

DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

DB08:020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2008

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports 700,000 New California Voters Registered Since Last Presidential Primary *244,202 Voters Joined the Rolls Since December*

SACRAMENTO – Seven-hundred thousand more Californians are registered to vote today than there were at this time before the last Presidential Primary Election four years ago, including more than 240,000 who signed up to vote since early December.

That's according to the Secretary of State's newest Report of Registration released today. The report, with data gathered 15 days before a statewide primary election, reflects updates to voter registration rolls, including the removal of people who have passed away, moved out of state, or have been determined to be ineligible to vote, as well as the addition of new voters.

"There are just four days until the earliest primary in our state's history, and California voters will step on the scales of the presidential race in a major way," said Secretary of State Debra Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. "Voter registration drives across the state have paid off, because there are now tens of thousands of new voters who will have their voices heard on February 5."

When compared to the same period before the last presidential primary, registration still lags behind California's population growth. While the overall registration number has grown, the percentage of people who are eligible to vote and actually registered to vote has dipped from about 69% to just below 68.5%. The drop is partly due to better tracking and removal of so-called "deadwood" from the voter registration rolls.

The registration totals for the six qualified political parties and voters who have declined to state their political affiliation are:

	<u>Jan. 22, 2008</u>		<u>Feb. 17, 2004</u>	
<u>Political Party</u>	<u># Registered</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u># Registered</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
American Independent	328,261	2.09 %	291,055	1.93 %
Democratic	6,749,406	42.95 %	6,518,631	43.20 %
Green	127,042	0.81 %	157,749	1.05 %
Libertarian	80,435	0.51 %	86,053	0.57 %
Peace and Freedom	57,182	0.36 %	70,475	0.47 %
Republican	5,229,425	33.28 %	5,364,832	35.55 %
Decline to State	3,043,164	19.37 %	2,480,039	16.43 %
Miscellaneous	97,838	0.62 %	122,326	0.80 %
TOTAL	15,712,753	100 %	15,091,160	100 %

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The two largest political parties have seen their registration percentages fall over the last four years as more voters decline to state a political affiliation. However, both parties have picked up new members recently: There are 150,633 newly registered Democrats and 39,246 newly registered Republicans since early December.

Overall, nearly 43% of California voters are registered Democrats. Alameda, San Francisco, and Imperial counties have the highest percentages of Democratic voters. Almost 34% of registered voters are Republicans. The counties with the highest concentration of GOP voters are Placer, Modoc, and Sutter.

Nearly 20% of California registered voters choose not to affiliate with any political party.

In the February 5, 2008, Presidential Primary Election, those decline-to-state voters may cast a non-partisan ballot containing the seven ballot measures before voters, but no presidential candidates. Or, they may vote in either the American Independent or Democratic parties' presidential primaries upon request. The other four political parties have "closed" primaries that do not allow decline-to-state voters to participate.

No decline-to-state voter can request more than one party's ballot, and if a decline-to-state voter does not request a specific ballot, a nonpartisan ballot will be provided.

By law, voter registration updates must occur 154, 60, and 15 days before each statewide primary election, and 60 days and 15 days before each general election. There is one off-year update released in February of non-election years.

The complete January 22, 2008, Report of Registration is on the Secretary of State's website at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_u.htm. Hard copies are available to the media upon request through the Secretary of State's Communications Office at (916) 653-6575.

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