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September 28, 2009

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #09160

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: *Debbie O'Donoghue*  
Debbie O'Donoghue  
Deputy Secretary of State, Voter Education and Outreach Services

RE: Polling Place Accessibility: Draft Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines for Review and Comment

Elections Code section 12280 states "When designating polling places, the elections official shall undertake necessary measures in the locating of polling places to ensure that polling places meet the guidelines promulgated by the Secretary of State for accessibility by the physically handicapped."

The Secretary of State's office contracted with the Department of Rehabilitation to update the Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines (Guidelines) that were last updated in June 2001. The goal of updating the Guidelines is to help county elections officials to better understand the federal and state requirements for accessible polling places.

It's important to note that these Guidelines do not make new law or impose new polling place accessibility requirements on county elections offices. Rather, they are a compilation of laws and regulations that county elections officials are required to adhere to, regardless of the existence of the Guidelines.

Throughout the document, specific code citations are provided where the Guidelines require county elections officials to take a specific action, so you and the public can easily find the underlying regulatory mandate. In some cases, the mandates identified are new to the Guidelines, but are not necessarily new regulatory standards.

The Secretary of State's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee and several county elections officials gave generously of their time during the initial draft and review of the Guidelines, which is greatly appreciated.

The draft Guidelines can be found on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place-accessibility-guidelines/](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place-accessibility-guidelines/).

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If you have comments or questions, please send them to [PPAGComments@sos.ca.gov](mailto:PPAGComments@sos.ca.gov) by October 23, 2009. You can also send your comments via fax to (916) 653-4620, or by mail to:

Office of the Secretary of State  
Attn: Debbie O'Donoghue  
1500 – 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

In addition to updating the Guidelines, the Secretary of State is now working with the Department of Rehabilitation to update the Polling Place Accessibility Checklist to be used in conjunction with these Guidelines and to provide training to county elections officials on surveying polling places for accessibility.

If you have questions, please call me at (916) 653-6173 or via email at [debbie.odonoghue@sos.ca.gov](mailto:debbie.odonoghue@sos.ca.gov).