

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**ITEM: 3.5**  
(ID # 17935)

**MEETING DATE:**  
Tuesday, December 14, 2021

**FROM :** EXECUTIVE OFFICE AND REGISTRAR OF VOTERS :

**SUBJECT:** EXECUTIVE OFFICE AND REGISTRAR OF VOTERS: Direct Registrar of Voters to Implement the Voter's Choice Act and Approve a Budget Adjustment, All Districts. [Total Cost \$4,940,310 – General Funds 100%] (4/5 Vote Required)

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Registrar of Voters to implement the Voter's Choice Act; and
2. Approve and direct the Auditor-Controller to make the budget adjustments as shown on Schedule A.

**ACTION:4/5 Vote Required**

Juan C. Perez, Chief Operating Officer

12/8/2021

Rebecca Spencer

12/8/2021

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**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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<b>FINANCIAL DATA</b>	<b>Current Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>Next Fiscal Year:</b>	<b>Total Cost:</b>	<b>Ongoing Cost</b>
<b>COST</b>	\$ 4,940,310	\$ 0	\$ 4,940,310	\$ 0
<b>NET COUNTY COST</b>	\$ 4,940,310	\$ 0	\$ 4,940,310	\$ 0
<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS: General Funds 100%</b>			<b>Budget Adjustment:</b>	Yes
			<b>For Fiscal Year:</b>	21/22

**C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary**

On May 11, 2021 the After-Action Report for the 2020 General Election (Agenda Item 3.38) was presented to the Board of Supervisors. The report included a total of eight recommendations to improve operational efficiencies, voter experience and the implementation of the Voter’s Choice Act for future elections.

The Registrar of Voters and Executive Office concurred with the After-Action Report recommendation to implement the Voter’s Choice Act for future elections, starting with the June 2022 Statewide election. As such, on August 24, 2021 the Registrar of Voters and Executive Office presented a Response to the Election After-Action Report (Agenda Item 3.3) to the Board of Supervisors. The report noted in particular to the VCA implementation recommendation, that both offices would return to the Board with a summary of the Election Administration Plan, a requirement per the California Secretary of State, and estimated implementation cost(s).

Assembly Bill 37, signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 27, 2021, made significant changes to the Elections Code. Every registered voter in the State will be required to receive a vote-by-mail ballot at least twenty-nine (29) days before Election Day. Voters with disabilities will be allowed to cast their vote using a remote accessible vote-by-mail system indefinitely. Any vote-by-mail ballot that was timely cast will be accepted up to seven (7) days after Election Day. Additionally, the Secretary of State will be required to maintain a system that allows vote-by-mail voters to track their ballot from mail to processing. Lastly, any county that does not conduct an all-mailed ballot election must provide at least two (2) vote-by-mail ballot drop-off locations within the jurisdiction where the election is held, whichever results in more vote-by-mail drop-off locations.

By opting into the VCA, the County would operate thirty (30) voting centers (one per fifty thousand (50,000) registered voters) for the upcoming Statewide elections for eleven days (11) leading up to the election. One vote center will be required for every ten thousand (10,000) registered voters on Election Day, and on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday leading up to Election Day (a total of 150). A vote center will allow a voter to vote in-person, drop off their ballot, get a replacement ballot, vote using an accessible voting machine, receive assistance, request voting material in multiple languages, register to vote and update voter registration.

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In the event that the County does not implement the Voter's Choice Act, we would have to increase our polling locations to 600 locations on election day. It would cost approximately \$7,000,000 additionally in equipment if we were to operate six hundred (600) polling locations in the same way that the voting centers operate, which have sufficient equipment to reduce waiting times for voters.

A total of fifteen counties have implemented the VCA including: Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne. All registered voters in participating VCA counties receive their ballot in the mail twenty-nine (29) days before Election Day. The VCA outlines three ways for voters to return their ballot: vote-by-mail, drop-off at a secure county drop box, or in-person voting at any county vote center, which replaces the traditional process of requiring voters to cast an in-person vote at a county assigned polling location. The Registrar has conferred with neighboring County Registrar of Voter offices who implemented the VCA as a means to model best practices. Additionally, the Registrar is in process of completing the required Election Administration Plan which describes how the Registrar will administer the election under the VCA.

**Impact on Residents and Businesses**

The Voter's Choice Act election model will provide voters greater accessibility and flexibility when casting their vote.

**Additional Fiscal Information**

On August 11, 2021, the Registrar of Voters received \$5,000,000 from the California State Controller's office for expenditures related to the Gubernatorial Recall Election. This reimbursement from the State was not anticipated at the time that the FY 21/22 budget was approved, hence general fund- net county cost (NCC) was programmed to cover the cost of the recall election. The County's actual total cost for the Gubernatorial Recall election held on September 14, 2021 was \$7,500,000. The Registrar of Voters will request additional funding in the amount of \$2,500,000 from the Secretary of State to cover additional expenses that exceeded the State's disbursement of \$5,000,000. The budget adjustment is being requested in order to recognize the \$5,000,000 in revenue that was provided by the State and use the corresponding budget savings that it creates in NCC to purchase the equipment necessary to implement the VCA. No additional County funds are requested.

The following equipment expenses have been identified by the Registrar including:

- Printing and postage to mail all registered voters a vote-by-mail ballot.
- Ballot marking touch screen devices
- Adobe InDesign licenses
- Ballot Sorter
- Precinct Based Scanners

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- Lease Ballot on Demand system and devices

**SCHEDULE A**

Increase in Estimated Revenues:

10000-1700100000-755320	CA-Misc State Reimbursements	\$4,940,310
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Increase in Appropriations:

10000-1700100000-523660	Computer Supplies	\$1,000,000
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10000-1700100000-523750	Postage-Mailing Expenses	\$1,000,000
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10000-1700100000-523800	Printing/Binding	\$1,000,000
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10000-1700100000-527380	Elections	\$940,310
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10000-1700100000-546160	Equipment-Other	<u>\$1,000,000</u>
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TOTAL		\$4,940,310
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Heydee Koury, Sr Accountant - Auditor 12/9/2021