California Secretary of State
Voter's Choice Task Force

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2025, | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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

   Roll Call
   Task Force Members Present: Chair Donna Linder, Chair Petrina Branch, Melvin E. Levey, Evelyn Mendez, Matt Moreles, Bob Page, Art Tinoco, Gabriel Taylor, Leslie Hernandez, Deanna Kitamura, Ellen Nash, Dora Rose, Dean Logan, Camila Chavez, Jesse Salinas
   Non-Voting Members Present: Carrie Cornwell, Ethan Jones

   Declaration of Quorum
   SOS staff Briana Ricketts-Beck declared a quorum was reached.

2. Discussion and Possible Action: Task Force Meeting Minutes of Nov. 20, 2025

   Recommendation for Action: Staff recommend the Task Force adopt the minutes of the meeting of Nov. 20, 2025.

   In a motion by Jesse Salinas, seconded by Donna Linder, and carried on a 15-0 vote, Task Force members approved the minutes.

   AYES: Chair Donna Linder, Chair Petrina Branch, Melvin E. Levey, Evelyn Mendez, Matt Moreles, Bob Page, Art Tinoco, Gabriel Taylor, Leslie Hernandez, Deanna Kitamura, Ellen Nash, Dora Rose, Dean Logan, Camila Chavez, Jesse Salinas
   NOES: None
   ABSENT: None
   ABSTAIN: None

3. Discussion: 2025 Special Election Report

   Public Comments received:

   - Brittany Stonesifer – Report ought to include the abnormally long wait times observed in this election and the impacts of that.
   - Rhonda Provost asked if the special report will be made available to the public, and when and where.

- o SOS Chief of Elections Jana Lean affirmed it will be posted to the website, though the time/date are currently unknown.
- Cindy Huang noted that there are people currently on her county's voter roll that shouldn't be there. She asked her county if/when the roll is cleaned, and got the answer that it only has to be cleaned every 10 years.
  - o Bob Page noted that that issue is not something this Task Force addresses – but there are laws that govern roll maintenance, and that it happens daily and constantly.
- Brian Bertacini is in a county considering rank-choice voting. If that system is adopted that system, how will it follow all the certification requirements for voting systems?
  - o Bob Page noted that again, this is not something this Task Force concerns, and state systems do not need to follow optional federal guidelines.

Task Force discussion on proposed committees (see list of committees below):

- Dora Rose asked how we can get data on wait times. Suggested surveying the counties. We also need cost data. Vote center use also needs to include drop-off, especially with delayed postal pick-up.
- Matt Morales noted it would be too limiting to have a committee that's just recommendations. It ought to be weaved in all of them.
  - o Jesse Salinas noted we need to use neutral language in making recommendations. Deanna and Dora agreed in the chat.
- Dean Logan likes the committees, but also sees some overlap – so it's important to share out to the whole Task Force. This is a report to the legislature, so bear in mind this is for policy guidance and context is needed. (Such as the limitations in what data are available in VoteCal)
- Public member Cindy Huang connects increased cost to security issues and concerns.
  - o Dean Logan responds that this is why context is important and we need to connect specifically to the VCA.

Committee Formation – proposed by Petrina Branch and Donna Linder

a. Purpose and History of the VCA
b. Unusual nature of this Special Election
c. How the VCA promotes accessibility, flexibility, and security
d. Review of VoteCal data
e. Review of the reports from the universities

4. Communications: Task Force Member Statements & Requests

None at this meeting.

5. Comments: General Public Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Petrina Branch invited public comments. The following comments were made:

- Cindy Huang corrects what was said earlier today, that mailing a ballot to every voter is indeed an aspect of VCA.
  - Dean Logan clarified that it is no longer unique to VCA, that all voters receive a mail ballot now.
- Alice Kao asked if the committees will take an honest view of the VCA, versus promoting it. There is an astronomical cost increase under VCA. It's important to compare the voter turnout increase relative to the cost increase.
- Mark Galperin asked if it's possible to change a VCA county back to a polling place model?
  - Bob Page answered that there's nothing in the code that prevents it, but there's no direction on how to do it.

6. Future Agenda Items and Other Comments: Task Force Members

- Petrina advised we plan future meetings now: perhaps 2 each in February, March, and April.
  - Jana flagged that there are logistical hurdles involved, such as 10-day notice and development of the agenda.
  - Dora Rose asked if SOS can send out a Doodle poll for schedules, and Jana said yes.
- Next meeting set for Feb. 5 from 2:00-3:30 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.