



# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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### **When are Election Results Final? Post-Election Canvass Under Way in California Counties**

**SACRAMENTO** – In the 31 days following every statewide election, county elections officials complete their official canvass by ensuring every eligible ballot is counted accurately and then certify final election results to the Secretary of State. For the June 5 Presidential Primary Election, county elections officials have until July 3 to complete the canvass and until July 6 to report their certified vote counts to the Secretary.

While the Secretary of State cannot announce the winner of a contest before all ballots are counted, news media sometimes choose to “call an election” sooner. In close contests, a clear winner may not be apparent for many days, as counties verify and count hundreds of thousands of unprocessed ballots that include vote-by-mail ballots, provisional ballots cast at polling places, and others. Depending on the volume of these types of ballots, it may take the full amount of time allowed by law for county elections officials to verify voter records and determine if ballots have been cast by eligible voters.

“While Election Day has come and gone, the meticulous tasks of reviewing signatures on vote-by-mail envelopes and verifying registrations of people who voted provisionally continues in each of the 58 counties,” said California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer.

As in past statewide elections, Secretary Bowen has asked all county elections officials to report the number of unprocessed ballots they have on hand so she can provide a statewide tally to the public. The numbers of ballots left to count – as voluntarily reported by counties – will be posted Thursday at <http://vote.sos.ca.gov/unprocessed-ballots-status/>.

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 returned from the polls to ensure all ballots – voted, un-voted, 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 form
- 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, smudges or other damage

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- Hand-count votes for qualified write-in candidates
- Sort all vote-by-mail ballots by precinct so they can be manually audited
- 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

Election results continue to be updated at <http://vote.sos.ca.gov>. How often election results are updated will vary based on the size of each county and the process each local elections office uses to tally and report votes. The Secretary of State's election results website will be updated as county elections officials report results. County elections officials sometimes update their own websites before reporting to the Secretary of State. County contact information is at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_d.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm).

After county elections officials provide the Secretary of State with their certified results by July 6, the Secretary then 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 13.

For more details on the election reporting process, visit [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/2012-elections/june-primary/faqs-primary-2012.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/2012-elections/june-primary/faqs-primary-2012.htm).

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