



DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports Record Percentage of Ballots Cast by Mail In June's Statewide Direct Primary Election, Certifies Results

SACRAMENTO – A record 58.7% of Californians cast their ballots by mail in the June 3, 2008, Statewide Direct Primary Election, according to results Secretary of State Debra Bowen certified today.

The 58.7% vote-by-mail turnout topped the previous record of 46.9% in June 2006. In the February presidential primary, nearly 41.7% of voters cast their ballots by mail. In June, more than half the votes were cast by mail in 48 of California's 58 counties. The exceptions were Colusa, Glenn, Imperial, Kings, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Mono, Napa, Sutter, and Trinity counties.

Overall, only 28.2% of registered voters cast ballots in the June election, marking the lowest turnout on a percentage basis for a regularly scheduled election. The lowest percentage turnout previously for a primary election was 33.6% set in June 2006. The lowest turnout percentage for a general election was 50.6% in November 2002.

Nearly 4.6 million of California's 16.1 million registered voters cast ballots last month. About 9.1 million Californians voted in February.

For the first time since 1940, California had a split primary in 2008. Voters cast ballots for the presidential nominees in February. Last month, they selected party nominees for the state Legislature and Congress.

“Splitting the primary to increase California's say in the presidential contests did give the state more clout in February, but everyone knew from the start that it ran the risk of orphaning the June election,” said Secretary Bowen, California's chief elections officer. “As feared, turnout plummeted last month when there was no top-of-the-ticket excitement to attract voters to the polls. Having a split primary was an effort worth trying, but based on the disappointing turnout in June, it's not an effort worth repeating.”

California law requires all future California presidential primaries to be split, as well. It would take legislative action to reunite future presidential primaries.

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The certified election results are available on the Secretary of State's website at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sov/2008_primary_june/contents.htm.

The Statement of Vote includes results broken down by county and Congressional and legislative districts. It also includes statewide and county-specific results for the two statewide ballot measures that were on the June ballot.

The Secretary of State's office will release a Supplement to the Statement of Vote by November 9. It will include more details on how votes were cast by Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization, and county supervisorial districts, as well as by city.

The last day to register to vote in the November 4, 2008, General Election is October 20. The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is October 28.

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