



To: Secretary of State Alex Padilla (cc: James Schwab)
From: Kim Alexander, California Voter Foundation
Date: March 27, 2020
Re: November election emergency measures

CVF has been working with a number of advocates and registrars on the challenge of how to facilitate voting in November in light of the coronavirus epidemic and compiled a few ideas we've been sharing - I am forwarding these along to you and hope you will find them helpful in your efforts to develop practical solutions.

1. Temporarily change all VCA sites to 4-day sites for the November 2020 election.
2. Temporarily allow counties to consolidate polling places (allow one per 6,000 registered voters instead of 1 per 1,000 voters as EC 12241 currently allows for special elections) if they wish/need to do so in order to locate suitable sites and provide sufficient staffing of sites.
3. Temporarily direct county employees to work as election staff if they wish to and provide paid leave for this purpose (the Governor could require this through executive order in a statewide emergency).
4. Temporarily require all counties to offer at least one in-person, 8-hour minimum voting location on Saturday, Oct. 31 and reimburse this cost.
5. Strengthen and stress-test VoteCal to ensure the statewide voter registration database will work reliably in real-time to facilitate faster in-person voting (and shorter lines).
6. Consider determining and reporting the Presidential election results prior to certifying all election results - there will be a point in the count when the presidential results can be called and since it is a "winner-take-all" contest, the final vote tally is not needed in order for the Secretary of State to designate a party's presidential electors. This could give counties an extended amount of time to certify their results (which they may need if more ballots arrive inside envelopes with signatures that must be verified).
7. Extend the deadline for accepting late-arriving ballots - allow mail ballots postmarked or otherwise verified as submitted by Election Day to be counted at least 7 days after arrival and up until 2 days prior to a county's certification date (to conform with the existing signature cure timeframe).
8. Require counties to use intelligent bar code readers - and provide funding and a training guide - so voters are not disenfranchised because their ballot envelopes have missing or unreadable postmarks (CVF's study of the 515 late-arriving ballots received by Sacramento County on 3/9 found that 71 of them (14%) had missing or unreadable postmarks. Of the 56 with no postmarks, 13 had intelligent bar code marks that could have been used to verify the postmark date if the county had this technology in place; according to Tammy Patrick with the Democracy Fund these readers cost about \$600 each).
9. Require all counties to have at least 1 external drop box open 24/7 and provide funding for this purpose (all accept ballots in their lobbies during business hours but not all have external boxes available 24/7).
10. Expand public awareness of remote-accessible vote-by-mail balloting (RAVBM) for voters with disabilities and military/overseas voters and allow more time to request an RAVBM ballot (current deadline is 7 days prior to Election Day).