Minutes: NASS Voter Participation Committee Meeting
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM
July 15th, 2016
Nashville, TN

Participants:
Hon. John Merrill, AL (Co-Chair)
Hon. Nellie Gorbea, RI (Co-Chair)
Hon. Wayne Williams, CO
Hon. Denise Merrill, CT
Hon. Brian Kemp, GA
Hon. Lawerence Denney, ID
Hon. Paul Pate, IA
Hon. Kris Kobach, KS
Hon. Alison Lundergan Grimes, KY (by proxy)
Hon. Tom Schedler, LA
Hon. John Wobensmith, MD
Hon. Matt Dunlap, ME
Hon. Ruth Johnson, MI (by proxy)
Hon. Steve Simon, MN
Hon. Jason Kander, MO (by proxy)
Hon. Linda McCulloch, MT
Hon. Barbara Cegavske, NV
Hon. Bill Gardner, NH
Hon. Jon Husted, OH
Hon. Jeanne Atkins, OR
Hon. Pedro A. Cortés, PA
Hon. Tre Hargett, TN
Hon. Carlos Cascos, TX
Hon. Spencer Cox, UT
Hon. Jim Condos, VT
Hon. Natalie Tennant, WV
Hon. Ed Murray, WY

Secretary Merrill called the meeting to order at 9:00AM. He announced that the first order of business was consideration of 5 NASS partnership renewal requests, and 1 new partnership request. He noted that NASS partners must be non -partisan, non-profit and non-issue advocacy groups, and the goals and activities of the group must align with the mission of NASS. He added that partnerships are reviewed by the Committee biennially. He also noted that NASS sent out the partnership materials to the Committee and did not receive any questions or concerns.

Action Item:
Secretary Pate moved to approve the NASS partnership renewal requests from Capitol Forum, Close Up Foundation, Kids Voting U.S.A, National Student/Parent Mock Election, and Youth Leadership Initiative, and the new partnership request from Inspire U.S. The motion was seconded by Secretary Cegavske and passed unanimously.

Secretary Merrill introduced Alexandra Collins, Outreach Manager from the Georgia Secretary of State's Office, to present on Georgia's Student Ambassador Program. Ms. Collins noted that the goal of the program is to provide high school students an opportunity to engage as leaders within their schools and communities. She said the objectives include having students engage in and learn about Georgia Civics, promoting and increasing voter registration among young voters, and encouraging students to volunteer and give back to their communities. She described the different events and activities that take place through the program and said the goals for the 2017-2018 school year are to partner with all 159 counties in Georgia and have over 250 schools participating.

Secretary Gorbea introduced Dana Chisnell from the Center for Civic Design, and Benjamin Shaykin from the Rhode Island School of Design, to discuss ballot design and usability. In her presentation Ms. Chisnell discussed how poor ballot design impacts voter confidence that they voted their ballot how they intended. She noted that design problems frustrate voters, undermine confidence, and contribute to Election Day problems. She noted that problems with ballot design include splitting contests into different columns, using arrows instead of bubbles on paper ballots, and leaving disqualified candidates on the ballot. She noted that a lot of progress has been made across the country in improving ballot design, but that a number of issues still exist. She encouraged members to review the EAC report on Effective Design for the Administration of Elections. She also encouraged members to utilize the free Field guide to Ensuring Voter Intent which is available on the Center for Civic Design website.

Mr. Shaykin noted that he recently taught a course at the Rhode Island School of Design called "Votelab." He said the goal of the course was to get students involved in the design of election materials. He discussed how students reviewed existing election materials and explored how to redesign those materials to make them more user friendly. He said students met with election officials and design experts, and were able to focus on the design of different types of election materials. He described how students redesigned signage in a polling place to address issues such as small font, too much text, and lack of standardization, and said the redesigned materials were later implemented at that polling location. He also noted that he had the opportunity to provide feedback on election materials to be used with new voting systems in Rhode Island.

Secretary Pate shared with the Committee that his office hosted a voter engagement summit in Iowa with representatives from colleges and universities throughout the state. He said that meeting is related to Turbo Vote efforts to get college students to register to vote. He noted that the summit provided an opportunity to engage in depth with students and gather feedback. He said his office will be following up after the election to measure the success of this effort.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50AM.