



DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Names Advisory Panel to Suggest Ways to Simplify State's Voter Registration Cards

SACRAMENTO – In her continuing quest to make California elections more user-friendly for voters, Secretary of State Debra Bowen today named a working group tasked with recommending ways to streamline and simplify California's cumbersome voter registration card.

“Registering to vote takes about two minutes but, if you look at our voter registration card, its appearance is about as daunting and uninspiring as a home mortgage application,” said Secretary Bowen, California's chief elections officer. “California's voter registration cards are cluttered, they are hard to read, and requirements like having them printed on a particular card stock are hopelessly out of date in this Internet age. California voters need a more appealing registration process.”

Similar to other states, California law requires people to provide contact information and identity verification on the voter registration card. The card also asks about a voter's political party affiliation, prior registration information, and interest in voting by mail.

California law spells out some format requirements, such as requiring voter registration cards to be printed on card stock and include a perforated stub for voters to tear off and keep as a receipt. Regulations also specify the size of the voter registration card. However, the fundamental design of the card is at the Secretary of State's discretion.

The four-member Voter Registration Card Working Group held its first meeting today. Secretary Bowen tapped the following experts in the fields of elections, voter outreach, and communications to serve:

- Kim Alexander
President and Founder, California Voter Foundation
- Tony Bernhard
Former Clerk/Recorder, Yolo County
- Efrain Escobedo
Director of Voter Engagement, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

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- Maria Mindlin
Language Specialist and Chief Executive Officer, Transcend Translations

Over the next month, the Voter Registration Card Working Group will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various voter registration card styles and their content. The group will provide options to the Secretary of State, including possible changes to state law to make the cards easier and more intuitive to use. The group will report its findings to the Secretary of State by December 15.

The last day for eligible Californians to register to vote in the February 5 Presidential Primary Election is January 22. The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is January 29.

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