



DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS RELEASE

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County Elections Officials Halfway Through Post-Election Canvass for Statewide Primary

SACRAMENTO – After every statewide election, county elections officials have 28 days to complete what is known as the post-election canvass to ensure every eligible ballot is counted accurately. For the June 8, 2010, Statewide Direct Primary Election, county officials are now halfway through that process, which concludes on July 6.

“Election Day may have been two weeks ago, but for county elections officials the election truly does not end until July 6th,” said California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer. “During the 28 days after a statewide election, elections officials have to finish validating signatures on hundreds of thousands of vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, ensure people who voted provisionally were eligible to vote, remake valid ballots that were damaged so they can be tabulated by optical-scanning machines, and much more.”

County elections officials must complete their canvass by July 6 and provide their certified results to the Secretary of State by July 9. The Secretary of State will certify the statewide results of the election in an official Statement of Vote by July 16.

Some counties voluntarily report their progress to the Secretary of State; a daily updated report is at <http://vote.sos.ca.gov/returns/status.htm>. Before July 16, however, the most up-to-date information can be obtained from county elections offices.

Many state and federal laws and mandates must be followed during this official canvass period before the election results can be certified. County elections officials must, among other things:

- Audit all materials returning from the polls to ensure all ballots – voted, unvoted, spoiled, provisional, vote-by-mail, surrendered vote-by-mail – are accounted for
- Ensure the signature on each vote-by-mail ballot envelope matches the signature on the voter’s original voter registration card
- Research all voters who cast provisional ballots to ensure each person was registered to vote and did not vote more than once
- Remake ballots that machines cannot tabulate because of wrinkles, tears or other damage
- Hand-count votes for qualified write-in candidates
- Sort all vote-by-mail ballots by precinct so they can be manually audited

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- Manually audit 100 percent of the ballots from one percent of the precincts in the county to ensure the results are accurate, according to state elections law
- Manually audit 100 percent of the voter verified paper audit trail to ensure votes cast on direct recording electronic machines were tabulated accurately, according to voting system use procedures
- Audit all voting equipment to ensure it was properly secured and was not tampered with
- Investigate any voter who voted more than once

“The post-election canvass has become more labor-intensive in recent years as many more Californians have chosen to vote by mail,” added Bowen. “In the 2004 statewide primary, 34 percent of voters voted by mail; in the 2006 statewide primary, 59 percent of voters voted by mail. Sixty-two percent of voters voted by mail in the May 2009 Statewide Special Election.”

After the county elections officials provide their certified results to the Secretary of State by July 9, the Secretary has seven days to review the material, compile the 58 reports, and clear up any reporting discrepancies before certifying the complete election results on July 16.

For more details on the election reporting process, visit the Secretary of State’s Frequently Asked Questions web page at <http://vote.sos.ca.gov/misc/faqs.htm>.

As county elections officials continue the ballot verification and tabulation process, voters can find out if, in the case of vote-by-mail voters, their ballots arrived at county offices in time to be counted and, in the case of provisional voters, whether their ballots were counted. To access each county’s website or phone number through the Secretary of State’s website, voters can go to www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status.

To track the number of ballots outstanding statewide, visit the Secretary of State’s website at <http://vote.sos.ca.gov/misc/vote-by-mail.htm>.

To sign up for regular election updates via email, RSS feed or Twitter, go to www.sos.ca.gov/multimedia.

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