



## Memorandum

To: Elections Commission  
From: John Arntz, Director  
Date: February 14, 2020  
RE: Director's Report: February 19, 2020, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on January 15, 2020.

**I. The Department continues to plan and administer the many processes required to conduct the March 3 election.**

- A. Since the start of the early voting period, which began February 3, the Department has issued approximately 355,000 ballots to permanent and one-time vote-by-mail voters, with nearly 8,000 ballots going to voters serving in the military or residing overseas. The Department has begun signature comparison on the returned vote-by-mail ballot envelopes. Ballot extraction (opening accepted return envelopes), ballot scanning, votemark adjudication, and ballot remake will begin on February 19. Mail ballot processing activities are livestreamed on [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe).
- B. At the start of the early voting period, the Department activated its accessible vote-by-mail portal at [sfelections.org/access](https://sfelections.org/access), through which voters with disabilities can download and mark ballots in a screen-readable format from any computer with internet access. For this election, the portal interface incorporates primary election rules, with a modified interface that allows voters with no party preference to choose between four ballot options (a nonparty ballot or one of three crossover ballots) and alerts voters registered with a qualified party to actions they need to take in order to receive a ballot of a different party.
- C. The Department opened its main Voting Center in City Hall on February 3. The voting center will expand next week to include 75 ballot-issuing stations and nearly 300 voting booths. Two satellite voting centers, the San Francisco State University and Joseph Lee Recreation Center, will open the weekend before Election Day, on February 29.
- D. The Department has secured 588 sites to serve as polling places across the City on Election Day. In preparation for deployment of voting equipment to these sites, the Department has recently completed Logic and Accuracy testing and is now finalizing the logistical details of equipment delivery, scheduled to begin on February 25.
- E. To date, the Department has recruited nearly 2,800 poll workers and began poll worker training classes. The March 2020 Poll Worker Training Manual as well as the videos shown in poll worker training classes are posted on [sfelections.org/pollworker](https://sfelections.org/pollworker).

**II. The Department is implementing changes resulting from the Governor's signing urgency legislation that applies to the March 3 election.**

- A. On February 13, 2020, the Governor signed urgency legislation, Senate Bill (SB) 207 that added Elections Code section 2119.5 and amended Elections Code section 2152 to allow an existing voter, after the close of registration through the close of the polls on election day, to change their political party preference or residence address by submitting a written request to the elections official.
- B. Prior to SB 207, voters wishing to re-register to change their residence address or political party preference after the close of registration would need to utilize the conditional voter registration (CVR) process, by completing a new voter registration affidavit. Now, instead of completing a Voter Registration Application and vote conditionally (at a voting center) or completing a Conditional Voter Registration Application and Provisional Ballot Envelope and vote provisionally (at a polling place), most voters changing party preference will instead complete a new *Political Party Preference Change* form and be issued a regular vote-by-mail ballot (at a voting center) or a standard ballot (at a polling place).
- C. The Department identified and has been working on revising several processes and materials to reflect the new law. These include revising online voter tools (Voter Portal and March 2020 Presidential Primary Ballot tool) and several informational pages on *sfelections.org*; modifying Poll Worker training, including training presentation for both Clerks and Inspectors and Job Cards in the Poll Worker Training Manual; drafting and distributing a notice of procedural changes to alert poll workers who have already attended the training; reprinting and replacing Ballot Option signs that have already been included with polling place supplies; developing and supplying polling places with new Party Preference Change forms; modifying procedures for issuing ballots at voting centers and retraining processors; retraining SFVote and SFVoteAbroad responders and phone bank operators; revising outreach materials that discuss ballot options after the registration deadline.

**III. The Department continues to provide information to City residents about primary election rules and ballot options for voters with No Party Preference.**

- A. The Department has expanded its phone and email assistance staff numbers with a fifteen-member team tasked specifically with answering telephone inquiries and managing email correspondence through Election Day. Staff will attend to voter-facing telephone lines and email accounts on the two weekends before Election Day as well as during the Department's regular business hours.
- B. Last month, the Department sent a mailer to every household in San Francisco—over 374,446 in all—reminding residents to vote in the upcoming primary and explaining how a voter's political party preference, or the lack thereof, affects that voter's party ballot options. The mailer also reminded voters with no party preference that they could vote in the presidential primary using crossover ballots.
- C. Approximately one week before the start of the early voting period, the Department began mailing the Voter Information Pamphlet to nearly 500,000 registered voters. The March VIP includes information about primary rules and highlights the availability of online tools that allow voters to check party their registered party preferences and request crossover ballots.
- D. The Department's Outreach Division continues to organize and participate in neighborhood events throughout the City to provide information on a number of general and primary-specific voting topics. Outreach also continues to post tweets and Facebook updates to remind voters with no party preference that they can vote in one of the

presidential primary contests and explain how to do so. Many such posts provide links to explanatory pages or primary tools on the Department's website.

- E. The Department has been working with the Prisoner Legal Services unit of the San Francisco Sheriff's Department to provide outreach and election-related services, such as registration and VIP and ballot delivery, to eligible voters in the City's jail.

**IV. The Department concluded the compilation of budget proposals for the next two fiscal years.**

- A. The Department finished compiling its funding requests for the FY2020-21 and FY2021-22 budget periods, submitting a draft budget proposal on January 31, 2020 to the Budget and Oversight of Public Elections Committee.
- B. The Department's budget proposal contemplates funding for fixed and variable operating expenses in the next two elections: the November 3, 2020, Consolidated General Election and the March 8, 2022, Consolidated Statewide Direct Primary Election, as well as expected revenues and reimbursements during these periods.
- C. The proposal also details and itemizes expenses associated with the Department's plans to expand voting centers into at least two neighborhoods with turnout below the City's historical average; to maintain outreach partnerships through funding grant programs to local nonprofits working with hard-to-reach populations across the City; and to prepare and support a Redistricting Task Force through securing a redistricting data consultant.