



Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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**Testimony to Senate Joint Informational Hearing
Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments and
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on State Administration and General Government**

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Good morning Chairman Allen, Chairman Roth and members of the Committees. I am Dean Logan, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk for the County of Los Angeles. I am here today both in my capacity as the chief elections official for Los Angeles County and on behalf of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of today's conversation on election costs and procedures related to the June 7th Presidential Primary Election.

I want to thank Secretary of State Padilla for raising this issue and for his commitment to work in collaboration with county election officials in ensuring the quality of election administration in California. I also want to thank Senator Allen for his focus on the funding of elections, its impact on the integrity of elections and the potential to encourage greater voter participation. Adequate and stable funding for elections was the subject of another informational hearing held in the Senate last month and was referenced repeatedly in a February 2015 joint oversight hearing with the Assembly Elections Committee on low voter turnout convened by Senator Allen.

In preparation for the current election season, county election officials watched closely as the chances of California playing a significant role in the Presidential Primary nomination process changed from unlikely in January to certain in late March and even more certain in the last several weeks. As such, counties are working within current budgets to successfully administer elections and ensure voters are well informed of the unique procedures associated with the Presidential Primary and to prepare for

higher than normal voter turnout based on what we have seen in states that have preceded us in the primary season.

There are a number of factors associated with this election cycle that contribute to the need for additional resources. This is the first Presidential Election cycle where the shift of state measures from the Primary to the General Election ballot has occurred and that impact will be significant with as many as a dozen petitions in circulation expected to be turned in on or near the deadline to qualify for the November ballot. That volume alone is unprecedented, but the impact of checking the petitions in parallel to administering the Presidential Primary election will put a strain on our resources that simply was not anticipated when the laws changing the date for state measures were passed and when counties adopted their 2015-16 budgets.

It is important to understand that the petition checking process and the administration of the Primary Election intersect and cannot be viewed exclusive of one another. The same personnel, management, facilities and systems are required for both – and, both are subject to rigid deadlines, scrutiny and detail. Both are impacted by the surge in voter registration with the petition signature gathering process generating late voter registration activity and the political party rules on party affiliation impacting changes in registration and vote by mail processing.

Layered on those conditions are:

- additional unexpected impacts of 34 qualified candidates for US Senate; which has challenged the limitations of ballot layout options on the aged voting systems used in the state;
- the ongoing transition to the new statewide voter registration database, VoteCal; which carries with it heavy workload related to addressing data quality and system needs; and
- new election procedures introduced for the first time including the eight day post-election signature cure process for vote by mail ballots; the post mark plus three deadline for vote by mail ballot return; and extended transit time for standard mail delivery from six to nine days by the United States Postal Service.

Those are all activities required under existing law that counties have ramped up for in short order. We are preparing for their impacts, but all indications are that they will be on an order of magnitude that has no historical parallel. And, the impact and strain on resources are magnified by the simultaneous unprecedented volume of petition checking.

California election administrators are dedicated and committed to elections integrity – and we have demonstrated that commitment under extremely difficult conditions in the past. You can count on that to continue; however given what we know today about the petition volume and what we have seen in the surge of activity in the states that have preceded us in the primary season, we know our systems and resources will be taxed. Together, we have the opportunity to take proactive steps to increase our readiness and ensure our voters are well served on June 7th.

An election administration process that ensures the integrity, accessibility and security of the right to vote is a fundamental obligation of our participatory form of governing. As such, it is important that the administration of elections in our state is properly funded and supported. While not an ultimate solution to the historical underfunding of election administration in California, action in support of this request – with the necessary checks and balances – will help address the extreme conditions under which the Primary is being conducted.

Again, I thank you and Secretary of State Padilla for your leadership and collaboration in addressing this important issue and for your support of the elections process in California.