit

interviews. What I constantly kept hearing from them was "You treated me like a human being. I felt like a human being with you." So there was something that I -- just who I am as a person and being open to the population I was working with.

At the time, you know, I dressed pretty much the way I dress always. So I was dressed just like I'm dressed today. I drove a convertible BMW on skid row, and no one ever broke into my car, any of those things, right? And one day I was -- one of my respondents was walking down the street. I saw him.

I had not seen him in a couple months. He had been in jail, I later found out, but I told him, "Come on. You know, jump in the car, and let's go do your interview now." And I remember he stopped. He looked at himself. He looked at the car, as if to say, "You're going to let me get in your car?" And I saw him do that. I said, "The seats are leather. I can wipe them off. Let's go," you know, and he jumped in the car, and we went to the office, and we did his interview.

That, for me, first, it was very genuine, and I think he realized that. This property, this stuff, this perception, all of this stuff, is not more important than you. I don't value this stuff over you, the human being, and I think that's the kind of connection that helps

facilitate engagement with people, not just in that scenario, I think very similarly around the table.

I may have a different view than a fellow Commissioner, but my openness and respect for them as a fellow human being, I think, really creates the opportunity for us to be able to engage and move forward together, and I think just doing that throughout the process, and then maybe saying, "Well, here's a tip on how you can come to that place if that's difficult for you." I would say that tips emerge more organically than me having some, you know, bag of tricks that I do, because that's not how I operate.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Thank you for that. So you talked about, as part of the advisory board, you went to a lot of the different counties in the state as part of that work. As you were traveling to those different counties and areas, what did you notice about the differences between those areas that, you know, might influence their preference for representation?

MR. LE MONS: Well, I think that, you know, whatever goes into someone's consideration set as it relates to representation, it's probably going to be driven by the belief that "Whoever I'm supporting in terms of representation for me has my best interests at heart." And so where the diversity comes is, in our society, there are key groups of people whose best interest is served more

often than not, and there are other groups of people whose interest is never served.

So I think that, as I've traveled throughout the state, our state, like any other state, as progressive and amazing, and fifth largest economy, and all the great stuff that makes California what it makes it, we have some of those same challenges when it comes to representation, and so I think being able to recognize where people are, what they need, and to be able to make sure that, again, we're supporting it, we're trying to move the needle toward the sort of more utopian idea of representation and needs being met, but, at the same time, all needs aren't going to get met. They aren't.

I think, as a Commission or as any group of people who have a responsibility, legislators, et cetera, who have a responsibility for a group of people's needs, is really making sure that the intention is there, there's honest effort toward that, and if, I think, communities see that that's really what's happening, like, "This person really has to balance my needs against a broad base of needs, but I'm a part of the consideration set," then that's what they really want, and I think we should be, as Commissioners, as we're out in the community, throughout the counties, looking at "Do we understand the needs?" That's the key, not our perception of the need. Have we did what we needed

to do to understand the need? Therefore, we can communicate.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Well, I see that you currently have your own coaching and consulting firm. Is that correct?

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: And then you're also working with FAME?

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Do you have other commitments, volunteer commitments, or other types of commitments as well?

MR. LE MONS: I'm a parent. I have a commitment to my children. I have two teenage boys, too.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Oh, my. So how would you balance your professional, parental, and the commitments for the Commission? How would you balance those?

MR. LE MONS: So I guess I'd look at, you know, I worked full-time, I went to graduate school, and I volunteered. I like to be engaged, not only engaged, but engaged in different things, and I don't know -- as I'm saying this, I'm wondering, is that because it, you know, pulls on different parts of my brain?

I'm not sure, but I'm always a simultaneous, multi-project person. I always have been. That's where I

thrive best. I'm not the "singularly focused on one thing" guy. So I have just the experience of that, A, and, B, it's what drives me. So I don't see it as much of a challenge in juggling all that. It's actually preferable to me. Yes.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay.

MR. LE MONS: I'm pretty organized, too.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: And so the way the Commission is selected, the first eight Commissioners are selected randomly, and then they will select the next six. If you were one of the first eight, what would you look for in the other six?

MR. LE MONS: All the things I said earlier. Let me ask this. How would those eight -- what would be provided to those eight in order to make that selection?

MR. DAWSON: I can answer that question.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Yes.

MR. DAWSON: Well, they would have the benefit of all these interviews and the application materials that the Applicant Review Panel is reviewing.

MR. LE MONS: Okay. So, then, I would, of course, examine those things, and do it through, presumably, the things that I outlined earlier that I thought was important, alongside the things that the Commission has identified, you guys have identified, as important to the

Commissioners.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Thank you. What would you ultimately like to see the Commission accomplish?

MR. LE MONS: Being able to meet the objectives of why the Commission was commissioned in the first place, and to successfully do that. That's what I'd like to see the Commission do.

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: Okay. Mr. Belnap, I have no further questions at this time.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

We're going to turn the time over to Mr. Dawson.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Madame Secretary, could I have a time check, please.

MS. PELLMAN: Excuse me. Yes. We have 32 minutes and nine seconds.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

Mr. Le Mons, I see that you got your bachelor's at Michigan State.

MR. LE MONS: Yes. Go, Spartans.

MR. DAWSON: Go, Spartans. Did you grow up in Michigan?

MR. LE MONS: Yes, I did.

MR. DAWSON: So I'm always curious about folks who came to California as adults, because they chose

California. Why did you come out to California?

MR. LE MONS: Okay. I love this story. So I was 15 years old, and I'm the oldest in my generation, so I grew up with a lot of adults, and my grandmother's brother was coming out here to bring his daughter a new car he had just brought her, and he called my mom, and well, he asked me -- I went to an all-boys private school, and we got out early, earlier than most of the other schools, and so he asked if I'd like to come out here on the road trip with him and help him drive the car.

Now, he didn't know I didn't have a driver's license, because I had been driving since I was 14, and he just assumed I had a driver's license. So, of course, me being the 15-year-old, wanting to go, I said, "Sure. Yes. I'll go help you drive out there," and that's what I did. I helped my great-uncle drive out to California from Michigan, and he stayed two weeks, and I stayed the rest of the summer, and I fell in love with it. I just felt -- I felt like this is where I belonged.

The cousin who we were bringing the car to, she was probably in her -- well, she was in her early 20s, and she was dating some guy, and always gone. So, when he left, imagine a 15-year-old in L.A. with a car, because she gave me the keys to her car. So I was able to -- I can't tell you how much fun I had.

I went up to Hollywood High School and talked to a counselor about enrolling myself, because I told my parents I wasn't coming back, and I was going to stay here, and I ended up staying the entire summer, and my mother basically threatened me, and told me, "Do not make me have to get on a plane to come get you."

So I vowed, as I marched to the airport to fly back to Michigan one day before school started for all that year, that I'd be back, and the moment I graduated undergrad -- I actually got into some schools out here, but [redacted] when I was a senior in high school.

So I decided, rather than -- I delayed my coming here because I didn't know -- it was very touch-and-go for her. So I decided to go to a college within the state so I'd be closer to home, but, the moment I graduated from Michigan State -- I graduated in June. I moved here in July.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. So the reason I asked the question is, California, often more than other states, has a lot of folks who were not born here, but made it their home, and I'm wondering if you think that this is a perspective that would assist you in your work on the Commission that maybe a native-born Californian wouldn't have.

MR. LE MONS: Well, it would be a perspective among perspectives. So I'd say, okay. If you have only the perspective of native-born Californians, with no other perspective, then there are certain considerations you may not have to address, but, because of the diversity of not only -- you know, I came here from the Midwest. People come here from all over the United States and make this their home, with diverse perspectives, diverse upbringings, et cetera.

So I think, just having an additional perspective to bring into the equation, there would be value in that, as would any other perspective, though. I don't see it as uniquely being something that would have me stand out, per se. I just think it happens to be a perspective that could add value.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Sort of staying on the same vein of thought, so my understanding is that, while living in California, you've primarily been in L.A. County. Is that correct?

MR. LE MONS: That's correct.

MR. DAWSON: And primarily in an urban environment?

MR. LE MONS: Yes. I also lived in Palm Springs -- well, actually back and forth. So I was in Palm Springs half the week and L.A. half the week for a period in the late '80s, early '90s.

MR. DAWSON: I see. During your travels in California, with your work or otherwise, do you think that you could still bring an appreciation of the inland and rural communities up and down the state?

MR. LE MONS: Sure. Absolutely.

MR. DAWSON: You talked about, you know, going to these smaller communities as part of your work -- I think it was on the CAC -- and having preconceived notions about certain parts of the state. What were some of those where you were genuinely surprised about what you found in a place where you thought you might find something otherwise?

MR. LE MONS: I'm trying to pick a particular one. Well, you know, what's interesting is, I think, Alameda County, quite frankly. So you think, "Big city." So this is a perception, right? You think, "Big city." If you're from that area, that may not be how you necessarily see yourself, right?

What I found was a very hometown feel in Alameda County. That surprised me. I didn't expect that. I expected something more New York in terms of engagement, or L.A. L.A. is distinctively different from Alameda County, but both are, of course, urban areas. So I think that was surprising. So something that seemed -- or you could expect to be similar was dissimilar in ways that I found surprising.

MR. DAWSON: Interesting. In your analytical essay, you referred to something called a "community participatory research approach."

MR. LE MONS: Yes.

MR. DAWSON: That's a term I'm not familiar with. Can you explain that, and how that would be significant?

MR. LE MONS: Yes. So I think the best way to kind of succinctly explain it is, most research in our country is done at the academic level, and what happens is, people in academia come up with research ideas to solve for certain problems or issues, which usually requires the community of subjects, and so, once the research protocol is established, they reach out to those perspective communities in order to get participation, and the community members either decide to participate or not. With a community participatory research -- okay.

So, before I go there, they do the research. They tell them why they're doing it. They get them to participate, and then they go off and they crunch the data, and they come up with whatever they come up with, and wherever that leads, it leads. It gets published in journals, and people make careers, and, you know, whatever else happens, and the community never hears about it again. They just know that some researcher came in a few years ago and did research on high blood pressure on them, never see

them again. That's usually the model, and I don't say that to be critical. I just say that because that's the model, right?

In community participatory research, it is a different frame of mind. So what happens is, the universities, UCLA -- I'll use that as a great example, because I've worked with them. So UCLA partners with the community. What happens is, in the very beginning, if it's ideal, they'll go to community first, and ask community, "How can we be of value to you in us working together? This is the expertise we bring."

Then the community may say, "You know what? In our community, we have a lot of pre-term delivery issues, and, as much as it is talked about nationally, blah, blah, blah, the statistics have not changed over the last decade. We're really committed to bringing down those statistics in our community." And the researcher says, "Okay. You know, there's people on our team who have a passion for that. Let's design a protocol." So a protocol gets designed.

The key piece here is, the community is at the table from the beginning. The other key piece is that it's not the community trying to fit their needs into the objective of a researcher. It's the researcher genuinely being interested in being of service to the community.

So the protocol gets designed. It gets approved.

It gets executed. There is a commitment for the data that comes out of the protocol to be given to the community. The community goes in understanding that they have ownership in the data. So the data is given to them. They may share that amongst community-based organizations. Community meetings are done to be able to share the data more broadly.

So it's making sure that a full loop happens from beginning to end, so that the community is involved, the researcher gets what they need, community gets what they need, and they may need different things. Like, how the researcher may use that data, ultimately, may be very different than how the community uses the data, but they have access to the valuable tool that came out of the process, which was what? Data. That's probably a way -- that's the best way for me to describe it. There's a lot more nuances to it, but that's the general idea.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you.

I have no more further questions. Mr. Chair?

CHAIR BELNAP: Did no one do follow-up questions?

MR. DAWSON: I'm sorry. Follow-up questions from the Panel, if there are any.

CHAIR BELNAP: So, Mr. Coe, do you have any follow-up questions?

PANEL MEMBER COE: I have no follow-up questions.

CHAIR BELNAP: Ms. Dickison?

PANEL MEMBER DICKISON: I do not have any follow-up questions.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay, I have one. So, Mr. Le Mons, as a former therapist and a professional coach, you have had many experiences interacting with people one on one in small groups. What I'm wondering is, have you had much experience holding public meetings, in particular the type of large public meetings that the Commission might have?

MR. LE MONS: Yes. So, in the community participatory research example I just gave, I worked on several projects where I was a part of that community engagement and bringing communities together in large groups, sometimes hundreds. Usually they were probably 300 or less, I'd say, for the most part, dependent upon exactly what the purpose of the meeting was.

So, if the purpose of the meeting was to actually get data, those groups would have been smaller. It might have been 50 people, 75 people, depending upon the environment. If it was to report data, it's been, you know, 500-plus-type meetings. So it just depends on the nature of the meeting.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LE MONS: You're welcome.

CHAIR BELNAP: That was my last question.

Madame Secretary, could I have a time check, please.

MS. PELLMAN: Yes. We have 20 minutes and 22 seconds remaining.

CHAIR BELNAP: Thank you.

Mr. Le Mons, I believe that all the questions are done. I'd like to offer you the opportunity now to make a closing statement to the Panel, if you wish.

MR. LE MONS: Sure. So I'd just like to, first of all, make the Panel for making this opportunity available to do it via video. I have to say I did have a little anxiety about having to trudge through the airport and the whole process with COVID-19, you know, going on.

So this I really, really appreciate, and to me, this is a great example of having an objective that you have to meet, because I know there's a deadline that you guys have to meet in order to complete the work that you have to do, and there are unforeseen circumstances, and that's life, but being able to pivot and come up with a way to make it happen so that you can still stay on the path to your objective. I have a ton of respect for that.

Ms. Dickison, you remember that was one of my biases, so I like people that are ready to get it done.

So I wanted to thank you guys for that, and say I really appreciated the communication in the process as

well, from the very beginning up until now. Communication is oftentimes a thing that people don't do well, and I feel like you guys, in terms of keeping us, the Applicants, involved and understanding the process and what's going on, and the little ticklers, and just all of it, was refreshing, and not often the case when you're dealing with government entities sometimes. So I appreciate that as well.

I look forward to, if selected, being able to bring my experience, my commitment, and what I do think is unique about me as a person is just that, who I am as a person, to the experience. So I think I could have the same resume of all the things that have happened, but without the ingredient that is uniquely Antonio Le Mons, that would be a very different guy talking to you. So that's that hidden part that only I can really kind of articulate, and, hopefully, you felt some of that during this interview, and I look forward to serving, if asked to do so.

CHAIR BELNAP: Okay. Thank you.

We're going to go into recess now, and be back at 2:50 p.m.

(A recess was held from 2:27 p.m. to 2:59 p.m.)

CHAIR BELNAP: It being 2:59, I want to call this meeting back out of recess.

I want to check, Mr. Coe. Can you hear me?