**DISABILITY VOTE SUMMIT**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

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>> CURT DECKER: Hello and welcome to the Disability Vote Summit. I'm Curt Decker, Executive Director of the National Disability Rights Network.

First, I'd like to thank the American Association of People with Disabilities, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, and the Democracy Fund. Without their generous support, this summit would not be possible.

I'd also like to acknowledge Rutgers University, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and the National Federation of the Blind for joining us today and enriching our program.

The goal of this summit is for policymakers to better understand the disability community and its potential impact on elections, especially close elections.

To learn that the challenges people with disabilities face when casting a ballot can vary by disability status, socioeconomic factors, and the accessibility of their polling places.

And to understand that while people with disabilities are a large voting bloc, they aren't a monolith either. Their political beliefs and priorities vary -- though there is a consistent finding that they want leaders who will address the needs of the disability community, and that doesn't happen nearly often enough.

In fact, during the democratic primaries of the last election, it took eight debates before the candidates for president were even asked a question about disability. It continues to be rare for candidates - for any office - to have sections of their platform devoted to disability policy.

Considering that there are over 61 million Americans have a disability, and the federal government oversees billions of dollars in disability related spending, why don't candidates for office take voters with disabilities more seriously?

That's a question we have sought an answer to over the past 2 years. Using polling, interviews, focus groups, and data from the 2020 Election, we examined the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of voters with disabilities.

What we found should serve as a wakeup call to anyone running for office. We hope today can be an opportunity for you to learn about this group of voters and what can be done to ensure people with disabilities can enjoy the full promise of civic life and participate fully in our democracy.

Thank you all for joining the Disability Vote Summit.

Now please join me in welcoming our emcee, Robin Troutman, the Deputy Director of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us, as Curt mentioned, my name is Robin Troutman, and I am the Deputy Director of National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. I use the pronouns she/her. And I am a woman with brownish hair wearing glasses and wearing a black shirt sitting in front of a Brown chair. And you might see our bedroom. But disregard that. I'll be your emcee for the first part of our very first Disability Vote Summit. Before we get started, I want to go through some instructions for the accommodations and logistics for this webinar. You may have noticed that there are not many breaks noted on the agenda, but please be sure to take as many breaks as you need, since we will be recording the entire event. We will have multiple American Sign Language interpreters for this webinar. And they should be visible on-screen and will switch between each other.

We will also have live captioning provided in both English and Spanish. The English captioning is available directly in Zoom by selecting the CC or closed-captioning button at the bottom of the Zoom window. In addition, there will be an English StreamText link that should be showing up in the chat box now.

We also will have Spanish captioning and audio available. To access the Spanish audio, select interpreting at the bottom of your screen and choose to listen to the event in Spanish.

To access the Spanish captioning, you will need to click on the Spanish StreamText link, which we will also be putting in the chat throughout the event.

If you are having any issues accessing the American Sign Language interpreters, captioning, or Spanish interpreting or any issues, you can message the panelist in the host using the chat function. As I noted, we will be recording, so we will share the recording and transcript with you after the Summit is over. And don't worry if you missed any part of the Summit. He will be able to check that recording.

In addition, we will have slides and video messages available to all participants after the Summit is over. So be on the lookout for that link.

If you do have questions, you can use the Q&A Box ahead of time to put those in. And some of you have submitted questions via email and we have those, and we're looking forward to sending those to our presenters.

As Curt mentioned, the disability vote is powerful. In 2020, over 38 million voters with disabilities were eligible to vote. However, there is a persistent 7 percentage point gap in turn out between voters with and without disabilities.

Today, we will hear from experts in the Disability Rights field, as well as voting rights, and civil and human rights fields as a whole. We have a jam-packed agenda, so let's get started.

Our first presentation is from the National Federation of the Blind discussing their 2020 blind and low-vision voter survey. Lou Ann Blake is the director of research programs. And Jeff Kaloc is the government fair specialist for the National Federation of the Blind. Lou Ann and Jeff, thank you so much for being here today.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Thank you very much, Robin. And thank you to Jack and Michelle Bishop for NDRN for us to participate in this Summit. My name is Lou Ann Blake. I am a director of research programs for the National Federation of the Blind. My pronouns are she/her. And I'll try to describe myself. I wear glasses, but I am blind. I have gray hair pulled back into a French braid. I have a top that has sort of a light green background and bluish and Black issue, and reddish spectacles on it. And I'll stop there. Jeff?

>> JEFF KALOC: Hi, my name is Jeff Kaloc for the National Federation of the Blind. My pronouns are he/him. I am currently wearing a suit with a purple shirt. And I do glasses and my hair is combed back hair. And we'll get started with the presentation. So, as we mentioned, Lou Ann and I are with the National Federation of the Blind. We're going to talk about the blind and low-vision voter survey. And to start off, we're going to give you little bit of a background. The first survey following the -- following the 2008 general election, we also conducted surveys following the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 general elections as well.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: I'll just throw in little bit more background about those surveys. Our first survey we did in 2008 was a telephone survey. And we used a list owned by the National Federation of the Blind of people that had a relationship with the NFB. Since then, all of our surveys have been done through Survey Monkey. And we've promoted those surveys through our member's list, as well as announcements in our weekly presence notebook.

Jeff?

>> JEFF KALOC: Sure. And then to go on to the 2020 blind voter survey, there were two separate surveys for the 2020 general election. One being in-person voters, and one being absentee or by mail voters. Total of 524 blind and low-vision voters completed the survey. 333 of those were in-person, whereas 191 completed by absentee or by mail survey. And 64% of the survey participants voted at their polling place as 36% of the surveys, or of the participants voted absentee.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, and I'll just add quickly that this was the first election year, 2020, that we actually did survey of blind voters who voted absentee or by mail. Couple of reasons for that. Because of COVID, of course, many elections were changed to primarily vote by mail. And just a trend of voting by mail has become more popular over the years. So we kind of wanted to get an idea of, you know, the participation of blind voters as absentee voters. Jeff.

>> JEFF KALOC: And then the results of the 2020 in-person blind voter survey, did you offer or access digital voting machine? In 2020, 92% answered yes. Highest value was 92% in 2020 and 2016 as well. The lowest value of the 63% in 2008.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: And I would say this is really the only parameter of all the parameters that we surveyed where we've actually seen some improvement. Sadly to say. We have seen fairly good percentage in 2020, and previously where blind voters were actually offered or requested use of the accessible ballot marking device.

>> JEFF KALOC: And further results of that 2020 in-person survey was the accessible ballot marking device up and running when you arrived at the polls? And in 2020, 68% answered yes. This is only a slight improvement from the 66% reported in 2016 and 2018 surveys. The highest value we received was 87% in 2008 for ballot marking devices that were up and running. And the lowest was 63% that we, you know, endured in 2012.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, so this data shows, I think, what we all know anecdotally, in that poll worker training, when it comes to setting up and operating the accessible ballot marking device is lacking. It consistently over our surveys about one-third of the survey participants have said that the machine was not up and running when they arrived at the polling place. So that means they had to wait, you know, for the poll workers to set it up. Frequently, the machine was not set up because of poll-workers did not how to set it up. So this means that poll-workers, or the voter has to wait around. And frequently many of those voters end up voting with assistance. Jeff.

>> JEFF KALOC: And then be the next is did poll workers have problems setting up or activating the accessible voting machines? And 24% answered yes in 2020. The highest percentage that responded yes was 33% in 2018, 2016, and 2012. The lowest percent was 19% in 2008.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, so here we see that, yes, you know, about a third of voters encounter the machines not being set up. So, yes, it is a problem that consistently been a problem. And throughout our surveys that we've taken over the years, and so this is a problem that we continue to work on and need to address with elections officials.

>> JEFF KALOC: Next question was, were you able to vote privately and independently using an accessible voting machine? 77% said yes in to 20. This is the highest reported value was 86% in 2008 and 85% in 2016. Lowest value was 75% in 2012 and 2018.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yes, so this number is a number that we can't accept, you know. If only 77% of our blind voters are able to vote privately and independently. And so we need to think about why is that or take a look at why is that. There are number of reasons why this number is 77%. First of all, of course, we have the issue with machines not being set up. Poll-workers not knowing how to set up the machines or operate the machines. We also have some evidence from our surveys that blind voters, not all blind voters actually know what accessibility features these machines have.

So for example, we'll see reference of low-vision voters using a hand-held magnifier to look at the touchscreen, rather than increasing the font size on the machine itself. Also, we've seen some evidence over the last few election cycles of blind voters just really getting frustrated with the experience of using the accessible ballot marking device. You know, when you're, particularly, when you're using the audio ballot, it takes a long time to go through the ballot. Especially, when there's a number of ballot measures, and if you're forced to read through the entire ballot measure before you can actually choose how you want to vote on that ballot measure.

So, we see some evidence that there's some blind voters who are just opting out of voting with assistance, or opting to vote with assistance rather than using the accessible ballot marking device.

So, all those factors contribute, you know, to only about 77% being able to vote privately and independently using accessible ballot marking device. Jeff.

>> JEFF KALOC: And the percentage of blind and low-vision voters who voted at the polls with assistance was 25% in 2020. 29% in 2018. 17% in 2016. 21% in 2014. 32% in 2012. And 37% in 2008.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: So here we did see little bit of improvement in the number of voters, blind voters who were voting with assistance. Going down, you know, slightly from 2008 to 2014, and then also 2016. But then around 2016, we started to increase again. 2016, we're at 17%. And then 2018 we're at 29%. And 2020, we're at 25%. So it looks like we're doing little back sliding here, which is concerning. And I think kind of coincide with the last cycles blind voters are experiencing when using accessible marking devices.

Voters may start off with the voting on the ballot marking device, but then they encounter some kind of problem. There's a problem with the machine. And the poll-workers don't really know how to troubleshoot the problem. And so then they end up voting with assistance. So I think this slide and the previous slide shows that issue.

>> JEFF KALOC: And then the methods used to mark absentee ballot, 37% marked paper ballot with assistance. 35% used accessible electronic ballot delivery system to privately and independently mark their ballot. 20% independently hand marked a paper ballot. And 8% of Braille ballot or plastic template.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, so, electronic back delivery system is relatively new. Some of you may not be aware what they are. Typically, it's a webpage that contains the ballot. You get emailed a link from your elections office. And this enables the voter to access the ballot using their own PC and their own access technology.

And these systems are designed to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. That means whatever access technology you use will work with these systems. And so screen reader, screen magnification, refreshable Braille display. Voice speaking. Any of those things will work with these systems.

They're also another type of system where it's HTML ballot that gets emailed to you. So those are the type of systems that are electronic ballot delivery systems. So it's interesting to see that even though these systems have not been, well, in some states they've been used for a while. But for 2020, there was about half the states provided these systems. And so we see that about 35% use these types of assistance when they voted absentee.

>> JEFF KALOC: Reasons for choosing to use an electronic ballot system is technically to avoid the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 at the polling place, which was 42% of the people surveyed. Paper ballot is inaccessible to me at 40%. I simply wanted to try it was at 24%. And I voted in an all vote by mail state, which was 6%.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Right. So this is kind of what we were expecting because of COVID. Voters didn't want to risk exposure by going to the polling place. So they were looking to vote absentee. So that was the primary reason that was given by these voters who used the electronic ballot delivery system.

>> JEFF KALOC: The reason for choosing a traditional paper ballot, top choice was to avoid exposure of COVID-19 at the polls. Which was 49%. And 28% was I used a paper ballot for previous elections, because they're accustomed to it. And then 18% is there is not an accessible way to vote absentee in my state.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, so, again, only about half the states in 2020 provided accessible way to vote absentee. And many of those states, 2020 was the first election year, in many cases, the general election was the first election they provided access to such a system.

So a lot of people, you know, weren't aware that there was an accessible way to vote absentee. And so some people continued to vote using a paper ballot, because they had used that before, that system before.

And, again, here we see the COVID, avoiding risk to exposure to COVID was the primary reason for using a paper ballot to vote absentee.

>> JEFF KALOC: And then access technology used to mark absentee ballot or vote by mail ballots. Screen reader was at 35%. CCTV was at 7%. Screen magnification was at 5%. Refreshable Braille display at 3%. And other technology, hand-held magnifier, Smartphone magnifier app was at 13%. And did not use access technology to mark ballot was at 48%.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, here, we're illustrating that, especially, when you use electronic ballot delivery, any kind of technology works with those systems. But then you also have low-vision folks who are using their hand-held magnifier to complete, or CCTV to mark their ballots. So all types of technology are being used to mark an absentee ballot.

>> JEFF KALOC: And then 85% of the survey respondents who use an electronic ballot delivery system said they found it easy to use. 7% said they encountered problems with printing the ballot or that printing the ballot was difficult.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, and so printing the ballot, which is required currently by the majority of the states that provide electronic ballot delivery. So an accessible way to mark a ballot, but they do require ballot be precipitated out. And that fact is preventing a lot of blind voters, actually, from using these systems. Main blind voters actually don't have printers. So if they want to use an electronic ballot delivery system, they can mark it on the computer. But they need to download the ballot on to a thumb drives and find a computer that has access technology that is connected to a printer and print the ballot out. So while the marking of the ballot is very easy, the delivery of the ballot, or the return of the delivery remains to be a problem. Particularly, when you have to print the ballot out. Sign an envelope, you know, there's no accessible way to figure out where to sign the ballot, although there are some ways that can be made accessible.

But the return of the ballot continues to be a problem.

>> JEFF KALOC: That's end of our presentation.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yes, that's it. So any questions, we'll be happy to take.

>>ROBIN TROUTMAN: Thank you so much, Jeff and Lou Ann. There are couple of questions. One was where can we find this data? And is there a county breakdown?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: So the only demographic data that we took was, we did ask the voters which state they voted in. So we do have data broken down that way.

And the report is found on our website. So if you go to NFB.org/vote, there will be a link on that page to our HAVA webpage where all of our reports from all of our surveys can be found. And I can provide that report also if you want to email me. I'd be happy to send it to you.

>>ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. Thank you. Another question from Jenny is she's trying to learn about resources for persons with disabilities in her community. Is there somewhere to view a video of the voting device that you described earlier? And that way, she could describe it to those who would like that information.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Well, actually, right now we are working on putting together videos of the ballot marking devices. Right now we're working on 4. So 4 of the most commonly found ballot marking devices that you'll find in polling places. And these videos will highlight the accessibility features of the ballot marking devices. And then it will also work through the demo ballot that's on these ballot marking devices. So you can see and hear actually because it's the audio ballot we're demoing. As well as screen magnification features and contrast features we're demoing. So you'll be able to see how you actually go through a ballot and mark the ballot using those accessibility features.

>>ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great. And Lou Ann, will you be able to share those videos or links with us so we can send it out to everyone?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Absolutely. So we'll have those links on our HAVA webpage. And we'll also provide those links to NDRN so they can provide those links as well.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. We have another question from Susan. How does the electronic ballot delivery system relay to security requirements?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: So there are some NIS standards or guidelines, I guess you could say. There are also are some more general security standards. One of the systems that democracy live system, which is probably the most widely used electronic wide delivery system is on an AmazonCloud Server. And that has been certified Homeland Security. Many other federal agencies as being secured. And currently, there is institute on security and politics at Berkeley, University of Berkeley California to come up with security guidelines. And you know, not to mention that these systems, when they are in use are constantly monitored. So there has not been any security breaches of these systems to date, I should say. And some of these systems have been used for quite a while. So I think we can be pretty, feel pretty safe using these systems. But there's continuing to be work to make them even more secure.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great. Another question we have is from Garrett. And it says due by chance know or maybe have an idea of the increase in 2018?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: I'm sorry?

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: We might want -- Garrett, if you can put little bit more information in that, that would be helpful. Another question from Reginald, how many states allow electronic signature and where can we find the list of those states?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: There are a few states. I don't know if you are referring to electronic ballot delivery and return? There are few states that do permit electronic return. I think that's five or six states. And so some kind of an electronic signature is acceptable in those states. And I think it's Nevada, Massachusetts, West Virginia -- Jeff, help me.

>> JEFF KALOC: North Carolina.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: And Hawaii. And Colorado. Yep. Those are the 6 states that permit electronic return.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great, thank you. And then with Garrett's question, it was the sudden increase in people with disabilities voting since 2018.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Well, I think someone is going to have to answer. Because our survey focused just on blind voters. So we don't really look at the overall percentage year-to-year. So I think someone else can probably answer that question.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Yeah, we'll probably get to some of that later on in the session. So we'll definitely be sure to come back to that question. Thank you. We do have one additional question. Is there updated assistance accessible technology available to states that want to use this technology?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: I'm not sure what you're referring to. If you're referring to electronic ballot delivery and return system or electronic ballot delivery system. So the technology that the voter uses, they have their own access technology. Whether it's on their home computer, office computer, maybe a computer in a library that has a screen reader on it. So it's not up to the jurisdiction to provide the access technology. It's the voter that supplies the access technology on whatever computer they're using.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great. And we actually have another question from Olivia. Olivia would like to know why all of our focus is not putting mail-in voting the states in most accessible way to vote? And why aren't we providing printers like we provided other needed equipment in order to support independence?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Well, yeah, that's a good question. So the trend is moving more towards mail-in voting. It has been for a number of years. More states are looking to move to all mail voting. And if states were to adopt electronic return, then there's no need to print out the ballot. You just automatically, you either download the ballot, and then email it as an attachment to your jurisdiction, to your elections office. The democracy live system, the electronic return works there by actually simply moving the ballot once the ballot has been mark by the voter. It just moves from a different section of the Cloud Server and the election office gets a notification that there is a marked ballot ready to be downloaded. And then they just download the ballot and print it out at the elections office. So there's always a ballot that gets printed out with these systems. Either it's the voter that prints out the ballot, or it's the election office that prints out the ballot.

>> JEFF KALOC: It's important to note and to add into the detail of that, too. In addition to providing printers as you mentioned, it's also very difficult for blind print-disabled voters to sign the form and send it back as well as, assure and verify the ballot they had marked is correct. So that's another reason why it's important, as Lou Ann mentioned, for electronic ballot delivery and return.

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, some jurisdictions have very strict signing requirements. You know, if it's not signed exactly on the line, then they challenge that signature. So while some states like Colorado say, well, all you have to do is sign on the bottom half of the signature page. So there are ways it can be handled. But, you know, requiring that the ballot be printed out, you know, it's just a lot easier, a lot more convenient for the voter to just return it electronically.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Kind of a follow-up to that, and it says from Lynn. Since the electronic return of a ballot breaks the secrecy of the vote, is there a way for a voter to get confirmation that the elections office has received and printed or transferred vote to a paper ballot correctly?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: Yeah, so, I use the system here in Maryland. I've used that system ever since it's been available. And so I do get you an email from the elections office when they receive my ballot. And also, if I remember right in 2020, I also received an email or text. It could be a text too, that the ballot has been counted. So there are jurisdictions that are doing that. There's also some electronic ballot delivery vendors, enhanced voting being one of those, that it's an electronic ballot delivery system currently. But they're looking to incorporate return to their system. And they're incorporating end-to-end verification as part of that electronic return. So what that means, at every step of the process, there's a verification that occurs.

That, yes, ballot is received. Yes, it's been countered. Or yes, the votes have been transferred. And then yes, it's been counted. And the voter gets a code so you can go and go to a website and confirm that the ballot has moved through every step of the process. So that is being incorporated in some of these systems.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. And then our final question, which few people have asked in various formats. So I'm going to go ahead and try to combine them all into one. As we know, there are number of laws that have been passed throughout the states that will potentially suppress the vote for people with disabilities. How is the low-vision blind community planning to respond to those voter suppression laws nationally and statewide? And what can individual voters do to advocate against those bills or laws?

>> LOU ANN BLAKE: That's a good question. So Jeff and I co-authored a resolution demoing deploring suppression of voting laws. That's one thing we've done on a national level. And we also work with our affiliates to support them in their efforts to advocate against these types of laws.

And so we're working both on the national level and the state level. Working against these laws.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great. Wait, we have one more. Nope. That's for everyone. We'll put that in the chat box actually. But thank you so much, Lou Ann and Jeff for your presentation, and the important work you're doing on advocating for people who are blind or who have low-vision especially in the voting right space. Our next presentation, we're going to quickly move forward. This is a good time to take a quick break as we get everyone set up. But our next presentation is called the power of the disability vote. And we will hear from Diana Mairose from the disability service and Essie Pederson from the self-advocates becoming empowered also known as SABE, their Go-Voter Project. Diane and Essie, welcome.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Thank you so much.

>> DIANA MAIROSE: Thank you so much.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Good to start, Diana?

>> DIANA MAIROSE: Hello. And thank you for having us at the 2021 Vote Data Summit. My name is Diana Mairose and I wear many hats. And one of them is a SABE Region 5 Board member. And I live in Cincinnati Ohio. And I have reddish long hair. Glasses, and a red Polo shirt that says "I shape every time I vote." And I go by she/her.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Hi, this is Essie Pederson. And I will be talking with you a little bit later. But I also am in Ohio. And I'm a staff member for self-advocate for members becoming empowered for the Go-Voter Project. I have ear length white hair. I'm wearing red glasses and a red shirt. And like Diana, I am wearing our GoVoter shirt which is "I make history every time I vote." I also go by the pronouns of she/her. And I look forward to talking with you. Next slide.

>> DIANA MAIROSE: Our agenda today is to talk about, number one, is to talk about the expertise and goals of the SABE Go-Voter Project. Number two, to discuss the two major activities of the project, which are the GoVoter toolkit distance training, and the SABE GoVoter experience survey. Next slide, please. The purpose of this SABE Go-Voter Project. Number one is to educate people with disabilities about their voting rights and responsibilities by free SABE GoVoter toolkit distance training webinars.

Number 2, it's to provide technical assistance to improve voting experiences with our survey findings. Number 3 is to support the partnerships of P&A's and self-advocacy group by providing training and technical assistance.

Next slide, please. The goals of the SABE Go-Voter Project. Number 1, to make sure that voters with developmental disabilities feel ready to vote. Number 2 is to make free teaching tools available that are easy to understands and use. Number 3 is to work together to educate voters with DD and their allies to train voters. Number 4 is to learn why people with DD who do not vote. Number 5, we also ask people with DD with developmental disabilities who do vote what works, and what does not work well when they vote. Number 6, boost the number of voters with developmental disabilities. Next slide, please.

Voting, it's your right. Why to vote. It's my right. It's my duty. It's my voice. Because I can. Why not to vote. No excuses there.

Next slide, please.

The SABE GoVoter toolkit training. Since 2014, 20 states have been trained on the GoVoter toolkit. To participate in this training, P&As and self-advocacy groups must submit a joint letter. Number 3 is maximum of 5 states are elected for training at any one time.

Next slide, please. Training structure. Requirements. Number 1 is to include a self-advocacy organization. And number 2 is to have one Protection and Advocacy, they must train and present together. We also have evaluations. From participants at their state training, from state teams about training by GoVoter Team. Each advocacy group that completes this will receive $500. Next slide, please. SABE GoVoter distance training. States must complete number one, three webinars to learn how to use the GoVoter toolkit. Activities in the toolkit increase voter confidence. Number 2, teach a minimum of one state training. Number 3 is one evaluation webinar after state trainings are completed. Next slide, please.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: I'll take it over from here. Diana, thank you so much. We have a quick video here that was developed by people with DD on ways to recruit voters to complete the SABE GoVoter survey. But in the interest of time, we're going to hold on that. And if we have time later, we will show it again. Next slide, please.

I am pleased to say this is the cover of the upcoming SABE GoVoter experience survey results. The power of the disability vote. And this is a review of the 2020 election. We hope that this report, the way it is written will be helpful to researchers, because we have taken our research and placed it into plain language. And because of that, it's been a challenge. This is the first time we've taken research and done it this way. But we think we're going to be able to interpret it pretty well.

Next slide, please.

Why does SABE do the GoVoter experience survey every 2 years? We started doing this survey in 2012, and it has just grown and evolved over the years. The reasons why we have questions and everything that SABE does start with questions. Do voters with one kind of disability have a better voting experience? If they do, why do they? Do voters from one disability group vote more often? And if so, why? Do voters know how to use the voting equipment? How many first time voters? How was it for them? Was the poll-workers, the ways the poll-worker did or did not support voters? Why did voters choose a particular way to vote? Ways guardians did or did not help voters. And did COVID-19 change the way people voted?

Next slide. We've taken that information that we have collected from the reports and the report itself is divided into 9 sections. We focus on the survey, the voter experience survey. We talk about polling center accessibility. How voters with DD actually did vote for 2020. The voting equipment and the ballots. First time voters. We look at poll-workers. We look closely at voter education. And ways to reach voters to get information to them. Guardianship. And the impact of COVID-19.

Next slide, please. We were able to collect 1,208 surveys from 47 states. We were a little bit discouraged with our number, but Michelle Bishop from NDRN said to me, you know, that's a really big number considering it's COVID and we can't reach people to do the survey. So when I changed my way of thinking about it, yeah, we are pretty happy with the fact that we got that number. The majority of surveys did come from 4 states. North Carolina, 235 surveys. Ohio, 126. New York, 97. And Wisconsin, 86.

Our goal with the survey was that we wanted to have 100 surveys from every state. So we're still challenged by that goal, and we hope we'll be able to get there by the next time we do the report. Next slide. When we looked at the report, we were able to take this information and describe the voter in a number of different ways. We can look at age, we can look at their gender, we can look at the voter as to where they are working or not working, the type of disability, where voters live, race, and the state that they live in.

All of this information we are able to pull from our survey. And it is available when you get the full document later.

Next slide, please. Because we have so much information in the report itself, and we have so many different ways that we can look at the data, we had a challenge to decide what we're going to share with you today. So we narrowed it down, and we decided that we would talk about the African-American voter. To learn, to share with you what we learned from the survey about them. We asked a question how often do you vote? And 4 out of 10 African-American voters said they have never voted. Well, we looked at all of the surveys that were completed. The numbers were 2 out of 10 of all voters who completed the survey said they had never voted. That's a 22% difference between the two groups. We've got a long way to go. Next slide.

The largest number of first time voters are African-American and Asian. So with the African-American voters that we're reaching, we're getting the first time voters. So we are starting to get people to vote within the group. We're looking at ways that we have been successful or at reaching these voters. And looking at continuing the things we have learned.

Next slide. Now why voters did not vote? 7 out of 10 African-American voters were told they could not vote. 5 out of 10 of all the voters that completed the survey were told they could not vote. This should be zero totally. This is a very high number of people being told they cannot vote for a variety of reasons, which you can read in our report, and we'll be happy to share that with you. But this is a sad number.

Next slide, please. Our data shows only 3 out of 10 African-American voters use the Internet to get information. And when we talk about the Internet, we're talking about the computer technology itself, as well as access to the Internet. Only 5 out of 10 of all the voters surveyed use the Internet to get information. We found that collecting this type of information is important, because part of our problem is we're not able to reach certain groups of people. And we need to get very creative as to how we're going to be going about that. So next slide, please. Why voters did not vote? 2 out of 10 African-American voters said because they were told, because they do not know how to vote.

2 out of 10 all voters surveyed said they do not know how to vote. That's why we spend so much time on voter education, and we want to let you know we have a program that Diana went through that was written by and for people with developmental disabilities. And we are trying to get that out there more and more. Next slide, please. This slide is a summary sheet that we think facilitates discussions. And you can use this within your state. It focuses on the African-American voter. And it is designed with 8 colorful blocks with information in each one. And certainly slides also include the stick people that are there.

And we start off with a young woman, Lynn Paris, who said I vote because it's important to get the right person to get the services they need. There's a real desire for people DD want to vote. And 1 out of 10 all the surveys we were looking at were completed by African-American voters. 4 out of 10 voters said they did not vote in the 2020 election. And we discussed that.

And if the largest number of first time voters are African-Americans. 7 out of 10 voters were told they could not vote. 2 out of 10 voters do not know how to vote. Only 3 out of 10 voters use the Internet. And then we have contact information if you have questions about the training. There's an email address to go to. And then if there's questions about the survey, someone that you can contact, our email and website address is GoVoter.org. And you'll be able to see all of this.

One of the ways that we see reaching more and more voters is by providing worksheets like this or sheets with this kind of information. So that coalitions, workgroups within states can look at these numbers and say, okay, what are we going to do about it in the state of Ohio? Because I'll just pick us because we're here. So, hopefully, you'll be able to use that.

Next slide.

A question for you. Do you know are national, state, and county election officials and policymakers asking voters with DD to help them plan and operate elections?

Why or why not? This is your job to find out to make sure that the changes that we have in this report and suggested improvements are reaching the people that it needs to reach. Next slide, please.

By a few we go into the Q&A, which is right now, so, Robin, I'm going to turn it over to you.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Thank you very much, Essie, and Diana. And so we have two questions that are asking about survey results from specific states. Specifically Kentucky and Texas. But this survey is sent to all states nationally. Is that correct?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: That's correct.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Okay. So when the survey does go out, what is the best way for people to access the survey? I know NACDD sent it out to their list. And I know NDRN and all the other participants on this call, AAPD. But to be sure that we get results from states like Kentucky and Texas, what do you recommend?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: We use a lot of the national and state organizations to disseminate the survey. We also recommend some ways they can collect the data. And also we connect with the self-advocacy group in that state to help find individuals to complete the survey. This survey is written in easy to use and understand language. But it is a challenge for individuals who do not read or write. So there's support needed to reach these folks. In years past, we've gone through the self-advocacy groups. And we have completed the survey there with individuals. And that actually has proven to be the best way to go.

And this year, because of COVID, a lot of the work was done on the telephone. Individuals were contacted by phone. If it was a trusted person and they felt comfortable with, they completed the survey with them and provided to us. So there's lots of ways. If you have any questions directly within your state, go to your P&A. Your P&A is going to be the best informed as to the status of the survey in those states.

And had your question about Kentucky and Texas?

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: And Georgia.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Well, Kentucky, you had one survey. Texas I know is not very good either. They had zero for 2020 and then in 2018 you had one. Now, Georgia is a great state. Georgia this year had 16 surveys that were completed. And last year they had 31. And that's just an example how COVID made it harder and harder for us to reach folks.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. One question is they said they're sorry if they missed qualification earlier. But the statistics of African-American not voting or being told they cannot vote, is that based on all African-American voters or is that a subset of disabled friendship voters?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Based on the African-American voters who completed our survey, individuals with developmental disabilities. It's not representative of all African-American voters. This is a targeted population that the information is used to facilitate reaching people and looking at the needs that they've identified they want to have targeted.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great. We've had a number of people ask where they can get a copy of the 2020 survey report?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Well, I'm very happy to say it was to be available today, which we were thrilled about. But because of me, I'm going through the last time to make sure it's totally accessible. And actually it will be done by tomorrow. And it will be posted on the GoVoter.org website by Friday. So please go to GoVoter.org on Friday, and it will be on our website.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. And then back to the question of African-American voters turning away, were there reasons given as to why they were told they cannot vote? Or who were the organizations or who exactly was telling them that they were not able to vote?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: I don't have the specific information of who told them they could not vote. They had an option to select that. The reason why they did not vote was they were told they could not vote. Or the reason they did not vote because they do not know how to vote. So it was a series of options individuals chose from. And as we're learning more and more, some of these groups we should be going in and looking more in-depth.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: That's very important. And then one person said it's not a question but a comment. Every time we have a discussion about voting in Alaska, they always provide time for people that are interested in voting get that opportunity. Because they understand the importance of voting. So, you know, this person is interested in seeing what other or how other states handle this. So I think that report will we very helpful to all states. Is there a way to figure out how other minorities with DD voted? And what barriers there were and why?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Yes, the numbers to complete the survey, we have the Hispanic, Latino population. We have the Asian. We have the indigenous people with the Hawaiian -- the Native American. So we have all of those groups that have completed the survey, but the numbers are very small. We're starting. And we're starting to find them. That's why some of these states would be so helpful to gather this information. So we encourage everyone to help us out when you can. Diana? You're muted.

>> DIANA MAIROSE: I just want to say that some of the geographical questions on the survey are optional. Or sometimes are not correct. Is that correct?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: That's correct. Everyone has the option to not answer and they have the option not to complete the survey as well. And the survey was provided in English and Spanish. So we're trying to reach more and more.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Just to confirm, Essie, and Diana, this survey you do every 4 years or do you do it midterm as well?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Every two years.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: So we should be expecting one after 2021 midterm election. So now that you're here, if you think about it, that maybe December/January, between 2022 and 2023, to think about that this survey is going to come out. If you haven't seen it yet, check the GoVoter.org website or any of your disability organizations within your state to make sure you receive a copy.

Our last question or comment is, and this is a really important one, whether it's answered by you, Essie and Diana, or any of our panelist and presenters later on throughout the day. But how can we increase the diversity of voting more nationally?

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: That is a challenge. That's a challenge that SABE is working on. For us reaching diversity, we work a lot with state self-advocacy groups. Many of those are not very diverse. Some of them are very diverse. I don't want to, you know, put them in little silos like that. But we're challenged with that as well. What we want to see happen, and we're trying to do is that this report is written in plain language. There is a plain language summary of the chapter that discusses poll-workers or whatever section it is. And then we have recommended actions that you can take. And it's within those action steps that you might look at to see if they will help you reach more and more diverse populations.

Diana.

>> DIANA MAIROSE: I also want to say that there are different types of diversities. Not just disabilities, but race. It is currently a hot topic more and more. And it's being not just on local levels, but on state levels as well. So, I'm really hoping that we can use that for voting and more people to vote.

>> ESSIE PEDERSON: Yeah, I just like to make a summary statement here. Everybody was concerned how COVID was going to affect the election. It did affect the election. Voters who have developmental disabilities like to vote at the polling location. They like to physically be present. They like to feel that inclusive environment when they vote. This year, our 2020, over 60% of the people who completed the survey use the mail in or absentee option. And then we have 30 percent that voted early. And then we had 20% who went to the polling place on Election Day.

So there's lots within the survey itself. We try to hit the highlights of things people would be interested in. But send us questions. And we could see if we can pull out specific questions you might have. However, it will be difficult to do it by states if you only have one, 5, 20 surveys. You're not going to get much information from that. But states close to 100, you can see some trends, or something that jumps out at you that you could use. So please complete the survey when it comes out. It's a valuable resource for everyone. Especially, the pole makers and election officials. Thank you.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Wonderful. Thank you so much to Diana and to Essie. And we definitely will be looking out for the next survey after the next election.

And just a reminder also, it is national disability voter registration week. So please be sure that if you are not registered, to get registered. If you have friends and family, or colleagues, or acquaintances that aren't registered, please, please go get registered now. And be ready for the midterm or even for November. There are some elections that are happening. And all elections matter. All voters matter. So please be sure to get registered. We are now going to take a very short break. During the break, there will be two video messages. One will be from Mr. Donald Palmer who is the Chairman of the U.S. assistance commission. And the second will be from Rebecca Cokley, who has worked in the President's office if the Ford Foundation. We will start our programming again at 1:15 p.m. Eastern. So please enjoy the video. Take a quick break and we'll see you in a few minutes.

>> DONALD PALMER: Hi, I'm United States Election Assistance Commission Chairman Don Palmer. Thank you for inviting me to this important Disability Vote Summit and for giving me the opportunity to talk about critical accessibility programs and initiatives at the EAC, the Election Assistance Commission.

I'd like to highlight the value of the National Disability Voter Registration Week and today's summit as these efforts are opportunities to share information, have discussions with each other, tackle some of the challenges that we face, and empower the millions of voters with disabilities across the country. The Help America Vote Act, HAVA, which created the EAC, established a clear mandate to ensure that Americans with disabilities be given the full and equal opportunity to vote independently and privately. Providing resources to state and local election officials, to help them serve voters with disabilities, is truly a core part of our mission.

Despite the extraordinary circumstances of the 2020 election, officials were able to make it one of the most accessible elections to date. Approximately 17.7 million voters with disabilities cast a ballot in the 2020 general election and this is a significant increase compared to 2016. Research has shown progress like the narrowing gap for voters with disabilities but there are still improvements to make and this demographic will continue to grow, no doubt, in turn making it even more critical for election officials at the state and local level to understand the unique challenges that voters with disabilities face.

So we are invested in this work and we are committed to ensuring election officials have those resources needed to better serve the disability community. Some examples, the EAC is developing some new tools, resource and best practices to help state and local officials address accessibility concerns throughout the election process from voter registration through casting an independent and private ballot. For those of you who may not be aware, we commissioned Rutgers University to perform an accessibility study on the 2020 election.

We've also hired a full-time accessibility attorney to lead a working group to ensure that accessibility is a priority and permeates throughout the EAC. The EAC will be releasing another study, some findings regarding the digital divide among those with disabilities in several months, and we all look forward to that. Across the country, organizations like AAPD and NDRN and others joining the summit today are doing innovative work in helping election officials understand the needs of voters with disabilities as elections continue to evolve.

The EAC is dedicated to serving the accessibility community and assisting election officials as they implement best practices. We wanna be a partner with you on this. If there's anything specific that the EAC can assist you with, please do not hesitate to contact me or our staff and we hope to work with you. Thank you for giving me the time to talk to you today and good luck with your summit in the coming days. Thank you very much.

>> REBECCA COKLEY: Hi, I'm Rebecca Cokley, Program Officer for the U.S. Disability Rights Portfolio in the Office of the President at the Ford Foundation. Congratulations to AAPD and NDRN for the 2021 Disability Vote Summit.

There are over 38 million voters with disabilities and our numbers will continue to grow each year. But unfortunately, as you will continue to learn through the Summit, there is a persistent turnout gap between voters with and without disabilities. Engaging our community in the democratic process is a key part of advocacy against the ableism and the inequity that our community continues to face.

But our community is strong and we showed that in 2020 and everyday since, that disability policy issues are not fringe priorities, that we are the base of our democracy. Creating an equitable country for people with disabilities in which we have equal opportunity to live, work, thrive, and love starts with our vote. While we're talking about voting, what we're really talking about is our right to have a say in the people and the policies that shape our lives.

The work of advocates, like so many of you in the audience today, is critical to eliminating that gap, getting out the disability vote and making sure that our community has access to the ballot, to the polls, and to our democracy. Lead on.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Hi, everyone. Welcome back. We hope you got a few moment to take care of some things and see these great messages from Donald Palmer and Rebecca Cokley. We're now excited for our first panel on voting and accessibility. Sarah Blahovec from the national Council of Independent Living will be our moderator, and I'll kick it off to her. Sarah.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Thank you, Robin. And happy national disability voter registration week to everyone. My name is Sarah Blahovec. My pronouns are she/her. And I am a White woman with glasses and brown hair pulled back in a ponytail. I'm wearing a blue shirt. And I am sitting in my dining room. So there is a table behind me. We're going to start off. We have some really great panelists. So I would love to allow each of them to briefly introduce themselves. If you can share who you are, give a brief image description of yourself. And what you do. So we'll start with Kriston Pumphrey.

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: Hello. My name is Kriston Pumphrey. And I work for CSE, communication services for the deaf. And I work with UFC, which is unite community foundation is where I provide service. And we have an organization called sign vote, the Felicia active is under CSD and I'm the Community Engagement manager. And I'm sorry, I forgot to give my visual description first. I am a Brown man. I have a salt and pepper beard. I'm wearing a Navy blue buttoned up shirt with dotted print. I'm happy to be involved in this panel, thank you.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. Thank you. Terry.

>> TERRY AOMINNIS: Hi, I'm Terry and I'm for action American advancing justice, JC. I'm an Asian-American female. And I have long dark hair. And I am sitting in front of a not so exciting background with my organization logo, my Asian-American advancing justice, JC. We're a non-partisan organization that is dedicated to advancing and protecting the civil and human rights of Asian-American and building a fair and equitable society for all. And I am super-excited to be here with you all today.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. And Ben.

>> BEN JACKSON: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ben Jackson. I'm a Black man wearing glasses and white button down shirt with pink tie. And my background is blurred. My pronouns are he/him. I was the attorney that was mentioned in Chairman Palmer's address that we just heard. I am a new subject matter expert to the Election Assistance Commission in charge of accessibility and ensuring that the EAC pushes out information related to ensuring the election process is accessible. Thank you for inviting me to be here this afternoon.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. So, this event today was meant to bring together policy-making community and voters with disabilities. So to start off, I would like to start with a question for everyone. What do you think is the biggest fix for accessibility that could be implemented relatively easily? And we'll start with Ben on that.

>> BEN JACKSON: Thank you. So I think the largest fix that could be implemented fairly easily would have to be related to just general accessibility. And so doing disability awareness and etiquette training. I think inclusivity is a way to decrease barrier, as long as we're thinking about disability throughout every step of the election process. You know, then we're going to reduce those barriers naturally. So if everybody from policymakers, election workers, poll workers are aware of the requirements to accessibility requirements of the A.D.A., or the Americans with Disabilities Act with the National Voter Registration Act. Then I think it's naturally, people are going to ensure that the process is accessible. So probably the lowest lift with the highest impact would be an awareness and accessibility training.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. Kriston.

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: When we're speaking of policy, it really is difficult. And you know, accessibility is the issue. It's difficult to respond to, because it's important for people to understand that the Deaf Community is very diverse. And if we have access to information through the Internet, but if there is an issue with captioning, or other accessibility, and we cannot get the equivalent of information through ASL, then how can we make decisions for ourselves and vote accordingly? The Deaf Community is very active, and they're involved in the voting process. However, we don't understand a lot about the true issues. For example, voting rights are being limited, you know, sometimes the community supports that without realizing that it impacts them as a deaf voter. Or that it makes it harder for people to vote, especially for those with additional disabilities within the Deaf Community.

So the point is that other organizations are getting out and getting information to the voting community. And we need to have the equivalent with the Deaf Community. And so we are working with deaf organizations to confirm that the information is getting into the Deaf Community.

I wish that we could talk more about all of the points that we like to speak to, but I think that's what I could say for now. We want to be careful not to speak on the behalf of all deaf, all Deaf people in the Deaf Community. Again, it's very diverse. I am a Deaf person. I'm BIPOC. I'm a Deaf person. And I recognize that I have a certain amount of privilege with education and access to communication. And other people may not have that. So it may be a different experience for them. So we have a lot of work ahead of us to really understand the information and what's accessible for the community.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Thank you. And Terry?

>> TERRY AOMINNIS: Sorry, it took me a minute to find the unmute button. So I just want to piggyback on the wonderful answer of my two fellow panelists I think are absolutely correct on both parts. The low-hanging fruit, I think, long the lines of what Ben was saying about inclusivity, potentially making sure the election administration process is seeing as a customer-based model which we have seen with election officials, recognizing that the voters right are people -- that we should be working to make sure the process is inclusive and accessible for voters, whether that is voters with disabilities, voters with language needs, voters for whatever reason, you know, needs to have some assistance in making sure they're able to cast their ballot effectively and efficiently. I think that could take on things such as in the language context. Perhaps voluntarily seeking out bilingual poll-workers, right? Yes, you have to when you're mandated by law to do so. But you can also do it on your own, because you see the need in your community, and you recognize, hey, you know, we can do something to make sure that all voters feel welcomed and are able to vote.

With that said, I completely agree with the diversity and we need all different voices and people at the table to make sure these issues are addressed. Also from the language access context, one thing that happens often where there are jurisdictions covered by law to provide assistance is the creation of advisory committees, right? Again, not something that should only happen because it's mandated by law, but something that seems like it would be a very prudent idea for election officials to go out into their communities virtually if need be, you know, and in person when we're able to hear from community members to see what it is that they need, what are the barriers? What is keeping them from participating? And what the election officials can do to help ameliorate some of those issues.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. Thank you. And kind of following up on that, Terry. My question is for you. So, language access is an issue, not just for deaf voters, but for voters with disabilities who come from language minority groups, also people who need cognitive accessibility. What can we do to improve language access for all voters? And by "we" what can we do to advocate? What can the government do? Whatever way you want to tackle that question.

>> TERRY AOMINNIS: Sure, of course education at all levels, whether that is community members, community groups educating, whether it's Federal Government, whether it's a local government, election officials, all super-helpful to make sure people are aware of their rights. But one thing that I think that we could also try to lean in, and move towards is having just generally more accessible ballot, right? And in my mind, that means plain language, right? We know that the way voting materials are written, it's not particularly conducive even for native English-speakers or those who only speak English. We also know in some instances, such as with ballot initiatives, people purposefully write things in a confusing manner to try to get the outcome they're looking for as opposed to properly educating people about what they're really voting about.

So I think that one thing that we collectively could all do is move towards more accessible voting material with respect to language. That means when it comes to translations, it's easier to translate. Whether there are cognitive issues at play, that is also something is that more accessible and, really, for just, you know, I'll say this. One of the points that we often point to in talking about the language access context is that some study that have been done around voting material shows the level, the educational level, or the English level is around 12th grade or higher. That is not what we should have for voting materials. We should really have materials that are accessible for all.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Yeah, I agree. As someone who works in voting rights, sometimes those ballot initiatives, I really have to research them before I go to the polls to figure out what they're actually saying and what I'm actually voting on. And a lot of times folks don't know there's going to be a ballot initiative. And the same even goes for things like voting requirements. Like understanding what type of voter ID you're able to bring. And that will be accepted. So I definitely think that would benefit everyone.

And going off of that, Kriston, we're talking about accessibility for deaf voters. Often materials for voter guides in candidate materials are inaccessible to ASL users, particularly, when folks don't caption information. What can be done to ensure that people who use American Sign Language are getting the information they need to be involved in the political process?

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: I just want to make sure I understand the question clearly. You're asking me what they can do to make sure that there's access?

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Yes. What can election officials do? And what can the Disability Community do to support advocacy or support the Deaf Community in pushing for reforms, or whatever changes need to happen to make voting information more accessible to deaf folks?

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: That's great. Well, I think trying to include us as much as possible. There are a lot of great organizations out there that are deaf-led, and deaf-centric organizations who are doing fabulous work. NAD for example, National Association for the Deaf is in general leading experts with mini policies and legal-oriented access issues for the Deaf Community. We also have DHHCAN. And which is deaf and hard-of-hearing communication -- I think it's -- okay, I'm not sure of the A. I think it's association network. And it's a coalition of different organizations within the community that come together to develop policies, and to include the candidates, and what their platforms are and make that -- it's a network. It's there and available for the community. But many people are unaware of that. So the disabled community, it has a strong -- it has a strong network. And so CSD wants to support people going through the process, trying to find what they're looking for and provide that in an accessible format. There's many deaf-led businesses for example, service providers who are expert providing livestreaming and captioning, as well as many other accessibility support services. So if we have Deaf people who can provide videos in American Sign Language to make it accessible, and, you know, simply the language is complicated. So to translate that into American Sign Language in a way that is clear and accessible in that visual language, without having trick questions or without having complicated terminology is how we're trying to support the Deaf Community.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. Thank you. And you can really see the language accessibility itself is just such a huge issue for so many groups of people, because voting does have a lot of legal language around it, very complicated language that most of us don't encounter in our every day lies. So I think that's a really big issue.

So, Ben, you've gotten to work on both sides of this issue. Previously, you worked in the protective and advocacy network. And now you're at the Election Assistance Commission. Having had that experience with protection advocacy more, and now EAC. What can we do to get our issues in front of decision-makers?

>> BEN JACKSON: Certainly, and so, I think the biggest issue is all politics are local. And so a lot of the decisions that are going to be impacting voters with disabilities, and voters generally are going to be happening on a local level. So your county and state. Also the rules and policies vary from county to county, state-to-state. And so it's making sure that you're aware of what's going on at your local level. And then being able to advocate understanding, because a person with disability is going to be the best person to advocate for themselves. They know exactly what's impacting them and the process on the local level. And finding the policymakers who have the ability to influence policy, and letting them know, you know, whether or not taking a look at the EAC, and taking a look at some of our Clearinghouse best practices, and saying, okay, well this is a barrier that we're facing here in our county or state. Here's where another state is doing and they faced a similar barrier and this is how they solve the issue. Coming to policymakers with solutions and problems with that personal background, I think, is the best way to impact change.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Great. Thank you. And actually, we have a question in the Q&A for you as well, Ben. Someone asked how do you envision awareness and accessibility training to ensure policymakers, election workers, poll-workers, et cetera are educated on the full accessibility requirements in voter accommodations of the Americans with Disabilities Act?

>> BEN JACKSON: Fantastic question. And so what I would envision, specifically from poll-workers and election officials is usually there are training requirements that poll-workers have to go through, or if you're signing up to register for voters, that I think Contra Costa County in California have advocacy training, but it would be going through the entire voting process. And including voters with disabilities. So reaching out to my former network, or, you know, the organizations that Kriston mentioned, or there are plenty of different disability organizations out there. AAPD, NDRN, AARP. Looking at your local organizations. And bringing them in and having a partnership between directly impacted people. And the policymakers who are going to be implementing those election systems. So I think that's what I would envision is local partnerships. And like Terry mentioned, some laws mandate that you create these oversight boards, or these community organizations. But it doesn't have to be that formal. It's great when it is. But just reaching out to your local partners, finding what the barriers are, doing trainings when you're updating it, you know, regularly. So as election laws change, you're contacting the disability organizations, seeing how these laws can impact them, and making sure that everybody stays up-to-date on the requirements.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: And we have another question from the chat from Tim White. Here in Washington State, the Secretary of State puts out the voter pamphlet in ASL video for folks and MP3 for blind. Should such services be required for non-English services and jurisdiction covered by Voting Rights Act in section 203? Terry, would you able to speak to this issue?

>> TERRY AOMINNIS: I would say section 203 for the Voting Rights Act would require the services also be included in the current language that's required in English. And also be provided in the cover language and as has been referenced by numerous speakers, right? We don't have just silos of oh, there's only a language minority voter or only a voter with disabilities. We do have, I'm sure plenty of voters with disabilities that also have language access issues. And so, therefore, I would say section 203 absolutely requires it. And additionally, would also put the plug-in even if it doesn't, even in places where section 203 is not applicable, certainly working with local partners to try to figure out how to provide some of these resources to the community is also another great way to try to help fill the gap.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Thank you. Kriston, do you have anything because we have been talking about language access, so we want to see if you have anything to add to what Ben or Terry said?

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: I don't have much to add. I think that they hit most of the points. I just want to emphasize that we work with local and national organizations as part of our work. And we cannot make change without everyone involved and seeing all perspectives and pushing for that change. To go forward, I think that we need to go back and -- the interpreter is clarifying. I think it's harder for example, to move forward and then realize that we're missing key points or key people and go back and repair it I think that's a harder way to go about it. So I think there's a lot of work to make sure we're including everyone from the beginning, that we're figuring out the solutions and getting them involved in those places and getting it right doesn't have to be perfect. But close enough. And then we can make adjustments as we go forward before we go forward.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Thank you. And we have just a few minutes left for our panel just looking at the comments here.

I'm seeing from Jenny. I can't see the last name there. Jenny Sykes. Every state and local government has limited English proficiency requirements. And you can go to lapd.gov to learn about those. But with just a few minutes left, is there anything else, any of you would like to share in terms of takeaways from this? Or what you think folks who are attending this webinar can do to push accessibility forward? Whether that's working with the groups you work with, or different advocacy strategies. So starting with Ben.

>> BEN JACKSON: Thanks, Sarah, that's a great question. I think inclusivity is the key. So, getting involved on state and local level is great. I think volunteering and becoming an election worker, working within your community to register people to vote. Becoming a poll-worker. Just getting involved, you know, can definitely help increase accessibility. I think the more people are in the community, the more people are participating, you're going to knock down some of those barriers because, you know, you have the right to participate in these functions. I think local, poll-workers by and large ensure as many people who can vote will vote. And so whatever they can control, they will try to ensure there's accessibility. I think often, unfortunately, they may be unaware of the requirements. And so by participating by volunteering, and by getting involved, you can help assist given the first person perspective on what the challenges are. And how to overcome them. So I would really encourage everyone register to vote, first and foremost. And then also find out what opportunities exist near you to volunteer and get involved. Thanks.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Terry.

>> TERRY AOMINNIS: Sure. I would just add that we should remember to think about the voting process is not just the act of voting, but all of the policies that go into this. I believe Kriston may have touched upon it earlier. But while we're working on election reform issues, while we're working on election administration issues, we also have to be part of discussion. So that solutions that are created with our communities in mind. And our needs in mind. Otherwise, trying to retrofit, if you will, something after the fact is much more difficult and less effective in actually addressing needs. So I would leave with that.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: And we're right at 1:45, but Kriston, anything to add?

>> KRISTON PUMPHREY: I think that they filled it completely, the other two experts on the panel.

>> SARAH BLAHOVEC: Thank you so much, to our panelists for being here today. And I'll hand it back to Robin.

>> ROBIN TROUTMAN: Great! Thank you so much, Sarah, Kriston, Terry, Ben, for your remarks. And thank you for your advocacy. It's been so informative. And I know lots of people that are participating today will have even more questions for all of you. So, thank you, again, to everyone for joining us for the first half of our Disability Vote Summit. We will be taking a short break. And we'll resume the second half of our Summit at 1:55 p.m. Eastern Time. See you then.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Hello, everyone. And welcome back to the Disability Vote Summit that is co-hosted by the National Disability Rights Network and the American Association of People with Disabilities. My name is Lilian Aluri, and my pronouns are she/her, and hers. And I am medium Brown skin multiracial woman with long dark brown hair and bangs, and my background is blurred. And I've got a blacktop on. I am the REV UP Voting Campaign Coordinator at the American Association of People with Disabilities. And I will be facilitating the second half of this webinar. And thank you to Robin, earlier for guiding us through the first half of this event.

If you joined us for the earlier part, I hope you will all feel refreshed and ready for part two. If you're joining us for the first time, welcome. I am very excited that you're going to be joining us for this event.

Before we get started, I am going to go through couple of instructions for the accommodations and logistics for this webinar just as Robin did at the start of this event.

We will have multiple ASL interpreters for this webinar. And they should be visible on-screen now. And will switch between each other. And we will also have live captioning provided in English and Spanish. The English captioning is available directly in Zoom by selecting the CC or closed-captioning button at the bottom of the Zoom window.

We will also have StreamText link for English captioning, which is now in the chat. And we'll continue to put the English and Spanish StreamText captions throughout the webinar. For the Spanish side of things, we have the Spanish captioning and audio available. So at the link in the chat, you can access the Spanish closed-captioning. And then to access the Spanish audio, select interpretation at the bottom of your screen and choose to listen to the event in Spanish.

If you are having any issues accessing the ASL or captioning, or any technical issues, you can message the panelist and host using the chat function, and we will be in contact with you to hopefully resolve any issues.

And we are recording this event and will share the recording, slides, and transcript with you afterwards. So if you missed part of the Summit, you can check out the whole recording later.

For questions, you can use the Q&A box. And we have also taken into account questions submitted by email and through the registration form. We also have couple of helpful links we will be sharing during the event now and in the future, which include the agenda for this event. So you can get an idea of who's presenting when. And then we also are going to share the link for slides in case you want to check those out ahead of the different sessions.

And if you are on social media, you can follow along, and even add your own post to the conversations on social media by using the #disabilityvotesummit.

And I'll just plug, again, today this whole week is national disability voter registration week. And so this past weekend, I myself updated my own residency, I guess, to Maryland. And got my -- and registered to vote in Maryland. And so I encourage you all. It just takes a few minutes to check your voter registration or to register for the first time. And so that link is weall.vote/revup. And I'm going to put that in the chat right now. So I encourage you to take a few minutes while you're participating in this Summit, and make sure you're registered to vote with the correct address and name and everything.

We will have another break at about 3:05. We're going to break from the panels and preparation for another few messages from guest speakers.

And so with that, again, thank you so much for being here. I'm really, really excited for this continued second half of the Summit. And I'm excited to announce that our next two messages will be from Susan Diegelman and Kim Wyman. Susan is the director of federal public affairs at AT&T and chair of the board of directors for American Association of People with Disabilities. And Kim Wyman is the secretary of State of Washington. So thank you for both of them for providing messages today.

>> SUSAN DIEGELMAN: Good afternoon. I'm Susan Diegelman, chair of the AAPD Board of Directors. Thank you for joining today's Disability Vote Summit.

We're here today to learn about the experience of voters with disabilities during the 2020 elections, and discuss the next steps in our advocacy work to continue to empower people with disabilities and strengthen our voting block. National Disability Voter Registration week is about building and harnessing the power of the disability vote.

This summit is a great opportunity to learn more about the power of our vote. And it's only one of many events taking place this week to mark National Disability Voter Registration Week being recognized September 13th through the 20th this year. According to the new American Economy Research Fund, the 2020 election proved to be the most diverse electorate in U.S. history.

The disability voting block has grown eight and a half percentage points since 2012. That's 3 million additional voters. We are a power unto ourselves, but consider our influence grows, when we work together with all other communities that we are a part of - Latinx, black, Asian American, LGBTQ+, and others.

In the last election, an estimated 38 million people with disabilities were eligible to vote, but we know that people with disabilities voted at a rate of seven percentage points lower than other people of the same age without disabilities. This points to a continuing gap in disability voter turnout. It's safe to say that we have our work cut out for us. We invite national, state, and local organizations to participate in all of the events happening this week to continue to raise the disability voice and civic participation across the country in 2021 and beyond.

You can find a calendar of events, partner toolkits, and other resources on the AAPD website at aapd.com/NDVRW If you are new to this discussion, welcome, and thank you for spending this time with us to learn more about increasing power of the disability community in our election process. If you've been on board with this work since the beginning, we can see the results of your work. You have moved the needle and you have made a difference for people with disabilities. Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication.

>> SEC. KIM WYMAN: Hello, I'm Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of this year's Disability Vote Summit. Every day, more than 10,000 election officials nationwide are dedicated to preserving your constitutional right to vote. Despite the challenges we've faced over the last couple of years and as we get closer to the November 2nd general election, we are unwavering in our commitment.

The ongoing pandemic continues to shape the way we administer elections, especially for people with disabilities. We believe no one should ever choose whether to vote or risk their health. So we're working hard to ensure our voting processes are safe, secure, and accessible for everyone.

Yet, before you vote, it's a good idea to plan ahead. For starters, make sure you're registered and that your registration is up to date. If you vote by absentee ballot, request your ballot as soon as possible. Election officials need time to prepare ballot materials and mail them to you. If you live in a vote-by-mail state, you can protect your health and others by sending your ballot in the mail or placing it in an official dropbox. In Washington, for example, people can vote as early as 18 days before an election.

Check to see if your state has an early voting option so you can avoid the election day rush. Some states, including Washington, offer voters with disabilities online and in-person assistance, including accessible voting units. Contact your elections office for more information about these and other services available to you. As we get closer to November, be critical of the election information you see or hear on the news or social media. Misinformation and disinformation campaigns seek to sow discord and threaten the foundation of our democracy. If you come across something that doesn't seem true, ask your Secretary of State or local elections official. Help us dispel myths and falsehoods by sharing information from trusted sources.

Finally, election offices across the country are facing staffing shortages. If you are able, I encourage you to consider volunteering at your local office. We are all responsible for the success of our democracy. Free and fair elections are at the very heart of that success. So stay safe, stay well, and remember to vote.

>> LILIAN ALURI: So I want to say thank you so much to Susan Diegelman and Kim Wyman for giving the message of encouragement and advice for making sure our votes count in this year's election. I'm really excited to introduce our next speakers. Dr. Douglas Kruse and Dr. Lisa Schur. To very talented researchers and professors. Douglas Kruse is a distinguished professor in the school of management and labor relations at Rutgers University, a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic research at Cambridge Massachusetts. And research fellow at the IZA institute for the study of labor in Germany. Dr. Lisa Schur is a professor and past chair of the Department of Labor study and implement relations at Rutgers University where she teaches p employment law and study. And they have conducted study for many years providing valuable insight into the experiences of voters with disabilities in elections.

And they're going to present what their most recent data says about the disability vote in the 2020 election. So take it away Doug and Lisa.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Thank you very much. I'm Douglas Kruse, I use he/him pronoun. I'm a white male with gray hair. And I also use a wheelchair due to paraplegia. And although the wheelchair is not visible on the screen here. I'm let Lisa start. You can introduce yourself and let me bring up the -- bring up our PowerPoint. Let's see here. Go ahead.

>> LISA SCHUR: Hi. My name is Lisa Schur. I use she/her. I'm a White woman and I wear glasses and I have brown hair.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Okay, let's see. Go ahead.

>> LISA SCHUR: All right. So we're going to do kind of a relay race here, well not a relay race but I'll start and hand it over to Doug. So questions we looked at when doing surveys are how likely were people with disabilities to vote? And the latest one was how were people with disabilities to vote in 2020? And then among people who voted, how many used mail in ballots or the option of voting early? And how did the 2020 disability turn out compare to past elections?

To answer these and other questions, what we did was we analyzed data from the November 2020 voting and registration supplement in the Census bureau's current population survey. And this contains responses from 18,898 voting eligible citizens. And that includes 11,000 citizens with disabilities. So we compared these data to 2016 when there was a sample of 93,794, which included 12,791 people with disabilities. Now, how do we define disability and how is it used here?

Disability is defined in the Census surveys by a "yes" answer to one or more of 6 questions. And they identify hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental or cognitive impairment, difficulty walking or climbing stairs, difficulty inside the home with activities such as dressing or bathing, and difficulty going outside of the home errands alone. The key result was that voter turnout surged in 2020 among people with disabilities. It was an increase of 5.9% points from 2016 and that's compared to an increase of 5.3 percentage points for people without disabilities. We see that 17.7 million people with disabilities voted in 2020? That represent 11.4% of all voters. So we see a real increase here.

And this surge in turn out occurred across all the major types of disabilities. The biggest change was actually difficulty going -- I'm sorry. Mental or cognitive impairment. But we saw the most people voting who had hearing impairments. However, that's the good news, but people with disabilities did remain less likely than people without disabilities to vote, although that disability turn out gap may have slightly narrowed.

So there's still this disability turn out gap in, 2016 it was 62.2%. And 2020 it's 76.5%.

So why do we see this turn out gap? This disability turn out gap that seems very persistent? It is not explained by lower interest in politics and elections among people with disabilities as shown in polls. Past research shows that the gap is partly explained by people with disabilities having Lowery sources, such as income and education. People with disabilities also tend to be more socially isolated. They're more likely to live alone. They're less likely to be employed. And that contributes to lower turn out. People with disabilities tend to have a lower believe that the political system is responsive to people with disabilities' needs. And the big factor is voting difficulties.

We worked with the EAC, the Election Assistance Commission on 2020 post election national survey with 2,569 respondents. And the results on voter turnout and method were very similar between this survey and the Census data. In addition, the EAC survey found that 1 in 9, 11% of voters with disabilities in 2020 experienced difficulties in voting, which was almost twice the rate of voters without disabilities.

So 11% of voters with disabilities had difficulty voting compared to 6% of voters without disabilities. Combined with the Census turn out data, we estimate that 1.95 million people with disabilities had some difficulties voting in 2020. Now, that is a significant improvement from a similar 2012 survey, when one quarter, 26% of voters with disabilities reported problems in voting compared to 7% of voters without disabilities. So we've really seen improvement, at least half of the improvement was due to greater accessibility of polling places since 2012, while the other half resulted from the shift to increased voting by mail during the pandemic.

Okay, go ahead. So I'm going to turn this over to Doug now.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: I'll just say little bit more about our findings on the 2020 voting here. People with disabilities are historically more likely than those without disabilities to vote by mail. About 5% more likely in general. The 2020 Census data showed that only one-fourth. 26% of voters with disabilities voted at a polling place on Election Day, the traditional method of voting compared to 31% of voters without disabilities.

Voters with disabilities were also less likely to vote early at a polling place or election office, 21% compared to 27%. They were more likely to vote by mail, 53%, just by half vote by mail compared to 42% for people without disabilities. Increase in voting by mail in 2016 and 2020 was actually very similar between voters with disabilities, and those without disabilities. 24 and 22 points. So, obviously, there was a big increase in voting by mail due to the pandemic that increased due to the pandemic was similar for people with or without disabilities.

Voting by mail is not easy for everyone. Sometimes people think, oh that's going to make it nice and easy. In our survey, we found 22% of over one-fifth of people with visual impairments reported difficulty voting with a mail in ballot which was obviously a concern. And I should say we're presenting lots and lots of numbers here. All of these numbers are available in reports we've done. We don't want to make people become -- as with our students, we don't want students to be overwhelmed by numbers. And so we don't want you to be overwhelmed by numbers.

But we think these numbers are important. We do a breakdown of demographic factors. The surge in turn out among people with disabilities occurred across major demographic categories. Women and men. Blacks, Hispanic/Latinx, white non-Hispanic, Latinx, and other. And age groups. People with disabilities were more likely to vote in 2020 than 2016. Also in past elections, there was no turn out gap between employed people with and without disabilities. The employment appears to play a very positive role in political inclusion, as well as economic inclusion of people with disabilities. They've written about this in the past.

Just a few more numbers here for you. We're really interested in getting to your questions, with any questions you may have. Voter registration. Eligible citizens with disabilities were 3 points less likely to be registered to vote than those without disabilities. 70% compared to 73%.

Among those who were registered, people with disabilities were 4 points less likely to vote. 88 compared to 92%. So the overall disability turn out gap that Lisa talked about is due both to lower registration, and lower turn out among those registered. We find that registered people with disabilities were more likely than those without disabilities to register at a Town Hall or election office. Less likely register in the Department of Motor Vehicles. And people with little bits less likely to have driver's license. And asked why they did not register, non-registered people with disabilities were more likely to give permanent no question about it illness or disability reasons. And they were not interested in the election or did not meet the registration deadlines.

Reasons for not voting, the Census Bureau asked people if you were registered to vote, and why did you not vote? Among this group, just one-third among people with disabilities said they did not vote because of illness or disabilities. Their own or their families. They were less likely than non-voters with disabilities to say they were not interested. They did not like the candidates or campaign issues. Or were too busy.

The percent saying they did not vote due to concerns about the coronavirus was similar for people or people without disabilities, which we found interesting.

The last few numbers here, obviously, different states and different rules on mail in ballot access. The increase in voter turnout appears to be larger in states made it easier to vote by mail. Still, it's interesting looking at the increase in voter turnout. The states that had no change in mail ballot access had increases of 4.9 and 5% when people with or without disabilities. The turnout, the increase was higher among people with disabilities and states that made it easier to request a mail ballot in 2020 compared to 2016.

7% increase. And in states where all voters were sent ballots in 2020, but not in 2016, in 7 states, one of those states being New Jersey where we live, they all received a ballot which in 2020 which we had not in 2016. And the surge was 6.7% in the states. So the increase in access to mail ballot seemed to help turn out for people with and people without disabilities.

The key takeaways here, to sort through all of this, we found voter turnout surged in 2020 among people with disabilities. So despite the barriers they often face, people with disabilities are just as interested in elections as people without disabilities, and they turn out to vote when motivated. A turnout gap did remain, however, between people with and without disabilities in 2020. And as Lisa said, combined with results on voting difficulties from our survey with the EAC last year, we estimate that 1.795 million voters with disabilities almost 2 million voters with disabilities encountered some type of difficulty voting in the 2020 general elections.

And these are just the people who voted. This is not people who may have not voted because of expecting some kind of difficulties.

More takeaways, people with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to use a mail ballot, and they increase in the mail ballot during the pandemic was similar between voters with and without disabilities. But mail ballots are important point and not a panacea. The large variation in types of severity of disabilities means that one-size-fits-all does not work for many people. Having options to vote will help the turnout of people with disabilities. This is a point Lisa and I made when people talked to us about this. Given the variation and the disability population, there would be lots of different methods. It's not one-size-fits-all. We need lots of different methods to academic lots of different types of disabilities.

Past research indicates inaccessible voting systems can discourage turn out, not only by making it difficult to vote, but also through the psychological effects by sending the message that people with disabilities are not welcome in the political sphere.

And, finally, the improved accessibility since 2012 is likely to have helped turn out among the people with disabilities in 2020. We were a bit surprised and very pleased to see the size of the improvement since 2012 in voting accessibility. And that reflects well on the efforts of disability advocate organizations. Such as ones we're involved with here. The EAC, election officials and policymakers. Obviously, there's a continued need for progress in improving accessibility and ensuring people with disabilities can easily exercise their right to vote. We welcome any questions and we want to make these results useful as possible for increasing access to voting among people with disabilities. And I will stop sharing there.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Hi, thank you so much both Doug and Lisa for sharing your research. Every time I hear you talk, I learn more from your research and think more about what it means for our advocacy work going forward. We do have lots of questions. So I'm going to start with one that kind of gets towards the beginning of your research process.

So, earlier in this -- or earlier in this session, and in the first part of today's event, we had a question for other researchers that I want to do ask y'all well. For potential voters that do not have access to the Internet or broadband?

>> LISA SCHUR: That is a really good question. We have worked with a survey research firm, SSRS, and this issue has come up. So they tend to split it between reaching people by telephone and reaching out through the Internet.

And that way, to try to get people who, you know, there's this digital divide for people with and without disabilities. So we want to make sure they can compensate for that.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Yeah, that's a really important point. In fact, that's a point we made when we presented the results to the election assistance commission that oftentimes, the solutions, the people offer for increasing turn out among people with disabilities have to do with some kind of electronic record, new website, new outreach through the Internet. But one of the points that we made is that, this is based on citizen says data. 18-point, almost 1 fifth of people with disabilities live in households without Internet access.

And that's compared to only 6% of people without disabilities living in homes without Internet access. So there's a real digital divide there. And that raises questions both for our research working with SSRS trying to reach people to find out their views. But also more importantly, for outreach efforts.

>> LISA SCHUR: By states and election officials, if they think you can just do it all on the web through the Internet, that's just not true.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Yeah.

>> LISA SCHUR: I think some of the digital divide, I mean, some of it is due to age that people with disabilities tend to be older than people without disabilities. And some of it has to do with poverty as well. And some of it has to do with people in rural areas who might not have good Internet.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Absolutely. Thanks for addressing that question. The next question that I wanted to ask is from Tim. Do you have a breakdown of your data by language? And Tim mentioned there's a huge weakness where the Voting Rights Acts section 203 languages written must completed with A.D.A. or HAVA requirements. So he also says often it is an either/or choice, not a both/and. So I was hoping you can peek to that and what is going on there? We can also tag this question to answer more fully if you don't have a feel you have a full answer.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Yeah, well, on the language issue, at least in survey we do, or surveys translate into Spanish, but just in Spanish, not into other languages. And onerously, I haven't done the breakdown. We haven't done the breakdown there of the Spanish language versus English language.

>> LISA SCHUR: But that would be a useful thing to do.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Yeah, that would be useful. And on the second question, I think we would have to think about that more. We don't have a quick response off the top of our heads. At least top of my head.

>> LISA SCHUR: No.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Thank you for answering. Thank you, Tim. You've given them a new idea for their 2022 research. So that's great. The next question I wanted to bring up is from Jean Martinez. Does the data reach out with people with cognitive disabilities, like autism, and more developmental disabilities?

>> LISA SCHUR: That's another really good question. I think the Census, the way they use cognitive or measure cognitive disabilities has some difficulties. They say do you have difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions? And that is very under inclusive measure. So if you don't -- you might have some sort of emotional or cognitive disability, that doesn't affect those particular activities. And you wouldn't be counted under that. So the answer is not enough, I think. That it will get some people with conditions such as autism, but it will miss others.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Yeah, that's right. And I should mention that the 6th Census question that Lisa presented, they do have that one question about cognitive disabilities. Those 6 questions are under inclusive. They don't capture it all. Because of that, in our survey, I should mention this. In the surveys we've done sponsored by the election assistance commission. We added a 7th question. Kind of hopefully a catch-all question. The question is, do you have any long-term condition or impairment -- I hope I get this right. That limits your ability to partner in work, housework, or any other major life activity? So we're trying to take, cast a wide net here and capture anything that would be covered by the A.D.A. in terms of limiting a major life activity. And that would capture some of those other conditions.

>> LISA SCHUR: Although, again, it would probably still be under inclusive for a lot of mental and emotional disabilities. But, yeah, it's an improvement, I think over what's there.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Yeah, thanks for sharing. I definitely think that's an interesting issue where the data might even, there might be more people in the survey to gather data to think more about how we can have a more inclusive definition. And I think that's a challenge that a lot of organizations recognize in other institutions. So with that, I'm going to ask one more question. And, hopefully, we have time for more afterwards. So the next question is what do you think led to the big increase in voter turnout in 2020? And that was another question from earlier. Sorry.

>> LISA SCHUR: I think it's a number of factors. I think there were people felt very passionately about this election. There was a lot of strong feelings about who was going to be President and other issues. And also because of the pandemic, a lot of states really made it easier to vote. So as Doug mentioned New Jersey, we were sent a mail in ballot and we could use it or not use it as we wanted. So making it easier, and taking away some of the barriers that people encountered definitely increased turn out among people with disabilities. So I think those two things. And I think also there has been improvement in the accessibility of polling places as well. That has been a concern over the years. And we did find that fewer people experienced difficulties in polling places.

There were also things like drop boxes and other things that people could use just to make it easier. As Doug said, the more options people have, the more choices they have, the higher, I think, turn out would be among people with disabilities, because one size does not fit all. Right? And you can say, well, if everybody just go to mail in vote, things would be great. But a lot of people with visual impairment or who are blind, mail-in voting may not be a good position and they might have a better time in person. So the variety of methods and variety of needs that people with disabilities have.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: I think Lisa named the most important things accounting for that increase. One thing we are very encouraged by, and as I say slightly surprised by was the improvement in voting accessibility. And I think that makes a difference. Back in 2012, we found 30%, almost one-third of people with disabilities who voted in a polling place said they had difficulties in doing that. That number decreased to 18% in 2020.

Now, 18% is still far too many, of course. But that's a big improvement. And that's really a testament to the work being done on accessibility. And I think that did help turn out. But as Lisa says, the interest in the election, and the general increase in the voting options, including voting by mail were really big factors too.

>> LILIAN ALURI: And I wanted to add a quick follow-up question. So Jacob asked do you think disability issues played a role in increased turn out or was it solely a reflection of more accessible elections in the national environment?

>> LISA SCHUR: I think that issues like healthcare. Healthcare was a big issue in this last election. And many people care about healthcare, but it's particularly salient for people with disabilities. This is really important getting access to healthcare. So I think that motivated a lot of people. I think some of the other policies that were up for debate, MediCare, accessibility, cutting benefits for example, for people and things like that, I think those were really big motivating factors for a lot of people with disabilities. I think also people with disabilities are also very engaged in the broad issues that the election was about.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Definitely.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: That makes sense, yeah.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Definitely. I want to ask one more question before we close with this presentation. What did your data say about the differences in experiences of white disabled voters versus disabled voters of color?

>> LISA SCHUR: Well, one of the things we looked at was time waiting in a polling place. And just looking among people with disabilities, we found that Black voters with disabilities waited twice as long in lines to vote in polling places than white voters with disabilities. And in some other measures, there really wasn't a difference.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Right. Yeah, Black voters with disabilities were no more likely than white voters with disabilities to describe difficulties in general.

>> LISA SCHUR: But this one --

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Except for the waiting in line.

>> LISA SCHUR: Yeah, waiting in line thing. But that's obviously a big issue, because if you have a disability, and it's really difficult for you to stand and there's no chair where you can wait, that might make it impossible for you to wait an hour and a half to vote or longer.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: And we did see the increase in turn out among from 2016 to 2020 among both white and Black voters with disabilities. Which is very encouraging. But there still does remain a turnout gap by disability status within those groups across racial categories.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Yeah, and I definitely think that confirms what we know anecdotally and the other data about voting population in general that voters will have compounding barriers with multiple identities and range of barriers that both voters of color and disabled voters experience. And so I definitely think that's an important point when we think about where should we be working and where kind of the gaps in our advocacy are going forward? And so, with that, thank you both so, so much for presenting your data and answering all these questions. Thank you so much.

>> LISA SCHUR: I want to say if people have nor questions for us, they can email us. And we would be happy to talk.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Absolutely.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Well, feel free to put your email in the chat.

>> LISA SCHUR: Yes, we will do that.

>> DOUGLAS KRUSE: Okay, we will do that. Thanks.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Thank you so much. Great! Up next we have the National Disability Rights Network's own Jack Rosen. Who is a Voter Engagement Specialist. And he's been a key part of planning this event. And will be sharing NDRN polling data which will ask a few key questions of people after they voted in 2020 to better understand perspectives on disability and disability issues among voters. So go ahead, Jack.

>> JACK ROSEN: Thanks, Lilian. Today we've heard a lot about the experiences of voters with disabilities at the polling place. We've heard about the numerous barriers they face and how they turn out last year in record numbers in spite of those barriers.

At NDRN, we want to explore something different and we want to know what drives the disability vote? So that our advocacy could better reflect the needs of those who we serve, and so that policymakers of all parties could do a little more to reach out to our community.

So we partnered with Lake research and The Tarrance Group to poll people with disabilities to see what mattered to them. And I forgot to put this at the top. Jack Rosen, he/him pronouns. I'm a White male with brown hair and beard. I am wearing a blue buttoned down shirt and I am in front of a gray and white virtual NDRN background. So getting to the methodology of this study. Lake Research and The Tarrance Group designed this pre-election survey from October 31 to November 3, 2020. Total of 2400 voters were reached nationwide who already voted in the 2020 election or were planning to on that upcoming Tuesday. 1335 interviews were conducted among voters reached by cell phone, including 600 interviews completed by text to online. 1,065 interviews among voters were connected on landlines. Issue questions reached a total of 100 nationwide as part of this survey.

Among the 2400 respondents, overall 359 self-identified as people with disabilities. Among the 1200 who were polled on the issues that mattered to them most, 1679 were people with disabilities. One other quick note on methodology. Due to some rounding of numbers in this presentation, they may not always add up to 100%. At times they may add up to 99% or 101%.

One thing we wanted to highlight, and we actually got a question about this earlier in the day is that the disability vote is a large swath of voters, but in some ways, it's each bigger than you might expect. 15% of voters in our survey self-reported as being a person with a disability. However, in additional 25% of voters reported having a close family member who is disabled. Well, it's important to understand that the priorities of people with disabilities and their family members are not always identical and sometimes can be contradictory. It's still worth noting just how wide of swath the population is touched by the issues impacting people with disabilities.

So getting into the results. I'm sure many of you want to know when voters with disabilities overcame those barriers we've discussed today and cast their ballots. Who did they vote for? Well, according to our survey, 51% of voters with disabilities voted for President Trump. And 47% voted for then candidate, now President, Joe Biden. In the swing state, the gap was notably a bit wider with 55% of voters with disabilities surveyed having voted for Trump. And 44% having voted for Biden. I should caution though that when looking at the swing states, we have a relatively small sample size. So if we were polling a large group there, we might not necessarily see the same gap.

Still, this was evidence of a shift from 2016. When couple of years ago, we conducted a survey also with Lake research asking people who they voted for, we found a plurality of people with disabilities voted for Secretary Clinton, 49% to be precise. While 46% voted for then candidate, Trump.

The down ballot votes were even more closely split. In fact, according to our survey, 49% of the voters with disabilities cast a ballot for Democratic Congressional candidates. And 49% voted for Republican Congressional candidates. The gap in the swing states well notable was a bit less pronounced than at the top of the ballot. 52% reported voting for Republican Congressional candidate. While 47% reported voting for a Democratic candidate.

In 2016, majority of voters in all states in our survey, 54% voted for the Democratic Congressional candidate. So we do, again, see evidence of something of a shift, the less pronounced and likely reflective of larger shifts in the electorate we saw in 2020.

So we know how they voted. But what issues mattered to voters with disabilities? Among voters with disabilities, perhaps unsurprisingly, the top issue was the COVID-19 pandemic. This shouldn't come as a surprise to many, given that the Disability Community is often among the most impacted by the pandemic from the disease itself, to being isolated, to not necessarily sometimes even being able to connect with service providers. This pandemic has had a real impact, and that's reflected by the fact it was the most commonly cited top issue.

The next important issue was the economy and jobs. Which 22% listed as their top priority. Healthcare was a bit of an interesting one. In the past, it has been a top issue among surveys of people with disabilities. And was surprisingly not this time with 15% of voters with disabilities ranking it as their most important issue. In contrast, in a survey conducted by Lake Research in 2019 months before the pandemic, 21% listed healthcare as their top issue.

So while we saw a shift away from healthcare here, I would caution that it's quite possibly a temporary shift, especially, given the overlap between the issues surrounding the pandemic, healthcare, and even medic care. One thing I want to highlight I previously said, the issues that are important to people with their disabilities and their family members can diverge. And here we have one interesting example. Only 10% of family members with those with disabilities listed Social Security and MediCare as their top issue. But 17% of people with disabilities in our survey did reflecting the fact that for people with disabilities, these Social Security and MediCare aren't just hypotheticals, but essential services.

So, we've heard what matters to people with disabilities and how they voted. But what do they actually hear from the candidates? The truth is the overwhelming majority of voters, not just those with disabilities do not recall hearing, seeing, or reading anything about the issues important to people with disabilities from either presidential or Congressional candidates. Among all voters when asked if they recall any mention of disability issues, the answer is a resounding no. 63% said they do not recall reading, seeing, or hearing anything from Congressional or presidential campaigns about the issues that are important to people with disabilities.

While African-American voters were notably than white voters, we still see a solid majority saying they did not see the campaigns prioritizing the issues that matter to voters with disabilities.

Now, the data on this slide is as I've said, looking at all voters, not just those with disabilities. Voters with disabilities, of course, are going to be more attune to the issues impacting them, and more on the lookout for statements about those issues. So what was their experience during the 2020 election?

The truth is they didn't notice much more emphasis on the issues that mattered to them. 41% of voters with disabilities recall hearing, seeing, or reading anything from the campaigns compared to 31% of voters overall. Women with disabilities were bit more likely at 46%. But, still, even among voters with disabilities in every category of our survey, the nose never dropped below 50%. Ironically in the battle ground states with ads and campaigning were flooded and less likely to see the issues that are mattered to their community. One small finding worth noting, among those who heard about the disability policy issues, there were two points more likely to have voted for Biden over Trump. 33% to 31%.

And yet despite not hearing about these issues, the majority of voters overall believed it's important that the candidate address them. Looking at voters overall, 86% rated as important and 60% saying it is very important for Congressional and presidential campaigns to address the issues that are important to people with disabilities.

African-American voters where are particularly likely to place an emphasis on these issues with 77% saying they thought it was very important.

And voters with disabilities clearly want to see more emphasis on the issues that mattered to them. 81% say it is very important for candidates to address these issues with and 12% saying it's somewhat important. With rounding that's 96% of all voters are disabilities rating it as important. Among age 50 and up. And 86% are rated as very important. And in the swing states which are inundated with ads and every conceivable issue, 79% of voters with disabilities said it was very important to see the campaigns address these.

So, just what do they want to see though? 76% of all voters overall strongly agreed that people with disabilities need to be involved in the decision-making process. 73% of voters want disability issues included in national discussions about healthcare. And 70% strongly believe candidates and campaigns should reach out to include people with disabilities.

43% of voters overall said that issues around disability and healthcare influence how motivated they are to vote. And 38% said that it impacts who they will vote for.

But among voters with disabilities, they unsurprisingly agree with these statements even more strongly. 81%, 81% believe candidates should reach out to and include people with disabilities. 79% believe America's leaders should fight stigma and bias that limit opportunities for people with disabilities.

And 85% believe that people with disabilities should be at the decision-making table. And notably, and I think there's one thing I like any candidates or policymakers attending to keep in mind. 54% of people with disabilities say those stances influence who they will vote for. And 50% said those stances were potentially lack thereof motivated how likely they are to vote. And clearly, pandemic has had an influence. When we surveyed voters in 2019, 40% strongly agreed these issues influence how motivated they are to vote. But in 2020, when we surveyed voters with disabilities again in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, 50% strongly agreed with that statement, that issues around disability motivate and influence how motivated I am to vote.

One last finding if you're wondering a bit more about what are disability issues? A major one is healthcare. 70% of people with disabilities in our survey, including 61% of response in the swing state are concerned that cuts to the healthcare or changes to the ACA would have a negative impact on people with disabilities. But that's not the only issue that matters to people with disabilities. From the economy and jobs, to immigration, to racial justice in the environment, to taxes, virtually every issue of our day has a disability component to it. So if you're a candidate or a policymaker, I can't encourage you enough to connect with the disability community on the ground where they're at.

Get in touch with activists at the local Protection and Advocacy agency. Get in touch with the folks at the local REV UP chapter on the ground in your state. Reach out to the folks advocating for inclusion. Develop a platform that includes what you do for the disability community. Because today's panel and presentation hopefully imparted information. But not who has always had their needs met. I'll now be taking any questions.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Hi, Jack. Thank you so much for those findings. We do have a few questions. I'm going to start by one that was sent earlier from Lucinda. And I know you mentioned something about the state-by-state data and swing states. But I was wondering does any of these data go down to the state level?

>> JACK ROSEN: Among voters with disabilities, I don't think so due to sample size. I think that it would be, you couldn't necessarily reliably infer on the state level. But I'll look into that to see if there's anything for Texas, given that's a larger state and we may have had respondents from it.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Awesome. And we had similar questions. So I'll go through some similar questions from Andrew. Andrew asks is there a breakdown of preferences by age as well?

>> JACK ROSEN: There were some. It was divided into over 50 and under 50. So that we could give those findings with a degree of statistical confidence.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Got you. I'm going to -- so Carolyn asked a question. And if you don't have the answer to this, then we can also flag the question and try to answer it after the event.

But Carolyn noticed the 17% concern about immigration compared to 10% to 12% for others. Is that meaning, does that mean the 17% focus on immigration among voters with disabilities and 10 to 12 among those without? I was wondering if you could go to that slide. Or if you have thoughts on why that is? If you don't, we can flag the question and make sure to answer it after.

>> JACK ROSEN: Off hand, I don't have thoughts, and I'm a little scared to try to share my slides again, in case I bump the interpreter off. I'm happy to follow-up on that question. But I would say that folks with disabilities are a diverse group that largely reflect the American population as a whole. So many times their priorities will be in line with what many voters care about.

>> LILIAN ALURI: All right. Looking through we've got a lot of different questions. Making sure I sort through all of them. One question that we had. So I'm curious about the data around people remembering disability being mentioned by candidates. And within the Disability Community, we pay close attention to when candidates mention disability in the election cycle. And in 2020, it seemed like there were a lot of gains and the presence of disability and campaign platforms, and debates, but the number of people that did not have disability and remembered disability being mentioned, to me, seemed pretty low. So I was wondering what you think, what do you think we can do to change that data point?

>> JACK ROSEN: Two things, I'd say. One, when candidates of either/or any party mention it, you know, there's activists, kind of course that highlight that, sticking within whatever rules may apply them if they work at a 501(c)(3) organization. Another one that can be done to encourage candidates to pick up a disability platform. As Curt Decker noted in the opening remarks today, it took several debates before we saw a question about disability and really I have to credit the great folks at Crip The Vote. And a lot of others who kind of did not let up and made sure that we saw those issues on the table. So I think the best thing you can do is encourage candidates to say what they will do for people with disabilities.

>> LILIAN ALURI: So we have two questions from Jacob. So Jacob asks what was your geographic breakdown for respondents? How did you wait for region? Did you find that results were in line with the general election results and their states and counties?

>> JACK ROSEN: So telephone numbers were drawn from the target smart voter file. And it was the sample was stratified geographically based on the proportion of likely voters in each region. And there were some further waiting based on 2020 exit polls to try to make sure the data accurately reflected the geographic make up. And I'm sorry, Lilian, can you remind me the second half of that question if I didn't address it?

>> LILIAN ALURI: I think you addressed it. So the question was basically, did you find the data reflected -- do you find that if any data was broken down by region, did that seem accurate to the election results for that region?

>> JACK ROSEN: It did. Though I'll acknowledge with any survey of voters. You'll always get a slight over sampling of people who reported voting when they did not. But that's common in pretty much any survey of voters.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Got you. Okay, so the second part of that question from Jacob was what states do you consider swing states?

>> JACK ROSEN: I believe there were 11 swing states that they looked at in 2020. Off hand, I believe they were New Hampshire, Minnesota, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas. And I believe they were considered as the states most likely to flip or be very close in 2020.

>> LILIAN ALURI: So I actually wanted to go back to the question. I had a thought on the question that we asked a bit earlier about engaging candidates. And I think one of the key thoughts that I'm having kind of reflecting on the data is particularly around the candidates mentioning disability, and then also really interested in disability inclusion that were highly approved of by the survey by the respondent, I would say most of us don't see that reflected on the policies and societies at-large. There's been progress made, but -- I think I see that and I'm slightly surprised by how that reminds me of the discrepancy between what people will say what they believe, but we see in reality when it comes to the policies that shape our lives. And so one thing I wanted to share is that REV UP, one of the things that REV UP does and partner with Protection and Advocacy as part of the National Disability Rights Network, to be hosting candidate forums. And we have a template as well. And that's one tool anyone can use to engage candidates more on issues and get them to start thinking, hey, this is an important -- you know, we are a big part of your voters. And these are the issues that are important to us. And those are issues that will be different for each community. And, Jack, I know that you encourage a lot of Protection and Advocacy agencies that do candidate forms. And if you can talk little bit about how those inform and what the purpose of those was?

>> JACK ROSEN: Yeah, NDRN, we've been proud to encourage our affiliates in the Protection and Advocacy network to engage with candidates through forums as a way to both educate them and the public. I'm proud to say they've been helping really lead the way there. And, in fact, they helped do forums in the mayoral election in New York City and non-partisan board election for providing support for the Democratic primary. They've also did forums in Albany New York, and Buffalo, New York. Asking the candidates what they will do if elected for people with disabilities. And I'm proud to say our South Carolina affiliate will do some forums as well in this fall. In more rural counties trying to connect with voters with disabilities there who have often been underserved. Up.

>> LILIAN ALURI: As a South Carolina born person, I'm really glad to hear that. So with that, we're going to close-up this session. Thank you so much, Jack, for sharing this data. And for sharing your perspective on the data as well. So thank you so much. So, next up we are going to have a quick break from the live panel and presentation. We're going to have two really important messages to watch from Wade Henderson, Civil and Human Rights and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. I'm really excited for these messages that we will share now and our next panel will begin at 3:15.

>> WADE HENDERSON: Greetings. I'm Wade Henderson, interim president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. It's wonderful to be with you for this empowering Disability Vote Summit. We know that for our democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all.

For too long, voters with disabilities have been overlooked and denied equal access to the ballot. But the truth is voters with disabilities are in every state, every community and in every party. All of us have an obligation to make sure voters with disabilities can cast a ballot that counts. With more than 38 million eligible voters with disabilities, the disability community can make a tremendous difference and has done so across our nation's history.

Disability rights are civil and human rights. We need the collective power of our coalition more than ever as state lawmakers turn their backs on voters and create egregious barriers to the ballot. This is our moment to act right now. We must urge Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the For the People Act to ensure voting is safe and accessible for all and free from racial discrimination. This isn't a new fight, but it's a fight we've won before and together we'll win it again. Thank you.

>> LILIAN ALURI: With those messages, I am beyond thrilled to introduce the next and last session of the Summit. So our last session will be a panel that will focus on the future of the disability vote asking what is our advocacy going to look like in the future, and how can we best strategize to build the power of the disability vote? Our moderator will be Marlene Sallo, Executive Director of the Disability Law Center, Massachusetts' Protection and Advocacy center. And lead of REV UP Massachusetts. Joining Marlene are Cedric Lawson, Field Director at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. Teresa Moore, who serves as the project director for two self-advocates becoming empowered projects. The SABE GoVoter project and SABE self-advocacy resource and technical assistance. And lastly, Gaylon Tootle, among his role, Gaylon is an independent living option for co-Chair of REV UP Georgia. Take it away, Marlene.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you, very much, Lilian. I hope everyone can hear me? Yes? Excellent. So today, we're going to cover the most important topic. I'm concerned about inclusion and advocacy. I know Lilian went ahead and she introduced, gave a little bio of everyone. But I like everyone to go around and I'll start first and provide your name and short description about yourself. So my name is as indicated, Marlene Sallo, I'm with the Disability Law Center. I'm Hispanic female with curly short hair. And I'm wearing a blouse with blue circles if I'm happy to be here today. And I will tap Cedric.

>> CEDRIC LAWSON: Thank you, Marlene. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Cedric Lawson. I am a fair skin, light skin African-American man in his 30s. I am the Field Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights where I've had the opportunity to work with a number of Disability Rights advocates on the national level as well as the state level. Mainly in transportation equity. But also in other areas, including fair courts advocacy and judicial nominations and voting rights. And I'm passing it to Gaylon.

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: Thank you, Cedric. My name is Gaylon Tootle. I am as Lilian said, independent living advocate here in Augusta, Georgia and I work for Walton option Center for Independent Living. I am a Black male. My pronouns are he/him. I am -- I also serve on several disability organizations and philanthropy. I'm also the first Vice President of the National Federation of the Blind of Georgia. And I serve on two disability counsel. One is the White House's office on public engagement which Mr. Richmond serve. I serve on his Disability Council with Emily and as well as fair fight access disability council. My focus is on improving the lives of folks with disabilities through voter advocacy. And any other advocacy because advocacy is my passion. I am a 61-year-old male who grew up in rural South. Who has seen this all before. And, again, that is the fire that burns in me because I'm not going back. Thank you.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you. And Teresa.

>> TERESA: Hello, my name is Teresa Moore from Phoenix Arizona. And I am a white female with blonde hair. I wear glasses. And I have a background that says "Vote, Vote" the SABE GoVoter project. And GoVoter.org. And my pronouns are she/her.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you, Teresa. So today, the Summit so far has covered everything from the turnout habit of voters with disabilities. To the political preferences, and the barriers they face when trying to be part of the electoral process. But we also need to look at the advocacy piece, both within the disability community and the broader Civil Rights community. So that we can all work to achieve the progress that we need, and so we don't go back in time.

So that progress, as we know, is a two-way street. And those will decide the laws need to meet us halfway which we're seeing in some states, and some states are not meeting us anywhere. They're basically trying to push us out. So my first question is for all the panelists today.

And I would ask what is the one thing you wish today's attendees, especially lawmakers knew about your community needs when it comes to being included in the political process? And Teresa, may I start with you?

>> TERESA MOORE: Sure. One of the things that works really well in the self-advocacy community and for voters with disabilities is an invitation. An invitation to be included, to be invited, and to welcome the ideas of the individual representing maybe themselves and others if they have those kinds of connections. And being respected for the ideas that they bring. And being able to see those ideas implemented. I think that models for people with disabilities that you care about what they care about, and that you do want to try to make improvements, especially, with things like ballot access and accessibility at the polls and different thing like that. I think people with disabilities want to see what you are willing to do and will leave quickly if they don't see action and move to the next person who will take action.

We are not going to spend a lot of time if our ideas are not respected.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you, Teresa. And Gaylon, what would you add?

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: Wow, I could think of several things.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Yes, you can. [Laughter]

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: We'll start with this one, and this is something I constantly stump for when I'm talking about, I've spoken with the Vice President before about this. I've spoken with several of the disability rights organizations, as well as you were saying earlier, the Civil Rights organization. I think it is important that our message be more central in their messaging. In other words, a lot of times we hear about the Black, the poor, the Brown, and I'm all of that. And I'm also blind. I'm all of that. But I feel that if we're going to win this fight, and we have no choice, we must win. We're going to have to implore them to put our messaging more central. Because what happens is if our message of disabilities and accessibility is more central to the messaging, then I think we can get more of those friend supporters. A lot of supporters, you know, they support the voter access process. They support fair voting. But sometimes you can beat them up too much if we just stay on the racial component now. I'm certainly about that, because the racial component is real. It is here. Like I said I grew up in rural Georgia and they will Pat you on the back and are won't let you go in their home because I grew up working for them so I know how they think in Georgia. But if our messaging is more central, I think we would have a better chance, because every question I get, when I'm in those spaces, especially the Vice President ask Gaylon, what about coalition building and well in Georgia we do a great job. But we've got to do it on a nationwide level.

So my biggest thing is, I want our plight to be more central to the messaging. And I think we could probably do a little better with getting folks on the fence who may want to support voter rights. But kind of over here, because we all know that racial issues in this country on a high-level. So anything we can do to get our message in there, we need to do that. I think that is something that needs to be central to what we're doing moving forward.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you, Gaylon. Listening to what Teresa and Gaylon said, Cedric, how would you add to this question that was posed?

>> CEDRIC LAWSON: First thing I put forth is call of action to everyone. If you haven't, make sure you have reached out to your federal decision-makers, as well as your state-based decision-makers when it comes to of course on the federal level, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and For the People Act. And for the respective voting rights activity that may be happening in your state. Of course, in over 3 dozen states, there has been voting rights legislation introduced ever since the beginning of this year. So chances are there is voting rights legislation to engage your state representatives on. And of course there's the federal legislation. In addition as advocates, I want to tag team with Gaylon on what he had mentioned in terms of intersecting identities. So many of us here in this space are coming from a place of intersecting identities that are marginalized. While we know the root of so much of this voter disentrance meant is anti-Blackness. We have an opportunity in sharing with those individuals empowered from the perspective of a person with a disability why this is so deeply important.

In addition to that, considering that there's so many identities that intersect with being a person with a disability regardless of your race, your gender, your sexual orientation, your income status, that gives the opportunity to work with the people with disabilities across the spectrum and across coalition to understands that we can work together with people of faith, with people of color constituency groups, with environmental groups. Understanding that our interest are all tied to keeping this democracy open for all.

So in addition to the call to action to those decision-makers, I would also implore everyone to think about someone you haven't reached out in your community that leads a constituency. Whether they are Jewish leaders, or they're from the Islamic community, any faith leaders, any youth or student groups. Understanding that there's students with disabilities. There's people with different disabilities. So that connection is already there. If you haven't yet reached out to someone who is not in your coalition or not a part of your work, reach out to them, because inevitably, there are people with disabilities in their spaces.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Correct, disability is an intersecting identity and it cuts across everything. And some people don't realize that. So it's up to us to educate them. And so along the lines of like tapping into the groups that are in our communities, you know, sometimes we need to understand that if we can't wait to the last-minute to reach out to the groups to start making that connection. Because it's about relationship building. It's about building that trust and commonality in order for you to be strong together. Because we're stronger together. So along those lines, just watching some videos you have online, Gaylon, I know you understand this concept very well. So I was wondering if you could share with us, like how does this ultimately work on the ground in Georgia with all of the voter suppression and actions that are taking place? And then how do we even apply in Texas if anyone has been on the ground in Texas doing the work? It's time for us to really band together.

>> GAYLON TOOTLES: Well, you have to start early. In Georgia, we never stopped. We started out last year, voter disability election week. And we began to getting out and registering folks to vote. And then we started planning for the upcoming election. We were very fortunate enough to link up with a young lady who was helping our co-Chair support what we call a grassroots connectors programs. Georgia is basically a rural state. We have maybe 4 Metropolitan cities in the state. So what we found out that we needed to get boots on the ground in the country. And, again, me being in front of the country, and understanding a lot of how that thing works down there, we were able to put together a network of young folks, and older folks like me, through what we call our grassroots connectors, our grassroots Gen-Z program. And we had people going out into these rural communities. We did phone banks. We did personal, in-person events. We did whatever required for us to reach the people, and understanding that in most cases, it's grassroots. We believe in that approach, because that's how we get our people. We don't have very good transportation network here. So we linked up with local churches, faith based organizations. We put drivers out there. We provided them with stipends to go and pick up the people. And we did not stop.

We continue to do that throughout the general election and the special election, which was held in January. So we know that through grassroots connecting, getting young people involved, getting your faith-based organizations involved, and, again, we reached out also to -- we work with Black voters matter. We worked with new Georgia project. We work with all voting is local. In other words, anybody doing any type of work we're doing as it relates to get our folks into place so they can exercise their right to vote securely and freely and accessibly, we would talk to them and work with them. So, again, that's what's really important as we move forward. Texas is seeing. So of the same stuff we're seeing. And one thing I would like to say about that though is that while a lot of these language in these voting bills seem to be the same. So it look like there were bunch of ghost writer writing this stuff. So there needs to be a combined effort on their part and there needs to be a combined effort on our part. So with the understanding, we're simply not going to go back. And that requires the mentality I have as an advocate having grown up in the '60s, and like I said I've seen all this stuff before and there's nothing new. I'm down on my feet delivering all the needs. So with that mantra, we push for the change and we understand all hands-on deck. And that is the mentality I feel is the best way to approach dealing with these folks. With the understanding that you're not dealing with the people that we used to deal with. The legislators are not the same. All these voter integrity stuff is built on a lie. But you have to go a little further, because we have to get our people registered to vote. Here in Georgia, we're the most disenfranchised voters in the state. Blind voters. We can't read our ballots and that's a non-start. A.D.A. says we should have that right. I don't want to take up too much. But you have to be willing to press. And you have to understand the environment in which you're working. These people don't -- these people really don't care, because if they did, they wouldn't tell you you can't have water or a snack on a July day in the State of Georgia down south when 90-something degrees.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Yes, sir. Teresa, I know you are part of the SABE project which I have been working with for the past three and a half year and you yourself have been on the ground trying to get the vote out and representing, you know, the need and the right to be able to vote independently and privately. And so I would love to hear from you what it is that you do yourself along with other state members to make sure people with disabilities know what their rights are when it comes to voting at the polls.

>> TERESA MOORE: Well, one of the things that we do and that we spend a great deal of time on is making sure that individuals know that our training is available to them. A lot of voters when we first started the project, and it continues today, say they don't really understand how it all works. And they don't have a connection with voting. It's not natural for some people to do that, because they've had so many decisions taken away in their life. And have other people that maybe in charge of their life, like guardianship and other things. And having the opportunity to learn what it's like to have this power to make a change that could make things better for people is sometimes a new concept to people.

So building the confidence of people in their abilities to make good decisions for themselves for their lives is the place that we start the personal story, as always a great beginning point for a lot of people. What are the issues they're having in their everyday life? And starting from there, because they may not draw those natural connections that people who live this every day get.

And so helping them to connect to the points, and to the legislators based on what interest the legislators and the issues that they're working on. Thinking about thing like climate change and thing like that for people's health, you know, sometimes it's not a natural draw to make those connections. So helping people understand it really is your issue to think about some of these things.

And helping people put their connection and personal story into it. And then finding help or mentoring for them to get help with their issues. We make lots of connections and we know a lot of people in our lives. But how have we built connections with the people and made really powerful introductions so people can build those skills that they need to start to speak up and have somebody that's really going to listen to them and care about what they care about. And then take it to the next level where they actually see something that they want to change, take it through the voting process, help people understand what are in the bills. And we like to do really great information sheets that are in plain language, trying to reach as many people as possible with and without disabilities who don't understand the voting process and what the issues truly are, and breaking it down how this affects your daily life. This bill will change your life if it goes this way or that way. And how that would affect you.

We've been able to successfully do that for a number of years and help voters and their supporters, and those that question whether they really understand it. You know, being able to listen to a person in a training talk about how important it is for them to vote and the issue that's important to them.

Some of the supporters are their staff and their family members. And they get to listen to individuals speak up for the first time about what's important to them, and giving them that safe place to do that where we can facilitate the conversation and help people talk about what's going on in their lives. And make that connection. And we do that. It's kind of like a one-person at a time approach. But also a movement at a time approach. Because as people see each other and model for each other, how that is done, we gain power and control over our lives.

>> MARLENE SALLO: I like that. One member at a time approach, but it's also a movement approach. I love that! And have you found from your own personal experience that this approach has actually helped to inform elected officials so they can start being a bit more inclusive when it comes to people with disabilities or with developmental disabilities to be exact?

>> TERESA MOORE: Well, I've left hand to some self advocates that I totally got involved in politics and really have found their niche, as they say to get involved and have a connection. Relationships that are built on a form of trust and respect are always powerful. And they have a tendency to last for a really long time. And we do want to be that trusted person that can say to them, this is my issue. Or this may not be my issue, but I know how to connect you to people that this is their issue who can help us talk about this in a completely open environment with whole hearts going forward, and making change, and giving good ideas that, you know, have been well-thought-out. And just having us involved in their lives changes the way that they look at things, how they start to question, and look at their community and say that's not really accessible. How can I improve that starting to look at the neighborhood level and putting dollar in places and different things that neighborhoods need to invite people to participate and be more open to them. I think that's one of the biggest ways that people with disabilities, when we build a personal relationship, we are great influencers, and we may not even realize it. But that's what's so great about it is that we don't have to have the credit to get the work done.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Love it. Thank you so much. And Cedric, I don't want to leave you out of this, because you've done some fabulous work as an activist, you're fighting for transportation equity, and you've done that. Both within the Disability Community and part of the broader Civil Rights Movement and communities. And we all know Disability Rights is Civil Rights. Hello! And so, what are some of the successes that you had and how do you think what you learned from those fights now can be transferred and applied for the ongoing fight for political inclusion of all people with disabilities?

>> CEDRIC LAWSON: Absolutely. I go back to coalition in that we have to work together in order to achieve these victories. We're in a place in the 21st Century in the United States that no one constituency alone can win on a political battle. So whether it is for voting rights, or whether it's for a fair and accurate count of the Census and of course that is still ongoing in terms of political representation and the like. Whether it comes to big democracy-based issues, whether it comes to justice and policing activity, which of course we're fighting for on the Hill. Whether it comes to environmental activity, natural, people with disabilities are impacted by all of these pieces. However, it's our necessity to work together to advance these jeopardy items for civil and human rights. Therefore, when people with disabilities, people with disabilities are at the table, I encourage you all to ensure that all ways to maintain accessibility for these activities of the democracy, whether it's voting, whether it is engaging in the Census, whether it is engaging in the ability to secure economic security through the pandemic and otherwise, ensuring that you are always at the table in these conversations is much like the curb cut piece that Teresa brought up, which is what is helpful for people with disabilities as a constituency is helpful for all of us in society. And we know that at the Leadership Conference, which is why we work to ensure people with disabilities are constantly involved with our task force activities, and activities for example, like we're talking about today with voting rights. So in coalition and strength, and we cannot win without coalition. And, finally, to have a friend, you need to be a friend. So there are 3 points I want to impart in terms of what is so important about coalition. In coalition in strength, as I've mentioned in this time, we can't win alone. We can't do it without coalition at this point. And in order to have a friend, you have to be a friend. So what does it mean to consistently engage with each other on our own interest, things that are important to us, ensuring that we have the opportunity to participate broadly in activities throughout or communities and within our country. But then also understand how we can be helpful to others in struggles they're moving on. So not just in voting rights or other activities related to democracy. But then also broadly with civil and human rights, whether it's comes to justice and policing, or education equity, or ensuring there is access to resources throughout this pandemic.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Thank you so very much, Cedric. I appreciate that. And Gaylon, I'm going to give you the last question because we have 5 minutes here.

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: Okay.

>> MARLENE SALLO: I really want to hear from you, so today we've heard about the some of the barriers that blind voters face when casting their ballots. We know that's an ongoing issue here in Massachusetts. We've actually been able to get accessible voting from home. And the City of Boston, we just got a settlement agreement this week. So the City of Boston is allowing voters to vote from home and electronically with accessible ballots. So we're working on it.

But barriers exist in all aspects of our life, right? Including advocacy itself. And so how do you think activists within the disability movement can be more inclusive of individuals with visual impairments or who are blind? Because we see it all around us that sometimes it's an afterthought.

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: Well, first of all. Title II says that we all should have public access. So it's already a law. Of course, it's within the A.D.A., which is you know what that is. It says, it puts a template there, but you still have to work it. But it says that we as all public activities or public entities have to be accessible to all folks.

So as I've told the Vice President when she asked me, and I'm sorry I have to hearken back, but she asked me if there's one thing she could do right now, what would that be? And what I told her was, it would be to bring in the Department of Justice, because for us not to be able to review our ballot, to ensure that it's printed exactly what we ask it to print, that's a breach of the law. So it's on the books. So the Justice Department should come down to Georgia, and do whatever they do, i.e., file a lawsuit. And we have center for poverty center and we're partnered with them. But it's simply that is why I have the mentality that I have. And that is you guys know this is the law. And this is not new, because we talked about this last year. So I just want folks to basically do what the law says. Let's work together and get this done, because this is the law. A don't know at this point, because having pushback against these guys for so long down here, it's just simply a matter of probably going to require judicial action, because they simply don't want to do it. So what we need from everybody is to understand we're in it together. "Nothing About Us Without Us." So if one section of the community is being discriminated against, then all of us are. And if that is what we're here to do, to improve the lives of folks with disabilities, then we implore you to get there out there with us and make sure they enforce A.D.A. Title II. That's a simple fix. It's the law. And if we do it, as Cedric said, in mass as a group, we can get it done. And while we're looking at that, I just saw where we're going to do a brief thing with the freedom voter act that was dropped in the city today. It's important to get out and fight for that. If we reach out to our legislators and let them know you need to pass this bill in the Senate, then that would really get rid of a lot of the unfair practices, i.e., the keeping folks from being able to vote. This would save us a lot of grief. So get in touch with your legislators. Speak to them frankly. And encourage them to, encourage everyone who has a stake in this to get out there so we can improve our opportunities to vote. Because voting, we need to work on this thing. Because for people like me in mind, which is Black Brown disabled folk in State of Georgia, our lives do depend on that we need to vote freely and securely.

>> MARLENE SALLO: May I'd be a little rebel rouser? And you're going to vote, reach out to the secretary's office and say this is the accommodation I need. We have the simple language on the Massachusetts P&A website and start bombarding them to see if they wake up and start making changes at the state level with the legislation.

>> GAYLON TOOTLE: And this is why I have to say, this is why I was thinking about the mentality. This is not new. I spoke to the secretary on many occasions and told him it will not work, because they did come up with a Band-Aid for the blind voter where they were allowed to bring in the device. Well, most blind people and seniors, they don't have that technology, so they're not going to be able to and it will not work. So I spoke to the secretary on many occasions. But believe me, all hands-on deck. And I would love to get some of the language you have and the verbiage so we can incorporate it. Because it's all about registering folks, educating folks, and giving them the power and information they need so they can use the power. So we thank you for that. And we look for all and any help we can get.

>> MARLENE SALLO: Sounds great. Thank you very much, everyone. And we've reached our mark, well, we're over the mark of 3:51. I want to thank Cedric, Teresa, and Gaylon today for such a fabulous discussion. I wish we could have gone on for at least another half hour. Thanks for attending this conference.

>> LILIAN ALURI: Thanks so much to all of you. I agree that I could have watched you all have this conversation for a lot longer. So thank you, all. One of the things I really, this is Lilian by the way. One of the things I really appreciated from the last conversation was the focus on working in coalition with different communities. Different faith communities, different communities of color, and as Cedric said, we cannot win without coalition. And that's definitely, I think it's been a foundation and attributed foundation of our work. So thank you so much to every single speaker, panelist, everyone who worked together to make this event happen. Thank you so much to all of the attendees here today who have spent part of your day with us. I hope that you are going to end this Summit with some new thoughts and perspectives, and inspiration on getting out the disability vote. And making sure that disabled voters have full and equal access to the ballot.

And the conversation started today. Will hopefully be ones that will continue through the coming months and the coming year. As a reminder, this Summit is recorded. So the slides and transcript and recording will be available after. Again, as we mentioned earlier, this week is national disability voter registration week. And so you can check out all of the other events taking place at a website I'm going to post in the chat. www.AAPD.com/NDVRW. Also a quick plug, if you're in California, make sure to cast your ballot. And the recall election that ends today at 8:00 p.m. local time. So make sure you get your ballot in. And then I'm really excited for this last part of today's Summit to close out our Disability Vote Summit and send us off into our communities. I'm going to hand it over to my boss, Maria Town, CEO and President of American Association of People with Disabilities.

>> MARIA TOWN: Thank you so much, Lilian. I have a lot of thank yous to say. But before I get into those, I am going to transcribe myself. This is Maria Town, President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities speaking. I am a White woman with shoulder length brown hair. I'm wearing red lipstick and a red dress. And I have a background behind me that that shows Black hands holding up protest signs that says vote like your life depends on it. And it does. And that is a quote from Justin Dart, the grandfather of the A.D.A. And so let me get back to the important thank yous. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this Summit. And I want to especially thank Lilian Aluri and Jack Rosen who have led in the organization and planning efforts. Thank you so much to our panelist and presenters for sharing your experience and insights with us. And for really setting a vision for how we can continue to build the power of the disability vote. In 2022, when we look at new disability voter turnout data, I want that 7% gap closed. And I'm sure that after this Summit that we can actually achieve that goal. Thank you to all of the organizers who are out there and part of national disability voter registration week engaging with the voters. We have over 100 events planned across the country for national disability voter registration week.

I want to say thank you to the National Disability Rights Network particularly for co-hosting this event with us. And for helping to make the whole event possible.

We ended this discussion, or today's Summit with a discussion of what we need to do in the future to ensure that we can continue to advance and enfranchisement to make sure we don't go backwards, which after hearing all of the data from today, we know is all too close at hand. We are risking, everything is so fragile in our democracy. And as advocates, we're always looking back at what we've learned and we're looking ahead for further accomplishments and to the next goal post. But I am preaching and singing to the choir here today on this Summit, because I know that none of our other goals will be possible, goals around healthcare, goals around transportation, goals around education, around employment will be possible if we don't do everything we can to protect and defend, and advance our right to vote. I'm going to hearken back to Gaylon. You know, we're not going to maintain our democracy through being nice. We've got to fight in the time to fight is now.

At the federal level for the John Lewis voting right advancement act. At the state level to prevent all of these voter suppression bills that are getting passed left and right. And even federal legislation that doesn't explicitly focus on voting rights. Today we heard eyesight quite a bit about the digital divide and how that limits people's abilities to make informed decisions and cast their ballot. We didn't hear things about physical infrastructure that all of which prevent people from getting to the polls. But there's a giant infrastructure package going through Congress right now and that includes a subsidy for broad band Internet and mandate to make all legacy transit system accessible. In addition to passing the John Lewis right act, Congress needs to pass that infrastructure bill, because our Civil Rights, our civic engagement depend on it.

One of the reasons I put that Justin Dart quote in the background, vote like your life depend on it because it does. It's because I am acknowledging the present moment. We are still in a global pandemic. One that has drastically impacted the disabled people, particularly disabled people of color. In the past year and year-and-a-half, we had to say over, and over, and over again that our lives deserve to be protected and that we deserved to be saved as states have said that disabled people don't deserve critical medical resources.

Voting is a way that we as a Disability Community, a community that is too often silenced and shunned into the shadows. Voting is a way that say we are here. We deserve to be here and we deserve to be in a world that works for us and with us. Voting is a way that self-direct our own lives. And have a say in so many of the things that are important to us. It is the way that we shape our future. And so with that, again, I want to say thank you. And I want to encourage all of you to dream and work towards a future where disabled people of color, LGBTQIA+ people, two spirit organizers and people across the broad spectrum of disabilities can live and work in a nation that allows them to thrive and fully allows their voice to be heard in every aspect of life. So with that, it's right at 4 o'clock. Again, thank you to everyone. We're going to competent to work together to build the power of the disability vote. And we're going to vote like our life depends on it, because it does. This is both a marathon and a Sprint. And we are going to change the shape of our nation as we run towards the finish line. Thank you so much.