



County of Fresno

COUNTY CLERK/REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
BRANDI L. ORTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fresno County Board of Supervisors Gives Green Light to Update and Implement New Voting System

FRESNO, CA – The Fresno County Board of Supervisors today approved Fresno County Clerk Brandi Orth's recommendation to purchase a new election system. The new system will replace the old one that began operating twenty years ago. According to Clerk Orth, the old system was outdated and replacement parts are no longer available. Additionally, the system itself has recently been removed from the current list of approved systems for California. State and Federal funds are available to cover the cost of acquiring the new system.

In a separate action, the Board also voted to implement the California Voter's Choice Act in 2020, which will dramatically change how voting services are provided throughout the county. Under this new voting model, Fresno County will have 50 Vote Centers, located strategically throughout the county. The Vote Centers will be open for four days, including Election Day, and 10 of the 50 Centers will be open for 11 days, including Election Day. The Vote Centers are designed to improve voting accessibility and convenience.

In recent county wide elections, there have been 268 polling places open for one day only. Under the current system, a voter can receive their precinct specific ballot only at their assigned polling place on Election Day or the Elections Office in downtown Fresno. The Voter's Choice Act will allow any voter to vote at any of the 50 Vote Centers and receive their precinct-specific ballot which will be printed on demand. Additionally, under the Voter's Choice Act model, all voters will receive a vote by mail ballot which may be returned to any Vote Center, to one of the additional 30 ballot drop off boxes, which will be provided to voters, or via US mail. In recent countywide elections, 65% of ballots were cast using vote by mail ballots.

Clerk Orth had recommended this transition to the Voter's Choice Act model based on her research and analysis of the five counties, including neighboring Madera County that currently use this model. She said, "After thorough research and with participation from our community, it is clear this is the right path to take for Fresno County voters. It makes good sense." Orth continued, "Though change can be difficult, improving access to the voting process is paramount to increasing participation, thereby resulting in a more robust democratic process. We are prepared to move forward and provide this more efficient system."

As part of the Voter's Choice Act, the County is required to have community advisory committees to assist in identifying the vote center and drop box locations and to participate in developing a plan to reach out and educate the voters about these changes in the process. Anyone interested in assisting with these efforts should contact Rachel Lopez at 559-600-3023.

For more information on the Voter's Choice Act, go to <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/>

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