



POST-ELECTION REPORT

June 7th Presidential Primary Election

Executive Summary

Los Angeles County is the largest local voting jurisdiction in the nation with over 4.8 million registered voters; approximately 1.7 million of those are permanent vote by mail (VBM) voters. To administer the June 7th Presidential Primary Election, the Department deployed more than 22,500 volunteer poll workers at 4,511 polling locations on Election Day.

Presidential Primary Elections are the most complex elections conducted by counties in the State of California. Partisan primaries in California are unique elections that only occur every four years, and are administered differently than other elections. Unfortunately, there are elements of this type of election that are, by design, incredibly challenging for everyone involved. They are confusing for voters, cumbersome for poll workers and can be very difficult to administer. Additional complications result from the consolidation of the partisan primary contest for Presidential nominees with the State voter-nominated primary including numerous contests listing candidates from all parties without regard to voters' party preference.

Presidential primaries are further complicated by the fact that the State's six qualified political parties make different decisions, based on their rules, on who can participate in their Presidential nominating primary – and, in this election, those rules varied between the two major political parties where candidates in each were still actively vying for nomination.

It should also be noted that while the State has made great strides in reforming its election laws to open up the election process and ensure that voters have better access to voter registration, the current model of conducting elections is outdated and in need of modernization and improvement. For example, voter registration ends 15 days before the election but the current infrastructure needed to produce precinct rosters listing eligible voters requires printing those rosters 25 days before the election. Poll workers and the voting public would be better served by having access to voter information in real-time at each voting location.

Most of the concerns/problems that were experienced by voters and poll workers on June 7th could be alleviated by a modernized voting experience. This is consistent with the County's ongoing Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP), which has been focused on improving not just the voting equipment but the overall experience of voting in the not too distant future. This continues to be our focus, yet we still must maintain and improve the voter experience in the immediate future.

The Department realizes that an improved future voting experience does not alleviate the impact for those who had a negative experience on June 7th. The Department takes the reports of issues that people encountered on Election Day very seriously. The following report is the Department's response to the issues that were brought up during the course of this election. We will continue to do what is necessary to improve that process and serve the voters of Los Angeles County.

Issue**There were multiple problems at polling places throughout the County.****Overview/Analysis**

The Presidential Primary Election is very complex and has elements that are incredibly challenging and confusing for voters. This was further complicated by the fact that the political parties in California are allowed to make decisions on who can participate in their primary and those rules were different for the two major parties in this election. The Democratic Party allowed No Party Preference (NPP) voters to participate in their primary while the Republican Party did not.

In addition, leading up to this election the County experienced a surge in new voters who had never voted in a Presidential Primary or a Partisan Primary since the State moved to the top two primary system. This was the first time many voters experienced an election where they had to have a party-specific ballot. Many voters and some poll workers were unfamiliar with the party-specific primary rules. Given this, an extraordinary number of NPP voters who received non-partisan VBM ballots without the Presidential contest appeared at polls and requested crossover ballots to participate in the Democratic Primary.

Response/Resolution

The Department used a variety of methods to conduct voter outreach and education to our large, diverse electorate. Leading up to the election, the Department's public outreach efforts included attending over 160 events and presentations throughout the County to provide voter education and registration services. During the course of the election season, the Department also appeared in over 40 televised newscasts and more than a dozen interviews on various radio stations to educate voters and promote voter turnout prior to the election. These appearances included a variety of ethnic media to reach the County's diverse electorate.

The Department's communications team also engaged in a paid-media campaign, including partnering with five major LA-area radio stations, which provided the Department with high visibility on social media, live television, branded websites and radio. Further, the Department sent out over 2 million emails and made over 650,000 robocalls to disseminate critical information to the electorate. Our social media outlets grew over 57 percent with our Twitter page having over 698,000 impressions and more than 41,000 visits throughout the month of June. The Department's website, LAVOTE.net logged 1.3 million views on Election Day alone.

Actions/Improvements

The Department took on extraordinary measures to try to educate and inform voters of many complex issues; however, it is clear that there were many voters that were still not aware of the unique requirements for this election. While the November election is not as complex, the Department's voter outreach and education efforts will continue to expand and innovate to reach our large and diverse population.

In addition to all of the correspondence it received throughout the election, the Department reviewed the full transcript of the public testimony to determine and analyze the concerns of every voter and poll worker that raised concerns. While some of the individuals who testified provided very detailed information about their experiences, others provided little to no specific information making it difficult to investigate their exact issues. Regardless of the nature of the information provided during the testimony, the comments of every person were reviewed and individual responses were generated when possible.

Issue

Poll Workers needed more training and Polling Locations were understaffed.

Overview/Analysis

Not only is the Presidential Primary Election challenging for voters, it is also very difficult for poll workers to manage. In June, the Department had to staff more than 4,500 polling places throughout the County spread out over 4,000 square miles, and relied on the work of 22,500 very dedicated poll workers to deliver those services. Poll workers had to navigate ten different ballot styles and three sets of voter rosters to determine voter eligibility and to issue the correct ballot. Party rules regarding NPP or non-partisan voter participation in the Primary also contributed to poll worker concern and confusion. A significant increase in party-affiliation changes leading up to the election also impacted the allocation of election supplies that were printed and distributed to poll workers ahead of the election. For example, there were over 85,000 re-registrations in the month leading up to the election alone.

The successful administration of any election relies on poll workers showing up on Election Day. In this election, approximately 3,400 poll workers cancelled leading up to the election and more than 3,900 did not show up on Election Day, 35 who were assigned as Inspectors. This created last minute staffing voids at polling locations and in the case of an Inspector not showing up resulted in a polling location not receiving their supplies on time or at all. The Department maintains a roster of poll worker reservists and has backup procedures for all of these scenarios, but their frequency in this election was significant and challenged capacity as well as quality and timeliness of response.

Ten different ballot styles

The image displays ten different ballot styles for the 2016 County of Los Angeles Primary Election. Each ballot is designed for a specific political affiliation or category and includes the following elements:

- Title and Header:** Identifies the ballot style (e.g., "REPUBLICAN Official Ballot", "PEACE AND FREEDOM Official Ballot", "NONPARTISAN-CROSSOVER DEMOCRATIC Official Ballot", "NONPARTISAN-CROSSOVER LIBERTARIAN Official Ballot", "NONPARTISAN-CROSSOVER AMERICAN INDEPENDENT Official Ballot", "AMERICAN INDEPENDENT Official Ballot", "NONPARTISAN Official Ballot", "LIBERTARIAN Official Ballot", "GREEN Official Ballot", "DEMOCRATIC Official Ballot").
- Instructions:** A "WRITE-IN BALLOT" section with instructions: "Use this part of the ballot to vote for qualified write-in candidates. Ask a Pollworker for the list of qualified write-in candidates."
- Example:** A section showing an example of a write-in name: "Office: School Board, Name: John Doe".
- Marking Area:** A section labeled "INSERT BALLOT" with arrows and the instruction "Fit over red posts".
- Ballot Marking Grid:** A grid of red posts for marking, with numbers 27 through 32 in the first row and 53 through 58 in the second row.

Issue

Poll Workers needed more training and Polling Locations were understaffed.

Response/Resolution

Poll worker training is another critical element of the Department's election preparedness. As the first line of defense in an election, poll workers need to be trained on complex election information. The Department's poll worker training curriculum included significant instruction on both the crossover and NPP issues. Unfortunately, not every poll worker attended training and options for testing poll worker knowledge and readiness was limited by the sheer demand on recruitment and placement.

For this election the Department did a significant amount of in-person and online training. The Department also had over 400 extensively trained Troubleshooters that were in the field on Election Day to assist with issues. The following shows the number of poll workers that completed training for each of the election worker categories (Clerks, Inspectors, and Coordinators):

In-person Training:

- Clerks: 13,866
- Inspectors: 4,416
- Coordinators: 317

Online Training:

- Clerks: 3,214
- Inspectors: 3,975
- Coordinators: 335

There was a specific claim made by a member of the public during testimony that indicated the Department's training manuals contradicted each other relating to the issue of crossover voting. The Department followed up on this specific allegation and determined that the speaker was referring to training manuals in counties other than Los Angeles. In a follow up inquiry with the speaker, she clarified that the Department's training materials were consistent and complete, but her colleagues from other counties were instructed with contradictory information during training in their counties.

It should also be noted, that in the week leading up to the election, over 230 inspectors cancelled, which required recruiting and placing last minute inspectors with limited opportunity to train them prior to Election Day. This does not include the 35 Inspectors that did not show up on Election Day.

Most of the following concerns that were raised by many members of public can be attributed to poll workers not showing up on Election Day:

- Delays in opening of polls
- Emergency openings
- Lack of trained poll workers
- Shortage of required supplies
- Understaffed poll locations

Actions/Improvements

In an effort to comprehensively analyze this area, the Department held focus groups with poll workers to debrief with them on their experience. The Department is working on a variety of initiatives to improve both the training and attendance of our poll workers. Some of these efforts include: increasing bonuses for attending training, ensuring that new Inspectors are paired with highly-trained poll workers, and recommending an increase in the poll worker stipend. Additionally, the Department has begun using data analytics in an effort to identify potential poll worker candidates who are less likely to cancel or not show up on Election Day.

When poll workers are not properly trained or do not show up, it creates a host of concerns that negatively impact a polling location and can last throughout the day. The Department understands the vital role that poll workers play on Election Day and continues to look for ways to improve training and work to ensure that polling locations have all of the necessary resources to successfully serve voters on Election Day.

ISSUE**Voting equipment at the precincts failed throughout the County.****Concern 1: Precinct Ballot Readers required a password and slowed the opening of the polls.****Overview/Analysis**

At approximately 6:00 AM, when poll workers arrived at locations and began to set up for the election, the Department began to receive an unusually large volume of calls about the Precinct Ballot Readers (PBR), sometimes referred to as “voting machines”, not booting up correctly and requiring a password. This was not the normal boot up sequence the poll workers were trained for, which prompted many Inspectors to call the Department for help.

Although the Department could not immediately determine the root cause, it was able to quickly provide the administrative password required to authenticate and clear the password screen. The Department used robocall services to rapidly send out voice messages to all Inspectors providing them with the password to clear the screen. By the time of poll opening at 7:00 AM, most of the precincts had resolved this issue.

Response/Resolution

The PBRs at the center of this issue do not count votes despite sometimes being referred to as “voting machines”. They scan marked ballots for possible errors and give voters the opportunity to make corrections before their ballots are secured in the ballot box. Upon discovery that the PBRs were requiring a password, precincts were provided one to start the devices. In isolated cases, poll workers did not receive the code and, thus, could not use the PBRs. In no way, did this impact the counting or casting of votes.

Since the election, the Department has identified the root cause of the issue and has developed protocols to ensure that it does not happen in future elections. After review of the election configuration file used to load the election data and ballot styles onto the PRB devices, it was discovered that a configuration setting was incorrectly set in the file. During General Elections, there is only one ballot style per precinct, so this optional setting is not active. For primary elections, however, the PBR system treats each unique party ballot as a separate ballot style. Therefore, when configuring the settings for the primary, it is necessary first to select the setting indicating that multiple ballot styles are permitted per precinct. Activating this setting also activates the setting to require an administrative password. To deactivate the password requirement, it is necessary to manually turn off this setting when building the election configuration file. For this particular primary election, staff neglected to turn off the setting, which resulted in the problem scenario described above.

Actions/Improvements

The next election that will require multiple party ballots for each precinct will be the 2020 Presidential Primary Election. Although a new voting system is expected to replace the current PBR system for that election, the Department will be producing a PBR election configuration file checklist that will be followed for all future elections to ensure the configuration settings are properly set prior to configuring and loading the PBR devices.

Issue

Voting equipment at the precincts failed throughout the County.

■ *Precinct Ballot Readers (PBR)*



ISSUE**Voting equipment at the precincts failed throughout the County.****Concern 2: Machines malfunctioned and needed to be replaced; concerns that votes were not counted.****Overview/Analysis**

Concerns were raised that there were widespread PBR malfunctions and that votes were not being counted. Analysis of call center data following the election revealed that there was indeed an unusual spike in calls in the setup problem category compared to prior major elections (due to password issue addressed above). There was also a higher than normal number of calls for PBR replacement. However, all other categories of problems involving the PBRs fell within the normal volume range for all past elections.

The data indicates that, apart from the password issue that resulted in a higher than normal call volume related to polling place/PBR setup and consequently in a higher number of PBR replacement requests, there were no systemic problems with system hardware or software. Moreover, additional review of the data in the PBR Tracking System that manages custody control of the PBR devices revealed that, in the end, the actual number of PBRs that were replaced throughout the day fell within the normal range for past major elections.

Response/Resolution

Again, a PBR is not used to tally votes. All votes are counted centrally at the Department's Headquarters in Norwalk after the polls close and as ballots are delivered from each voting precinct. The PBRs serve the purpose of detecting over-votes and blank ballots, and allow for the activation of the Audio Ballot Booth. In the event that the PBR becomes inoperable in a polling place, poll workers are instructed to continue assisting voters by manually inserting the voted ballots directly into the Ballot Box.

In response to the PBRs being delivered to the polls in a non-operational state, precincts were provided with a password to activate the machines on Election Day. There were a limited number of cases where poll workers were unfamiliar with the code and unable to immediately activate the machines; however, this issue did not prevent voters from casting ballots or affect the validity of any votes cast.

Actions/Improvements

The County's new voting system resulting from VSAP will replace the current PBR system, but the Department will still require the use of the PBR for the next several elections, including the upcoming Presidential General Election in November. The Department is taking all appropriate maintenance precautions to ensure that this aging technology will be ready for use during each upcoming election until the time that it can be phased out and replaced with the County's new voting system.

Issue

Voters listed in the roster with the wrong political party selection or not listed in the roster at all.

Overview/Analysis

A voter's name not appearing on the roster or listed with a wrong political party was a recurring theme heard during public testimony by both voters and poll workers. This often led to a voter having to cast a provisional ballot, which led to further frustration by the voter. This particular concern may appear to point to a systemic issue with the rosters, but the Department's analysis of all of the specific cases presented shows a variety of different causes for these issues.

The following is a sampling of the different cases that highlight these issues:

Response/Resolution

Case #1: A voter indicated that their name was not printed on the precinct roster where she appeared to vote and she had to vote provisionally. This particular poll location was a Neighborhood Voting Center (NVC), which means that the location is shared with another precinct. The voter was directed to go to the Green table where her name was not on the roster rather than the Orange table where her name was on the roster. In this specific case, there was no issue with the roster but rather the voter was incorrectly sent to the wrong table to vote. NOTE: the sample ballot issued to the voter properly identified her precinct as assigned to the Orange table. The voter's provisional ballot was counted.

Case #2: The current address of a voter in the database was in Glendale although the voter believed that she was registered in La Canada Flintridge. The address on her voter record was changed from her former address in La Canada Flintridge to Glendale in 2013 based on a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) change of address electronic notification. She would not have received a sample ballot for this election at the La Canada address and her name would not have been listed in her former polling place. The Department has notified the voter of the DMV-generated address change and changed the voter's record to reflect the La Canada Flintridge address based on the information provided by the voter on the provisional ballot envelope. The voter's provisional ballot was counted.

Case #3: A voter was not in the roster and voted provisionally. After review, it was determined that the 1st supplemental roster, where the voter was listed, was mailed to an Inspector who cancelled after the roster was mailed. The new Inspector only received the 2nd supplemental roster that did not contain the voter's name. The voter's provisional ballot was counted.

Case #4: A poll worker claimed that she was not sent the supplemental rosters as expected. After investigation it was determined that both of the supplemental rosters were mailed to the inspector's address; however, the apartment number was not captured in address so the Inspector did not receive them. NOTE: a robocall is made to all inspectors indicating that supplemental rosters were prepared and mailed out. Inspectors are instructed to contact the Department if the supplemental mailing is not received by the day prior to the election.

Case #5: A voter complained that her political party changed from Democratic to Republican without her consent. She claimed she had always voted Democratic and would never have voted for a Republican. After reviewing her file, her original voter registration affidavit was located and was clearly marked Republican. Party preference does impact ballot selection in General Elections. The Department also confirmed that she voted in the Republican Primary in 2008.

Issue

Voters listed in the roster with the wrong political party selection or not listed in the roster at all.

Actions/Improvements

The Department has reviewed both the paper voter registration form and the online voter registration interface to ensure that these State forms are clear and understandable. The Department will also be evaluating its poll worker training materials prior to the next Primary Election to ensure that poll workers are aware of these added complexities.

As was previously mentioned, the Department investigated and reviewed not only these cases, but of every voter and poll worker that raised concerns. When the analysis of each case was completed, the Department responded to the individual voter or poll worker with the resolution.

Issue

Voters listed as receiving a VBM ballot that they did not receive or request.

Overview/Analysis

This was a recurring theme that was heard from many of the poll workers who testified. Many of the comments indicated that voters either did not request to be a VBM voter or did not receive a VBM ballot. Similarly, the Department saw consistent increases in provisional ballots cast by VBM voters who did not surrender their unmarked ballot or who indicated they did not receive one. This trend is consistent across the State.

It should be noted that voters who were issued a VBM ballot prior to the election may vote at the polls, but to receive a regular ballot they must surrender their unmarked ballot to ensure that a voter does not vote both at the polls and return a voted ballot through the mail. This is a safeguard to ensure that a voter does not vote both at the polls and return a voted ballot through the mail. Unfortunately, there is no way around this on Election Day. If the roster indicates a voter was issued a VBM ballot and they do have a VBM ballot to surrender, they must be issued a provisional ballot.

Response/Resolution

The Department researched this issue, but found no systemic issues regarding improperly sending voters a VBM ballot. The Department reviewed numerous voter registration forms of voters claiming they had not requested VBM status, but the document image on file clearly shows a VBM request. The Department believes some of this is attributable to an early version of the online voter registration form. There was an early version of the Secretary of State's online registration system where the check box to become a permanent VBM voter was easily checked without voters readily recognizing what they were selecting. That particular box was moved and updated on the online registration form by the Secretary of State.

There was one very specific allegation made during the testimony that is important to specifically address. A member of the public claimed that during a phone conversation with an unnamed staff member it was stated that, "many people were changed to vote by mail status to avoid an expected crush of high voter turnout". This allegation was reviewed and found to be unsubstantiated.

Actions/Improvements

The Department continues to review this issue as it moves into the November Elections cycle in an effort to minimize the impact of VBM voters who have to vote provisionally. Potential solutions being considered include a possible redesign of the VBM materials as well as a targeted outreach campaign for Permanent VBM voters highlighting this issue.

Issue**There was a ballot shortage at some polling locations.****Overview/Analysis**

There were isolated instances of precincts where emergency ballots had to be used when original voting supplies and ballots were unavailable because of poll worker absence. Isolated situations also occurred in high-volume precincts where ballot inventory was depleted due to increased usage of provisional ballots.

Response/Resolution

The Department addressed this particular concern in a variety of ways. Initially, the Department conducted an analysis prior to its initial ballot order that identified numerous precincts where additional party ballots should be ordered on top of the original state-mandated levels. Subsequently, the Department further reviewed crossover trends and registration rates leading up to the election and ordered a second supplemental order of additional ballots prior to Election Day. Further, the Department prepared even more additional ballots for select precincts and distributed these via Sheriff on Election Day just after the Emergency Openings ended.

Actions/Improvements

The Department took proactive steps prior to the election to anticipate the need for additional ballots and also made concerted efforts on Election Day to deliver additional ballots to these locations and to minimize the use of emergency ballots. Voters should never be turned away from voting due to ballot inventory shortages and emergency ballots are provided at every polling location in the event that ballot inventory is depleted. Unfortunately, some circumstances, including emergency openings, cannot be anticipated prior to Election Day and do require reacting quickly to each situation individually. While emergency ballots require special handling and duplication, they are counted and they do prevent disenfranchisement.

Issue **There are too many ballots left to be counted.**

Overview/Analysis

Following Election Day, an estimated 616,056 ballots remained to be processed (Provisional and VBM) in Los Angeles County. It is not unusual for one-third of ballots cast in a statewide election to be counted after Election Day. The estimate is consistent with past elections. Additionally, California law now allows VBM ballots postmarked on or before Election Day to be received up to 3 days after the election. These ballots require detailed accounting and processing prior to tabulation to ensure every valid vote is counted.

Response/Resolution

The Department received a significant number of VBM ballots through the mail on Election Day (64,778) and also during the 3 days following the election pursuant to the new State law as well as from voters who deposited VBM ballots at the polls (182,072). Additionally, the Department had to process over 270,000 provisional ballots. It should be noted, that the majority of work related to validating the provisional ballots cannot begin until all of the VBM ballots are processed to ensure that voters did not cast two ballots.

Actions/Improvements

Processing such a large number of VBM and provisional ballots takes time and focus, which is why State law provides counties with 30 days to certify elections. The County finished its canvass period and certified the election on Friday, July 1st, within the State-mandated timeframe. The Board of Supervisors approved the results on Tuesday, July 5th.

Issue **Provisional ballots are not counted.**

Overview/Analysis

Past election records show that an average of 85-90% of provisional ballots cast in the County are validated and counted during the post-election canvass. Widespread information about restrictive rules for provisional ballots in other states led to unfounded concerns in California about the validity and handling of provisional ballots. The number of provisional ballots in this election was high, but not exceedingly above other high profile elections:

- February 2008 Presidential Primary: 176,479
- November 2008 Presidential General: 271,074
- June 2012 Presidential Primary: 49,588
- November 2012 Presidential General: 371,638
- June 2016 Presidential Primary: 271,318

The Department received 271,318 provisional ballots for this election. During the official canvass period, these provisional ballots were verified and validated to ensure that each voter was eligible to vote. Throughout this process, 236,788 provisional ballots were approved and subsequently counted. The remaining 34,530 provisional ballots were rejected for various reasons noted below. The number counted made up 87% of the total provisional ballots received, which is in line with the Department's historical average.

Response/Resolution

This issue was one of the most significant complaints about the recent election, where over 270,000 voters had to use a provisional envelope when casting their ballot. While there is a necessity for provisional voting and a high rate of validation, there is no doubt that this method of voting significantly diminishes the voting experience. Administratively it also takes significant resources and time to verify and validate such a large number of provisional envelopes.

Actions/Improvements

Due to the strong public concern about this particular issue, the Department sent a postcard to every voter whose provisional ballot was counted to proactively notify them of this status.

The future election experience under consideration, when fully deployed, will allow counties to use an electronic poll book or other similar solution to securely access and update voter registration data in real time, thus significantly reducing the need for provisional ballots. This solution will not only prevent voters from casting ballots multiple times during an election, but it will also allow for same day registration.

Issue

Provisional ballots are not counted.

■ *Counted provisional ballot postcard*



Your Provisional Ballot



Dear Los Angeles County voter,

Our office has received your Provisional ballot from the June 7th Presidential Primary Election. We are happy to confirm that your Provisional ballot was processed and counted for this election.

For information on Provisional voting and voting options, please visit LAvote.net or call (800) 815-2666.

Thank you,

Los Angeles County
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Issue**Vote counting on Election Day was slower than usual.****Overview/Analysis**

It was stated that election night ballot-processing was slower than in past elections. Part of this concern is simply due to the geography of the County, which is over 4,000 square miles. The Department has to get ballots from more than 4,500 locations that, in turn, deliver those ballots to 72 check-in centers which then deliver them to Headquarters in Norwalk. The Department uses Sheriff's Department patrol cars and helicopters to expedite these critical processes.

It should be noted that there was some slow-down of the ballot counting process in part, due to a high number of ballots with write-in votes and the implementation of new ballot accountability procedures in our central count operations. The Department employed some new ballot accountability features in its ballot flow at Headquarters this year that were intended to ensure enhanced accountability and chain of custody for all ballots.

Response/Resolution

It should be noted that the Department counted and reported votes from more than 1.4 million ballots on Election Night. Although it may have appeared at times that ballot boxes were not processed in an expeditious manner, the fact is all boxes need to be inspected carefully, in part to ensure all ballots that needed to be withheld could be remade during canvass.

Actions/Improvements

New procedures were implemented to ensure that the Department could more effectively account for all ballots cast and document their chain of custody. The Department will continue to analyze these issues and ensure that we take the necessary steps to increase the speed to the extent we can without sacrificing accuracy and accountability in the November election.

Issue**County called the election before all votes were counted.****Overview/Analysis**

It was alleged that the Department called the outcome of the election to the detriment of certain political campaigns. The Department does not “call” the outcome of any election or contest. The County is responsible for counting and certifying the official vote totals.

Response/Resolution

As stated above, the Department did not announce the outcome of the election. We count the votes and we certify the votes. By law, there’s a 30-day post-election canvass process that includes accountability and auditing procedures intended to ensure the integrity of the election. The election results are not certified and official until that process is complete.

Actions/Improvements

While the media, candidates and political parties may make calls about the election results ahead of or during the canvass period, that is not a process in which the Department has any role.

Issue

Voter intent for Presidential contest on Provisional and VBM NPP ballots should be recognized.

Concern 1: Provisional NPP Voters selection for President should be counted.**Overview/Analysis**

During the canvass period the Department received inquiries from observers about the processing of Provisional ballots cast by voters registered with NPP, but issued Democratic ballot cards. The Department reviewed and addressed these inquiries. Procedures were modified to ensure all such ballots were processed as NPP-Dem crossover ballots including the Presidential contest.

Response/Resolution

With regard to inquiries about the processing of provisional ballots cast by voters registered with NPP, but issued Democratic ballot cards, the Department further reviewed that category of provisional ballots and concluded the ballot card itself is sufficient to indicate voter intent to participate in the Democratic primary under the liberal construction clause of Elections Code 14312. Canvass staff was instructed to process all such ballots as NPP-DEM crossover ballots and to prepare them for tabulation in subsequent updates as scheduled.

Actions/Improvements

There is no process for a challenge to the determination of voter intent on provisional ballots, the election official does have to authority to identify the need for and to take corrective action during the canvass period. This authority was exercised with regard to any provisional ballots processed and counted prior to the modification described above. Those ballots were identified and re-processed as NPP-DEM cross over ballots and will reflect a vote cast in the Presidential contest, if the ballot was marked as such.

Issue

Voter intent for Presidential contest on Provisional and VBM NPP ballots should be recognized.

Concern 2: VBM NPP Voters write-in selection for President was not counted.

Overview/Analysis

As stated above, during the canvass period the Department received inquiries from observers about the processing of provisional ballots cast by NPP voters, but issued Democratic ballot cards. Following this action on provisional ballots, some observers requested that the Department also count Presidential write-ins for NPP VBM ballots and remake them as NPP-Democratic crossover ballots. The Department determined that such action was not authorized by the Election Code.

Response/Resolution

With the provisional ballots where the NPP voter was issued and voted on a Democratic ballot, a clear assumption can be made that the voter intended to crossover and vote in the Democratic Primary – or that the poll worker issued the wrong ballot. In those situations the Presidential contest actually appeared on the ballot the voter voted upon. For NPP voters voting by mail who did not request a crossover ballot, there was no Presidential contest listed on the NPP ballot and thus no provision for a write in vote.

Actions/Improvements

NPP VBM voters were provided notice as required under the Elections Code of the options for crossover. Additionally, we extended that information to that universe of voters through email blasts, robocalls, a dedicated website and extensive paid and earned media. Information on crossover voting was also listed in the sample ballot and the VBM guide that accompanied the NPP ballot. This was new information added in materials for this election to specifically highlight the options for VBM voters. These actions are consistent with the California Elections Code, and the Department consulted with County Counsel on the basic legal question and with other California counties to confirm similar practice.

Vote by Mail



Contact Information

Phone: (800) 815-2666

Email: votebymail@rrcc.lacounty.gov

Online: LAvote.net



Voting Options

Vote By Mail: All voters in Los Angeles County have the option to vote by mail. You can either mail your ballot back or drop it off at any polling place in Los Angeles County. Your ballot must be postmarked on or before Election Day to be counted.

At the Polls: Voters may choose not to vote their Vote By Mail ballot and instead vote in person at their polling place or at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's office. Please bring your ballot to surrender to receive your new ballot.



Accessible Voting Options

Accessible Polling Places: If you decide to vote in person you may locate the nearest accessible polling place by calling (562) 466-1310 or using the Polling Place Lookup online.

Each polling place has an audio ballot booth if you would prefer to vote using this method.



Replacement Ballot

Contact us at (800) 815-2666 to request a replacement ballot if your original ballot is lost, spoiled or destroyed.

Vote in person at RR/CC Norwalk office:
12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650.

Conclusion

In Los Angeles County, over 2 million residents cast a ballot during the June 7th Presidential Primary Election, which equates to over 40% voter turnout. This should motivate us to seek higher turnout in November. While many of the voters and poll workers did not have any negative experiences on Election Day, the Department is acutely aware that there were many who did. This was clear from the public testimony presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 14th.

As has been mentioned, the Presidential Primary Election is inherently complex and is not designed with the voter in mind. There are significant challenges for voters, campaigns, poll workers, and election administrators in these elections. Additionally, the State's current election system is outdated and in need of modernization and improvement; from antiquated/inaccessible voting equipment, and manual/paper-based processes, to outdated/limited voting options. Given this, it would be unacceptable to sit back and not address these issues when the existing voting experience is inadequate and inconvenient for the voter. The status quo is unacceptable. Most of the problems that were experienced by voters – along with the complexities of administration and the demands on poll workers – could be alleviated by a modernized voting experience realized with the passage Senate Bill 450 and the successful implementation of the County's VSAP.

That being said, the Department takes responsibility for the deficiencies in this election and is working to correct them. We will continue to highlight our mission to provide election services in a fair, accessible and transparent manner – a mission that facilitated 320 members of the public to readily observe our processes during the post-election canvass period.

It is our hope that this report addressed concerns that were experienced on Election Day, while also providing the appropriate resolution or corrective action where appropriate. Please note that when specific information was provided by the voter/poll worker, the Department reviewed each case and in many instances initiated follow-up investigations, including interviews with the parties involved. This often led to a comprehensive response provided directly to the voter/poll worker on the outcome.

The Department is actively engaged in preparing for the Presidential General Election in November that could bring even higher turnout than the Primary Election. As such, we will redouble our efforts to diligently review and improve our processes/procedures, maintain our equipment, expand our outreach/education and strengthen our poll worker training to ensure that every voter has a successful and satisfying voting experience.