



Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

May 1, 2017

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Dean C. Logan,  Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

ELECTION-RELATED ISSUES RAISED DURING MARCH 28TH BOARD MEETING

At the Board of Supervisors Meeting on March 28th, your Board raised a few election-related issues during its discussion on Item 20 that declared the results from the March 7th Consolidated Municipal and Special Elections official. This memo is in response to those issues.

Polling Place Changes

The first issue related to polling places being changed between the November 8th Presidential General Election and the March 7th Consolidated Municipal and Special Elections and the challenges that this created for voters seeking to cast their ballots. As was mentioned at the meeting, the Department is very sensitive to this concern, particularly with respect to accessibility and parking issues. Generally, keeping polling locations consistent from election to election, especially in a Primary and a General election cycle, is one of our top priorities.

In November there were a total of 4,523 polling locations, while in March there were only 2,543 polling locations. Further, of those 2,543 from March only 1,940 matched the consolidations from November, which means that in reality there was a difference of 2,583 polling locations between November and March. This significant reduction in the number of polling locations was due to a decrease in precinct consolidations that is standard practice in off-cycle elections to reduce the overall cost of the election. This change in consolidations reduced the number of polling places, which effectively assigned voters to a different polling place than they used in the previous two statewide elections.

Moving forward, the voting experience that we are working on implementing here in Los Angeles County will actually result in vote centers, as opposed to polling places. The California Voters Choice Act (CVCA), which passed last year, advances this vote center model, under which a voter can choose to cast their ballot conveniently at any vote center over a 10-day period instead of one specific location on one day between the hours of 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Furthermore, vote centers will provide greater choices of voting sites allowing voters to vote at familiar, convenient locations that are part of their daily experience, removing polling place restrictions that can hinder a voter's ability to participate. This concept is consistent with the County's Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) that has been focused on improving not just our voting equipment but the overall experience of voting.

Transportation of Voters

The next issue raised during the Board Meeting was a suggestion to look into the use of County Prop A transit funding or some other Countywide transportation mechanism to assist with bringing voters to the polls on Election Day or during the early voting period. As I stated during the meeting, our Department would be glad to explore these options and others. I have already reached out to the Director of Public Works (DPW) to begin this discussion. We will review this suggestion in collaboration with DPW and follow-up if feasible prior to the next statewide election.

Additionally as I mentioned at the meeting, leading up to the November 8th election, our Department had conversations with the rideshare providers, Lyft and Uber, to discuss potential community partnerships to provide transportation services to the polls. We are hopeful that there will continue to be some ongoing dialogue on this effort. As we move forward with the vote center model, there may actually be even more opportunities to accommodate this type of work because we can actually take advantage of location-based applications. For example, a transportation provider would be able to locate the closest vote center to where they are picking up a rider/voter. We will continue to explore these types of partnerships.

Sample Ballots

The final issue brought up during the Board Meeting was in regards to erroneous sample ballots sent to a small number of voters for the April 4th Congressional District 34 Special Primary Election. As was discussed during the meeting, our mailing vendor made an error that affected a small number of Korean-language sample ballots.

The sole issue in the limited number of mislabeled books was the order in which the candidate names were listed. While we take full responsibility, it is important to reiterate the limited context of this situation. Please note the following:

- All candidate names were listed in all iterations of the sample ballots.
- Vote by Mail (VBM) ballots or materials were not impacted;
- VBM packets received by Korean-language voters contained the correct sample ballot and candidates were listed in the correct order;

- VBM materials instruct voters to check the ballot group reference on their ballot guide to the group number of the ballot card itself as further confirmation; and
- No materials at the polls on Election Day were impacted.

Out of concern for consistency of materials, messaging within the community, and after meetings with community stakeholders we acted quickly and broadly (ahead of the March 28th Board Meeting) by sending the correct Korean-language sample ballot page with a bi-lingual notice to all Korean-language voters in the District alerting them to the issue and providing a hotline with Korean-speaking operators for those with questions or concerns. In addition, we re-mailed bi-lingual sample ballots to every Korean-language voter in the district and reached out to Korean media to help to promote voter information and voting options leading up to Election Day. Additional signage and notification were also provided to poll workers, including Korean-speaking poll workers, to remind voters to carefully review their official ballot and to mark their ballots based on the candidate names.

We take this issue very seriously and we have had extensive follow-up conversations with our vendor on this issue. They have taken responsibility for this error and have implemented additional quality control mechanisms to ensure that this type of error does not occur.

If you have any questions or require further information on any of these matters, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Aaron Nevarez, Division Manager of Governmental & Legislative Affairs, at (562) 462-2800.

c: Lori Glasgow, Executive Officer
Mark Pestrella, Director of Public Works