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General Comment

E.O. 14019 Promoting Access to Voting

Several areas are of concern in attempting to ensure that the online Federal Voter Registration Form is accessible to people with disabilities. Ensuring that people with disabilities have technology tools, and WIFI access easily and readily available to them is a pressing concern. During this past year of providing support groups and 1-1 sessions with people with disabilities we learned rapidly how few have access to these resources, or the technological understanding to successfully utilize these tools. And, we heard from these individuals that they are on a very fixed income and do not have the means to have equipment or WIFI to allow them to participate. In speaking with them we heard that many of them do not have an email, or any means of being contacted other than a flip phone they have had for many years. These same people do not have cable TV, or social media contact, so they are not aware of the voting opportunities advertised on these mediums and would not understand how to utilize them. A large portion of the disabled community are home bound and unable to go to locations where technology and WIFI are available. The County I live and work in is large, and has a substantial portion of it with no bus service making it even more difficult for people to access information, technology and WIFI.
It is very concerning to think that this significant number of individuals would have such limited options for voting. Mail in ballots with unbiased assistance is necessary for many of these individuals to be able to vote. This is often not made available, and many don't know it is or could be available to them.
During this time of focusing on equity and inclusion it is so important to reach out in different ways so these communities understand what is available to them to make their voices heard and level the playing field.
In the very rural areas of the county it would be helpful to have ballots picked up from the homes of people with disabilities by certified voting support people to ensure they get counted.
Barriers that people with disabilities encounter using technology for the registration or voting process, whether online, in person or via mail includes, of course lack of technology and WIFI but also lack of assistance in filling out the form, assuring them that they are putting the correct information in the correct spots. Many of these individuals are not comfortable using technology in this capacity and do not

necessarily understand how to delete and correct items without it impacting the whole form. Others are not certain the information has been entered and received and may do this several times because of their lack of understanding.

In order to remove the barriers that many marginalized populations face it is important to figure out ways to connect with those who have experienced persistent poverty and inequality and ask them what they need to make this equitable. They will have the best answers for this question.