

# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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### Secretary Of State Debra Bowen Announces Criminal Charges Against Fresno Man for Delayed Voter Registrations

**SACRAMENTO** – Secretary of State Debra Bowen announced Mitchell Eugene Qualls of Fresno was charged today with 12 misdemeanor counts of negligently holding voter registrations of would-be Fresno voters for nearly five times the legally allowed time period. A warrant has been issued for his arrest.

In June 2007, Fresno County Registrar of Voters Victor Salazar contacted the Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit to report he had received a batch of two-week-old voter registration forms from Qualls. To prevent voters from being disenfranchised, state law requires anyone who helps register voters to deliver the completed registration forms to county elections officials within 72 hours.

"This case is an important reminder for all voters to check with their county elections officials to make sure their voter registration information – including their political party affiliation – is correct," said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. "This case also highlights the fact that, if you're going to help others register to vote, you must follow the law. I thank Fresno Registrar Victor Salazar for looking out for Fresno voters and Fresno County District Attorney Elizabeth Egan for aggressively pursuing elections fraud cases."

The deadline to register to vote in the June 3 primary is May 19. Registering to vote is simple, quick, and free. Registration forms are available at most post offices, public libraries, city and county government offices, the Secretary of State's offices, and online at [http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_vr.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.htm).

The Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit helps maintain the integrity of the electoral process by investigating allegations of election and voter fraud in California. Potential Elections Code violations brought to the unit's attention are thoroughly investigated and referred to law enforcement officials for prosecution when there is sufficient evidence of wrongdoing. The Secretary of State's office does not disclose information about the status of ongoing criminal investigations, but the information from a case that results in a criminal complaint filed by a county or state prosecutor is a public record.

Anyone who has witnessed a violation of the California Elections Code is encouraged to contact the Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit at 1-800-345-VOTE or [http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_fraud.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_fraud.htm).

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