



# NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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## **Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Speaks at Disability Capitol Action Day Rally**

*Also Unveils "Your Voting Rights - A Guide for Voters with Disabilities" Flyer*

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today addressed the participants of the Disability Capitol Action Day Rally at the State Capitol. Secretary McPherson discussed new state and federal laws in effect for the 2006 elections.

"The new laws in effect for the 2006 elections allow voters with disabilities to cast their ballot privately and independently for the very first time," said Secretary McPherson. "It is a personal commitment of mine to improve accessibility for all eligible voters and an ongoing effort that will not be an issue that ends this year."

Christina Mills-Hovious, Statewide Community Organizer for the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers explained, "The disability community is very happy to work with Secretary of State Bruce McPherson on voter accessibility and multilingual language access. We finally feel as though we are making headway in the get out the vote campaign for people with disabilities on a statewide level and to having equal access at the polling place."

Secretary McPherson today also unveiled the "Your Voting Rights - A Guide for Voters with Disabilities" flyer. The flyer includes important elections tools for voters with disabilities. Among other things, the flyer contains key information about the Official State Ballot Pamphlet on audiocassette, polling place accessibility and accessible voting equipment.

The "Your Voting Rights - A Guide for Voters with Disabilities" flyer is attached and available on the Secretary of State's Elections website [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_dis.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_dis.htm).

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California Secretary of State **Bruce McPherson**

# Your Voting Rights

a guide for voters with disabilities

Dear Citizen,

The Secretary of State's goal is to have 100 percent of eligible citizens participate in our elections. The health and vitality of our democracy rest on the "consent of the governed," and it is only with every eligible citizen voting that we achieve this goal.

California has been very proactive in reducing or eliminating barriers to voting: All citizens can register and vote by mail, and counties are required to ensure that voting is accessible to voters with disabilities.

The information in this guide describes some of the rights of voters with disabilities. Please share it with your family and friends. Working together, we can move toward a barrier-free election system where all voters can cast a private ballot independently.

## General Voter Eligibility Information

You are eligible to register to vote in California if you are:

- ! 18 years of age or older by Election Day
- ! A U.S. citizen
- ! A resident of California
- ! Not in prison or on parole for conviction of a felony, and
- ! Not judicially determined to be mentally incompetent

i For more information about California elections, visit the Secretary of State's web site at **[www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)**.

be heard  
**vote!**



## Proof of Identity

In order to protect your vote, federal and state laws require that your voter registration affidavit include your California driver's license or state identification number, if you have one, or the last four digits of your social security number if you do not have a current and valid California driver's license or state identification card. If you are a first-time voter who registered by mail and you did not provide this information when you registered to vote, you may be required to show a form of identification when you vote. If you do not have a California driver's license, state identification card, or social security number, you can still register to vote, but if you have this information you must provide it.

## Sample Ballot Information

State law requires county elections officials to mail a "sample ballot" to each registered voter. Among other information in the sample ballot, you may find instructions for using the voting equipment at your polling place, including instructions for voters with disabilities about voting privately and independently. The sample ballot may also include the International Symbol of Accessibility, usually located on the back cover next to the address of the voter's assigned polling place, which indicates whether the polling place is accessible to voters with disabilities. If you do not receive your sample ballot or have questions about your polling place, you may contact your county elections official.

-  To contact your county elections official, check the back of this booklet,
-  or go to [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_d.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm)



## Official State Ballot Pamphlet Cassette Tapes

The Secretary of State produces cassette tapes of the Official State Ballot Pamphlet — also known as the Voter Information Guide — to allow voters who are blind or otherwise visually-impaired to have access to information about each of the state measures to be voted on at the next election. The Secretary of State has also begun producing large print versions of the pamphlets.

 These audio and large print voters' handbooks are available at no cost by calling **1.800.345.VOTE**

## Absentee Voting

Any registered voter in California may vote by mail. To vote by mail, you must have completed and returned the application included with your sample ballot by May 30, 2006. While it is best to return the application provided with your sample ballot, any form of an application is acceptable, so long as it contains your printed name and residence address, the address where you want to receive your absentee ballot, your signature, and the name and date of the election for which you want an absentee ballot. After you vote your ballot, mail it back to your county elections official in time for it to be received by the time the polls close on Election Day, at 8 p.m. Do not forget to put the proper postage on the return envelope and make sure you sign it where directed. Apply early.

## Permanent Absentee Voting

In California, you may apply to be a “permanent absentee voter” and to automatically receive an absentee ballot in the mail for each election.

A voter’s permanent absentee status will only be canceled if he or she fails to vote in two consecutive statewide general elections.



## **Late Absentee Ballot Requests**

If, in the seven days before the election, you find you will not be able to vote in person on Election Day, you may still request an absentee ballot. You must make a written request, signed under penalty of perjury, and deliver it, either in person or by someone you designate, to your county elections official.

## **Polling Places**

State and federal laws also require polling places to be physically accessible to voters with disabilities. County elections officials inspect each site and often make temporary alterations to homes, libraries, garages, churches, businesses, schools, or other locations in an effort to make them accessible to all voters on Election Day.

 To contact your county elections official, check the back of this booklet

## **Poll Worker Training**

The law requires that everyone who works in a polling place on Election Day receive training, including instruction on the rights of voters with disabilities. Poll workers also learn about issues confronting voters who have disabilities, including access barriers and the need to make reasonable modifications of policies and procedures to allow equal access to vote.

## **Curbside Voting**

It is recommended that you contact your county elections official regarding whether or not curbside voting is available at your polling place. If curbside voting is available at your polling place, you may approach as near as possible to the voting area and elections officials may bring you a roster to sign, a ballot to vote, and any other voting materials you may need, whether you are actually at a curb, in a car, or otherwise located outside the polls.



## Voting Equipment

Both state and federal laws require that all voters, including voters with disabilities, be able to cast their ballots privately and independently. New voting systems have been specifically designed for this purpose. Each polling place should have at least one voting system that permits voters, including those who are blind or visually impaired, to cast a ballot without assistance. In addition, the voting system must permit you to privately and independently verify your vote choices and, if there is an error, permit you to correct those choices before the ballot is cast.

**i** To find out what system your county uses, and how to use it, check out [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/voting\\_systems/ca\\_map\\_counties3.html](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/voting_systems/ca_map_counties3.html)

## Assistance to Vote

Although new accessible voting equipment is required to enable voters with disabilities to cast a ballot privately and independently, if you want help, or if for any reason you are unable to personally mark your ballot, you may choose up to two people to help you cast your vote. However, the persons or person you choose may not be your employer or your employer's agent, or your labor union leader or agent.

## Provisional Ballot

If, for any reason, your name does not appear on the list of voters at a polling place, you have the right to cast a "provisional" ballot. This is a ballot just like a regular ballot, but it will be placed in a special envelope and will be counted after the elections official confirms that you are eligible to vote. The official at the polling place will give you information about how to find out if your ballot was counted, and, if it was not counted, the reason why.



## County Contacts

<b>Alameda</b> 510.272.6933	<b>Inyo</b> 760.878.0224	<b>Monterey</b> 831.796.1499	<b>San Luis Obispo</b> 805.781.5228	<b>Trinity</b> 530.623.1220
<b>Alpine</b> 530.694.2281	<b>Kern</b> 661.868.3590	<b>Napa</b> 707.253.4321	<b>San Mateo</b> 650.312.5222	<b>Tulare</b> 559.733.6275
<b>Amador</b> 209.223.6465	<b>Kings</b> 559.582.3211 ext. 4401	<b>Nevada</b> 530.265.1298	<b>Santa Barbara</b> 805.568.2200	<b>Tuolumne</b> 209.533.5570
<b>Butte</b> 530.538.7761	<b>Lake</b> 707.263.2372	<b>Orange</b> 714.567.7600	<b>Santa Clara</b> 408.299.8683	<b>Ventura</b> 805.654.2664
<b>Calaveras</b> 209.754.6376	<b>Lassen</b> 530.251.8217	<b>Placer</b> 530.886.5650	<b>Santa Cruz</b> 831.454.2060	<b>Yolo</b> 530.666.8133
<b>Colusa</b> 530.458.0500	<b>Los Angeles</b> 562.466.1310	<b>Plumas</b> 530.283.6256	<b>Shasta</b> 530.225.5730	<b>Yuba</b> 530.749.7855
<b>Contra Costa</b> 925.646.4166	<b>Madera</b> 559.675.7720	<b>Riverside</b> 951.486.7200	<b>Sierra</b> 530.289.3295	
<b>Del Norte</b> 707.465.0383	<b>Marin</b> 415.499.6456	<b>Sacramento</b> 916.875.6451	<b>Siskiyou</b> 530.842.8084	
<b>El Dorado</b> 530.621.7480	<b>Mariposa</b> 209.966.2007	<b>San Benito</b> 831.636.4016	<b>Solano</b> 707.784.6675	
<b>Fresno</b> 559.488.3246	<b>Mendocino</b> 707.463.4371	<b>San Bernardino</b> 909.387.8300	<b>Sonoma</b> 707.565.6800	
<b>Glenn</b> 530.934.6414	<b>Merced</b> 209.385.7541	<b>San Diego</b> 858.565.5800	<b>Stanislaus</b> 209.525.5200	
<b>Humboldt</b> 707.445.7678	<b>Modoc</b> 530.233.6201	<b>San Francisco</b> 415.554.4375	<b>Sutter</b> 530.822.7122	
<b>Imperial</b> 760.482.4226	<b>Mono</b> 760.932.5537	<b>San Joaquin</b> 209.468.2890	<b>Tehama</b> 530.527.8190	