

DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of State Bowen and County Elections Officials Coordinate with Governor to Ensure Voting by Emergency Personnel in Fire Zones

SACRAMENTO – To ensure no voter in Congressional District 10 or Assembly District 51 is disenfranchised in special elections today, Secretary of State Debra Bowen coordinated with county elections officials and the Governor's office to distribute ballots and extend voting hours for emergency personnel serving in three wildfire-ravaged counties.

Special primary elections are being conducted to fill vacancies in CD 10 and AD 51. The Governor late yesterday signed Executive Order S-17-09, waiving some state elections laws for emergency personnel who are currently serving away from their homes. The order permits emergency personnel – and ONLY emergency personnel who are registered voters in CD 10 or AD 51 and are stationed in San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Mariposa counties to battle the wildfires in those areas – to cast ballots under the supervision of a county elections official at one of four specific Incident Command Center locations.

A second Executive Order, S-19-09, issued today at 4:20 p.m., states that in accordance with California Elections Code section 15152, election results from the AD 51 and CD 10 special elections cannot be released until after 10:00 p.m. tonight. Only at the Incident Command Centers will CD 10 and AD 51 balloting be permitted until 10:00 p.m. Under the Governor's Executive Order, which recognizes the timing of evening shift changes for firefighters and medical personnel, only eligible emergency personnel are permitted to cast ballots at these locations. Emergency personnel will receive a provisional ballot from the local county elections official, which will then be placed in a sealed envelope and returned to the county elections offices in CD 10 and AD 51.

California law does not address the scenario some voters and elections officials are encountering with the two special elections today. Assembly Bill 1440 (Swanson), sponsored by Secretary Bowen and pending on the Senate floor, specifically allows emergency personnel responding to a government-declared disaster to cast a provisional ballot for statewide races and ballot measures in the county where the emergency occurred. Under current law, a provisional ballot only counts if it is cast in the county where an individual is registered to vote.

Election results will be available starting at 10:00 p.m. tonight at www.sos.ca.gov/elect-results.

To view the Governor's Executive Orders, go to www.gov.ca.gov.

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