



# **Remote Accessible Vote- by-Mail:**

**A NEW WAY FOR CALIFORNIA VOTERS TO  
VOTE PRIVATELY AND INDEPENDENTLY**

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# Traditional Voting Options

- ▶ **All voters can request a vote-by-mail ballot without a reason why they cannot vote in person.**
  - Vote-by-Mail ballots are generally only available in paper
- ▶ **Generally, all voters may go to their polling place. Each polling place has an accessible voting system.**

# How accessible is traditional Vote-by-Mail?


- ▶ Many voters with disabilities find it easier to vote-by-mail for the convenience of the process.
- ▶ For people with certain disabilities, (e.g. people who are blind or have a vision loss, people with mobility, dexterity or intellectual and developmental disabilities) voting by mail requires them to waive their right to a private and independent ballot because the paper ballots require voters to be able to read the ballot independently and be able to use a pen to mark the ballot.

# Example

- ▶ **Several years ago, due to unusual circumstances, it was necessary for me to Vote-by-Mail**
- ▶ **Because of dexterity issues, I needed assistance to mark my ballot...**

# Example (continued)

- ▶ ...unfortunately, I chose my mother to assist me.
- ▶ Needless to say, we differed on a number of candidates and issues.



SO MUCH FOR MY  
PRIVATE AND  
INDEPENDENT  
BALLOT!

# More Accessible Voting Options Needed

- ▶ **Some voters with disabilities are unable to vote by mail privately and independently. Nor can they get to their respective polling location.**
- ▶ **Washington, Colorado, Oregon, and Maryland have ballot marking devices for voters with disabilities to read and mark their vote-by-mail (or absentee) ballots privately and independently using their own devices.**

# Movement Towards All-Mail Elections

- ▶ **San Mateo County held an all-mail special election in 2015 as a pilot.**
- ▶ **Several states now have all-mail elections, such as Washington and Oregon.**
- ▶ **Colorado uses the vote center model.**
- ▶ **Five counties in California will begin using the vote center model in June 2018 (under California's Voter's Choice Act passed in 2016) similar to Colorado: San Mateo, Napa, Madera, Sacramento, and Nevada.**



# Voting Under The Voters Choice Act

- ▶ **Only applies to the 5 counties (San Mateo, Napa, Madera, Sacramento, and Nevada) in June 2018. All counties will have the option to switch in 2020.**
- ▶ **Every voter will be mailed a ballot**
- ▶ **Instead of neighborhood polling places there will be a limited number of Vote Centers located throughout the county as well as some Drop-Off Boxes.**
  - At Vote Centers:
    - Voters can drop off a completed vote-by-mail ballot
    - Vote using an accessible voting system
    - Register and vote on the same day
    - Voters will be able to use any vote center in the county
- ▶ **Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail**

# Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail

- ▶ DRC and other disability advocates opposed SB 450, the bill that became the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), until they added protections for voters with disabilities including Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail
- ▶ Because of the VCA, AB 2252 was passed requiring the Secretary of State to certify Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail.
- ▶ A voter with a disability would download their ballot and use their own assistive technology to read and mark the ballot.
- ▶ Because of security concerns, they will need to print the ballot and mail it back.

# Current RAVBM Systems:

- ▶ **Democracy Live (certified)**
- ▶ **Five Cedars (certified)**
- ▶ **Dominion (currently under testing for certification)**

# How does RAVBM work?

1. When the voter receives their VBM ballot, they should keep the return envelope to return the ballot selections.
2. A voter would request a RAVBM from their County elections office by postage paid application, phone or email.
3. Once request is received, an email with a link to the RAVBM will be sent to the voter. Voter would click on link and enter their voter information in a secured portal. At this time, the voter would affirm they are a voter with a disability (type of disability is not asked).
4. Voter downloads their specific ballot type and any additional information and instructions on how to mark and return the ballot.

# How does RAVBM work? (Continued)

5. **Voter marks their ballot using own assistive technology (jelly switches, screen readers, mouse keys, sip and puff, etc)**
  - ▶ Voter will be alerted to overvotes and undervotes as they navigate through the ballot.
6. **Once complete, voter prints out ballot with their selections and places in envelope.**
7. **Voter signs envelope.**
8. **Voter can return ballot by mail, drop box, or polling place/vote center by 8pm on Election Day. Voter can check the status of their ballot.**