Implementing the Voter’s Choice Act in California

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Overview

• History and Background
• Expanded Voting Options
• Impact on California Voters
• Emphasis on Voter Education & Outreach
California’s Demographic

“Our state’s value and our strength is our diversity.” – Dr. Shirley N. Weber Ph.D.

- The 5th largest economy in the world.
- ~ 27 million eligible voters
- Nearly 23 million registered voters
- Over 1 million corporations and businesses
- 25 major languages (Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, Khmer, Hindi, and more)
What is VCA?

- The Voter’s Choice Act (VCA) was chaptered into law in 2016 under Senate Bill 450 (Allen).

- The result of large collaborative effort between advocates, legislators, and the Secretary of State’s Office.

- Goals: 1) Expanded voting options, 2) inclusion and engagement of diverse populations in planning voter education and outreach efforts. 3) mitigate barriers to access voting.
The Vote Center Model

- Pioneered by Colorado in 2004.

- Replaces pre-designated polling places to allow voters to vote anywhere in the county or local jurisdiction.

- VBM ballots to voters at their homes

- To date, 18 states utilize the vote center election model. Some even have adopted Universal voting models to allow voters to vote anywhere in the state.
States that use Vote Centers

- Arkansas
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- South Dakota
- Washington
- Wyoming
In California, voters have the option of either:

- 11-days of in-person voting
- Returning their ballot by U.S. mail, OR
- Dropping their Vote by Mail ballot in a drobox location.
Voter Education and VCA

• Voter education and outreach and voter engagement throughout each phase of planning elections.

• Representation for a variety of demographics, including language and accessibility communities that allows the county to develop an inclusive strategy.

• Messaging and communication to voters.

• During Covid targeted messaging and legislation helped expand statewide usage of vote-by-mail to include non-VCA/ traditional polling place counties
VCA counties are required to educate voters by:

• Creating PSAs in the media.
• Holding public workshops.
• Establishing two direct contacts with each voter.
VCA counties are required to educate voters by:

- Creating public hearings
- Developing a toll-free voter assistance hotline.
- Posting election resources on county websites.

![OFFICIAL VOTING INFORMATION](image-url)
Advisory Committees

VCA counties are required to work with their local communities. State-level engagement also occurs.

- **Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC).**
  - Encourages representation of language minority groups in development of election materials and outreach.

- **Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).**
  - Encourages representation of voters with special access needs are reflected in voting materials and outreach.
VCA Impacts

VCA has Grown in size each election cycle.

• Shown higher voter registration rates than Non-VCA counties.

• Displayed higher voter turnout rates than Non-VCA counties.
VCA Implementation

• VCA is passed (2016)

• During 2017, five counties prepare to participate in the pilot.

• (2018) the first VCA Election
VCA and COVID

• 15 Counties in 2020
• First VCA election under COVID conditions
• Emergency regulations
• Expanded options protected voters during the 2021 Recall election
• In 2021, Secretary Weber is appointed

• Prepping for Election

• Program nearly doubles in size from, increases with 12 new counties for a total of 27 VCA counties

• Secured funding to support education and outreach efforts
VCA in 2024

- ~30 counties in 2024
- Smaller counties joining now
- Some rural counties say VCA helps expand access - more days to vote
- Mobile vote centers
VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2018

- 1,781,734 registered voters

7.07% VCA County
92.93% Non-VCA County

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VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2020

- 12,150,578 Registered Voters

51.57% VCA

48.43% Non VCA

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VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2022

- 20,372,611 Registered Voters

- 75.80% VCA
- 24.20% Non VCA
VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2023

- 20,968,782 Registered Voters

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<th>VCA</th>
<th>Non-VCA</th>
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<td>%</td>
<td>21.52%</td>
<td>78.48%</td>
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California Secretary of State
Future Direction

VCA started as the exception, but has slowly become the standard statewide

- Universal Vote-by-mail under AB 37 in 2021 (Berman)
- Ensuring all counties have an EAP.
- Guaranteeing that voters of all populations are aware of their voting options and access.
- Strengthening relationship with advocates and county election officials.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and utilization of each voting option through data and reporting.
Thank You!

For more information, please contact:

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