



**OFFICE OF COUNTY CLERK, RECORDER,
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
ELECTIONS DIVISION**

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Date: October 2, 2015
To: Stanislaus County Candidates
for the 11/3/15 Consolidated District Election
From: Lee Lundrigan, County Clerk, Recorder, Registrar of Voters
Subject: Official Canvass Process and Election Updates

This letter is being sent to all candidates and media to inform you of the dates and processes for conducting the canvass of the vote by the Stanislaus County Registrar of Voters (ROV).

HOW TO OBTAIN RESULTS OF THE VOTE

There are three ways to obtain Election Night, Update and Final results of the vote from the Registrar of Voters office. Upon release of results, there are three options for you to obtain this information:

WEBSITE: stanvote.com click on link 'Election Results'
IN PERSON: Office of the Registrar of Voters, 1021 "I" Street, Modesto
TELEPHONE: 209-525-5201

INCOMPLETE BALLOT COUNTING ELECTION NIGHT

Candidates are frequently surprised on the day after an election when they learn there are between 5,000 to 10,000 ballots countywide remaining to be counted. These uncounted ballots may leave some close races undecided for days or even weeks. The following explains the logistics of Election Night ballot counting and follow-up ballot tabulation, which occurs in the days/weeks following the election.

ELECTION DAY – TUES. NOV. 3

Elections Code § 1000 requires an election to take place the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November – Tues. Nov. 3 this year. At the close of polls at 8:00 p.m. on Election Night the ROV will tally those vote by mail ballots which have been processed during the past 10 *work days*, but not yet tallied. Regular updates as the 113 polling site results become available will be released throughout the evening until all polling sites have reported.

CANVASS OF THE VOTE – WED. NOV. 4 UNTIL COMPLETE

The canvass of the vote will begin on Wed. Nov. 4 and continue on regular business days until complete. Holidays and weekends are excluded from the canvass. This is a free process, open to the candidates and the public. The election canvass process is an internal audit and is required by state law to ensure the accuracy of election results prior to official certification of the election. By California election law for this odd-numbered year election it must be completed by Mon. Nov. 23. During the canvass, vote by mail and provisional ballots not counted on Election Night are researched to validate eligibility. Once validated, these additional vote by mail and provisional ballots are added to the count. Additionally, all voted ballots from a randomly selected 1% of the precincts are manually tallied and balanced against the computer counts to verify the accuracy of the election tally system. This process is required by law. Once the results are official the Registrar of Voters, Lee Lundrigan, will certify the election.

HOLIDAY CLOSURE – WED. NOV. 11

The ROV office will close on the Veterans Day holiday. No canvass will take place this day.

DEADLINE TO CERTIFY THE ELECTION – MON NOV 23

Elections Code § 15372 states certification of “Special district elections conducted on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years, (shall certify the election) no later than the last Monday before the last Friday of that month.” This date is Mon. Nov 23. It is the last day the ROV may canvass the election.

CANVASS PROCEDURES

There are four categories of ballots that cannot be processed on Election Night:

- ◆ Vote by mail ballots turned in at polling locations
- ◆ Provisional ballots voted at the polls
- ◆ 7-day ballots voted in the office
- ◆ Ballots containing votes for certified write-in candidates (there are no certified write-in candidates for the Nov 3 election)

VOTE BY MAIL BALLOTS TURNED IN AT THE POLLING LOCATIONS

Some vote by mail voters wait until the last minute to make their voting choices and then drop off their vote by mail ballots at a polling place on Election Day. We receive these ballots very late on Election Night. All vote-by-mail ballots must be pre-processed before they are counted - this includes verifying every vote by mail voter’s signature prior to opening the vote by mail ballot envelopes to remove the ballots in preparation for counting.

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Provisional ballots are voted at the polls when a voter’s registration is in question, or when our records indicate the voter was already sent a vote by mail ballot. Provisional ballots are sealed in special envelopes at the polls and must be individually researched and verified at the registrar’s office before ballots are counted or rejected in accordance with election laws. Due to the extra research required to validate provisional ballots, these ballots are usually the last to be tallied prior to the completion of the official canvass (which must be completed by Mon. Nov. 23, 2015).

WRITE-IN BALLOTS

There are no qualified write-in candidates in the Nov. 3 election. The number of marks made in the bubble next to blank write-in spaces will be tallied and reported. No names written in this space will be credited with a vote. Also tallied will be over votes (i.e., voted for more candidates than can be elected) and under votes (i.e., left blank or voted for fewer candidates than can be elected).

SUMMARY

Based on past trends, the number of ballots remaining to be counted after Election Night is anticipated between 5,000 to 10,000 countywide for this type of election. These ballots are segregated by precinct prior to counting. However, the number of outstanding ballots for any specific electoral district will be unknown until the computer tallies these ballots.

California law requires an official canvass and certification of the results of each election. This provision of the law recognizes the complexity of completing the ballot count and conducting a thorough audit of the election results to ensure accuracy. Part of the canvass process is a legally required manual recount of the votes cast for all candidates and measures on the ballots in 1% of the voting precincts. This manual process verifies the accuracy of the computer count.

Candidates and members of the general public are invited to observe supplemental ballot counting and the manual tally of ballots from the randomly selected 1% of the voting precincts.

Stanislaus County updates the ballot tally results three times. First on Election Night, again when the majority of outstanding vote by mail ballots have been tallied and concludes with the final official results and the Certification of the Vote.

We realize it is difficult for candidates/campaigns involved in close races to wait days and sometimes weeks to know whether or not they won or lost the election. However, we hope that the reasons for the timing of the final ballot tally have been explained fully.