

Voter's Choice Task Force Report

June 2, 2026, Statewide Primary Election

Contact Information

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Alternative formats available upon request.

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About the California Secretary of State

The California Office of the Secretary of State is committed to adhering to the highest standards of integrity and transparency, supporting businesses, strengthening democracy, protecting individual rights, preserving our state's history, delivering quality services, and providing accessible resources and trusted information.

The California Secretary of State's responsibilities include:

- Serving as the state's Chief Elections Officer
- Implementing electronic filing and Internet disclosure of campaign and lobbyist financial information
- Maintaining business filings
- Commissioning notaries public
- Operating the Safe at Home confidential address program
- Maintaining the Domestic Partners and Advance Health Care Directive Registries
- Safeguarding the State Archives
- Serving as a trustee of the California Museum

Special Note About This Report

Pursuant to California Elections Code Section 4008, the Secretary of State shall establish a task force that includes representative of all of the following:

- (1) County elections officials.
- (2) Individuals with demonstrated language accessibility experience for languages covered under the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- (3) The disability community and community organizations and individuals that advocate on behalf of, or provide services to, individuals with disabilities.
- (4) Experts with demonstrated experience in the field of elections.

This Task Force has been appointed by the California Secretary of State. The Task Force is currently comprised of 16 members. Beginning in 2025, the California Secretary of State's Voter's Choice Task Force is charged with reviewing elections conducted under the Voter's Choice Act and providing comments and recommendations to the California State Legislature within six months of the election.

Aggregated data from the state's VoteCal database, as well as data from university reports created through the Voting Rights Project, will be provided in a supplemental report in the future.

Voter's Choice Task Force Appointees

1. Melvin E. Levey, Merced County ROV
2. Donna Linder, Stanislaus County ROV, Task Force Co-Chair
3. Dean Logan, L.A. County ROV
4. Evelyn Mendez, Sonoma County ROV
5. Matt Moreles, Santa Clara County ROV
6. Bob Page, Orange County ROV
7. Jesse Salinas, Yolo County ROV
8. Art Tinoco, Riverside County ROV
9. Petrina Brandt, Attorney, Task Force Co-Chair
10. Camila Chavez, Executive Director of the Dolores Huerta Foundation
11. Leslie Hernandez, Civic Engagement Specialist, AltaMed Health Services
12. Deanna Kitamura, Managing Attorney, Asian Law Caucus
13. Ellen Nash, Chair/President of the San Diego Black American Political Association of California
14. Dora Rose, Deputy Director, League of Women Voters
15. Brittany Stonesifer, Senior Program Manager, Common Cause California
16. Gabriel Taylor, Senior Advocate, Disability Rights CA

Advisory Appointees

1. Carrie Cornwell, Staff Director, CA State Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
2. Ethan Jones, Chief Consultant, CA State Assembly Elections Committee

Purpose and History of the Voter's Choice Act

The Voter's Choice Act (VCA), enacted through [Senate Bill \(SB\) 450](#) (Allen, Hertzberg, et al., Chapter 832, Statutes of 2016), authorized participating counties to adopt a modernized election model designed to increase voter access, convenience, flexibility, and participation. The model expanded vote by mail, introduced countywide vote centers, and provided multiple ballot return options. The adoption of the bill authorized 14 counties to pilot the new voting model beginning in 2018, allowing all counties to move to the new model in 2020. Thirty of California's 58 counties conducted the June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election using this model.¹

Legislative analysis of Senate Bill 450 conveys the purpose of the VCA is to increase voter participation. The bill author based the VCA on Colorado's election model given the high rate of participation in that state.² Instead of requiring everyone to vote on Election Day during the hours of 7:00 am and 8:00 pm, voters are given options. It gives voters greater flexibility by allowing them to vote by mail, expanding access to in-person early voting, casting a ballot at any Vote Center within their county, and using secure ballot drop-off locations throughout VCA counties. Because vote centers are staffed for multiple days, proponents of SB 450 pointed to the benefit of having smoothly run in-person voting.

The VCA allows counties in California to replace Election Day neighborhood poll sites with a reduced number of multi-day vote centers. All vote centers must be open for at least four days starting the Saturday before Election Day, with a portion being opened for eleven days.³ Voters in a VCA county may vote at any vote center in their county, while voters in

¹California Elections Code § 4005.

Ibid.

California Elections Code § 4005 and 4008.

Participating VCA Counties as of November 4, 2025: Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Humboldt, Imperial, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Ventura, Yolo. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/voters-choice-act/vca-participating-counties>

²August 1, 2016 Assembly Appropriations Committee and August 18, 2016, Assembly Floor Analysis.

³California Elections Code § 4005.s

non-VCA counties must vote at their designated poll site. Initially, only VCA counties were required to mail registered voters in the county a ballot in the mail, but beginning in 2020, all counties are required to mail a ballot at least 29 days before an election.⁴ At all voting locations, whether a neighborhood poll site or a vote center, additional services are provided to support voters. Both offer services such as providing voters the ability to register and vote a conditional ballot, translated election materials and interpretation, accessible ballot marking devices, and the ability to drop off a ballot received in the mail. The VCA requires counties to create an Election Administration Plan (EAP), to conduct outreach and education to voters, and to create a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and a Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).

The VCA sets a statutory floor for voter access. Not including special elections, counties must provide 11-day vote centers at a minimum ratio of one per 50,000 registered voters, and 4-day vote centers at a minimum ratio of one per 10,000 registered voters a minimum of 8 hours per day. Also, each county must provide at least two ballot drop-off locations, or one for every 15,000 registered voters, whichever results in more.⁵ In addition to establishing minimum requirements for official ballot drop-off locations and vote centers, the VCA creates a baseline of offerings for accessible voting equipment, voter services, language assistance, outreach, and accessibility. It is especially geared toward communities that have historically faced barriers to voting, requiring counties to account for more than a dozen factors such as proximity to public transportation, disability access, low-income communities, low vehicle ownership, and historically low vote by mail use when setting vote center and drop box locations. And through the Election Administration Plan, the Voter's Choice Act makes those obligations public and enforceable by requiring a detailed process of publicly noticed meetings, public comment, draft revision, accessible publication, and state review.⁶

The VCA also requires mailed direct contacts to go at least once to voters sharing a surname and address in each requested language. It requires vote centers to post information about available county or Secretary of State language assistance services and hotlines, and, through 2029, it requires counties with more than 500,000 registered voters to establish a Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee and hold at least one dedicated public meeting on voter education and outreach during development of the Election Administration Plan. Just as importantly, it creates a more defined pipeline for community input by requiring Language Accessibility Advisory Committees and Voter Accessibility Advisory Committees to meet before the public planning meeting and requires that meeting to occur before the draft Election Administration Plan is publicly noticed, thus helping to ensure that affected communities have a meaningful opportunity to shape the

⁴ California Elections Code § 3000.5.

⁵ California Elections Code § 4005.

⁶ *Ibid.*

plan before it is finalized. The VCA also sets a firm 120-day pre-election deadline for final Election Administration Plans, requires counties to post election cost reports within nine months of an election's certification, requires the Secretary of State to submit their final report within six months after each election, and re-establishes a standing task force to review each VCA election and report recommendations to Legislature.⁷

Overall, the Voter's Choice Act represents a significant shift from traditional Election Day voting toward a more flexible, accessible, and voter-centered election process. By expanding vote-by-mail, establishing countywide vote centers and ballot drop-off locations, and requiring counties to address accessibility and language needs, the VCA is designed to reduce barriers to voting and increase participation. At the same time, its requirements for public input, Election Administration Plans, and state oversight create accountability and transparency, making voter access a shared responsibility between counties and the state.

Chart 1. Select Special Requirements for the June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election Under Polling Place and VCA Models

	Polling Place Model	VCA Model
Vote by Mail	All voters receive a ballot in the mail (as of 2020)	All voters receive a ballot in the mail
In-Person Voting	Precinct polling places open on Election Day	Minimum: One vote center for every 50,000 voters for 11 days (including Election Day) and one voter center for every 10,000 voters for four days (including Election Day)
In-Person Voting	In-person voters must go to a designated neighborhood poll site although those with comprehensive electronic voting rosters can vote	In-person voters can go to any vote center in the county

⁷ California Elections Code § 4005 and 4008.

	anywhere in the county	
Official Ballot Drop Boxes	Minimum: One official ballot drop box for every 30,000 registered voters	Minimum: One official ballot drop box for every 15,000 voters and at each vote center
Toll-Free Language Hotline		Language hotline availability and hotline phone number posted at voter centers
Election Administration Plan	Voter Education and Outreach Plan	Plans must include a voter education plan and a description of how media will be used to promote elections. Also requires public meetings, draft postings with feedback.
Community Committees		Language Accessibility Advisory Committee, Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (in large counties)

Unusual Nature of the June 2, 2026 Statewide Primary Election (Ballot Rejection Rate and USPS Changes)

Ballot Processing Improvements

Impact of the Voter's Choice Act on Flexibility, Accessibility, and Security

Review of the VoteCal Data

Reviews of the University Data

Recommendations and Conclusion