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May 4, 2026

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #26121

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Wesley Keller
Program Manager, Candidate Filing and Election Night Reporting

RE: Primary Election: Changes to Vote-By-Mail (VBM) Ballot Processing

This memorandum is being sent as a reminder regarding Assembly Bill (AB) [16](#) (Ch. 140, Stats. of 2025), that became effective January 1, 2026. Among other changes, AB 16 did the following:

- Amended Elections Code section 15101, which provides when the elections official may begin processing VBM ballots.
- Amended Elections Code section 15104, which establishes procedures related to the processing of VBM ballots that VBM voter observers shall have sufficiently close access to.

Section 15101

Section 15101 permits elections officials to begin processing vote-by-mail ballots on the date in which they are mailed, which shall not be later than twenty-nine days before Election Day.

For the June 2, 2026, Primary Election, VBM ballot mailing shall begin no later than **Monday, May 4 (E-29)**, and processing may begin on that same date. (Elec. Code § 15101(a))

Section 15104

Section 15104 provides that VBM voter observers shall be allowed sufficiently close access to observe the established procedures listed in Section 15104(d) to process VBM ballots, including verifying signatures on unsigned identification envelope and signature verification statements completed pursuant to Sections 3019(d), (e). (Elec. Code § 15104(d)(4))

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If you have any questions, please contact the Candidate Filing and Election Night Reporting Help Desk by at (916) 653-9154, or email your questions to candidate-filings@sos.ca.gov.