Voter's Choice Act Report Summary: 2024 Primary and General Elections

This summary presents an overview of voting behavior and ballot usage findings in the 2024 Primary and General Elections reports to the legislature (California Election Code § 4005). Drawing from statewide VoteCal data, the full reports detail turnout rates, registration statistics, voting methods, and ballot rejection patterns across a range of demographic and linguistic groups. This summary also includes some comparison between the 2024 primary and general election data to data from the 2020 general election.

While the data offers valuable insights into what occurred during the elections—such as differences in turnout across counties and age groups—the figures provided are descriptive in nature. This summary does not attempt to establish any causal relationship between the implementation of the VCA and changes in voter behavior.

Key Findings in the 2024 Primary and General Elections Reports

In the 2024 Primary and General Elections, the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) voting model continued to expand across California. A total of 29 counties implemented the VCA model, which includes 17.2 million registered voters—approximately 78 percent of the state's electorate. By comparison, only 15 counties used the VCA model during the last Presidential Election, the 2020 General Election, reaching 11 million voters, or about 50 percent of the statewide electorate. To provide an immediate comparison to the most recent Presidential election, data from the 2020 Presidential Election may be discussed in some of the findings below.

Voter Turnout 2024 General
- The voter turnout rate for (28) VCA Counties was 74.4% excluding Los Angeles County.
- The statewide turnout rate was 71.4% and non-VCA counties had a turnout rate of 70.4%.
- Los Angeles County had a turnout rate of 66.2%.

Voter Turnout 2024 Primary
- The voter turnout rate for (28) VCA counties, excluding Los Angeles County was 37.8%,
- The statewide turnout rate was 34.9%, and non-VCA counties had a turnout rate of 35.2%.
- Los Angeles County had a turnout rate of 29.1%.

Comparison of 2024 Presidential to 2020 Presidential Elections Turnout
- Turnout rates for the 2024 Presidential election were similar to the 2020 Presidential election rates.
- In the 2020 General Election, (14) VCA counties excluding Los Angeles County had a turnout rate of 74%
- The statewide turnout rate was 81%, and non-VCA counties had a turnout rate of 82%.
- Los Angeles County had a turnout rate of 71%.

Turnout by Age
- Historically, voter turnout rates increase with age. Voters aged 18-25 typically have the lowest turnout rate. Voters aged 65+ typically have the highest voter turnout rate. This was consistent for the 2020 Presidential and 2024 Primary elections.
- However, in the 2024 General Election, voters in the age group of 18-25 (61.5%) had a slightly higher turnout rate than voters in the age group of 26-35 (59.5%).

Voter Participation: Vote by mail (VBM) vs In-person[1] – Vote by mail was the preferred method for voters in California during the 2024 General Election.
- 16,140,044 ballots cast Statewide
- 13,034,378 VBM ballots cast Statewide (80.76%)
- 3,105,666 ballots cast in person Statewide (precincts or vote centers) (19.24%)

- 12,630,669 ballots cast in VCA counties
- 10,198,897 VBM ballots cast in VCA counties (80.74%)
- 2,431,772 ballots cast in person at vote centers (19.26%)

Vote by mail was the preferred method for voters in California during the 2024 Primary Election[2].
- 7,719,218 ballots cast Statewide
- 6,841,984 VBM ballots cast Statewide (88.64%)
- 877,234 ballots cast in person Statewide (precincts or vote centers) (11.36%)

- 6,018,870 ballots cast in VCA counties
- 5,379,741 VBM ballots cast in VCA counties (89.38%)
- 639,129 ballots cast in person at vote centers (10.62%)

Voter Participation: Ballot Return Methods – Vote by Mail (VBM) - Ballot drop-off continued to be the most popular method for returning VBM ballots, whether through a drop box, designated drop-off location, or vote center.
- Statewide, 7.8 million ballots were returned at ballot drop off locations, including precincts, ballot drop boxes, ballot drop off at a county designated location that is staffed, and VBM's dropped off at vote center locations.
- 6.2 million VCA voters returned ballots via drop-off locations, compared to 1.6 million voters in non-VCA counties.

- During the 2024 Primary Election, 2.7 million voters in VCA counties returned VBM ballots via ballot drop-off and 710 thousand voters in non-VCA counties returned their ballots via ballot drop-off.
- In VCA counties, 31% or 3.9 million voters returned their VBM ballots by mail—an increase from 28% in 2020—but still lower than the 37% of voters who returned ballots by mail in non-VCA counties.

- During the 2024 Primary Election 43% or 2.5 million voters in VCA counties returned their VBM ballots by mail – more than the 31% during the 2024 General Election – but also lower than the 48% or 816 thousand voters who returned ballots by mail in non-VCA counties.
- During 2020 General Election, ballot drop-off was also the most common return method in VCA counties.

Ballot Rejection Rates

2024 General Election
- Statewide: 1.07%
- VCA counties: 1.01%
- Non-VCA counties: 1.27%
- VCA counties excluding Los Angeles County: 1.07%
- Los Angeles County: 0.85%

2024 Primary Election
- Statewide: 1.61%
- VCA counties: 1.57%
- Non-VCA counties: 1.74%
- VCA counties excluding Los Angeles County: 1.54%
- Los Angeles County: 1.67%

Ballot Rejection Reasons
- In VCA and Non-VCA counties, the top three reasons for ballot rejection were non-matching signature, ballot not received on time, and no voter signature.
- During the 2024 Primary Election, in VCA and non-VCA counties, the top three reasons for ballot rejection were ballots not received on time, non-matching signature, and no voter signature.
- During the 2020 General Election, the top three reasons for ballot rejections were no voter signature, non-matching signature, and ballot not received on time.

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[1] This voting data are sourced from the Secretary of State's Statement of Vote for the November 5th, 2024 General Election found here:
https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/prior-elections/statewide-election-results/general-election-nov-5-2024/statement-vote
[2] This voting data are sourced from the Secretary of State's Statement of Vote for the March 5th, 2024 Presidential Primary Election found here:
https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/prior-elections/statewide-election-results/pres-prim-march-2024/statement-vote

Interpretive Note

While this summary presents observed differences in turnout, ballot usage, and rejection reasons across counties, it does not assess the causes of these differences. The data are descriptive and is not intended to represent causal conclusions about the impact of the Voter's Choice Act. Additional research would be required to determine whether these differences were caused by the implementation of the VCA.