

County of Santa Clara

Registrar of Voters

Public and Legislative Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC CHANGE: VOTER'S CHOICE VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOTS ON THEIR WAY TO ALL VOTERS FOR MARCH 3, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

Over 940,000 Ballots Mailed to County Voters

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF. – A Vote by Mail ballot was mailed out to every active registered voter in the County today as part of the new voting model aimed at encouraging election participation by making casting a ballot easier than ever before.

There are over 940,000 active registered voters in the County and for the first time in the history of Santa Clara County elections, all will be mailed a Vote by Mail packet. That includes an official ballot which may be filled out and placed in the accompanying postage-paid envelope, which is signed by the voter for verification and returned to the Registrars' Office.

Voters are encouraged to check their primary election ballot when they receive it. Nearly 300,000 Santa Clara County voters are registered as No Party Preference (NPP), and their primary election ballots will not include candidates for President. NPP voters who wish to cast a ballot in the presidential primary can still choose and cast a crossover ballot for American Independent, Democratic or Libertarian parties. All requests for new ballots to be mailed must be received no later than February 25. The Green, Peace & Freedom, and Republican parties opted to not allow crossover voting. If voters choose to cast a ballot for the Green, Peace & Freedom or Republican party they must re-register with that party. Voters can re-register online at RegistertoVote.ca.gov.

The new Voter's Choice Act election model was adopted by the Board of Supervisors last year with a goal of making it more convenient for Santa Clara County voters to cast a ballot. In addition to giving every voter the opportunity to return a ballot by mail, there are improved options for voting in person as well, with Vote Centers opening throughout the County up to 10 days before Election Day beginning on Saturday, February 22. Any Santa Clara County voter may go to any of the 110 Vote Center locations to vote in person. Early in-person voting begins today at the Registrars' Office located at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, in San Jose.

“This truly is the future of elections,” said Registrar of Voters Shannon Bushey. “We have seen Vote by Mail rates skyrocket to the point where nearly 80 percent of voters – four out of five – chose this option in 2018. That figure was expected to continue to rise even if we did not adopt the Voter’s Choice model. It really just makes sense to send everyone a Vote by Mail ballot.”

More than 7,000 Vote by Mail packets, also with postage-paid return envelopes, were previously mailed to military and overseas voters to ensure that they have enough time to return their ballots by the deadline. In order to be counted for the March 3 Presidential Primary Election, Vote by Mail ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day and must be received at the Registrars’ Office by Friday, March 6.

About 22 of Santa Clara County’s new Vote Centers will open on Saturday, February 22, 2020 in locations throughout the County – a full 10 days before Election Day for any voter who wishes to vote a live ballot. More will open in the final four days through Election Day, with a total of more than 110 locations. All Vote Centers can be used by any Santa Clara County voter – voters are no longer tied to a single polling place. Anyone can also get a replacement ballot at any of the Vote Centers and utilize additional services such as registration, language or accessibility assistance. Vote by Mail ballots can also be returned to any Vote Center or to any of the nearly 100 drop boxes countywide, many of which are available 24 hours a day. The list of all Vote Center and official drop box locations is posted on our website at eservices.sccgov.org.

The last day to register to vote in the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election is February 18, in order for a ballot to be mailed to you by the deadline of February 25, and can be done online at [Register to Vote](#). Voters wishing to check their registration may do so on the website at [Check Your Registration Status](#). Conditional voter registration begins of February 19 through Election day for those voters that have moved into the county, need to update their address, or their party affiliation.

Voters should complete a new registration form if they have moved, changed their name, or would like to change their political party preference. To register to vote in Santa Clara County, a voter must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, a Santa Clara County resident, and not imprisoned or on parole for a felony.

For more information, including locations and hours of all Vote Centers, drop boxes and information about needed services, contact the Registrar of Voters’ Office at (408) 299-VOTE (8683) or toll-free at (866) 430-VOTE (8683), or visit www.sccvote.org.

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