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California Secretary of State Alex Padilla Sees Promise in Colorado Election Reforms

With the Focus on Voter Participation, Colorado is Increasing Voter Turnout

SACRAMENTO – Secretary of State Alex Padilla and key members of his staff traveled to Colorado last week to meet with Denver election officials. The purpose was to see firsthand how Colorado is increasing voter turnout and reducing costs of elections. The visit offered an opportunity to observe the Denver municipal election over a period of two days.

Colorado is considered a national leader in election administration. Despite historically low turnout across the nation in 2014, Colorado had the third highest voter turnout in the nation.

“Colorado offers new ideas for us to consider as we seek to increase California voter participation in a cost-effective manner,” Secretary Padilla said.

"The reforms in Colorado focus on voter participation and convenience, and they are undeniably working," Padilla said.

“In addition to voting by mail, Colorado citizens can choose to utilize ballot drop off boxes, drive through drop off stations, and voting centers to cast their ballot. With so many convenient options and a robust early voting system, it is no surprise that voter turnout has increased in Colorado," said California Secretary of State Alex Padilla.

“The Colorado model of voting centers provides voters the flexibility to vote when and where it is most convenient. It may be more convenient to vote a week before election day near where you work, or where your kids go to school, or near your local supermarket. The Colorado model makes voting easier and more convenient for the voter. It's a great example of government facilitating greater participation," Secretary Padilla said.

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Colorado has no shortage of convenient options for voters.

- In Colorado, every registered voter is mailed a ballot. 72% of voters drop off their ballot in person and less than 5% actually mark and cast their ballot at a voting center.
- Before implementing new election innovations Colorado engaged in a successful campaign to register new voters and re-register those who had moved. This ensured as many citizens as possible would receive a ballot.
- Commuters may utilize drive through ballot drop off stations to return their ballot without ever leaving their cars.
- Secure ballot drop off boxes are also located throughout the county allowing voters to drop off their ballot 24 hours a day in the weeks leading up to an election.
- Colorado has replaced traditional polling locations with voting centers to make voting more convenient. Instead of being required to vote at a designated polling place, Colorado citizens can vote at any vote center in their county.
- During municipal elections in Denver, voting centers are open for 8 days and a total of 64 hours. In general elections, voting centers are open for 15 days.
 - Voting technology improvements make elections more accessible and secure.
 - Voting centers are located at public buildings like recreation centers that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement. They allow same day registration and the opportunity to update your registration in the days leading up to, and including, Election Day.
- Voters can be automatically notified in real time regarding the status of their ballot. Denver voters can track the status of their mailed ballots online—just like tracking a package.
- Denver elections and their voting centers feature "ballot on demand" technology. "Ballot on demand" allows every vote center to print the appropriate ballot for any voter. Poll workers can input a voter's address and print out a paper ballot that can be marked and cast.
- At Denver voting centers you have the choice of using a "ballot on demand" ballot and marking it manually or you can use a touch screen to mark your ballot and print it out on printers that are located next to each touch screen.

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