Please stand by for realtime captions. okay thank you

We get expert guest speakers every month to deliver fresh, relevant content. My favorite part of every webinar is when her audience and speakers engage in a question and answer session diving deep into your challenges and ideas. Please use the chat box provided to send us your questions. So, let's dive into our agenda. Today, Michelle Bishop is going to talk to us about some of the laws that are in place regarding voters with disabilities. She will discuss some of the unique challenges those voters face. And, she will talk about what nonprofits can do to help advocate for accessibility. Then, will hear from Molly Broadway from disability rights Texas. She'll talk about their work supporting voters with disabilities and how to be a better ally. Lastly, we will hold our question-and-answer sessions with our speakers. This webinar is being recorded, the slides and recording will be sent to all attendees as well as posted on our website for you to revisit and share.

Now, I would like to introduce Michele. Michelle Bishop is from National Disability Rights Network. And she is a voting rights specialist where she provides training and technical assistance to the protection and efficacy network on voting rights access. Voting rights and access to the vote for peaceable with disabilities. Michelle works with the coalition for civil rights community in Washington to see to ensure a strong federal policies regarding voting rights and election demonstration. For her adventures on Twitter, user handle at Michelle votes. All right. I want to double check that our audio here is working. For everyone on the line or anyone, okay, we can hear you. Thank you, Sylvia. We have somebody on here who needs a little assistance with calling in. With that said, I will turn the microphone over to Michelle to get us started with the content for today. Thank you, Michelle.

Thank you so much Caitlin. Thank you everyone for joining us. We have a lot to cover. Fortunately, I am a fast talking New Yorker. Will get through it. But please don't hesitate in the Q&A, if you have any questions, this will be a broad overview. First, let's start with the boring stuff. I did I end up here? I work for an organization called national disability rights network. In terms of the amazing work that you do, the only thing you need to know about us is we are a nonprofit membership organization for the protection and efficacy system which are federally mandated to protect the rights of peoples with disabilities. We are the Washington DC arm. I help them do the work they are doing around voting rights. What exactly is the network? These are federally mandated. They were established by Congress to protect the rights of people with disabilities through legal support, Okafor and education. There are 57 PNA's. Each of the territories, as well as 57th in the Southwest United States. Collectively, that makes our network the largest provider of legal advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States. Why is this relevant to you? One of the programs that PNA. It was established by the health America vote act for PNA's to ensure full participation in electoral process for people with disabilities. No matter where you are, there is a PNA and that is working on making sure that people with disabilities have access to the vote at every point in the process from the time you go to get registered to you successfully cast a ballot. So, we will get into some of the details you probably want to hear about that. I want to pause and say why is a disability vote so important? Why are we bothering to Mike about this in the first place? There were, in 2016, 35.4 million people with disabilities who were eligible to vote during the 2016 election. 35.4 million. That is a huge voting block by any standard. Interestingly enough, the voter turnout with people with disabilities was lacking about 6% behind their fellow, nondisabled, Americans. That number goes up and down a little bit. It hovers right around that 6% all the time according to Rutgers university. The 6% doesn't sound like a lot but it represents about 3 million voters missing from the American electric. 3 million is a big number. When you think about that, that is enough to turn just about any election we've had in the United States
on its head. I'm sure we would be hard-pressed to name elections that have had a bigger margin than 3 million voters. That is important to us. We want people with disabilities to be engaged for I hope, for those of you doing voter registration and voter outreach who aren't specifically to the disability community, all you need to hear is that 35.4 million eligible voters with disabilities in the United States. And no, whoever it is you are targeting, wherever it is you are working, whether you intend to, you're coming across people with disabilities. We cross cut all other demographics in the United States. We are part of every other voting block. We are located everywhere in the United States. You will come across people with disabilities. So, it is helpful to know some information we'll give you this afternoon so whatever work you're doing to get voters ready, to get them activated, you are prepared to speak to voters with disabilities. Enough of that. I will make a better case in the Q&A. Let's talk about some of the ins and out. Of a listing of five, I did stop. Five notable voting accessibility laws. I will not read them on the slide. I will give you a quick 2-4 point over you. We will use as framework. Let's talk about the voting accessibility for the utterly and handicapped act. This act is, where voter access starts in the United States. First, it was passed in 1984. Before in 1984, we didn't have federal laws guaranteeing elections will be accessible. Also, it comes 6 years before the American with disabilities act which didn't become law until 1990. This truly is a beginning. This act requires all polling places are physically accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections. Unfortunately, it comes with loopholes which allows for another way of testing a ballot if no accessible location is available. This is where you get good ideas like, if you don't have absentee, a people with disabilities can use that as a reason to vote absentee or criticize voting. It gives a lot else for making sure your polling places are accessible. Is a trail in, they don't often identify. There to be acquiring disabilities one way or another. That means that your elections official should actually have resources available that could come in handy for the work you're doing. Let's skip forward to 1990 and talk about the ADA, the American with disabilities act. This is the behemoth when it comes to voter access. The ADA is one of the largest and most sweeping pieces of civil rights legislation to pass in the United States. This is what set it is illegal to discriminate in hiring practices based on disability which means before 1990, you could legally discriminate in your hiring practices against people with disabilities. Let that sink in. I hope that horifies you the way it it horrifies me. Nevertheless, we have the ADA, now. It lays out the architectural access. This is a piece of legislation that says if you have stairs, you have to have a ramp or elevator. All of those standards, of which there are many, apply to polling places. I have a link in the slide, you will get this PowerPoint and you will have access. That is the checklist for polling places that the United States Department of Justice created to help you take a look at your polling places to make sure they're accessible to people with disabilities. They put in that leg work to make it a lot easier to assess.

Something I wanted to note about the ADA, there is misinformation out there about the American's with disabilities act. It says small business will be able to keep up because of the make these modifications. If they don't have a ramp, they have to get a contractor to pour cement in. Some of these silly things we believe about 88. This legislation is beautifully written. It took those things into account which means you can do the lowest cost modification. You don't have to come and pour cement for a ramp if you can put down a portable ramp or blocks of wood that are going to work just as well. This applies to polling places as well. This is something we hear a lot from elections officials that they don't own the locations you use. They can't force them to comply with the ADA but can you send a modifications: They can put out temporary parking signs and portable ramps which makes her locations more accessible. Most important thing for doing voter outreach, if you need to know the specific polling site is accessible, you will absolutely hear this question from a person with a disability. The best thing to do is contact the local election official Park someone in that office knows this information. If you have difficulty with that, you can contact your PNA which is part of our network. You can go to in DR.org. Let's keep it moving. The help America vote act, this legislation is significant because it takes a concrete look at the voting station. How it is forecasting our ballots. HAVA gave us amazing language guaranteeing the right to an abandoned ballot which goes a long way to making the election accessible. Also replace the punchcard system. Those are hardly inaccessible. This is where you get the new technology we are seeing used in the Bell casting process. Ballot marking devices for someone who can't mark their own paper ballot. Also touch screens which record your vote electronically. Those aren't being is uses commonly but that is where it comes from. For the help America vote act became law, we were doing anything to make sure how you cast your ballot was going to be accessible for everyone. HAVA was a big leap forward in terms of voter access. It created the U.S. elections assistant commission which has tons of helpful resources on their website. To find out more about access and
Motor voter. The national voter registration act. I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with this one. It says DMV's have to ask you if you want to register to vote. A little-known fact. Section 7 of motor voter records state governments to offer voter registration to any eligible person who interacts with offices and provides services for people with disabilities. Disability offices have to be complying with the motor voter act as well. Compliance in some states are questionable. It is worth knowing, taking a look at and doing some advocacy if this is is an issue. I would be surprised if this wasn't an issue in Texas. I think Molly will discuss at a little bit. We're your good. We're Molly and I know each other very well. I don't think I was throwing anything at her she wasn't ready for. The last piece of legislation I want to mention is the voting rights act of 1965. The famous one there is one piece in your that is actually really important to people with disabilities, section 28 of the voting rights act provides voters who need assistance by reason of disability, - inability reader right. Any such voter, may be given assistance by the person of the voters choice. The only exception is it can be an agent of your employer or your own employer or the agent of your employer. They don't have to be registered to vote, they don't have to be the over the age of 18. They are to speak English or be a citizen. You can bring anyone you want with you to assist you in voting if you need that as a person with disability. It is an important right but sometimes it is violated by very well-intentioned voting workers who aren't familiar with these laws.

Let's get into the practice. The current state of pole access. The us government accountability access has been studying this going back to 2000, he did major surveys, 2020 16. To coincide with HAVA. That B requested by Congress . There typically by about every 8 years . It's a major election coming. There is Canadian here. It lets us know where we are at in terms of what voting looks like for the people with disabilities that you will be reaching out to, this is what they're up against when they go to vote. This is good stuff to know. I promise you, they're thinking about this. So, there is a couple major things they look at. The path of travel which is typically from where you are to the voting booth and the voting booth itself. The percentage of accessible polling places in terms of that path of travel in 2000, only 16% of polling places had a successful path of travel. The number jumped up to 27% in 2008 and 40% in 2016. The major take away is we're going in the right direction and part of that is because of PNA Bricco are working so hard to make polling places more accessible. The scary thought is we've been doing this for at least 16 years and less than half of Americans -- polling places are compliant with the ADA interns architectural access. The voting booth itself, and the two most recent studies, 2008-2016., they took a look at the voting stations. They founded 2008, at least 46 percent had one impediment and 65% had at least one impediment in 2016 which means the number is getting worse. The number of inaccessible voting booths is going up to under have to over half. What's happening? You can see here whether or not the voting station was set up for privacy. If your person with a disability and unity that accessible voting station, where there voters in line behind you who could easily see your screen and see who you are voting for? That increase. Not wheelchair accessible had a big jumper 29% to 41%. This may be not having enough clearance underneath. You could mean having to be position to close to wall were someone using a wheelchair couldn't get around it. The view -- voting booths were not able to have the your phone presents. People with learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities use that audio ballot. Systems were left powerdown and set up for use per while we are going to the right position for architectural access to pulling places, we are making our voting stations less accessible. There is a lot of thought about why this may be happening. Where moving back towards paper-based systems which are on accessible. That is something to be aware of and something we want to help voters prep for.

What are some options for voters? If you're doing voter registration, what might you talk to voters about? What are they concerned about, is it the accessibility? First, it is criticized voting . This is not in every state. But for many of you it can be part of your state law. You want to know if it is line your state and make sure voters are where curbside voting is when, if you're polling places accessible, but you can get to the polling place, they bring the ballot up to you outside. It is exactly what it sounds like. You can walk up or drive up. People who use wheelchairs also drive. They may pull up. But they may not be able to get down the stairs to the church basement where the voting is happening. They should also have some sort away for the voters to let the pull makers that they or their. Early voting, that is a great option for a lot of people with disabilities especially where transportation may be a concern. The early voting period just give you more possible days to figure out how you
will get your polling place and back. It means less strain on public transit options. Also para -transit was created for people with disabilities. Absentee balloting, the reason you can use to vote absentee, some places don't have a by mail may have a permanent absentee list at the area which you can get on as a person with disability. It is a great option for people who know the polling place will be inaccessible to them. It is an ongoing issue that has to be resolved. It is great option for people who are homebound and works really well for people, based on their disability, their health fluctuates and you're not sure how you feel on election day. Those are the types of people I talked to core interested in absentee or permanent absentee. Ballot machine delivery. This can be done. Election officials mean a -- may not be into this. But there's something in state law that says they can bring machine to you in your home. If you're polling places not accessible, they should reassign you. That is a paperwork nightmare. Sometimes, they will bring a voting machine to your house to avoid having to relocate you. Those are some of the options out there. It is worth digging into your state election laws and knowing exactly what is available in your state. And, the process for getting involved in that. If you're registering voters, you are talking about these options when you come across with people with disabilities were concerned it will not be accessible for that.

We talked a lot about access to polling places per going to make sure I highlighted some of the other issues that may come up. Inaccessible voter registration systems. I have a link for an report called access tonight that was published by the ACLU. As we move towards online voter registration which is amazing, unfortunately a lot of states are creating websites that are not accessible which means people certain types of this village cannot use them. As we make voter registration more available, we're leaving people with disabilities behind. Especially, people with disabilities who would benefit from that if the traditional paper form is not accessible. In addition to online voter registration portals, websites that provide motor information and sample ballots have similar issues with accessibility that make more difficult for a person with disability to do things, and your polling place, or will you want to vote for. Inaccessible absentee and mail-in voting. In the visual system of mail-in voting for you mail a piece of paper where the market and send back is not accessible. Emailing a blank ballot that can be completed on your computer, just making mail-in voting more accessible. And in general, the transit systems. If you go to places where there is not extensive public transit or where the public transit is not compliant with the American with disabilities act which does happen, that can be a barrier for folks. We are seeing calls about emergency hospitalizations, someone who went into the hospital but did not expect it, they did. This happened after the deadline for applying to an absolutely valid, someone does have to come to vote them in the hospital part, that can be tricky. Voters don't know that is an option or it is not being honored. Just thinks to be aware per researching your options, I recommend, where should I go to find information? There are a lot of websites that take information from multiple states and put it in one place per they don't include things that are specific to disabilities like is her curbside voting in my state? I always recommend your state voting website or your local officials is your primary resource. You can also find your PNA who is an amazing resource. You can reach out to me and I can put you in touch with him. I want to highlight this website, it is a newer website and they put a concerted effort to make it accessible and including information about accessibility options for voters with disabilities. I had to give that a shot up.

When voting goes wrong, that is the last thing I want to highlight and then we'll get into Molly's presentation. We know from looking at the data that voting should be accessible to all but it is not. Not all polling places are acceptable. Options like curbside voting seem like a great option until it is a long day and the line is long. It is not always honored. Things can go wrong. The most successful polling places in the world and the best voting equipment we have seen don't make a difference if everything breaks down on election day. One voters don't know what their rights and options are or the poll workers are unfamiliar with this. What I would recommend, if you're talking to a voter who you have been in contact with and is having an issue, reach out to your PNA. They assist voters with these types of things all the time and they want to work with you. Call election protection, they're very involved in the election protection coalition. If the voter calls the hotline with a disability related concern, if it is simple to answer, the volunteer lawyers will take those answers. It is little bit more complicated and it gets bumped to the PNA in the state or gets dumped to the person who specializes in the election protection. I take some of those directly. We are involved in the coalition so we can help resolve those as well a couple of newer resources to pay attention to, the national Association of the deaf has an ASL hotline. You should be able to find information about it on their website. There is actual video chat hotlines were people were deaf and hard of hearing can converse in American sign language to get assistance. An organization called arc
launches a nap for -- launches a nap for voters. We will hopefully get you more detailed information about that. That is everything I have. Kaetlyn, take it away.

Okay. And Q so much, Michelle, for going through that information. It was a lot to process but if anyone has questions, please do use the chat box. Michelle isn't going anywhere. She can answer questions at the end of this webinar and I believe you included your contact info as well, Michelle. If anyone has questions they want to post to her directly through that, you can do that.

Please do that. It really was a whole lot.

It was. It was very good information.

One thing I wanted to raise, I get this great newsletter from we think-media about voting, election concerns, and there and out. One article coming out of Philadelphia was talking about the lack of poll workers and the shortage around poll workers. Back could be another option if you are thinking about how you can really support accessibility is become a poll worker at your polling site and before you show up for your shift, before you show up for the training, really read some of this stuff and the great links Michelle provided and be ready to ask and make sure that the proper accommodations and plans are in place and know that the voters are a lot of those a Sisters and be able to advocate for voters who may need assistance on election days. We did have a few questions come in and I will pose one or two of those to you, Michelle, before we hop over to Molly's part of the presentation. If I do not ask your question now, I will ask it at the end. So, we had someone who said they were doing a voting rights presentation and got a question from a person with a disability who was a resident of a facility. They were wondering if a staff member they trusted could help them vote even though that person was affiliated with the facility management. Could a staff person assist them? We're oh, that is a great question. I would say, you say did work for facility? If they're not actively working for this facility, if they are not actively employed by the facility, then issue not be a problem. If they are or could be again, he gets a little tricky. That is not typically the, not necessarily what anyone had in mind when they wrote that into the voting rights act. They were thinking more the ability of the employer or union to intimidate or: sure vote. It sounds less likely here given it is a residential facility. I would say, that may be in terms of a red light, green light or yellow light, I'm getting a yellow light vibe from that. Is there someone else that the voter trust that could assist them, that may be a better option. But, don't be afraid to talk it through with the voter. I am interested in how the person is a resident and works for the facility. I like to hear about this kind of thing. Molly, have you heard anything like that before? We can circle back to that after your presentation is well. But, I would say, if they work for the employer, it is likely they may again. It may be better to find someone else they could trust and it would be less in a danger zone in terms of being a assisters.

I have one more I want to do before we switch over, do you have any idea of the size of the voting pool involved here? How many eligible voters that have a disability that may need some form of accommodation or accessibility measures?

It is hard to say exactly how many or who? Because God disability is so different. Every type of disability is very different from the next. And every person experiences their disability differently whether or not it is the same disability. It is also different, I'm trying to find the slide. In general, we are talking about over 35 million eligible voters have disabilities. What those needs are are very different based on the person. Someone who is going through a vision issue may need to use accessible equipment to cast a paper ballot. It is very different from someone who uses a wheelchair and get down two flights of stairs to get to the polling place which is different from someone who has an intellectual disability and has difficulty understanding the layout of the ballot. It is very different from a deaf person who speaks ASL and having difficulty communicating with poll workers. It is different for everyone. The base number, where talking about over 35 million voters were eligible to vote in the United States, the needs are very different and individualized. We stress partnering with its ability organizations like the PNA interstate and take us case by case. I hope that is a fair answer. If it is not what you are looking for, we'll talk about it again in the next Q&A session. Mac so, we will transition over to Molly. Molly is the training and technical support specialist for voting rights, disability rights Texas. This role allows her to travel across the state to provide voting rights training for community members and election officials as well as provide, at no
cost accessibility inspections of voting polls. Molly has brought statewide and national attention to the HAVA program through her collaboration with community groups to improve local voting accessibility and efficacy for statewide, systematic change. And Q for joining us today, Molly. I will turn it over to you.

Thank you. So, unlike Michelle who decide to talk New York, IME slow talking Texan. Hopefully, I can get everything in. I work at the PNA in the state of Texas. We are called the disability rights Texas. IME licensed social worker. I have 60 years of experience working at nonprofits. I've done everything from case management to being a trainer, to being a job coach, to being a house parent, to driving somebody's kids to daycare. I've done a little of everything. I found throughout those job tasks and up to now, that when I need to get things done effectively, the best way was to connect my clients with the resources they need in their communities. This often meant partnering with other local nonprofits. Chances are if was restricted by funding or whatever rules of the nonprofit, there was another nonprofit in town that could do the stuff I needed. So, the partnership was there. It just needed to be facilitated. So, I have always felt that if we cannot re-create the wheel and complement the services of each nonprofit, I think will be more effective in serving our community. I have seen voting and civic engagement as a way to invest in one's community. When working with clients, I would let them know that voting is a great first step to take ownership of what is happening in your community. There is a larger macro scale problem and, you know, that was for everybody. I worked with youth who were coming out of foster care, youth with documented disabilities. People with criminal backgrounds related to felonies to minor misdemeanors to really be crimes. It was always there. In the state of Texas, once you're considered off paper for your crimes, you can reregister to vote. I think people have always gotten good about that. They are giving good feedback about that. They like investing in their community. They like participating and being seen in their community. That is especially so within the disability community. One of the big things is, you have to be able to CS. We have to get out in the community and let people know we are there. Else, they won't know that need accommodations. So, there is that. Let me see if I get the slight change. Said, a great way to do that as a nonprofit, how can you best reach out to the disability community if you don't have that connection? Get with your local PNA. If you're from Texas, link up with disability rights-Texas. We have offices throughout the state. We have offices in 6 major areas of the state. Chances are there is one close to you. The beauty of us is if you're lacking materials on, if you want to do voter outreach but you need documents that are renewed in braille, or you need to know how to get stuff printed in braille, chances are we know how did you do that for you. We have documents ready for that and documents created that are geared towards this population. So, let us help you best serve your clients. We also have access to areas or communities of people that other nonprofits don't have access to or we have partnerships with existing community groups that you may not have partnerships with. Basically, help us help you. Take advantage of the resources that we have. Also, the bottom bullet points says many state agencies are required to provide voter registration services. Michelle kind of touched on that in regards to the motor-voter act. She is correct. All state agencies that assist individuals with disabilities are required to offer voter registration. If you know this is not happening, contact your local PNA. That is part of what we do and we help hold people accountable to the laws we need to follow. In Texas, we call it the Texas workforce commission. And, this is a large state agency and we have a lot of services with the main goal of being able to find employment and therefore helping provide more security through other areas of your life. Within Texas workforce commission, there is a vocational rehab services program. We got information from a person that the Boca-rehab program was not offering voter registration. What we did on the PNA side, we did investigation in this we contacted the appropriate people and asked them about this. When we felt like we had the information we needed or we were getting enough information or cooperation from that agency, we partnered with another local civil rights group and we offered to see what we could do to rectify that. We wanted to let them know they needed to fix that issue so we threatened to sue them and go through litigation with everything. And, actually, the agency was really receptive and no large agency wants to do anything unless they absolutely have to. Once we told him we would sue them if they didn't do what they were to do, Texas workforce commission actually told them, we will work on that. We have been working with them for the last year to make sure they are offering the best kind of voter registration assistance they can and making sure it reflects their policies for the employees that are doing that kind of work.

So, we tried to do our best to help fix larger scale issues as well. Some of the work we do, some of the fieldwork that is occurring in Texas, I know that somebody may have made a comment about a list of transportation options. Texas, if you're not familiar, it is a big state, we have 254 counties. Was of it is rural. Transportation is
always an issue. Something we did a couple of years ago, we partnered with another resource throughout the state called the legal women voters. Every state should have won. But we made it transportation list that provided information on free, low cost accessible transportation throughout the state on election day. So, that covered anything from large urban areas and public transportation options and more rural options. We listed the contact information and the fees for each right. We disperse that. I use the partnerships that we had through the disability community and also the league of women voters and we get that list out to a lot of folks. I think approved useful. We also encourage people to serve, have your officer at the polling site. We did this at disability rights Texas probably, i don't know we started in 2016. Maybe 2015 we started this. It has proved great. If you have climates -- clients coming to you, sometimes a cat make it to go vote because of the schedules and the transportation options or whatever, if you're coming to see you, having your office to serve as a polling site is a great way to have them go vote while visiting you . It is also a great way to visit community relations and to spread word about what your organization does. Mac we have offered trainings on voter rights and registrations to case manager groups in this area. Often, there is a local case manager group and every month they provide information on various topics. We went down there to let them know how they could best serve registering voters, registering clients with disabilities and also informing them about their rights.

We tried really hard to, as part of what it said in my intro, I go around the state and inspect polling sites for ADA compliance. I work with that County election official to make sure they fix those locations that are not working. Part of that, it can be an expensive process. We try to link them up with low cost resources and engage them, connect them with community groups that may be useful. They can also divide training outreach to other pockets of their community as well. Something else we have done, we connect with the special education departments of school districts throughout the state to let them know that what voter rights are for students with disabilities and they can access those just like any other student. We go in and do trainings as well for them.

So, the bottom line, I will throw it out there in case it sass. To give you a gauge of what we are looking at in Texas, we have an estimated, in terms of voters with disabilities, we have over 1 million voters with disabilities where trying to engage a lot of these folks are running but a lot of them are not. The exact estimated number is 1,000,074 one 86,000 per. We have a lot of people to reach out to. It keeps us busy. Had to be an ally? The best thing, when ever you to prepare with interact with the client, anticipate what they are asking and know what their needs will be. Also know the existing barriers that people with disabilities may be facing when they vote. Make sure you help them overcome those barriers. Some of the can be simple as a type of printed materials you handout. It could be a large print material. Defining the language in your handouts to plane English instead of complex language that is embodied with jargon and whatever else. Train your volunteers. If you're going to do voter registration or motor outreach, train your volunteers on how to best serve voters with disabilities. If you need assistance, contact your local PNA to see what we can do to help you.

Connect with your disability advocates in your area. They are your best resources. Also, incorporate who we term, we call them self advocates. Anybody with a disability who is outgoing and wants to really engage themselves in this outreach effort, get them out there. They can best help your effort. Like I said, usurer PNA as a resource. We have a ton of information. If you go to the disability rights Texas website, it is a treasure trove of information of everything you need. So, that is the long story short of how you can best serve your disability community and better outreach.

All right, thank you so much, Molly for covering that and sharing your great work. We have a bunch of questions. Also, folks can keep chatting those questions over to us. So, let's see, all right. Our first question, I think I will direct this to you Michelle. Someone is asking, is voter assistant rules such as a husband helping a blind spouse, etc., different in every voting district?

No, they shouldn't be. The right to have someone this issue is in federal law. As be honored everywhere. There are some states that add stuff to this. They may ask you to find some legal affidavit saying you are assisting the voter based on the disability annual lot influencer vote. They may make you jump through hoops. But other than that, the process should be the same. You can bring who you want with you if you trust your spouse. I hope that is not an issue never anyone's marriage. The rules should be different. We are looking at the state law to see if they have added any extra stuff. Also to kill two birds with one stone, I will follow up with if residential facility
staff can assist you to vote? Residential facility staff if you live in assisted facility, the one specific question, the resident had worked for. It is more concerned it was an employer. In general, staff that work in a facility that you live in are able to assist you in casting a ballot.

Thank you for getting both of those. You mentioned, Michelle, that sometimes they will, there will be this online type of voting. We have a participant asking about if a voter is concerned about hacking with regards to online types of voting, what can you tell them about that besides it is secure?

Oh, that's good. And that someone asked that question. I want to be clear about that. People with disabilities aren't voting online. The thing that we are starting to use now is electronic delivery of a blank ballot. So, you can have sent to you through an email or clicking on a link, a blank copy of the ballot. But you fill it out on your home computer and printing it. And then you turn in a paper ballot or mailing it in or dropping it off at about center or your election center. You are not returning it electronically one -- once it has been completed. You are still required to submit that piece of paper and in the majority of polling places in the U.S., when you vote in person, if you successful woman cut use the market pizza paper. I hope that helps. I'm glad someone asked that.

Thank you. I will jump around and I have one for Molly. Someone is asking about the funds you would have used for that lawsuit. Regarding the NVR a project.

That is why we partnered with another agency. Because, they would have spearheaded that effort and we did the research on everything and provided them, they would've actually done the suing because we wouldn't have had the funds for. Relied on a partnership with the civil rights groups.

Great. Another one for you, Molly. How do you deal with the voter ID requirements in Texas?

A comes at education. I don't know the person is a question is from Texas or not. But, if people aren't aware, Texas as one of the most stringent voter ID laws in our good country. But, recently, in the last year or two, additional roles have been posted to that saying if you don't have one of the seven forms of roof identification, you can use a supporting form of identification which is your voter registration card, a bank statement, a government ID at, basically a government former ID, if you don't have those, you can then sign the form that explains why you don't have those forms of identification and then you go ahead and cast your ballot. So, it is a lot of paperwork. It can be done if you don't have a voter ID. How we deal with that, we educate people as much as we can. Every time I do a voter training, we are always talking about voter ID. Always review about voter identification. We have a statewide voter hotline through -- able can call us. Also, in Texas, there is disability exemptions for state IDs. If you cannot, if you cannot obtain a picture ID because of your disability status, that is the whole of the application process itself, in that will be documented under federal registration card and you will not to Roger photo ID.

Thank you for that answer. Also, last month, nonprofit vote did a webinar about supporting voters who need IDs. So, if you're in Texas or any one of the other states that has voter ID laws on the books, or if you're just interested in it, you can check out that webinar which lists a few, great partners including project vote, sorry, including vote writers and spread the vote as resources to help voters with disabilities and voters who may lack ID get the ID they need to cast the ballot. All right. We have a bunch more, great questions. So, we have someone asking how do you make sure curbside voting is available? The workers are pretty far away from the curb and might polling place. I'm not sure how someone was single to them that they need to come by? Is there a generally accepted way to wave them down or single to them or are they doing it wrong in general?

This is Michelle. I love that question. So, curbside voting is a matter of state law. It is worth checking your stately awes to see if there's any thing specific to set that up. But to be honest, I doubt it. Most of the state laws are pretty sparse around curbside voting. They let you set up however you see fit at the polling place. It may be hard to make them, to force some sort of compliance if the law isn't there. With that said, I will get people with disabilities networking and get them talking to those election officials about how they could be doing it better. They may just not know I need the guidance. If there was a step to making changes, there is nothing wrong with people with disabilities contacting their local media and let them know how much it is not working. We tried to
partner with in a really positive, productive way with her election officials to make voting as accessible as possible. But, sometimes our election officials are not willing to play ball. Sometimes there worst nightmares getting sued or ending up on the evening news. Sometimes, you have to know -- do that if needed.

I think that is right. Also, realistically, what I encouraged, it is not idea, I encourage voters to contact your election, your county elections official or your parish and say you will have to, you will need to vote curbside and you show up to this polling site on this day at this time and we need to have it brought out you. Maybe make an appointment for curbside is a good option. I would encourage you, like what Michelle said, each polling site is required to have curbside access. You need to, you should be able to alert a poll worker. So, contact your PNA. Look them up and contact them. We have got a lot of smaller projects have arisen because voters have told us about these concerns. Something that has happened, the different parts of the state, some self advocates got together because curbside voting was not being issued properly in their county. They created their own task force. So, they started meeting with the elections official Nye County and they got permission to go around to each polling site and check it for curbside and they have a whole check sheet and they relayed that information into the elections office. If it is an issue, the elections office goes to try and fix that issue. If that is still failing to, you can file HAVA complaints. But contact your PNA since it will be good option. Spent all right. We are reaching 3:00 P.M. We can keep going with questions but, before the people who had to leave jump off, I want to throw out Michelle and Molly's emails on the screen. If your question didn't get answered and you want to as them directly or something comes up, here is their contact information. In the meantime, we will keep rolling with these great questions.

So, we have someone saying, lately, some election officials have been trying to shut down polling locations or lack of ADA compliance. Additionally, the DOJ seems to be targeting polling places on native lands for this. Can you talk about how advocates should respond to these attempts?

Where was that? Could you read that again?

Sure. Essentially, local elections officials have been trying to shut down polling locations for lack of ADA compliance including polling places on native lands. So, how should advocates be responding to these attempts?

ND-are in is doing research into this right now because we've been hearing about this ever since there was a notable case in Georgia where they attempted to shut down almost all their polling places him or stop because they got so much pushback. We are looking into it. We are planning on issuing a report around this publicly so we can let the folks know to share that or you can find it. I would say this. No disability rights advocates are advocating for polling places to be closed. It doesn't make it any more accessible for nondisabled people who are troubled further. It makes things for disabled voters as well. Where and asking for polling places to be close. We are asking them to be modified or relocated to a more accessible location in the vicinity really that is comparable. I can assure you that the you Steve Hartman of justice does investigate these issues and enter into settlement agreements with counties. They also, if you look at the settlement agreements, don't ever recommend Coaling. I think you want to talk about it in that regards. It doesn't benefit anyone to close polling places. The ADA doesn't require the DOJ nonenforcement. There are better solutions that will actually make voting accessible to everyone. Let's have the PNA took a look at the situation. I would recommend going that route. We will let you know when the report is available for we have written stuff about this. I'm sure, honestly, if you googled my name in Georgia or ND-are in in Georgia, some information will come up. Please feel free to spread those around and use them.

Thank you. This is actually lining up nicely, the remaining questions are about polling place accessibility and accessible voting reforms. Is there anything else that, Michelle, you would like to say or anything you like to say, Molly, about the type of oversight or follow-up you can do if the County does not improve their polling places?

Well, in terms of a PNA, in terms of the PNA, this is Molly. I will tell you our process. After a polling site inspection is performed, I write up a report I send a copy to the County and a copy to the Texas secretary of state. I give them, I give the county 90 days. And, I sent a follow-up letter saying hey, you have my report, how are
things going? What have you fixed? Send me an update with pictures. If I don't hear anything back, I send them, I give them 90 days to respond per was at 90 days goes by again, I say, haven't heard anything back. Just, so you know, I and willing to work with you. But, if we get more complaints or if we get complaints about your county, this gives us a lot of leeway to step forward with litigation action. That is how we follow up.

This is Michelle, there is also, if we are talking about something a little more specific to HAVA collect the voting stations, there is a complaints process through HAVA that the voters can initiate. Associations like PNA can help voters go through that complaints process. It is different in every state. There are different processes. We can help you find that information. Once a complaint is made, there are federal requirements around how quickly the elections official has to respond and what they have to do if they find there's something that needs to be brought into compliance. In some situations, the complaint process can be helpful.

Thank you. All right. Let's see. So, I and unfamiliar with an acronym in here. Somebody is asking they are curious if the disability community has push for automatic voter registration to include other agencies beyond the -- I am and Massachusetts, we are where you get your drivers license. Is a resource that shows people disabilities are less likely to do business with the BMV. Where else besides getting your drivers license should automatic voter registration be happening for people with disabilities?

I'm not entirely convinced there is good research out there on that. I don't know if anyone is looking at that issues. Are people with certain disabilities who are less likely to have that ID. If you are not eligible to drive, you will be less likely to have a drivers license per we do know that people, who are low income, are less likely to have an ID. So come we know this through workaround voter ID laws, where some of that research has been called into question. We know people disabilities are more likely to be represented among people with lower income. There is some overlap and there is reason to believe that people disabilities are less likely to interact with the DMV. What we typically encourage, advocates who work on automatic voter registration to the about, expanding it on the DMV to all those types of organizations that will be covered by national voter registration act or motor-voter which we discussed earlier. This includes state agencies who provide services to be with disabilities. This Cas a must broader net.

Thank you. We are getting towards the end. Molly, can you talk about which election innovations in particular you consider inaccessible?

I would need some clarification on the term election innovation. I don't know if they are talking about the equipment itself or the voting machines or what. Is the person still available? Any clarification will be appreciated. But, I will tell you, like Michelle touched upon, a lot of voting machines, also, they have, summer highbred. Some are paper ballots and electronic machinery. And then, some are just paper ballots. Obviously, I'm not into the paper ballot idea. It is not accessible. So, as long as, some of the new machines have an electronic input device. But it spits out a paper ballot. As long as there is a way to read that paper ballot once is been printed out, I am fine with it. Other than that IEM, I live in Texas. There is always something that isn't there.

This is Michelle. The question maybe my fault. How to be an ally. I put in a bullet point on how to be an ally. That came for me and that is my fault. I would say yes, Molly is on point about removing that and going back towards paper-based systems. We really need to acknowledged a paper-based voting systems are not as accessible to people with disabilities, especially people arguing for hand marked paper. Some people are never going to be able to do that privately and independently which HAVA guarantees. But in a broader sense, we talked about online voter registration and information that is provided to voters online is amazing. But when it is done in a way not accessible, people with disabilities need to be aware of that when push -- pushing for reforms. The conversation we had about automatic voter registration, is that going to catch everyone? Is it limited to the DMV? Taking a look at the election reforms you like to see happen in your state if you advocate for those and thinking about how they are or how they are not inclusive for people with disabilities.

Thank you for clarifying that. I think that was exactly what is being looked for. The last thing I want to, that I have on our docket to be discussed. Someone is saying that accessible polling places and some of the difficulties in California and all over the nation for locations and accessibility is these places need to be open longer. Or
they're not open on the weekend or may not be big enough. Are those some of the things that national disability rights networks or disability rights Texas is talking about or advocating for?

I would say, this is Molly. In Texas right now, the polls are open on the weekend. They're open from 7 AM-7 PM unless it is a multiple voting site. So, there is that. But, what we are moving, in Texas, what we are trying to do. We have countywide polling states. Instead of being restricted to one polling site in your precinct, where try to get other counties to adapt to the possibility of voters being able to vote anywhere within their county not being restricted to the particular precinct so, we are doing that. If you find a polling site that is too small or you think you know of a place that is a better fit, pack your elections office to let them know. They are always looking for polling sites that can best serve the voters of the community. A lot of people don't know that you can just throw up out a suggestion. I didn't know that we could just call up and asked to be a polling site. It turns out you can. So, let them know you are, you voted at this location and was pretty cramped. Or this business has a lot more space across the street. If they are looking for a better area to vote, that maybe it.

This is Michelle. I can add to that. In general, they are supportive of anything that create more options and opportunities for voters in general. Yes, longer polling hours per early voting periods. Early voting present include the weekend. We are in favor of those. We have been supportive of those kinds of innovations. We can provide more information if that is helpful. Also, there is a lot of research out there on queuing theory. How we manage lines specifically. I would think small, cramped polling places will be a nightmare for line management. There was some research that had been, I'm not sure if it was funded by the elections commission or shared by the elections commission, if you go on the website, you can find some of that.

Thank you. Well, now I have a question. This question is for all of our participants who have hung on and watched this webinar with us. Will you please provide us some feedback when you exit the window. You will be prompted to share your thoughts. Please do that with us because we are at the end of our time. Thank you for joining us. That was my tricky way to get that in before everyone exits the room because I'm saying thank you to our presenters, Michelle and Molly, for your time and this awesome content. Also your really thoughtful answers to the questions. We will be hosting our next webinar in June. On June 19. Details on that will be in a follow-up email that will go out to everyone who has registered for this webinar. That will include the recording. All the slides, a transcript of this recording and some relevant links. So, for anyone else who attended the webinar and has content you think other people who watch this webinar may want to see, you can email that over to me at Kaetlyn at nonprofit vote. If you respond to the confirmation email you got in the webinar, it will get shot over to me. Once again, thank you everyone for we will catch you next time and, good luck. Registering and serving voters with disabilities and the rest of us. Thanks again. [Event Concluded]