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March 9, 2010

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #10085

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: Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines

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 Secretary of State's office also worked with the Department of Rehabilitation to update the Polling Place Accessibility Checklist (Checklist) to be used in conjunction with the Guidelines to evaluate polling places for accessibility.

The goal of updating the Guidelines is to help county elections officials and members of the public 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 members of 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 Guidelines can be found on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place-accessibility/ and the Checklist can be found at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place-accessibility/accessibility-checklist.htm

Many county elections officials and members of the Secretary of State's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee provided feedback on the draft Guidelines and Checklist, which was greatly appreciated.

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