

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

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 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, Russia Chavis Cardenas, Leslie Hernandez, Deanna Kitamura, Ellen Nash, Dora Rose, Dean Logan, Camila Chavez

Absent: Jesse Salinas (joined meeting at 2:08 p.m.)

Non-Voting Members Present: Carrie Cornwell, Ethan Jones

Absent: None

Declaration of Quorum

SOS Liaison Robert Ullrey declared a quorum was reached.

2. Announcement of New Co-Chair, Petrina Branch

3. Discussion and Possible Action: Task Force Meeting Minutes of Oct. 16, 2025

Bob Page noted some highlighted holes in the previous meeting notes. Task Force members confirmed the following amendments to the minutes:

- Petrina Branch seconded the minutes approval from September.
- Leslie Hernandez approved the September meeting notes.
- Dora Rose asked the question about reduced services at vote centers.

Recommendation for Action: Staff recommend the Task Force adopt the minutes of the meeting of Oct. 16, 2025.

In a motion by Bob Page, seconded by Task Force member Evelyn Mendez, and carried on a 14-0 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

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN: Dean Logan, Jesse Salinas

4. Discussion of Voter's Choice Task Force Policies & Procedures Manual

Item was carried over from the previous meeting.

Robert Ullrey confirmed this is a living document that can be modified as needed, but can serve as a starting structure for the burgeoning Task Force.

No questions received from the Task Force members.

5. Discussion: 2025 Special Election Report

The following potential report topics were discussed:

- Context of special election circumstances:
 - 75-day timeframe for election preparation instead of typical 6–9 months
 - Impact of compressed timeline on securing voting locations and staffing
 - Legislature's intervention in typical VCA requirements
- Original intent and purpose of the Voter's Choice Act:
 - Increasing voter options and accessibility
 - Providing flexibility, especially for voters with disabilities
 - Not necessarily intended to push more vote-by-mail usage
- Voter behavior and turnout:
 - Election day surge was unexpected given previous voting patterns
 - Discussion of lines at vote centers, particularly on college campuses
 - Importance of distinguishing between VCA impact and other factors affecting turnout
- Wait time tracking and voter information:
 - Some counties have wait time trackers that allow voters to see busy locations
 - Jesse will survey counties about which ones have wait time tracking systems
 - Discussion of manual processes for tracking wait times
- Security and contingency planning:
 - VCA provides flexibility if security issues arise at voting locations
 - Discussion of coordination with law enforcement
- Community engagement:
 - Importance of community involvement in VCA implementation
 - Value of community feedback for vote center and dropbox locations
 - Opportunity to build trust and transparency through engagement

6. Communications: Task Force Member Statements & Requests

- Dean Logan noted that a lot of counties piloted programs and ideas this election. It can be helpful to do a call out to those counties and invite them to present to the Task Force. That can help the report as well.
- Dora Rose asked about spending on outreach and its possible impact on turnout.
 - Camila Chavez shared there was nonprofit funding available for their organization (California Calls) to use to confront voter intimidation.

7. Comments: General Public Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Linder invited public comments. The following comments were made:

Kim Alexander from California Voter Foundation raised concerns about:

- Long lines at vote centers (particularly on campus locations)
- Lack of amenities for voters waiting in line
- Ballot rejection concerns
- Confusion about dropbox locations closing before 8pm on election night

Rhonda Provost from Sonoma County expressed concerns about:

- Ballot security issues
- Undeliverable/unreturned ballots under universal vote-by-mail

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

No additional items were raised.

9. Adjournment

Chair Linder moved to adjourn the meeting. Dora Rose seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.