



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 13, 2006

Contact: Nghia Nguyen Demovic
916-653-6575

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Appeals to Governor and Legislature to Work Together to Reimburse Counties for Postage Costs on Voted Ballots

Larger than normal absentee ballots require extra postage in 24 California Counties

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson appealed to the Governor and Legislature to reimburse the counties for extra costs they may incur during the November 7, 2006 General Election. Voted absentee ballots may weigh more than one ounce, triggering the need for extra postage. In some cases, voters may not affix the required postage to their voted ballot. Counties affected by a larger than usual ballot are working with local postmasters to pay the postage due on voted absentee ballots.

"I look forward to working with the Governor and Legislature in a bipartisan fashion to reimburse the counties for extra costs incurred because of the larger than normal absentee ballots," Secretary McPherson said. "I appreciate the counties working with their local postmasters, but I believe it is appropriate for the state to reimburse them for these costs. I look forward to working with the Legislature next year to determine a permanent solution to this problem. At a time when more and more Californians are voting by absentee ballot, it is crucial that we work together to protect the integrity of the vote."

Yesterday, Secretary McPherson sent a letter to the Postmaster General on behalf of California's voters asking him to alert local Postmasters and encourage cooperation with local elections officials to ensure all absentee votes cast are counted. While the counties are working to alert their voters to the fact that mailing back their voted absentee ballot will require additional postage, Secretary McPherson stressed that it is imperative that each vote cast is counted and timely delivered.

Based on recent county responses to a survey conducted by Secretary McPherson's office, it was determined that the return of absentee ballots in the following 24 counties will require more than the standard 39-cent stamp: Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Contra Costa, Glenn, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Stanislaus, Ventura and Yuba. Other counties have indicated that if the voter leaves the stub on the ballot, rather than tearing it off before mailing it back, it will increase the weight, which will also trigger the need for additional postage.

Please see the attached letter to the Governor and Legislative Leadership on this issue.

Attachments: Letter to the Governor and Legislative Leadership and letter to Postmaster General.

October 13, 2006

BY HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
The Honorable Don Perata
The Honorable Fabian Núñez
The Honorable Dick Ackerman
The Honorable George Plescia
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger and Legislative Leaders:

I want to bring to your attention an important matter affecting a number of California absentee voters. I am asking for your immediate and expedited assistance.

Due to the size of the November 7, 2006 General Election ballot, attributable to both state and local races and measures, the standard 39-cent postage most voters are accustomed to using to return their voted absentee ballots may be insufficient in some counties. With lengthy ballots in several counties, the General Election absentee ballot will weigh slightly more than one ounce; therefore, 63 cents postage will be required to return the voted ballot.

Based on recent county responses to a survey conducted by my office, I have determined that the return of absentee ballots in the following 24 counties will require more than the standard 39-cent stamp: Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Contra Costa, Glenn, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Stanislaus, Ventura and Yuba.

The affected counties have alerted their voters to the fact that mailing back their voted absentee ballot will require additional postage through notices to the voter, media releases and special postings. While the counties are already working with their local post offices to pay the insufficient postage and ensure delivery, I asked the United States Postal Service yesterday to be alert to this situation and to guarantee that they are working with the local county registrars of voters to ensure that all voted absentee ballots are timely delivered to the county elections offices regardless of postage. Elections Code Section 3017 requires that voted absentee ballots must be received by the local election official before the close of polls on Election Day. It is important that no voter's absentee ballot is returned to that voter due to lack of postage or insufficient postage.

This is not the first time, nor is it the last time, that local election officials face such a situation. Every election, local elections officials are faced with a multitude of voters who do not provide sufficient postage or any postage at all, when returning their voted absentee ballots. The local election officials must work closely with their local Postmasters to ensure that no voted ballot is returned for insufficient postage. Most counties enter into agreements with the U.S. Postal Service to have the post office deliver the ballot, regardless of postage, and billing the county for any deficiency.

In the June 2006 statewide Primary Election, 2,471,354 absentee voters cast their ballots. This represented approximately 47% of the ballots cast for that election. We can expect that the November General Election will have even higher numbers requesting and subsequently casting absentee ballots throughout the state.

I am requesting that you join me in seeking a budget augmentation next year to cover the cost to the counties of the additional postage not provided by the absentee voters. The cost will be ascertained by the billing submitted to the counties by the U.S. Postal Service.

Looking to the future, I am anxious to work with you on finding a long-term solution to this matter. A long-term solution will not involve the use of funds from the Help America Vote Act of 2002 since their use for this purpose is inappropriate. It is clear that absentee voting is growing in popularity in California, and it is critical to ensure that no unnecessary obstacle be placed in the way of exercising that basic right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce McPherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" being more prominent and the last name "McPherson" following in a similar style.

BRUCE McPHERSON
Secretary of State



BRUCE McPHERSON | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ELECTIONS | 1500 11th Street, 5th floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 | tel 916.657.2166 | fax 916.653.3214 | www.ss.ca.gov

October 12, 2006

Michael Daley
Vice President Pacific Area Operations
United States Postal Service
11255 Rancho Carmel Dr
San Diego, CA 92197-0100

Re: Postage cost for returned voted absentee ballots in some California Counties

Dear Mr. Daley:

Due to the size of the November 7, 2006 General Election ballot, the standard \$.39 postage most voters are accustomed to using to return their voted absentee ballots may be insufficient in some counties in California. With lengthy ballots in several counties, the General Election absentee ballot will weigh slightly more than one ounce; therefore, 63 cents postage will be required to return the voted ballot, which will likely be covered by the use of two 39-cent stamps.

Many of the counties have alerted their voters to the fact that mailing back their voted absentee ballot will require additional postage through notices to the voter, media releases and special postings. While many of the counties are already working with their local post offices to pay the insufficient postage and ensure delivery, I am asking that you contact your local postmasters throughout California to alert them to this situation and to guarantee that they are working with the local county registrars of voters to ensure that all voted absentee ballots are timely delivered to the county elections offices. Elections Code Section 3017 requires that voted absentee ballots must be received by the local election official before the close of polls on Election Day. It is important that no voter is disenfranchised due to lack of postage or insufficient postage when returning his or her voted absentee ballot.

In the June 2006 statewide Primary Election 2,471,354 absentee voters cast their ballots. This represented approximately 47% of the ballots cast for that election. We can expect that the November General Election will have even higher numbers requesting and subsequently casting absentee ballots throughout the state.

Based on county responses to a recent survey conducted by my office, I have determined that the return of absentee ballots in the following counties will require more than the standard 39-cent stamp: Contra Costa, Glenn, Inyo, Mariposa, Monterey, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Stanislaus, Ventura and Yuba. Other counties have indicated that if the voter leaves the stub on the ballot, rather than tearing it off before mailing it back, it will increase the weight, which will also trigger the need for additional postage.

Michael Daley
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Please help me guarantee that each voted absentee ballot is timely delivered to the county elections office on Election Day. I look forward to your support in this effort. Please contact me directly at (916) 653-7244 if you need additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce McPherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" being more prominent and the last name "McPherson" following in a similar style.

BRUCE McPHERSON
Secretary of State