



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 4, 2026

Dear Clerks and Election Officials,

As Californians prepare to go to the polls in the June primary election and November general election, I wanted to express my appreciation for your dedication to ensuring and protecting the right to vote. California's commitment to democracy is made real through your efforts to administer our elections. Your work does not begin or end with the casting of votes or declaration of results. Long before Californians cast their ballots, you help voters register, secure printing paper, identify polling sites, and train poll workers. It is unseen and tireless labor.

Over the past decade, administering elections has grown more and more difficult and is reaching a breaking point. Election administrators have been threatened and falsely maligned for simply doing their jobs. Results are subject to alarming levels of mis- and disinformation that aim to erode voter confidence. These threats and attempts to undermine and potentially interfere with a free and fair election are only escalating.

In the face of these challenges, we must continue building confidence in our elections and ensure not only that every vote is counted, but that every vote is trusted. We must acknowledge that the longer the voting count takes, the more mis- and disinformation spreads. That means we must do all that we can to tabulate votes quickly and accurately. Time is of the essence in preventing election lies from taking hold.

To this end, last year the Legislature unanimously passed and I signed several pieces of legislation aimed at shortening the timeframe to finish counting ballots from 30 days to 13 days, AB 5 (Berman, Chapter 250, Statutes of 2025), extending the time before the election date that vote by mail ballots can be processed, AB 16 (Alanis, Chapter 140, Statutes of 2025), and more regularly updating the public on vote counts SB 3 (Cervantes, Chapter 307, Statutes of



2025). These changes aim at supporting your work to ensure confidence in our elections. It is critical that we take full advantage of these tools to accurately count every lawfully cast ballot as quickly as possible to mitigate what are likely to be unprecedented and misleading attempts to undermine faith in the integrity of our election.

We are being tested like never before. We face an assault on our democratic values unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes, and it's our job to safeguard those values during these unprecedented times. California is grateful for your service.

Sincerely,



Governor Gavin Newsom