

**California Secretary of State
Voter's Choice Task Force**

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 30, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

1. Welcome, Call to Order: 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Task Force Members Present: Chair Petrina Branch, Chair Donna Linder, Melvin E. Levey, Matt Moreles, Ethan Jones, Gabriel Taylor, Art Tinoco, Bob Page, Dean Logan, Bob Page, Deanna Kitamura, Dora Rose, Brittany Stonesifer, Evelyn Mendez

Absent: Camila Chavez, Carrie Cornwell, Leslie Hernandez, Ellen Nash, Dean Logan, Jesse Salinas

Declaration of Quorum

SOS Josh Robinson declared a quorum was reached.

2. Comments: General Public Items Not on the Agenda
Chair Petrina Branch invited public comments. The following comments were made: No public comments.
3. Discussion and Possible Action: Task Force Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2026
Recommendation for Action: Staff recommend the Task Force adopt the minutes of the meeting of June 11, 2026.

In a motion by Donna Linder, seconded by Brittany Stonesifer, and carried on a 11-0 vote, the meeting minutes from June 11, 2026 were approved.

AYES: Chair Petrina Branch, Chair Donna Linder, Melvin E. Levey, Matt Moreles, Gabriel Taylor, Art Tinoco, Bob Page, Dean Logan, Bob Page, Deanna Kitamura, Brittany Stonesifer

ABSTAIN: Dora Rose

ABSENT for vote: Camila Chavez, Leslie Hernandez, Ellen Nash, Dean Logan, Jesse Salinas, Evelyn Mendez

4. UCLA Report on Race & Ethnicity Presentation
 - This item was initially skipped as the Task Force waited for Dr. Michael Rios to join the call. The Task Force began discussion on item 5, below.

- Dr. Michael Rios from UCLA joined the Task Force meeting to be available to answer any questions related to the report.
 - To access the report on the Secretary of State's website: [Supplementary Report – UCLA Voter's Choice Act \(VCA\) Report on Race and Ethnicity in the 2025 Special Election \(PDF\)](#)
- The questions asked by the Task Force included:
 - Chair Petrina Branch asked for an overview of the BISG technique.
 - Bob Page asked a follow-up; is it a correlation/projection rather than based on actual data? Michael did note that these are racial estimates, though they are accurate at over 70%
 - After Michael provided an overview of some of the findings related to how voters prefer to return their ballots, Bob Page asked a question about methodology – how does he determine these correlations based on block analysis?
 - Michael affirmed that when their predictions are compared to self-reported race data, the percentages are the same – which helps support the efficacy of the model.
 - Dora Rose asked in the chat if Michael has looked at rejected ballots and whether there are disproportionate impacts on certain communities? Dora also asked to confirm that the methodology is explained at the top of the report, which was indeed confirmed.
- Dr. Michael Rios realized it may be helpful to share a brief PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the report's main findings. Following the presentation, he noted his availability outside of the meeting to answer any questions that might emerge later.

5. Subcommittee Discussion and Assignments (for 2026 Primary Election report)

- Chair Petrina Branch jumped to this item as the Task Force waited for Dr. Michael Rios to join the call for item 4. Petrina explained that the Task Force will soon begin their report on the 2026 Primary Election. This discussion is to determine the subcommittees for this election's report.
- Gabrielle Taylor noted the need to get the VoteCal data earlier so that they can analyze it and use it to determine the other subcommittee topics. He implores the folks working on compiling that data to make it available ASAP.
- Bob Page highlighted the discussion before about what is true for VCA versus non-VCA counties, and that that difference ought to be the focus of this report instead of other factors (such as mail postmarking, ballot processing speed/efficiency, etc.).
 - Bob also noted that since implementing the VCA, ballot processing speed has actually increased, due to significantly reducing the number of provisional ballots. This might be an opportunity to promote VCA.

- Donna Linder said that Stanislaus is also faster than they used to be, and that might be an effect of the VCA. Might be worth exploring.
 - Brittany Stonesifer noted in the chat that the Task Force can also talk about the increased number of drop boxes in VCA counties being helpful to alleviate the postal issues.
- At this time, Dr. Michael Rios joined the call and was able to return to item 4.
- Following Dr. Michael Rios's presentation for item four, the Task Force resumed discussion on this matter.
- Melvin Levey noted that while he sees that the point of this report is to focus on VCA vs. Non-VCA, it's also an opportunity to shine light on larger issues all counties are experiencing.
 - In the chat, Deanna Kitamura agrees with Mel.
 - Matt Morales noted agreement, and it can be noted in the report that it's an experience not connected to VCA.
- Chair Petrina Branch proposed **4 categories: VoteCal, University Reports, Ballot Rejection Rate/Post Office Changes, Ballot Processing Speed**
 - Mel Levey volunteered for Ballot Rejection Rate/Post Office Changes
 - Bob Page volunteered for Ballot Processing Speed
 - Matt Morales volunteered for VoteCal, though he did that section in the Special 2025 report
 - Dora Rose noted in chat that she cannot participate in a section this time due to personal reasons.
 - SOS Josh Robinson offered that SOS can send out a poll for committee members to rank their subcommittee preferences. That might be a better option to also include folks who are not present today. Brittany Stonesifer agrees with this method.
- SOS Josh Robinson noted that the 6-month deadline for this report is December 2, 2026.
- Deanna Kitamura noted there ought to be an **introduction and overview**, which can include a brief history. Deanna volunteered for that section.

6. Future Agenda Items

- Chair Petrina Branch invited future agenda items from the Task Force.
- Mel Levey noted that he and Jesse Salinas are still working on the second supplemental for the 2025 Special, focusing on the university data. They expect to share a draft in time for the next meeting in August. Mel invited comments from the Task Force, based on the presentation shared today.
 - SOS Josh Robinson noted that the group can send any comments to SOS to then send to the subcommittee. Also that the group can

expect the Sac State report soon, hopefully before the August meeting.

7. Adjournment

Chair Petrina Branch adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.