

County of Santa Clara

Registrar of Voters

Public and Legislative Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REGISTRAR OF VOTERS WILL COUNT RECOVERED BALLOTS IN OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF – The Registrar of Voters (ROV) has completed the examination of the ballots found near Highway 17, and the majority of those ballots are being counted to be included in the official results of the November election.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) recovered 36 ballots, which were turned over to the ROV on the afternoon of Monday, November 14. Under California elections law, the ballots can be counted if they are postmarked or dated on or before Election Day, or if the USPS confirms that they were mailed by Election Day. These ballots were subject to the same validation and signature verification processes as all other mail ballots before they were counted. The ROV is unable to count ballots whose envelopes have been opened or sufficiently torn such that the ballot may have been tampered with.

Of the 36 ballots, 31 could be verified and were approved to be counted, 4 ballots had open envelopes, and 1 ballot had a signature that did not match the voter's signature on file. The ROV will notify affected voters regarding the status of their ballots.

"I am glad that we were able to recover these ballots and that the majority of them can be counted and included in the final election results, which we will certify on schedule on December 8," said Shannon Bushey, Registrar of Voters. "This was a very unfortunate incident. I appreciate the USPS for working with us to get us the ballots as quickly as possible on behalf of the voters."

On Friday, November 11, a member of the public reported that ballots from the November election were found near Highway 17. The ballots were found along with other non-election mail, including letters and parcels. It appeared that these were voted ballots that voters had returned by mail and that subsequently went missing while they were in the possession of the USPS before they could be delivered to the ROV. The ROV immediately notified the USPS so that USPS could recover the mail and investigate this incident. The ROV has also referred this incident to the District Attorney's Office, who is coordinating with the USPS.

There is no indication these ballots were taken from any of the ROV's ballot drop boxes or vote centers. Ballots are collected from drop boxes and vote centers by designated election workers, are

not mixed with non-election mail, and the ROV has extensive safeguards and chain of custody procedures to ensure that ballots are collected and transported safely and securely.

Voters can track their ballots online at www.sccvote.org to confirm that they were received by the ROV and counted. The ROV notifies voters whose ballots could not be counted because the signature on the envelope did not match the voter registration record. Those voters have until December 6 to submit a verification statement to have their ballot included in the final election results. Voters who have questions about their ballot status are encouraged to contact the ROV at (408) 299-VOTE [8683] or toll-free at (866) 430-VOTE [8683].

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