

OP-ED PIECE – for Fresno County
August 5, 2020

Nothing will stop democracy in America, not even a global COVID-19 pandemic! Every eligible United States citizen will have the opportunity to vote in the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

First, voters should verify their voter registration at <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/> or www.votefresnocounty.com. Voters should be sure their current residential address or mailing address is on file. Voters can update their voter registration at www.registertovote.ca.gov. Eligible citizens can register to vote at www.registertovote.ca.gov.

Fresno County voters', along with election workers' safety, is of paramount importance; therefore, additional health precautions will be in effect. California voters will automatically receive a ballot in the mail. If a voter does not receive their ballot by October 12, 2020, they should immediately contact our office at 559-600-8683.

We urge voters to vote the ballot mailed to them and return it through one of the 60+ secure drop boxes located through the county. Drop boxes will be open beginning October 5, 2020 and up to 8:00 pm on Election Day. While election officials cannot control the postal service, election officials do control the drop boxes. As the Fresno County Clerk, I recommend that voters utilize a drop box to return their ballot. For the convenience of voters, we have added more drop boxes. A list of all drop box locations will be mailed with the ballots.

Voters can mail their ballot (no postage required) back to the Fresno County Elections office. It is a legal requirement that a mailed voted ballot envelope have a postmark showing no later than Tuesday, November 3, 2020 (election day). The Postal Service advises voters should deposit their ballots in the mail no later than October 27, 2020 to ensure that the envelope timely reaches the elections office.

It is a legal requirement that the signature on every returned voted ballot envelope be compared to the signature on the voter's registration card. If a voter thinks that their signature has changed over time, they should contact the Fresno County Elections Office at 559-600-8683 or re-register online at www.registertovote.ca.gov. The DMV signature may be utilized with online voter registration.

If additional services including language assistance, or a replacement ballot are required, Fresno County will provide approximately 53 locations for in-person voting opportunities. These Vote Centers will be open on Saturday, October 31, 2020; Sunday, November 1, 2020; Monday, November 2, 2020 and Election Day Tuesday, November 3, 2020. If you go to a Vote Center, you will be asked to wear a mask and you may have to wait in line. A list of all Vote Centers and Drop Boxes will be printed in the County Voter Information Guide to be mailed in early October and will be available on the County website.

The main elections office, located at 2221 Kern Street, Fresno, is also open for voting beginning Monday, October 5, 2020, through election day. All services are provided here so that voters can vote in person and beat the crowds!

Voters can track their ballot, by requesting this service at <http://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov/> to receive automatic email, text or voice call notifications about their ballot. For the November election, all voters may request and receive a Remote Accessible Vote by Mail ballot. To request this service, voters should contact our office at 559-600-8683. Voters may also request an official ballot in

Spanish or ask for a translated ballot in Hmong, Punjabi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Khmer, Tagalog and Laos by calling 559-600-8683.

Part time jobs are available. Vote Center workers are needed for the four day in-person voting period. Interested registered voters should call 559-600-1830 or go to www.fresnocountyjobs.com to apply on-line.

All voters should make a safe voting plan. The Fresno County Clerk's office is here to answer questions or provide assistance. We can be reached at clerk-elections@fresnocountyca.gov or call (559) 600-VOTE (8683).

This editorial was written by Brandi L. Orth, Fresno County Clerk/Registrar of Voters. She has 19 years of service in elections and, for the past 8 years has served as County Clerk. Brandi is also President of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO).
