



DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

March 18, 2011

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
CC: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Dean C. Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Dean C. Logan

2010 PERMANENT VOTE BY MAIL PILOT PROJECT

During the 2010 Gubernatorial Election the Department, with the support and initiation of your office and the Chief Executive Office, implemented a pilot program aimed at increasing Permanent Vote By mail enrollment among registered voters in Los Angeles County. This report provides a summary and results of the project.

Background

In 2002, California expanded voting options by permitting voters to enroll as Permanent Vote By Mail (PVBM) voters to automatically receive a Vote By Mail ballot in every election in which he/she is eligible to vote. Since 2002, PVBM enrollment has consistently and steadily increased in Los Angeles County to more than 600,000 voters, accounting for 14% of the County's electorate. While numerically the County boasts the largest number of PVBM voters in the state; as a percentage of the total electorate, the share of PVBM voters lags behind the statewide percentage.

Project Description

A universe of 250,000 voters, distributed evenly across the County's five Supervisorial Districts, was randomly selected for PVBM recruitment. The voters targeted met the following criteria:

- Active registered voter
- Voted in the November 2008 Presidential Election
- No previous or current Permanent Vote By Mail status

Voters who met these criteria were selected randomly from each Supervisorial District. Appendix A includes a table with a distribution of voters by district.

The pilot project sought to utilize a direct appeal to registered voters, informing voters of the option to become a PVBM voter and of the convenience of voting by mail. Individual voters selected for the pilot were mailed an 8 1/2 x 11 postcard from the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk as official election mail. The mailer included motivational messages that promoted the convenience of voting by mail and receiving a ballot automatically every election. The piece also included a Permanent Vote By Mail application with pre-printed return address information. Included in Appendix B is a copy of the mail piece. Mailings to voters took place starting October 4, 2010 in advance of the deadline to request Vote By Mail ballots for the November 2010 General Election.

In an effort to increase the response rate, automated robo-calls to remind voters to complete and return the PVBM application were placed to all voters in the project who listed a phone number on their voter registration form. Calls were generated starting October 20, 2010. One week before the Vote By Mail request deadline. A total of 14,090 voters with valid telephone numbers received the robo-call reminder. A copy of the script for the automated robo-calls is included in Appendix C.

Project Costs

Costs required to execute the program were tracked by the Department's Finance and Management Division. Project costs tracked included an allocation of employee salaries and direct costs associated with the goods and services expended on the project (e.g. printing costs, mailing costs, robo-calls). The total cost of the project (including employee salaries) was \$126,184.79. If we exclude employee salaries and only account for goods and services, the total was \$98,749.69. These costs account for 78% of the project costs.

The "per voter" cost for this project is determined to be \$4.33 if we include employee salaries and \$3.39 if we account only for costs associated with goods and services. This calculation provides a unit cost for each new PVBM resulting from the direct appeal mailing. Appendix D provides a more detailed expense report for the project.

Results

The following are key findings from an analysis of the pilot project results:

- 250,000 voters were selected for direct mail solicitation as part of the project.
- Just over one in every ten voters targeted (29,155) enrolled as PVBM voters using the application included in the mailing.
- Response rates across Supervisorial Districts varied slightly. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th Districts had the higher rate of responses at about 13%. Response rates in the 1st and 2nd Districts were lower, at 10%.
- Not controlling for likelihood of voting regardless of our project, the voter universe that responded to the mailer by enrolling as PVBM exhibited a much higher turnout rate, well above countywide turnout. 89% of the 29,155 voters who enrolled as PVBM voters

voted in the November 2010 General Election. An almost 35 point difference above the countywide turnout of 54%.

- Highest response rate was concentrated among older age groups. Nearly half (45%) of all new PVBM voters in the universe were 70 years of age, or older. Only 16% were under the age of 40.
- The project helped to enroll voters who did not have a history of voting by mail. A sizable share of the 29,155 voters who enrolled as PVBM voters had not voted in the most recent major elections (November 2006 and November 2008). More than three-quarters (77%) of these voters did not vote by mail in the last Gubernatorial General Election in 2006. More than half (57%) did not vote by mail in the November 2008 Presidential Election.

Additional Countywide Efforts

In addition to the results of our specific project it is important to note that this past election we experienced an unusual surge in PVBM enrollment countywide. During the 2010 General Election cycle (from September 29, 2010 through Election Day) the Department processed nearly 200,000 PVBM requests. This represents a 30% increase in PVBM enrollment. While our direct mail solicitation pilot project contributed to this increase, we attribute this increase to expanded voter education and outreach efforts that the Department undertook in 2010. These efforts included modifications to the Vote By Mail Request form in the Official Sample Ballot Booklet and targeted voter education and outreach through email and social media.

Official Sample Ballot Booklet

In 2010 the Vote By Mail request form was modified to allow voters to request PVBM status by simply checking a box on the request form. This removed the need for a voter intending to Vote By Mail in the election to then complete a separate independent request for PVBM status or to have to make separate requests to vote by mail in future elections.

Voter Email Blasts

The Department coordinated a mass email reminder about voting by mail to more than 750,000 registered voters who had provided an email on their voter registration form. The email contained hyperlinks to the Department's online Vote By Mail request forms, information about becoming a PVBM voter, and important deadlines for the election. Included in Appendix E is a sample of the email sent to voters.

Recommendations

The following is a set of recommendations addressing ongoing promotion of Permanent Vote By Mail as well as considerations for future pilot projects.

- Continue the new practice of including a PVBM request box on the Official Sample Ballot Vote By Mail form. The practice is absorbed as general election costs and streamlines the request process and makes the PVBM status request more accessible to voters. The significant increase in PVBM enrollment during the November 2010 Vote

By Mail period makes a strong case for continuing this practice. According to an initial analysis of Sample Ballot Vote By Mail requests, nearly 128,080 voters requested PVBM status by checking the PVBM box on the form in the November 2010 General Election.

- Continue to provide Vote By Mail information electronically via email. An increasing share of the population has access to the internet and obtains important information from online sources. The Department should continue to promote its online services via email. This makes it more likely that recipients of the email can directly access the information via hyperlinks and also share with friends. In addition, the practice is extremely cost effective, incurring minimal to no costs to the Department.
- Greater consideration and study should be put into encouraging younger voters (<40 years of age) to vote. Project results demonstrated the lowest enrollment rate was among those voters under the age of 40. Future projects or special initiatives should first explore how these voters view Vote By Mail and how it can be made more accessible to them. Further analysis of the impact of using email to reach out to this electorate is recommended.
- Consider timing for future efforts. It is recommended to give voters ample time to receive and return PVBM requests. Because requests can be made at any time, future outreach can begin before the Vote By Mail period for a specific election begins, 29 days prior to Election Day.
- Increase the frequency of reminders to voters. We recommend that the frequency of robo-call reminders be increased from one reminder to two. An initial robo-call would alert voters to the mailing. A second robo-call closer to the election would remind voters to return their PVBM request form.
- Future efforts should consider the context of the election. Higher return rates may be obtained if the outreach is conducted during off-year or special elections (these elections are usually characterized by low voter turnout). In this electoral context, the option of Voting By Mail may be more appealing to voters.

Conclusion

Overall the pilot project had a demonstrably positive impact on our target population. Nearly 12% of the voters targeted by the project responded to our appeal by enrolling as PVBM voters. A large share of these new PVBM voters had not voted by mail in recent elections. These results, while modest, indicate an ability to persuade voters who do not generally vote by mail to take advantage of the opportunity. Results do suggest, however, that this is particularly more likely or more effective with older voters.

The additional steps and activities that the Department engaged in had a significant impact in increasing PVBM enrollment countywide as well. Modifications to the Official Sample Ballot Vote By Mail request form and targeted email outreach helped to increase awareness of PVBM enrollment and more importantly made it easier to request the status.

Project costs suggest further evaluation of the specific direct appeals that we might consider in the future, in order to try and identify more cost efficient, yet effective, methods of informing Los Angeles County voters of their option to become PVBM voters. In the interim the Department will continue the countywide practices it implemented in 2010, as these activities will incur significantly less costs.

The Department will also continue to monitor and collect statistics on PVBM enrollment throughout the County.

TABLE 1

PVBM Pilot Project Results, by Supervisorial District					
District	Outreach	Now PVBM		Voted	
1	48,499	4,841	10.0%	31,348	64.6%
2	50,000	4,909	9.8%	32,598	65.2%
3	50,501	6,406	12.7%	35,935	71.2%
4	50,501	6,452	12.8%	35,447	70.2%
5	50,499	6,547	13.0%	36,530	72.3%
Total	250,000	29,155	11.7%	171,858	0.687432

TABLE 2

PVBM Enrollment Rate, by Age Group			
Age	Total	PVBM	% PVBM
18 - 29	111	10	9%
30 - 39	39,031	2,575	7%
40 - 49	58,026	4,760	8%
50 - 59	58,479	6,524	11%
60 - 69	38,587	6,188	16%
70 - 79	20,941	4,402	21%
Age 80+	14,884	3,889	26%
No Birthdate	19,941	807	4%
Total	250,000	29,155	12%

APPENDIX A

**PVBM Pilot Target Universe, by
Supervisorial District**

<u>District</u>	<u>Voters</u>
1	48,499
2	50,000
3	50,501
4	50,501
5	50,499
Total	250,000

APPENDIX C

Robo-Call Script

**SPECIAL PVBM OUTREACH PILOT
ROBOCALL REMINDER
10202010**

ENGLISH

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL MESSAGE FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS.

WE WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT THE LAST DAY TO REQUEST A VOTE BY
MAIL BALLOT FOR THE NOVEMBER 2ND GENERAL ELECTION IS THIS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26.

YOU MAY HAVE RECEIVED A SPECIAL MAILING FROM OUR OFFICE WITH
AN APPLICATION TO BECOME A PERMANENT VOTE BY MAIL VOTER. YOU
CAN AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT THIS ELECTION
AND EVERY ELECTION AFTER IF YOU COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM.

YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO BUSY TO VOTE BY MAIL!

TO REQUEST A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT ONLINE OR LOCATE YOUR
POLLING PLACE VISIT US AT WWW.LAVOTE.NET

REMEMBER...VOTE THIS NOVEMBER 2ND...YOU COUNT!

APPENDIX D
Project Expenditures

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
 REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK
 FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTION

VOTER OUTREACH PILOTS
TASK CODE 377
FISCAL YEAR 2010 - 2011
AS OF JANUARY 31, 2011

DIVISION	SALARIES	S & S				SUBTOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
		PRINTING	MAILING	ROBOCALLS			
JULY 2010							
302 - EXECUTIVE OFFICE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
JUL. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
AUGUST 2010							
302 - EXECUTIVE OFFICE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
AUG. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SEPTEMBER 2010							
302 - EXECUTIVE OFFICE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SEP. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OCTOBER 2010							
302 - EXECUTIVE OFFICE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 83,983.43	\$ -	\$ 83,983.43	\$ 83,983.43	\$ 83,983.43
427 - REGISTRATION & VOTE-BY-MAIL ADMINISTRATION	15,757.88	-	-	-	-	15,757.88	15,757.88
430 - DOCUMENT RECEIPT & VOTE-BY-MAIL PREP	464.87	-	-	-	-	464.87	464.87
432 - VOTER RECORDS RESEARCH AND INTEGRITY	6,297.33	-	-	-	-	6,297.33	6,297.33
473 - ELECTION MATERIALS OPERATIONS	4,766.68	-	-	-	-	4,766.68	4,766.68
OCT. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ 27,286.76	\$ -	\$ 83,983.43	\$ -	\$ 83,983.43	\$ 111,270.19	\$ 111,270.19
NOVEMBER 2010							
427 - REGISTRATION & VOTE-BY-MAIL ADMINISTRATION	\$ 148.34	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 148.34	\$ 148.34
NOV. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ 148.34	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 148.34	\$ 148.34
DECEMBER 2010							
311 - EXECUTIVE LIAISON	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 309.98	\$ 309.98	\$ 309.98	\$ 309.98
447 - ADMIN. SERVICES AND TECH. SUPPORT	-	14,456.28*	-	-	14,456.28	14,456.28	14,456.28
DEC. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$ 14,456.28	\$ -	\$ 309.98	\$ 14,766.26	\$ 14,766.26	\$ 14,766.26
JANUARY 2010							
302 - EXECUTIVE OFFICE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
JAN. 2010 SUBTOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 27,435.10	\$ 14,456.28	\$ 83,983.43	\$ 309.98	\$ 98,749.69	\$ 126,184.79	\$ 126,184.79

APPENDIX E

Vote By Mail Email



Why Wait until Election Day?
VOTE BY MAIL today.

www.lavote.net

GENERAL ELECTION	VOTING BY MAIL
<p><i>"The mission of the RR/CC is to serve Los Angeles County by providing essential records management and election services in a fair, accessible and transparent manner."</i></p> <p>Key Election Dates:</p> <p>October 4, 2010 (Monday) First day to Request a Vote by Mail Ballot</p> <p>October 18, 2010 (Monday) Registration Deadline</p> <p>October 26, 2010 (Tuesday) Last day to Request a Vote by Mail Ballot</p> <p>November 2, 2010 (Tuesday) *ELECTION DAY!*</p> <p>Polls open 7 a.m. Polls close 8 p.m.</p> <p>visit www.lavote.net and click on the Vote by Mail button in the Quick Links box located on the main page.</p> <p>Voters may also call the RR/CC at (562) 466-1323.</p>	<p> Request A Vote By Mail Ballot Submit a request for a vote by mail ballot before October 26, 2010.</p> <p>Online at www.lavote.net</p> <p>Use the application on the back cover of your sample ballot.</p> <p> Vote Your Ballot Insert your voted ballot in the return envelope.</p> <p>Remember to sign the envelope. Put it in the mail.</p> <p> Voted Ballots Must be received by the RR/CC by Tuesday, November 2, 2010 by 8 p.m.</p> <p>*No postmarks accepted.</p> <p> Track Your Vote By Mail Ballot Verify if we mailed and received your ballot.</p> <p>*Vote by Mail may also be returned in person to the RR/CC Headquarters, or delivered to any polling place before 8 p.m. on Election Day.*</p>

Los Angeles County
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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