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Secretary of State Alex Padilla Statement on Election, Census Funding in State Budget

SACRAMENTO, CA – Secretary of State Alex Padilla issued the following statement after Governor Gavin Newsom signed the 2019-2020 state budget today.

“California is making a major—and timely—investment into our democracy. I thank Governor Newsom and the legislature for providing funding to upgrade and replace aging voting systems, expand census outreach, and help counties transition to more modern elections under the Voter’s Choice Act. While gridlock in Washington has left the 2020 census underfunded and election administrators without the resources they need, California has once again stepped up. This investment will pay dividends for our democracy.”

“In 2020, Californians can cast their ballots with confidence knowing that the equipment being used for our election has been tested and certified to the highest security standards in the nation. Additional funding for the census outreach will help us reach our goal of a complete count in California—securing our political representation in congress and our fair share of federal funding for our roads, schools, healthcare services, and communities.”

Voting System Upgrade

The 2019-2020 budget includes an additional \$87 million for counties to purchase modern voting equipment that has been certified to the state’s latest security standards. This funding is provided to counties on a 3 to 1 matching basis, meaning counties must put up \$1 of funding for every \$3 they receive from the state. For 15 California counties, that have 50 precincts or less, there is no matching fund requirement. \$134 million was allocated in last year’s state budget for counties to upgrade or replace aging voting systems.

Decertification

[In February](#), Secretary Padilla began the process of decertifying voting systems that had not been tested to the state’s most recent certification standards. This will require county elections officials to implement a voting system that meets the state’s newest testing and certification standards in time for the [March 3, 2020](#) Presidential Primary Election.

Census Outreach

This year's budget includes an additional \$87 million was allocated for statewide census efforts, including outreach to language minority groups and \$2 million for local education agencies. This follows a \$100 million investment in census outreach in last year's budget.

Voter's Choice Act

The budget includes \$3.8 million for outreach and education efforts in counties that are implementing the Voter's Choice Act. This year's budget also appropriates \$15 million of previously received federal funds to help support counties with the infrastructure and equipment costs of implementing the Voter's Choice Act.

Under this modern election model, every registered voter will automatically receive their ballot by mail and have options for how to return their ballot: by mail, to any ballot drop box in the county, or at any vote center in the county convenient to them. Fourteen counties, representing over half of the state's registered voters, will use the Voter's Choice Act in 2020.

The 14 counties implementing the Voter's Choice Act for 2020 are: Amador, Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne.

Cybersecurity

The budget includes \$2.74 million dollars to provide additional resources to the Secretary of State's cybersecurity program to ensure continuous identification and mitigation of evolving threats and to further protect the Secretary of State's technology ecosystem from cyberattacks. This funding will also allow Secretary of State to implement additional security controls, as well as additional monitoring and alert notification tools to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of all agency services.

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