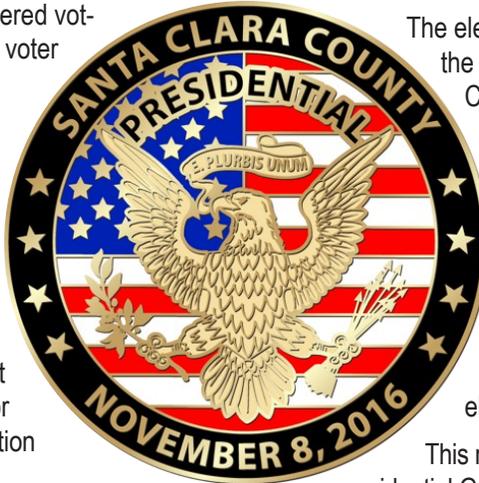# Executive Summary

November 8, 2016 Presidential General
Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters Post-Election Report

The November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election saw the largest ever voter turnout in a presidential general election in Santa Clara County. Out of 875,176 registered voters, a total of 724,596 cast valid ballots for a voter turnout rate of 82.8%. This turnout rate was the largest among the 10 California counties with the highest number of registered voters.

The election set new records for voter registration, total ballots cast, vote-by-mail ballots cast, provisional ballots cast, number of contests on county ballots, number of local ballot measures, percentage of registration activity from online sources, most ballot cards, number of ballots picked up prior to the close of polls, number of bilingual election officers, and number of recounted contests.

Additionally, the number of ballot types created for voters was the most for a 21st-century presidential election, while the election's turnout rate was the second highest in the past 48 years. Nearly three-quarters of the ballots cast in the election were vote-by-mail ballots, although unlike in past elections, vote-by-mail and polling place turnout rates were nearly identical.
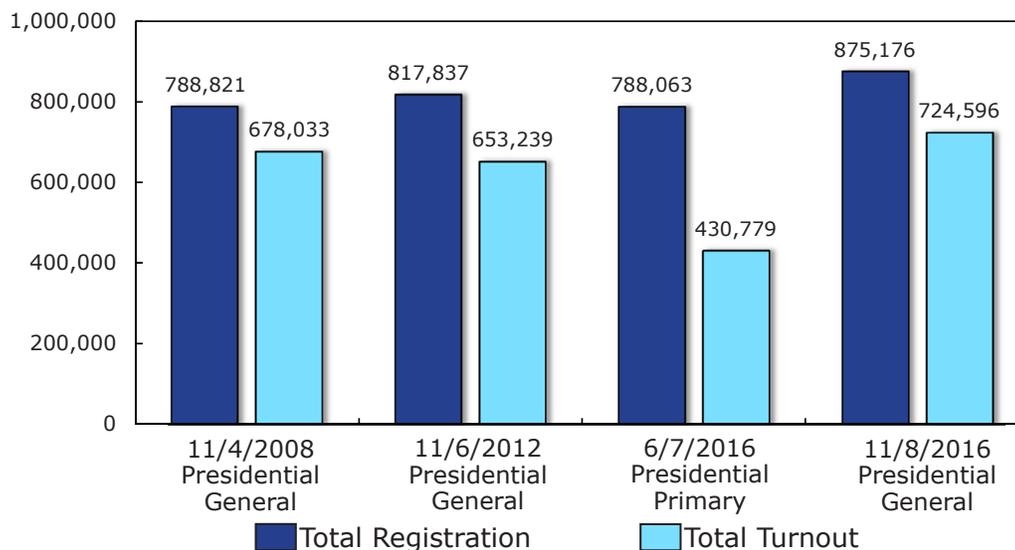
The election took longer to finish tallying than the most recent elections held in Santa Clara County. Due to the record high volume of ballots, extended ballot receipt deadlines, large quantities of write-in and provisional votes, and required audits and recounts, the Registrar of Voters' office did not finish tallying the last polling place ballots until December 6, 28 days after Election Day. Due to improvements in post-Election Day ballot processing efficiency, more complete election results were delivered to voters earlier.

This report compares the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election with the presidential general elections held in 2012 and 2008, as well as the June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary Election. Statistics for other elections are presented for comparison purposes, when the data are available and help tell the story of this historic election.

Results Overview

Total Registration and Turnout
Past Presidential Elections

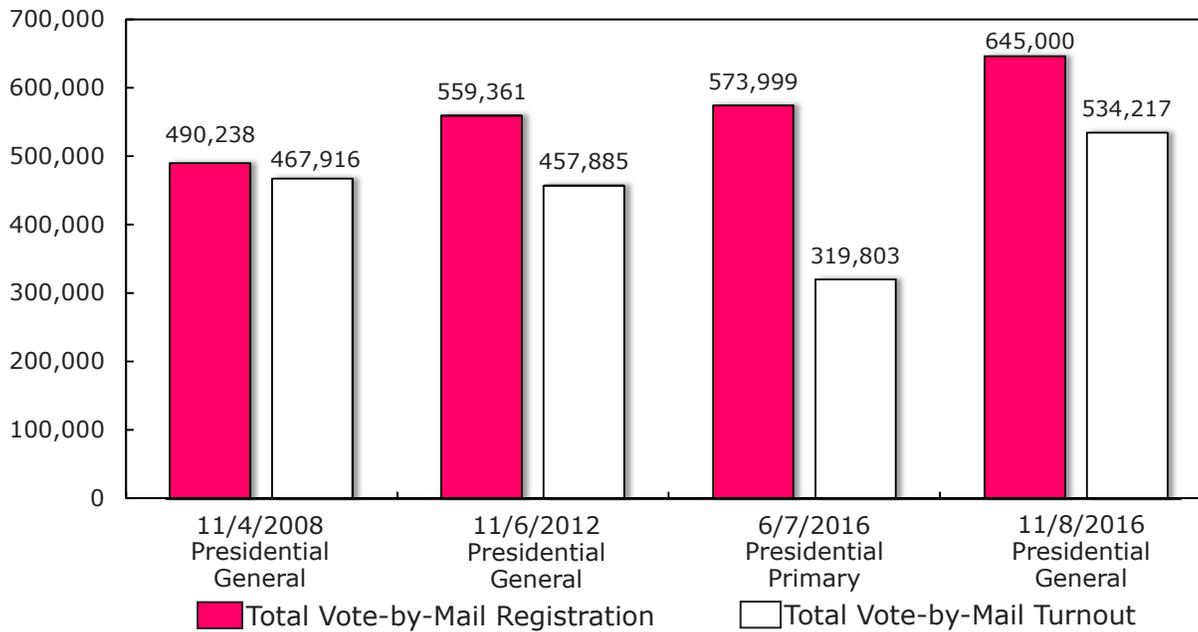|	Total Registration	Total Turnout
11/4/2008 Presidential General	788,821	678,033
11/6/2012 Presidential General	817,837	653,239
6/7/2016 Presidential Primary	788,063	430,779
11/8/2016 Presidential General	875,176	724,596

Voter turnout for presidential general elections is higher than in presidential primary elections. Turnout in presidential general elections without an incumbent running, as in 2008 and 2016, is generally higher than when a president is running for re-election. The 724,596 ballots cast in the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election represent the most ever in a Santa Clara County election. The 82.8% voter turnout rate in the 2016 Presidential General Election is topped only by the 86.0% turnout rate in the 2008 Presidential General Election, of all elections in the last 48 years.

FAQ

Q: How did Santa Clara County's turnout rate compare with other counties?

A: Among the 10 California counties with the highest numbers of registered voters, Santa Clara County had the highest voter turnout rate in the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election. Nearly 82.8% of Santa Clara County registered voters participated in the election, compared to the statewide average of 75.3%. Among the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties, the turnout rate in Santa Clara County trailed only those in the counties of Marin (89.0%) and Sonoma (86.8%), whose turnout rates were the two highest in the state.
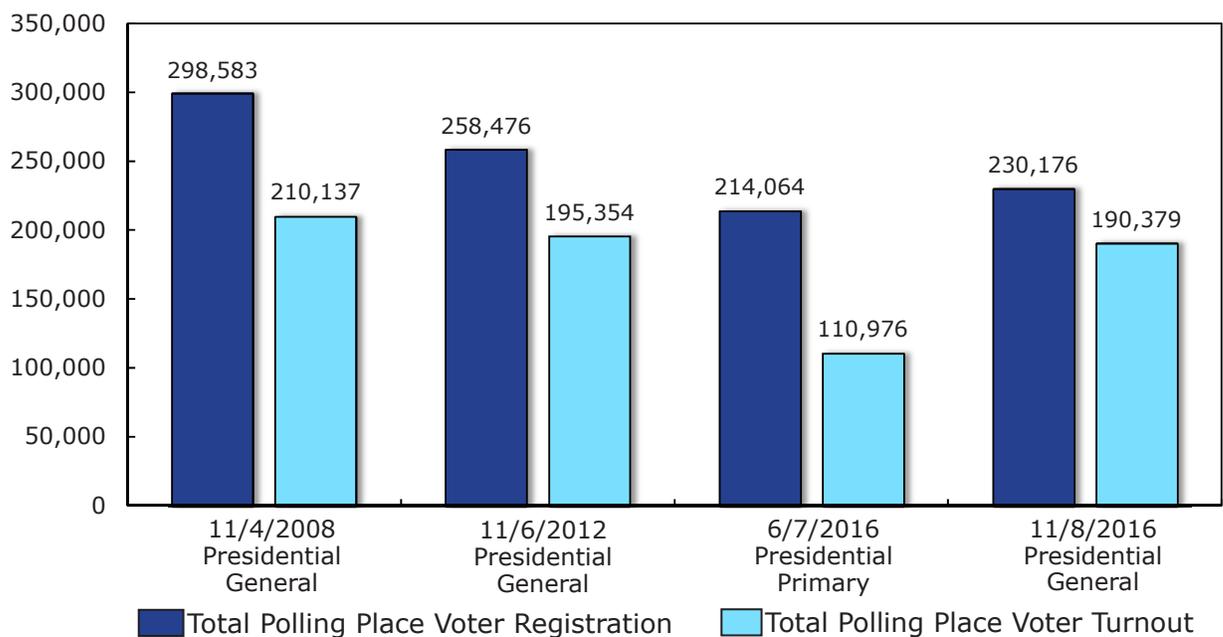
Vote-by-Mail Registration and Turnout
Past Presidential Elections

Chart data:

Election	Total Vote-by-Mail Registration	Total Vote-by-Mail Turnout
11/4/2008 Presidential General	490,238	467,916
11/6/2012 Presidential General	559,361	457,885
6/7/2016 Presidential Primary	573,999	319,803
11/8/2016 Presidential General	645,000	534,217

In 2001, the California Legislature passed a law to allow residents to become permanent vote-by-mail voters. Since the law went into effect the following year, the percentage of vote-by-mail voters in Santa Clara County has trended upward. On the other hand, vote-by-mail turnout, and turnout in general, depends on a number of factors, including voter interest in the election and whether an incumbent is up for re-election. These charts reveal a stark contrast between turnout in the June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary Election and in the three presidential general elections, for both voting methods.

Polling Place Voter Registration and Turnout
Past Presidential Elections

Chart data:

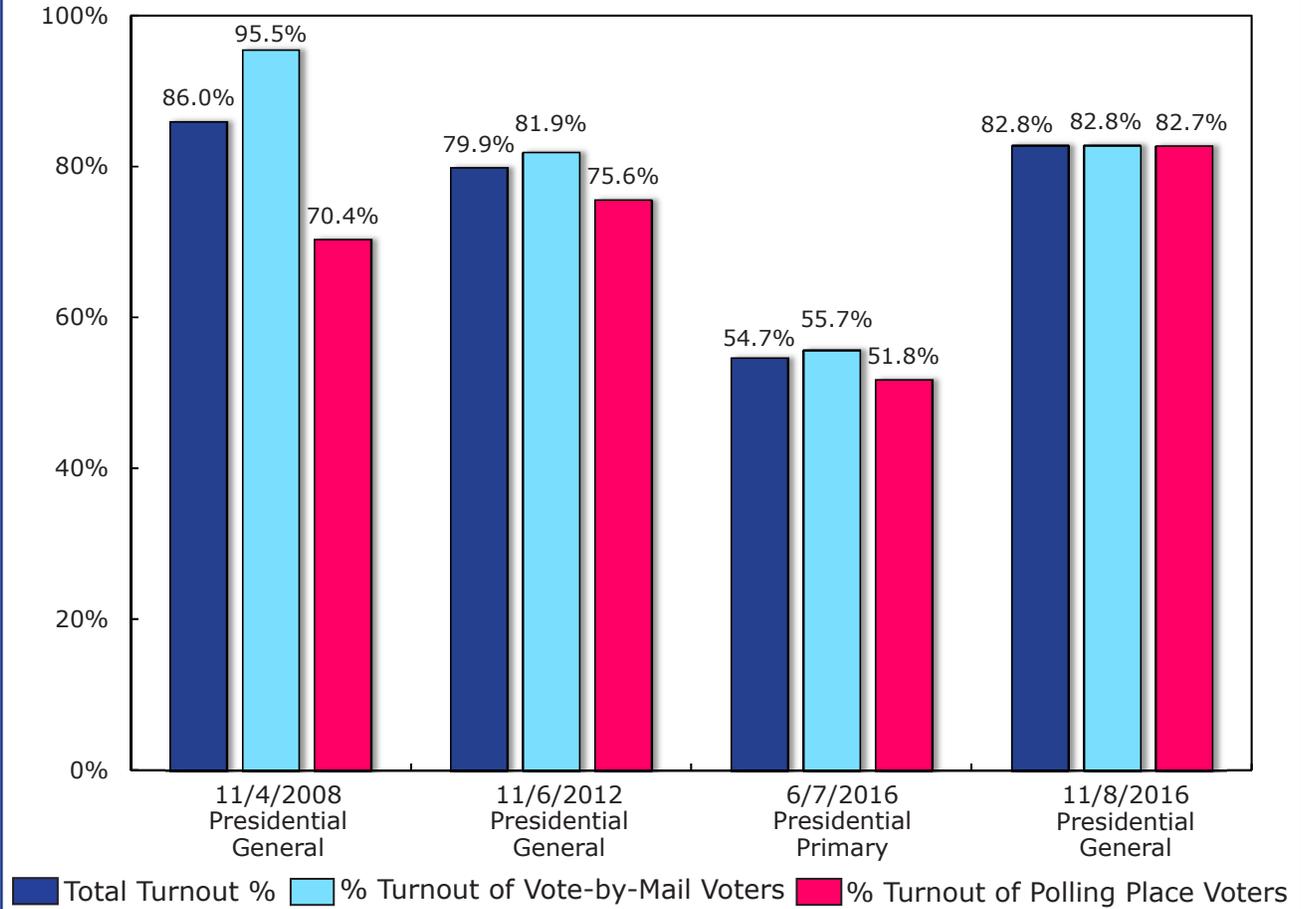| Election	Total Polling Place Voter Registration	Total Polling Place Voter Turnout
11/4/2008 Presidential General	298,583	210,137
11/6/2012 Presidential General	258,476	195,354
6/7/2016 Presidential Primary	214,064	110,976
11/8/2016 Presidential General	230,176	190,379

FAQ

Q: What is the difference between vote-by-mail (VBM) and polling place voters?
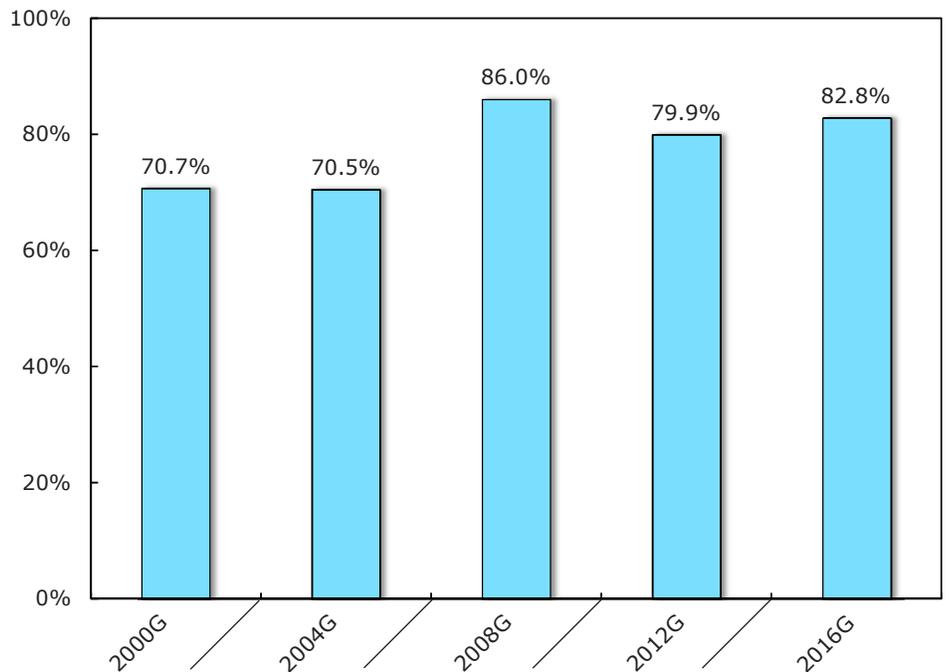
A: VBM voters are voters who have registered to permanently vote by mail, meaning that for every election, these voters receive their ballot in the mail. Polling place voters are voters who typically vote at the polls and do not usually receive a ballot by mail. Sometimes, due to how precincts are drawn, polling place voters can be assigned to mail ballot precincts. These voters may alternatively cast their ballot at a polling place if they wish.

Voter Turnout Percentages by Voting Method
Past Presidential Elections

Chart data:

Election	Total Turnout %	% Turnout of Vote-by-Mail Voters	% Turnout of Polling Place Voters
11/4/2008 Presidential General	86.0%	95.5%	70.4%
11/6/2012 Presidential General	79.9%	81.9%	75.6%
6/7/2016 Presidential Primary	54.7%	55.7%	51.8%
11/8/2016 Presidential General	82.8%	82.8%	82.7%

Legend: ■ Total Turnout % ■ % Turnout of Vote-by-Mail Voters ■ % Turnout of Polling Place Voters

Voter Turnout Percentages
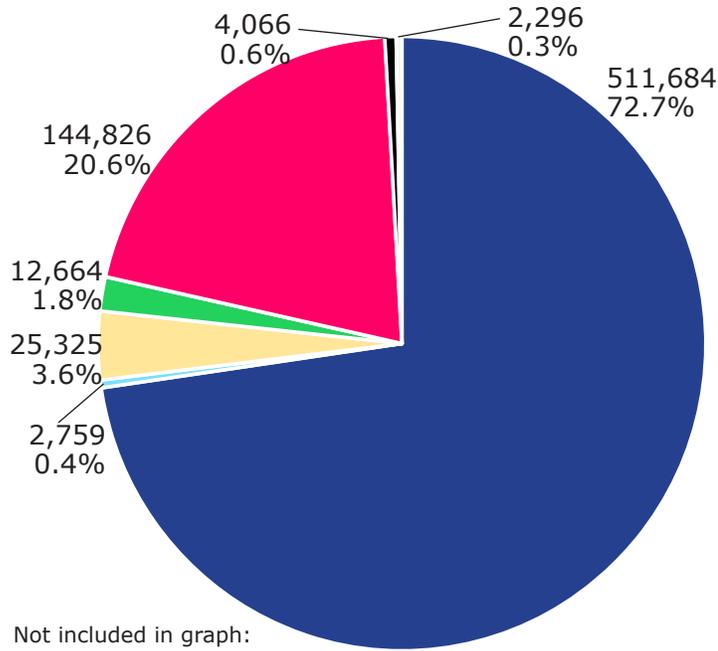*Past Presidential General Elections*

Historically, a higher percentage of vote-by-mail voters have voted in presidential-year elections than have polling place voters. In the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election, vote-by-mail and polling place voters turned out at nearly the same frequency. The overall turnout rate in November 2016 was well above typical for presidential general elections.

| Election	Turnout %
2000G	70.7%
2004G	70.5%
2008G	86.0%
2012G	79.9%
2016G	82.8%

2000G - 11/7/2000 Presidential General
2004G - 11/2/2004 Presidential General
2008G - 11/4/2008 Presidential General
2012G - 11/6/2012 Presidential General
2016G - 11/8/2016 Presidential General

Santa Clara County, Presidential Votes
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

4,066
0.6%

2,296
0.3%

144,826
20.6%

511,684
72.7%

12,664
1.8%

25,325
3.6%

2,759
0.4%

Not included in graph:
89 votes for other
qualified write-in candidates

State of California, Presidential Votes
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

79,341
0.6%

39,596
0.3%

4,483,810
31.6%

8,753,788
61.7%

278,657
2.0%

478,500
3.4%

66,101
0.5%
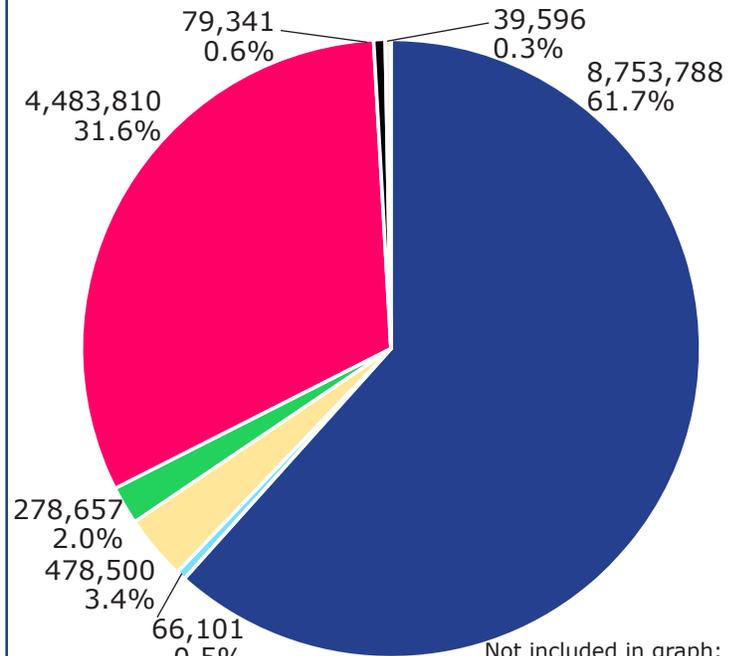
Not included in graph:
1,802 votes for other
qualified write-in candidates

Hillary Clinton,
Democratic

Gloria Estela La Riva,
Peace and Freedom

Gary Johnson,
Libertarian

Jill Stein,
Green

Donald J. Trump,
Republican/American Independent

Bernard "Bernie" Sanders,
Qualified write-in

Evan McMullin,
Qualified write-in

U.S. Popular Vote, President
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

2,315,043
1.7%

65,853,625
48.0%

62,985,106
45.9%

1,457,222
1.1%

4,489,233
3.3%

The graphs on this page show President Donald
Trump receiving an increasingly larger share of the
vote as the tallies move from county to state to
national levels, and ultimately the Electoral College.
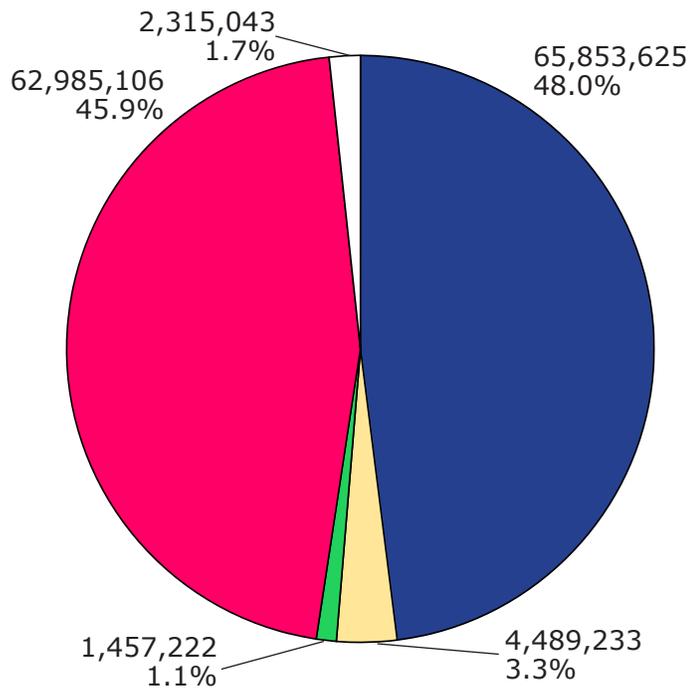
U.S. Electoral College Vote, President
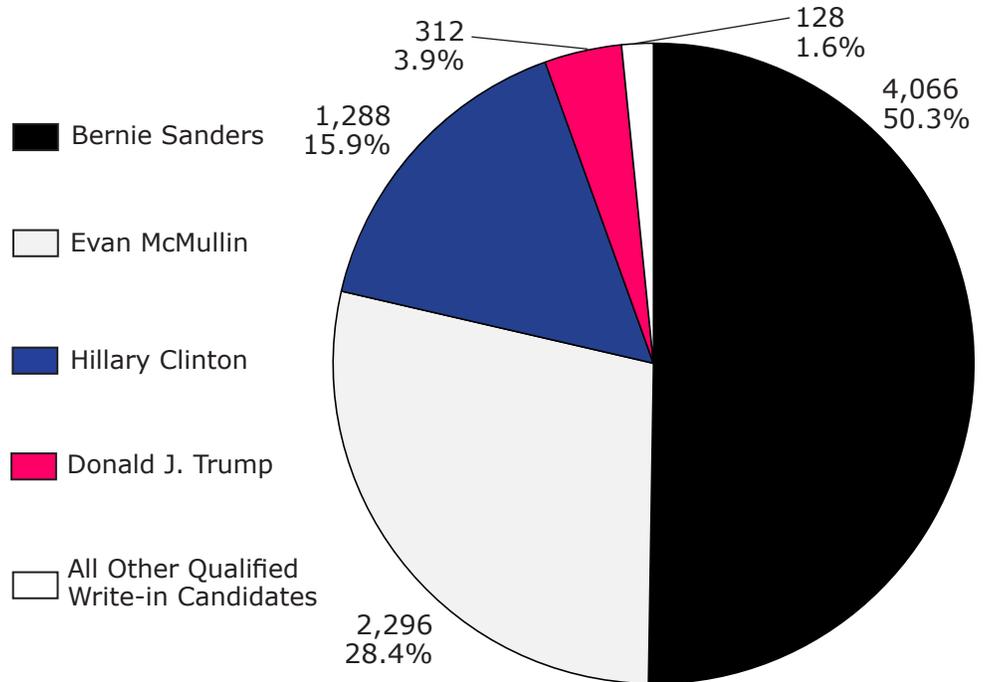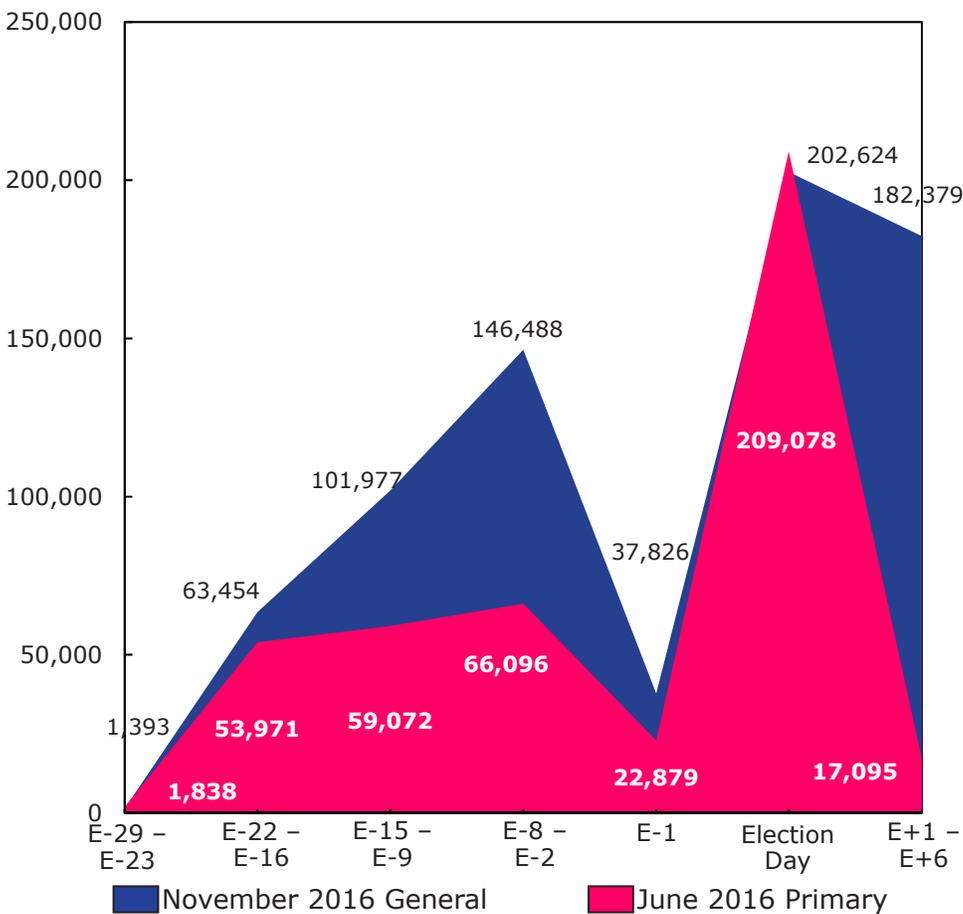*November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election*

7
1.3%

227
42.2%

304
56.5%
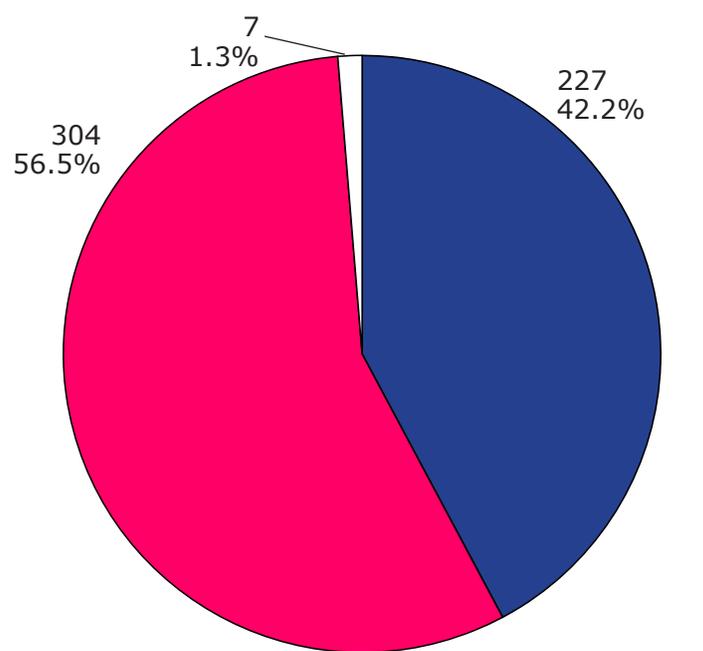
Others receiving electoral votes: Colin Powell (3),
John Kasich (1), Ron Paul (1), Bernie Sanders (1),
Faith Spotted Eagle (1)

Hillary Clinton

Donald J. Trump

Jill Stein

Gary Johnson

All Other Candidates

Santa Clara County, Presidential Write-in Votes
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

Senator Bernie Sanders received over half of all qualified write-in votes for President cast in Santa Clara County in the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election. Independent write-in candidate Evan McMullin received over a quarter of the qualified write-in votes, followed by Hillary Clinton, President Trump, and all other qualified candidates. Three candidates conducted write-in campaigns for local elected offices – Mayor, City of Gilroy, Councilmember, City of Saratoga, and Director, Santa Clara Valley Water District, District 1. Of these, Saratoga City Councilmember candidate Sudip Ghosal's 697 write-in votes were the most, equaling 3% of the total votes for that contest.

Legend:
- Bernie Sanders
- Evan McMullin
- Hillary Clinton
- Donald J. Trump
- All Other Qualified Write-in Candidates

Pie chart values:
- 312 / 3.9%
- 128 / 1.6%
- 4,066 / 50.3%
- 1,288 / 15.9%
- 2,296 / 28.4%

Ballots Processed by Time
2016 Presidential Elections

November 2016 General values: 1,393; 63,454; 101,977; 146,488; 37,826; 202,624; 182,379

June 2016 Primary values: 1,838; 53,971; 59,072; 66,096; 22,879; 209,078; 17,095

X-axis categories: E-29 – E-23; E-22 – E-16; E-15 – E-9; E-8 – E-2; E-1; Election Day; E+1 – E+6
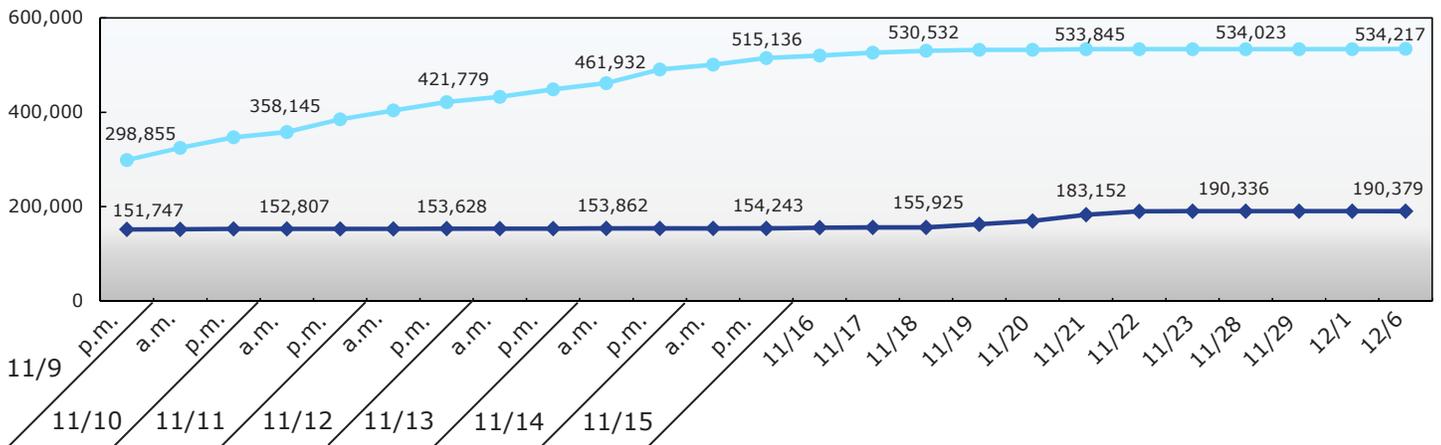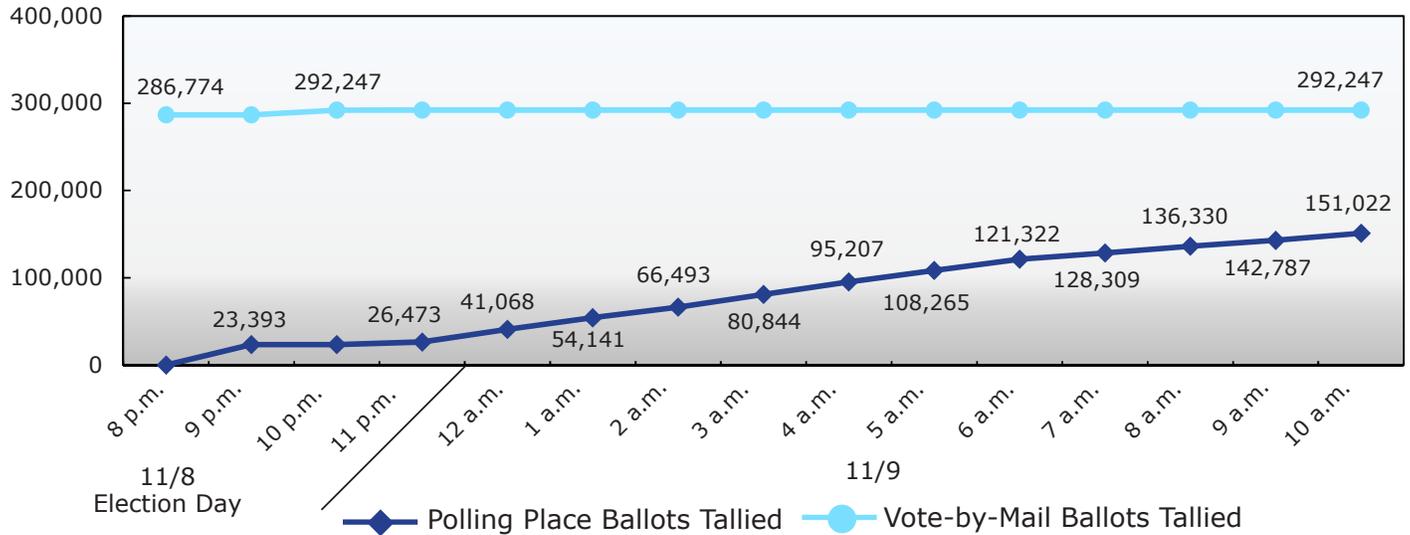
Legend: November 2016 General; June 2016 Primary

FAQ

Q: What do **E-** and **E+** mean?

A: Many laws relating to elections are triggered on specific days leading up to or after an election. Because each Election Day falls on a different calendar date, the Registrar of Voters (ROV) tracks days based on their plus or minus relation to Election Day.

The graph at left shows for the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election, the ROV processed nearly half the ballots cast in the election prior to Election Day, about a quarter of the ballots on Election Day, and the remaining quarter of the ballots after Election Day. Because of the high volume of ballots received in the days around Election Day, a sizable number of ballots were received on the day before they could be processed into the Registrar of Voters' voting system. The June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary election shows a ballot processing pattern by time similar to the November General, but with a lower percentage processed in the two weeks prior to the election (E-15 through E-1) and in the few days after Election Day (E+1 through E+6).

Ballots Tallied Over Time
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

Upper graph — *Polling Place Ballots Tallied* and *Vote-by-Mail Ballots Tallied* (8 p.m. 11/8 through 10 a.m. 11/9):

Vote-by-Mail Ballots Tallied: 286,774 (8 p.m.), 292,247, ... 292,247 (10 a.m.)

Polling Place Ballots Tallied: 23,393, 26,473, 41,068, 54,141, 66,493, 80,844, 95,207, 108,265, 121,322, 128,309, 136,330, 142,787, 151,022

Lower graph — 11/9 through 12/6:

Vote-by-Mail: 298,855, 358,145, 421,779, 461,932, 515,136, 530,532, 533,845, 534,023, 534,217

Polling Place: 151,747, 152,807, 153,628, 153,862, 154,243, 155,925, 183,152, 190,336, 190,379

Starting 10 days before the election, all of the vote-by-mail ballots received prior to Election Day are processed and tallied before 8 p.m. State law, however, does not allow the Registrar of Voters (ROV) to release the first results until the polls close. The first point on the upper graph – showing the number of ballots tallied as of 8 p.m. on Election Day – represents the VBM ballots that were tallied in the days prior to Election Day. The second point on Election Day shows the bulk of the tallied polling place ballots retrieved during Election Day as part of the midday pickup program. The rightmost point on the upper graph represents the final posted report including all the polling place ballots processed on Election Night. The ROV finished tallying around 9:30 a.m. in the morning, and posted the final report close to 10:30 a.m., a finish-ing time that trailed other large counties in the state. The 443,269 ballots tallied by this final Election Night report made up 61% of the total ballots cast in the election. The ROV made up ground, however, after Election Day. By the November 14 deadline to receive valid vote-by-mail ballots, the ROV had processed approximately 85% of total ballots cast – well above the average for large county election offices and second only to Alameda County's approximately 87% of total ballots processed by then.
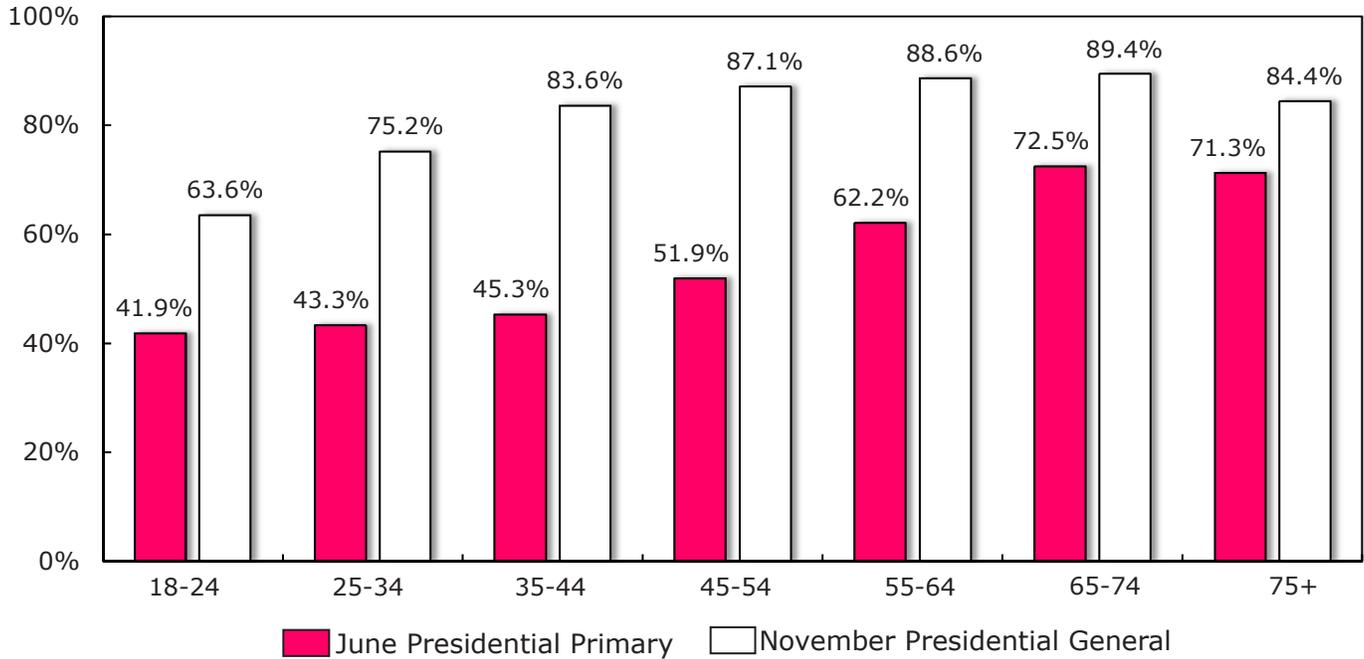
The polling place ballots tallied last in the lower graph are mostly provisional ballots, which need to be verified for voter and contest eligibility. In some cases, these ballots must be further processed to ensure that provisional voters only cast votes in contests for which they were eligible to vote.

FAQ

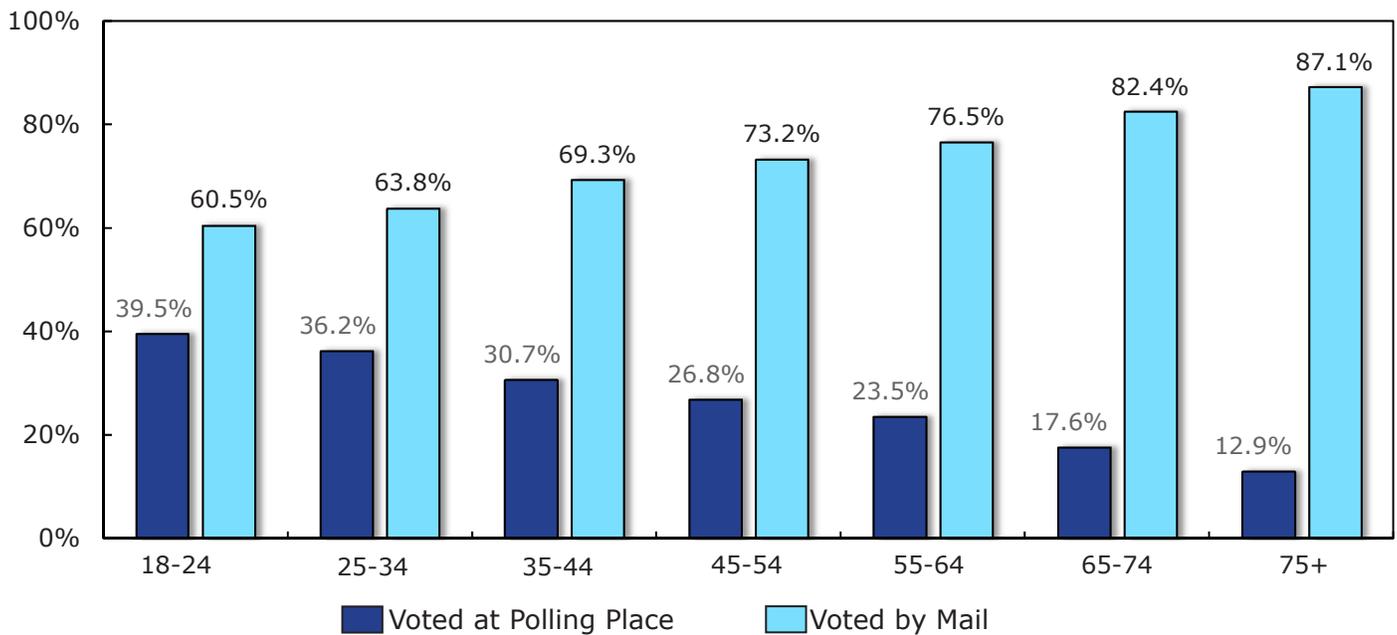**Q:** Why were ballot tally updates provided only once an hour on Election Day?

A: The Registrar of Voters (ROV) typically publishes vote count updates every 45 minutes on Election Day, starting at 8 p.m. when the polls close. With the historically high volume of ballot cards in the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election, the report from the vote tabulation program took about 45 minutes itself to generate, and required additional processing steps to produce a properly formatted vote count for the ROV's Election Night Results website. As a result, the ROV posted hourly updated election results on the website on Election Night and through the early morning hours, until the final report with all of the polling place votes posted after 10 a.m. on November 9. Thereafter, the ROV posted updates twice daily during the 24-hour ballot processing period spanning the week after Election Day.

Voter Turnout by Age Group
2016 Presidential Elections

Age Group	June Presidential Primary	November Presidential General
18-24	41.9%	63.6%
25-34	43.3%	75.2%
35-44	45.3%	83.6%
45-54	51.9%	87.1%
55-64	62.2%	88.6%
65-74	72.5%	89.4%
75+	71.3%	84.4%

Voting Method by Age Group
November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election

Age Group	Voted at Polling Place	Voted by Mail
18-24	39.5%	60.5%
25-34	36.2%	63.8%
35-44	30.7%	69.3%
45-54	26.8%	73.2%
55-64	23.5%	76.5%
65-74	17.6%	82.4%
75+	12.9%	87.1%

Generally, no matter the voting method, the higher the age group, the higher the turnout in both the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election and the June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary Election. The rate of turnout by age group rises and crests among voters between 65 and 74, before decreasing somewhat among voters at least 75. In the November General as in most other elections, the higher the age group, the more likely the voter was to vote by mail.

Challenges Resolved

Due to a combination of factors ranging from the size and scrutiny involved in the landmark election to the conduct of 10 automatic recounts, the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election presented several unanticipated challenges that the Registrar of Voters (ROV) resolved throughout the election preparation process. Below are some of the issues that were solved by the ROV's dedicated staff behind the scenes to ensure a positive voting experience and a successful presidential election.

Donald J. Trump Nominated by Two Parties

What happened?

As expected, presidential candidate Donald J. Trump and his vice-presidential running mate Michael R. Pence received the nomination from the national Republican Party. For California ballots, the presidential ticket also received the nomination from the American Independent Party.

Why was this challenging?

The ROV is required by state law to print "Vote for One Party" instructions on the ballot, and election officials from some counties suggested that Mr. Trump therefore needed to be printed twice on the ballot. Voters might be confused if they saw a candidate listed in two places on the ballot.

How was this solved?

The ROV communicated with other counties and the California Secretary of State about the unusual challenge. The Secretary of State advised that the names of Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence needed to be printed on only one line, but that both nominating political parties would be listed. The "Vote for One Party" instructions would need to remain on the ballot. During the election, there were no reports of voter confusion about the ballot listing two political parties for the ticket of Trump and Pence.

Midday Ballot Pickup

What happened?

A 2016 law allows voted ballots to be retrieved from polling places before the polls close in order to relieve the burden of a high volume of returns on Election Night.

Why was this challenging?

The law requires specific procedures to ensure ballot security and uniform processing of ballots. The ROV was able to securely process over 23,000 voted ballots picked up on Election Day from 201 polling places for the midday pickup in the June 2016 Presidential Primary, but the turnout rate in November was expected to be 25 to 30 percentage points higher than in June, and neither the vehicle entrance capacity at the ROV headquarters nor the midday ballot processing area could be expanded significantly.

How was this solved?

The ROV redesigned the ballot sorting and counting process to maximize space and efficiency within the midday ballot processing area, and hired dozens of additional election volunteers to be able to process twice the number of ballots, and three times the number of ballot cards, than had been processed in June. Through process improvements and careful planning, the ROV was able to retrieve over 46,000 ballots from 211 polling places as part of the midday pickup process during the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election. This enabled the ballot counting teams to get a head start on providing Election Night returns to the interested public.

Accelerated Canvass and Automatic Recounts

What happened?

A pilot program approved by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors called for the ROV to conduct, prior to certification of the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election, an automatic recount for any local contest with a margin of victory within 0.5% or 25 votes.

Why was this challenging?

The ROV could not be certain how many contests would qualify for an automatic recount until all the ballots were counted. In a major election expected to have high voter turnout, it would take weeks to count all of the vote-by-mail ballots, provisional ballots, and ballots with write-in votes. The ROV would therefore need to recruit enough staff for hand recounts of multiple contests, and conduct many tasks involved in the post-election canvass simultaneously, instead of sequentially.

How was this solved?

With the help of the County Human Resources (HR) department, the ROV recruited extensively, administering surveys, conducting phone interviews, and holding job fairs to secure enough staff for operations before, during, and after Election Day, and for potential automatic recounts. The ROV was able to recruit 407 temporary staff members, of whom 376 were submitted to HR for hiring. The ROV also received approval from the Board of Supervisors to extend the hours of some of its more experienced temporary staff members, so that they would not reach their maximum hour limit during the post-election canvass or recount operations. In addition, the ROV adjusted its typical canvass schedule, moving up some tasks and running others in parallel, so that automatic recount efforts could be carried out during the later stages of the canvass.

During planning, the question remained about how many workers would be needed for an unknown number of recount operations. A total of 297 automatic recount-eligible contests had been held in the four countywide general elections since 2008 plus the June 2016 Presidential Primary, when one contest did qualify to be recounted. Of these 297 contests, a total of 11 contests (4%) would have met the margin of victory criteria for an automatic recount. This percentage suggested as many as three or four out of 93 local contests could qualify for recount in November, although six contests out of 64 (9%) would have qualified for recount in the November 4, 2008, Presidential General Election, had the recount pilot been in place then.

By November 23, 2016, the ROV confirmed a total of 10 local contests (11%) would be recounted starting Monday, November 28. Starting with 125 staff members and reaching 307 after the canvass concluded, the ROV succesfully completed the recounts in six weeks' time, by January 5, 2017. The election outcomes for all 10 contests were confirmed by the recounts.

Takeaways

For an election encompassing nearly 900,000 voters, 836 polling places, and nearly 725,000 ballots cast, the November 8, 2016, Presidential General Election went as smoothly as could have been hoped. Over 7,000 Registrar of Voters (ROV) staff members, election officers, Election Day volunteers, and automatic recount staff worked tirelessly to prepare for, conduct, and verify the election.

This experience has provided numerous key facts and lessons to keep in mind for future elections:

- Despite the presidential race not expected to be and not ending up too close in California, **turnout in Santa Clara County was higher than in its peer counties, the statewide average, and the national average**. Extensive voter outreach through advertising and the wealth of voting opportunities – including early voting sites, drive-thru locations, drop-off boxes, and postage paid envelopes – likely contributed to this higher turnout.

- The election saw the **most ever ballots cast** in a Santa Clara County election, with the **second highest turnout rate in 48 years**.

- While the ROV has increased early voting opportunities, **over 100,000 vote-by-mail (VBM) voters, or about 19% of participating VBM voters, dropped off their completed VBM ballots on Election Day** rather than mailing them in early.

- More than **40,000 voters voted provisionally** at the polls, representing a higher than average percentage of all voters and establishing a **new record** for a Santa Clara County election.

- Despite nearly 75% more ballots cast in November than in the June 2016 Presidential Primary, about **2,000 fewer VBM ballots were received after Election Day and about 1,000 fewer valid VBM ballots were received after Election Day in November,** as voters appeared to be motivated to vote earlier in the Presidential General Election.

- Although the ROV has augmented its vote-tallying operations through additional vote-tallying machines, conducting 24-hour processing of VBM ballots, and conducting midday pickups – all of which ultimately led to faster ballot counting than in past elections – **Santa Clara County still trails similarly sized counties with respect to reporting times**. Santa Clara County is currently in the process of replacing its aging voting system with a modern one, which would significantly increase tallying efficiency.

- Despite an Election Night final reporting time trailing its peers, the Santa Clara County ROV jumped to **second among large county election offices in the percentage of total ballots processed** by the November 14 deadline to receive timely postmarked ballots.

- Voters registering to vote and updating their registration information online now exceed those using paper forms, with **almost 75% of registration documents submitted over the internet**, up from 60% in June.

- The **nearly 900,000 registered voters was the highest ever recorded** in a Santa Clara County election, and that figure is expected to rise considerably in the years ahead with the New Motor Voter Program at the DMV.

- A new law allowing **midday pickups** of voted ballots at polling places **enabled the ROV to retrieve about 15% of the polling place ballots cast and tally them early**, which eased the burden of tallying more than 160,000 polling place ballots after the polls closed.

- The **turnout among polling place voters was nearly identical to that of VBM voters**, and was the closest to the overall countywide turnout in any presidential-year election since prior to 2008.

- A total of **10 local contests** with narrow victory margins met the criteria for automatic recount in the election, and more than **300 ROV staff members worked six weeks** to hand recount the voted ballots in these contests. The recounts confirmed the winners in all 10 contests. Based on the ROV's experiences in the June 7, 2016, Presidential Primary and the November 8, 2016, Presidential General, it takes between three days and one week to perform a hand recount of an average-sized local contest.

Staff members close one of the county's five early voting sites in preparation for voters arriving the next day.

Figures in Pictures

Among the 10 California counties with the largest number of registered voters, Santa Clara County has by far the highest percentage of vote-by-mail voters at **73.7%**

Alpine County + Sierra County
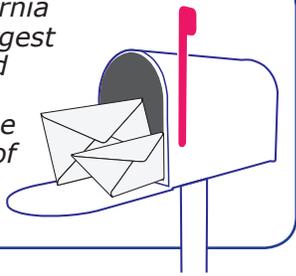
ROV staff and more than **7,000** election officers and volunteers recruited for the election formed an organization larger than all the registered voters in California's smallest two counties combined

Voters in Santa Clara County participated in the election at a substantially higher rate – **82.8%** – than the statewide average of **75.3%**

Among the 10 California counties with the largest number of registered voters, Santa Clara County voters turned out at the highest rate

During the election, ROV staff members delivered, distributed and restocked more than **125 tons** of polling place equipment and supplies – a weight greater than the statue of President Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Register, Update, and Participate

The best way to ensure that your voice is heard is to vote. The Registrar of Voters (ROV) offers numerous ways you can register to vote, update your registration information, stay informed regarding election news, track your ballot, and locate your polling place.

Register to Vote

- **In Person**: Visit the ROV's office between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, in San Jose.

- **By Mail**: Obtain a voter registration affidavit from a library, post office, or other government office.

- **Online**: Visit www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Pages/Online.aspx.

Find Your Voting Information

- **By Mobile App**: Visit www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Pages/Registrar-of-Voters.aspx and click on "SCCVOTE Mobile App" to download the ROV's app for Android or Apple.

- **Access Candidate and Measure Information**: View information about recent and upcoming elections at www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/CandidateINFO.aspx.

- **Keep Up to Date**: Look up your districts and polling place, verify that your ballot was received and counted, and more at eservices.sccgov.org/rov.

Volunteer

- Learn how to serve as a paid election officer by visiting www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Volunteer/Pages/Volunteer.aspx.

Update Your Registration

- Update your registration information or provide changes to your address, party affiliation, or language preference at www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Pages/ChangeRegistration.aspx.

Connect with the ROV

- **By Phone**: 1-866-430-VOTE (8683) or 1-408-299-VOTE (8683).

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