



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman, Committee on Administration
United States House of Representatives
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6157

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY FOR FULL COMMITTEE HEARING: “WHY THE WAIT? UNPACKING CALIFORNIA’S UNTIMELY ELECTION COUNTING PROCESS”, HELD ON APRIL 29, 2025

Dear Chair Steil and Members of the Committee:

Los Angeles County was pleased to host you, Representative Torres, Congressional members and staff when you toured our ballot tabulation process at our Ballot Processing Center, in November 2024. Los Angeles County is committed to ensuring secure, transparent, and trusted elections, serving nearly 5.8 million registered voters, in accordance with state and federal law.

As the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, I write to submit a supplemental written testimony for the Committee hearing: “Why the Wait? Unpacking California’s Untimely Election Counting Process”, held on April 29, 2025.

Because no election administrators from California were invited to testify, we felt it was important, as the largest and most complex electoral jurisdiction in California and in the country, to submit this written testimony to provide important background, context, and clarification in response to questions raised in the hearing.

Should the Committee or staff have any questions, I can be reached at (562) 462-2716 or email dlogan@rrcc.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

DCL:KF

c: Members, House Administration Committee
Honorable Shirley Weber, California Secretary of State



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

United States House of Representatives, Committee on Administration

“Why the Wait: Unpacking California’s Untimely Elections”

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025

TESTIMONY

Dean C. Logan
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Los Angeles County

Good morning, Chair Steil and Members of the Committee. I am Dean C. Logan, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (“RR/CC”) for Los Angeles County (“County”) in the State of California (“State”). I oversee the County’s voter registration process, voter file maintenance, federal, state, local and special election administration, and other related programs. The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is one of 58 county election officials in California responsible for administering elections and certifying election results.

Los Angeles County has nearly 5.8 million registered voters, with 5,000 voting precincts established for countywide elections. The County is the largest and most complex electoral jurisdiction in the country, with 88 cities, over 100 school and community college districts, 55 general and special districts, and approximately 140 unincorporated areas.

During the 2024 General Election, we counted over 3.7 million ballots. To put that into perspective, Los Angeles County counted more ballots than 38 other states, including the great states of Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin.

Because no election administrators from California were invited to testify before the hearing titled, “Why the Wait: Unpacking California’s Untimely Elections”, held on April 20, 2025, we felt it was important to submit important background, context, and clarification in response to questions raised in the hearing.

Q: Why send every registered voter a ballot by mail, if it takes more time and effort to process the ballots?

A: Delivering every registered voter a ballot through the mail ensures voters have time to study the ballot, the ability to vote independently, and the freedom to return their ballot by mail, at a drop box, or at a vote center.

Prior to 2020, substantial numbers of California voters were already choosing to vote by mail, with most counties experiencing a majority of voters choosing this option. After much research and policy discussion, California was planning to launch a pilot project for multiple counties to move to automatically mailing registered voters their ballots, while opening Vote Centers and drop boxes as additional options for voters to return ballots. Many of the counties that were ready to participate in this pilot already had high vote by mail participation rates.

When the COVID pandemic swept the nation, California was poised to build on the efforts of a successful pilot project and implement a statewide standard for mailing ballots to all eligible voters / opening Vote Centers/ siting Drop Boxes / implementing Conditional (same day) Registration options. In Los Angeles County, where a larger portion of our electorate historically voted in-person, we were concerned about whether these large-scale changes would result in voter participation drop offs and we engaged in extensive outreach and education efforts to design a voting model responsive to voter preferences and behavior.

In fact, Los Angeles County voters embraced the changes. We were able to establish engaging locations and opportunities for voters to cast their ballots (from voting at Dodger Stadium to voting out of mobile voting centers) that resulted in 1.14 million voters using their VBM ballots to vote, and another 1 million voters voting in person in the March 2020 primaries; and 3.4 million voters used a VBM ballot and 900,000 voted in person in the 2020 General Election in the midst of the global COVID pandemic. A historic 4.3 million voters turned out to vote in November 2020, increasing voter participation rates from 58% (Nov. 2018) to 76% (Nov. 2020) turnout. In a survey of voters, we found an increase in voter satisfaction with their experience, with 94% of survey respondents indicating they had an overall positive or neutral experience.¹ Academic studies have found that mailing every voter a ballot has a positive effect on turnout.²

Los Angeles County made monumental systemic changes to meet voters where they are – working moms who prefer to mark their ballots at home and return them by mail; restaurant workers who only have one day off and need flexibility to accommodate their shift schedules; people of religious faiths who have restrictions on the days or times they can vote, and independent contractors working abroad who rely upon foreign and U.S. mail for receipt and return of their ballots.

¹ [Los Angeles County Election Administration Plan, 2022.](#)

² [Vote-by-mail policy and the 2020 presidential election - Eric McGhee, Jennifer Paluch, Mindy Romero, 2022.](#)

In the November 2024 General Election, of the over 3.7 million people who voted in LA County, 28% voted in person, with the remaining 72% using the ballot they received in the mail to vote (51% returning the ballots in secure drop boxes, 17% returning at Vote Centers, and 32% returning by mail).

Q: Do California's ballots need to be postmarked? What happens if it is not dated?

A: California's election laws are clear: Ballots *must* be cast on or before Election Day to be counted.

It is California law and Los Angeles County's compliant practice to require any ballot returned by mail to be postmarked on Election Day or before. Los Angeles County cannot and does not count ballots that are postmarked after Election Day or that are received more than seven days after Election Day, regardless of postmark.

LA County's procedure for ballots with no postmark and out-of-State/Country ballots is to use the US Postal Service's Mail Recovery and Storage (MARS) system to determine the mailing date. If there is no postmark, or MARS verification, California Elections Code requires us to use the date that we stamp the vote by mail envelope upon receipt from the United States Postal Service or a bona fide private mail delivery company. In this instance, only ballots that are stamped by our office, as received on or before Election Day would be counted.³

Q: Wouldn't we get election results faster if California stopped receiving mailed ballots after Election Day?

A: With 1 million votes arriving on Election Day, it takes time to process the ballots and count the ballots.

We welcomed a bi-partisan group of elected officials, including Chair Bryan Steil and Rep. Norma Torres, to tour and observe our ballot processing operations after the General Election in 2024. Chair Steil remarked that he observed 3 days after the election, 900,000 ballots still needed to be counted, and that "It was an amazing experience to walk through the LA Central Count."⁴

It's true. The work of hundreds of dedicated staff and temporary workers *is* amazing. We operate 24/7 with hundreds of employees working over multiple weeks, ensuring all voted ballots receive the same level of accurate and secure processing regardless of the method or date of return selected by the voter within the parameters established in California state law.

Focusing on only the ballots received on General Election Day 2024, which includes all the ballots cast in-person at Vote Centers on Election Day before 8:00 PM PT, ballots

³ California Code, Elections Code - ELEC § 3020.

⁴ Statement of Rep. Bryan Steil, Chairman, U.S. House Committee on House Administration, Apr. 29, 2025.

dropped off at Vote Centers or drop boxes on Election Day before 8:00 PM PT, and ballots mailed and arriving by Election Day; Los Angeles County's Ballot Processing Center received 1.6 million ballots on Election Night.

To count 1.6 million Election Day ballots, it would require at least a week to process all the ballots. Processing time includes checking signatures, opening envelopes, extracting ballots from envelopes, sorting out any ballots that have issues (coffee stains, dog bites, missing pages), scanning ballots and then tabulating results. Where we can, we have employed machines and cutting-edge technology to speed the process.

To protect the integrity of the count and ensure voter confidence in the results, a vital step is signature verification of the ballots. The signature verification process has three layers, that includes using automated signature verification to allow speed and accuracy. Because voters' signatures change over time and age, we also have human reviewers. Contrary to some contentions, our staff go through extensive training provided by the Secretary of State's office to manage the voter verification process. We also provide additional training to temporary workers to understand the law, signature verification techniques, and Los Angeles County processes.

Even with automation, highly efficient processes, and trained people working around the clock, verifying signatures, sorting ballots, scanning and counting over 1.6 million ballots could not be done in a day.

Los Angeles County counted 96.89% of the total ballots cast in the 2024 General Election in one week. By November 12, 2024, we counted 3.6 million ballots. The remaining ballots that require extra attention and additional time include conditional voter registration ballots, provisional ballots, and ballots where we give voters an opportunity to cure missing information or signature.

Q: How many voters and who would be affected by a law cutting off receipt of ballots at the end of Election Day?

A: In Los Angeles County, 75,000 voters could be disenfranchised, including uniformed and overseas voters.

Adopting a national law to cut off receipt of ballots on Election Day would not only affect California voters, but also voting in 17 states, including Alaska, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. In many places, vote by mail is the only way to get ballots out to and back from voters who live in remote or rural locations.

Based on our experience in the 2024 General Election, some of the 75,000 ballots postmarked on or before Election Day (that arrived in the 7 days allowed by state law following Election Day), would be disqualified, if such law was adopted. It is important to

note that the 75,000 ballots reflect a proportional representation of the County's electorate spanning party registration, voter age, and geographic location.

Much attention during the hearing was focused on Congressional contests with thin margins determining the final outcome. It is in these contests where consistent, accurate, and transparent processing of all valid ballots is critical to ensuring the certified returns reflect the intent of the participating electorate.

One important group of voters who would be particularly impacted are the large numbers of Uniformed and Overseas Voters. As Rebecca Nowacek of Secure Families Initiative testified: "Military voters are 27% less likely to have voted than their civilian counterparts. When a military voter tries to vote that is unsuccessful, the most common reason is because their ballot arrives past the deadline.... Best practices include, number one, enable ballots that are postmarked by election day to arrive at least seven days after election day to still be counted...." In 2024, Los Angeles County received 20,000 ballots from Uniformed and Overseas voters. The State's Postmark-Plus-Seven law allowed these ballots to be verified and counted.

California has established a strong foundation to support free and fair elections, to encourage and facilitate voter registration and participation, and to support a voter-centered approach to when, where, and how elections are administered. Any change to that process – or the timeframes associated with casting a ballot must be consider the potential rejection of ballots clearly cast by voters on or prior to Election Day.

The mechanics of when, where, and how elections are conducted should never be driven by political directive. These critical processes must be guided by deliberate, thoughtful legislation focused on ensuring eligible voters clearly understand their voting options and can exercise those options without unnecessary barriers.

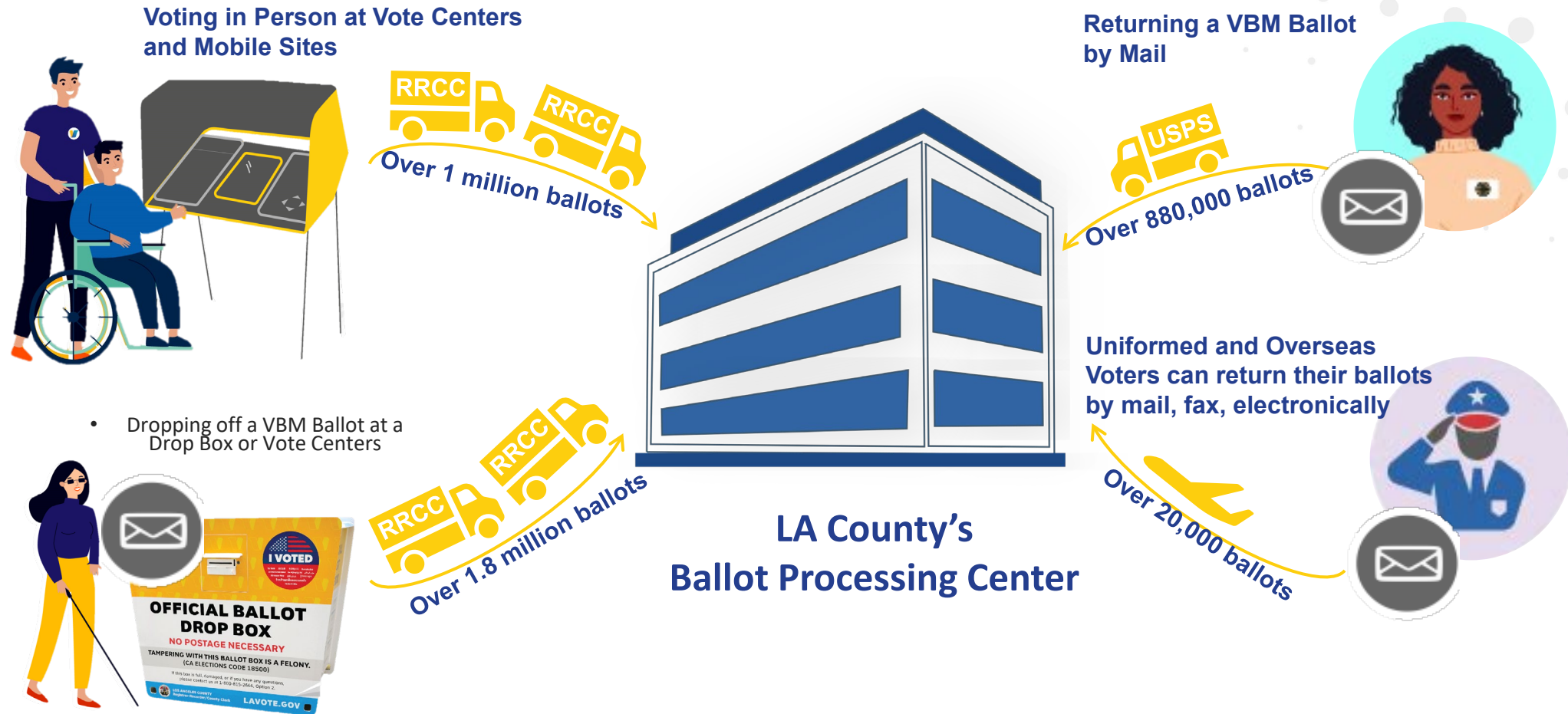
BALLOT COUNT: PROTECTING INTEGRITY, ACCESS, AND SECURITY

Los Angeles County
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

May 5, 2025



How do ballots arrive at LA County's Ballot Processing Center?



Only ballots cast on or before Election Day are counted

To ensure that only ballots cast on or before Election Day are counted:

- **Vote Centers** close at 8 PM, with election workers managing lines to allow only voters already waiting to cast their ballots.
- **Ballot Drop Boxes** are locked exactly at 8 PM across the County by deployed teams.
- **Mailed Ballots** must be postmarked by Election Day; any ballot postmarked after will not be counted.

Snapshot: 2024 General Election

TOTAL BALLOTS CAST: 3,793,106



51%

**Ballot Drop Box
Votes**

17%

**Vote Center
Drop-Offs**

32%

**Ballots Sent
By Mail**



426 BALLOT DROP BOXES



648 VOTE CENTERS

Every Vote by Mail (VBM) ballot undergoes a rigorous, multi-step process before it is counted.

◆ **No VBM ballot is counted unless it passes each step of this verification process.**

◆ **Strict chain-of-custody procedures are enforced at every stage to protect the security and integrity of each ballot.**

1. Intake and Receipt:

- Each envelope is logged and secured.
- The postmark date is verified to ensure it meets legal deadlines.
- The voter's signature is scanned for verification.

2. Signature Verification:

- The signature on the VBM envelope is carefully compared against the voter's registration record.
- Trained election workers and supervisors undertake multiple reviews of any mismatches before proceeding.

3. Ballot Preparation for Tally:

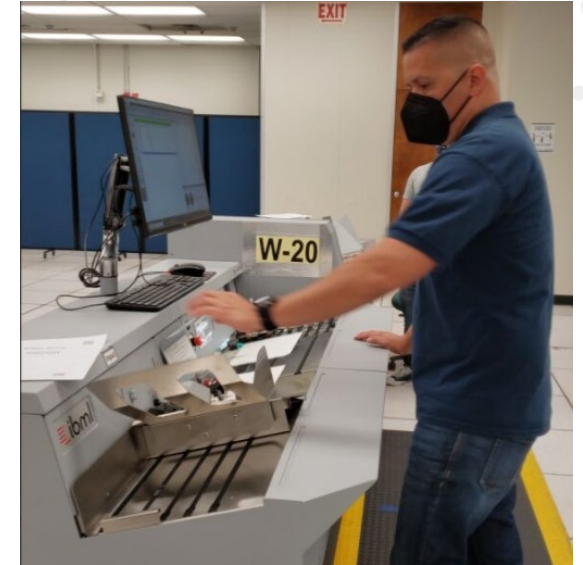
- Once verified, the ballot is securely separated from the envelope to maintain voter privacy.
- Ballots are checked for damage, prepared for scanning, and staged for tabulation.

Leading up to Election Day 2024, we received ~1.65 million VBM ballots, and ~400,000 Early Vote Center ballots

To be able to count so many ballots on Election Night, we spent 4 weeks before Election Day processing these early arriving VBM ballots.

- We match the signatures and verify the information on the outer envelope to be sure the ballot can be counted
- We “extract” the ballot from the envelope and check to be sure the ballot condition allows it to be counted
- We scan the ballots

And then, at 8 pm on Election Day, we start tabulating!



An additional ~1.6 million ballots arrive on Election Night

On Election Night, truckloads of ballots come in to be processed and counted.

Processing these ballots must be treated with the same care, security, and transparency as the 30-day period before Election Day.



After Election Day 2024, we continue to receive ~75,000 ballots by mail



Some ballots – like those from Uniformed and Overseas Voters and mailed ballots - need extra time to arrive.

The ballots that we received after Election Day were proportionally distributed across the major political parties.

If it was cast on or before Election Day, we work diligently to process and count every valid ballot.



Reporting Results: After Election Night

L.A. County counted 96.89% of the total ballots cast in the 2024 General Election in one week.

3.6 million ballots were counted by Nov. 12, 2024

Teams worked night and day to process the outstanding ballots.

- 100's of staff
- 12-hour day shifts x 7 days a week
- Overnight shifts x 7 days a week
- We maximized speed through machine-based letter opening, signature verification, scanning, and tabulation

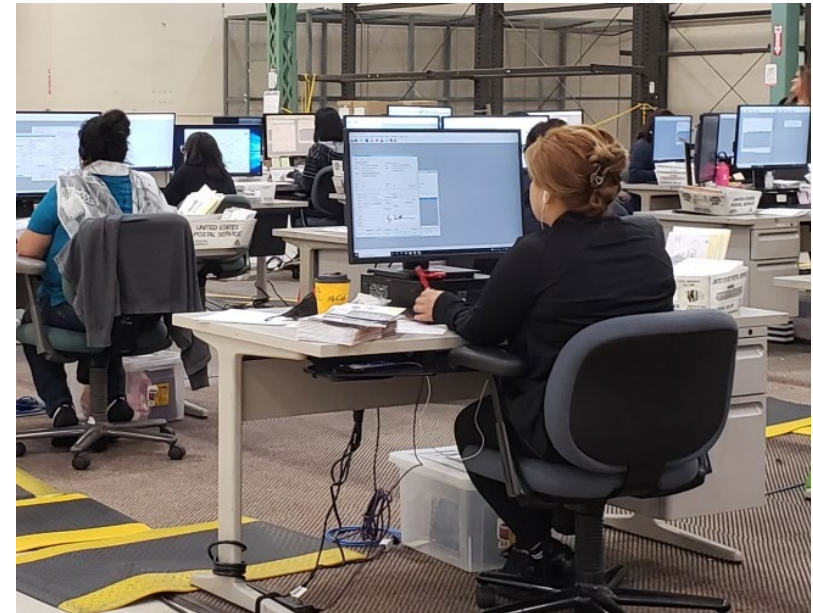


Close to the finish line, we process and count the ballots that need extra attention

Between November 13 to December 2, L.A. County had ~141K outstanding ballots remaining, including:

- ◆ **Conditional Voter Registration (CVR) ballots** – Ballots cast by first-time voters who registered at a Vote Center. Each CVR ballot requires careful research and verification of voter eligibility before it can be counted.
- ◆ **Provisional ballots** – Issued to in-person voters when there are questions about eligibility. Provisional ballots require detailed investigation to confirm eligibility and determine if the ballot can be counted.
- ◆ **Vote by Mail ballots pending signature curing** – Ballots that were returned with missing or mismatched signatures. Voters are contacted and given the opportunity to correct their information so that their vote can be counted.

✓ Every CVR and Provisional ballot must be individually researched and verified; this process takes additional time and attention to ensure accuracy and fairness.



Our Commitment to Transparent Elections

Transparency is the cornerstone of our electoral process. From the moment ballots are cast to the final certification of results, we ensure every step is open and observable.



Rep. Brian Steil (R-WI):

“The counting of votes is going to continue for some time until we reach the final results. But as we know, the balance of power in the United States House of Representatives hangs in the balance and will likely be determined here in Southern California.”

House Administration Chair Bryan Steil, Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar, and Reps. Norma Torres, Jimmy Gomez and Sidney Kamlager-Dove with LA County Registrar Dean Logan at the Ballot Processing Center.

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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk