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# Guidance: California Online Voter Registration

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On February 7, 2017, the Secretary of State (SOS) will deploy the VoteCal California Online Voter Registration website (COVR). The new VoteCal COVR website replaces the current California Online Voter Registration website. By design, the new VoteCal COVR website mirrors the existing COVR functionality. The differences between the old COVR and the new VoteCal COVR website are listed below:

- VoteCal receives and processes online voter registrations. VoteCal then sends a message and the new voter registration records to the county Election Management System (EMS).
- Allows 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote. VoteCal receives the application, pre-registers the voter, and sends a pre-registration voter notification card to the pre-registrant, as per Elections Code 2155.3.
- Allows users to opt-out of receiving the state and county voter information guides by mail. Once a voter chooses to opt-out of receiving a hardcopy VIG; VoteCal updates the voter registration record and notifies the county EMS of the VIG opt-out request.
- Allows registrants to change the language used to complete the voter registration application at any time during the application process.
- Allows registrants to request the SOS print the online voter registration application for them. If a Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) signature is not found, or if the voter does not to allow use of the DMV signature for voter registration purposes, the voter must print, sign and mail the application. If a registrant does not have a printer, they can request to have the SOS send the pre-populated online registration application for them to sign and return to the appropriate county.

Counties will continue to use the existing COVR interface to retrieve voter registrations received from DMV field offices. The SOS is currently in the process of upgrading this process to interface directly with VoteCal. Once that process is finalized, the SOS will notify the counties and the old COVR interface will be decommissioned.

## **Guidance – DMV Signature Not Found**

When a signature is not found through DMV during the online voter registration application process, voters will be provided with two options to complete their application: print, sign, and mail on their own, or request a form be printed and mailed to them. Counties will be notified of all COVR registrations pending signature through their EMS in a VoteCal message titled “Online Voter Registration Pending Signature,” regardless of which option the voter selected. The SOS will mail a pre-populated voter registration application to any voter who requested the form be printed and mailed to them; however, counties must continue to follow up with voters who chose to print, sign, and mail on their own but have not yet returned their completed application. In order to assist counties in identifying which voters require follow-up, the SOS will provide a list of voters already mailed the pre-populated form every Wednesday and Friday through the



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VoteCal Communications Portal. Counties will need to compare the SOS list to the “Online Voter Registration Pending Signature” messages to determine which voters require a follow-up mailing.

This process will continue until the SOS establishes a process to take over the mailing of follow-ups to voters who have selected to print, sign, and mail on their own.

For additional instructions on processing VoteCal COVR records, review your EMS training materials or contact your EMS vendor.

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## **VoteCal Contact Information**

For questions or to report issues contact the SOS VoteCal Help Desk at 888-868-3225 or email [VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov](mailto:VoteCalHelp@sos.ca.gov).