



DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports Highest Voter Turnout for a Gubernatorial Election Since 1994

SACRAMENTO – California Secretary of State Debra Bowen today certified the results of the November 2 General Election, showing that 59.6 percent of California voters participated.

After each statewide election, county elections officials must complete their official canvasses by ensuring every eligible ballot is counted accurately within 28 days, and send certified results to the Secretary of State 31 days after Election Day. The Secretary of State then has seven days to review the material, compile the 58 sets of data, and clear up any reporting discrepancies before certifying the complete statewide results on the 38th day after the election.

“The race for governor and some controversial propositions drew the highest number of people to the polls in five gubernatorial elections,” said Secretary Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer. “I applaud the work of each county elections official and the more than 100,000 elections workers and volunteers who helped to make voting as easy as possible for every eligible Californian.”

Four years ago, 56.2 percent of registered voters participated in the gubernatorial election. In 2002, voter turnout for the gubernatorial election was 50.6 percent, while 57.6 percent of registered voters turned out in the 1998 gubernatorial election. In 1994, voter turnout was 60.5 percent when Governor Pete Wilson defeated State Treasurer Kathleen Brown.

Ballots cast by mail comprised 48.4 percent of the total votes cast in last month’s general election. During the last gubernatorial election in 2006, 41.6 percent of all participating voters cast ballots by mail. The counties with the most vote-by-mail voters as a percentage of total turnout were Mendocino (79.4 percent), Nevada (73.9 percent) and El Dorado (70.5 percent). In Alpine and Sierra counties, all voters cast ballots by mail.

“Vote-by-mail voting has steadily increased in popularity over the last 32 years since the law was changed to allow any registered voter to vote by mail,” added Bowen. “More and more California voters turn to their mailbox for the convenience of voting by mail.”

For the November 2, 2010, election counties with the highest voter turnout as a percentage of registered voters were Sierra (81.9 percent), Nevada (80.8 percent) and Amador (77.6 percent). Turnout was the lowest in Imperial (49.8 percent), Merced (50.9 percent) and Fresno (52.2 percent) counties.

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With each gubernatorial election comes a change in the signature threshold to qualify an initiative or referendum for a statewide ballot. Proponents for an initiative statute or referendum in the next four years must collect petition signatures of 504,760 registered voters – the number equal to five percent of the total votes cast for governor on November 2, 2010. Proponents for a constitutional amendment in the next four years must collect signatures of 807,615 registered voters – the number equal to eight percent of the total votes cast for governor on November 2, 2010.

The certified election results, including county-by-county numbers and historical statistics on voter eligibility, registration and turnout, are available on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sov/2010-general.

The Secretary of State's office will release a Supplement to the Statement of Vote by April 9, 2011. It will include more details on how votes were cast by each Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization and county supervisorial district, as well as by city.

California's next regularly scheduled statewide election is the February 7, 2012, Presidential Primary Election. More information about state elections is available at www.sos.ca.gov/elections.

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