

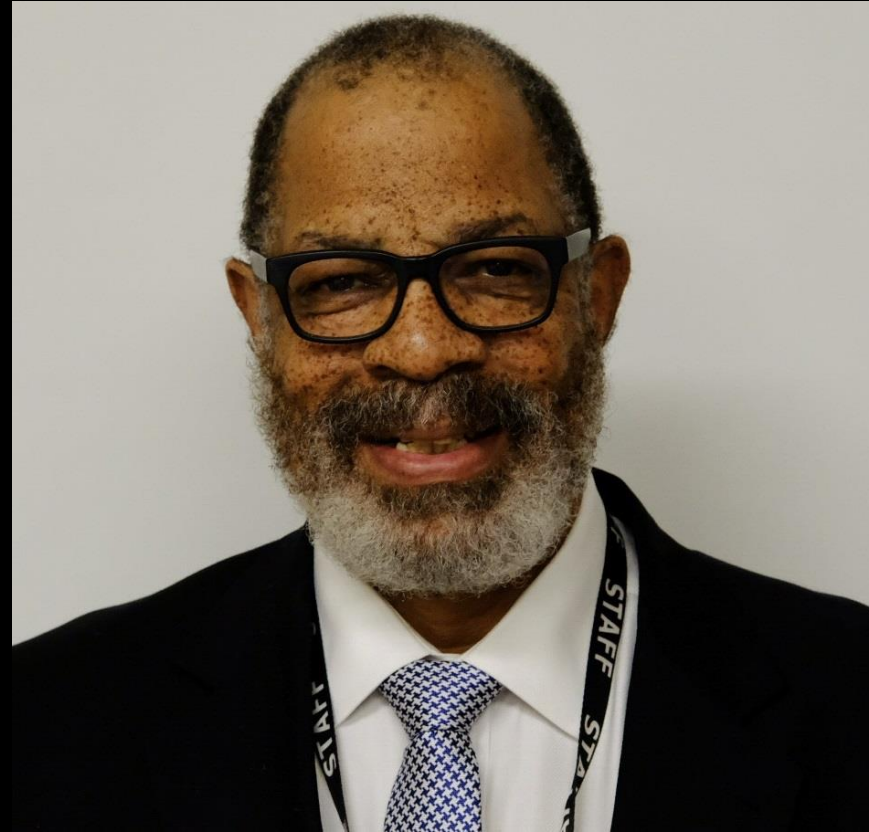


# NEVADA COUNTY

Voter's Choice Act: Expedition to Implementation

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# VOTER'S CHOICE ACT

## Voter's Choice Act:

- True modernization of our current voting model. Makes voting more convenient, and increases accessibility.
- Voting opportunities are broadened, and challenges are mitigated through preparation.



# FIRST STEPS

- After initial inspection of Senate Bill 450, many hours of research, and staff meetings, we started to gain a better understanding of how this implementation would work. This allowed us to identify potential challenges, and create solutions.
- Initially, the Elections Office met with the Nevada County Board of Supervisors to get their thoughts, and concerns regarding moving forward with the VCA. It was insightful to see additional points of view.

# ANALYSIS

- Throughout the analysis we looked at several important factors regarding the siting of vote centers, and drop off locations:
  - Population centers in our County.
  - Accommodating geographically isolated populations.
  - The geographic nature of our County.
  - Ensuring that locations are accessible, and convenient.
  - Proximity to public transit.

# VOTE BY MAIL TRENDS

- We used Sierra County, a county-wide vote-by-mail county, because of the similar nature of our counties. The all mail ballot election has worked well for them for years.
- Nevada County has trended toward being a primarily vote-by-mail county. 61% VBM in 2007 – 82% VBM in 2016.

# COMMUNITY STRIDES

- We established our Voter/Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC and LAAC) to gain critical insight from our community members.
- The VAAC has been extremely helpful with not only our disability community, but our senior population as well.



# COMMITTEES

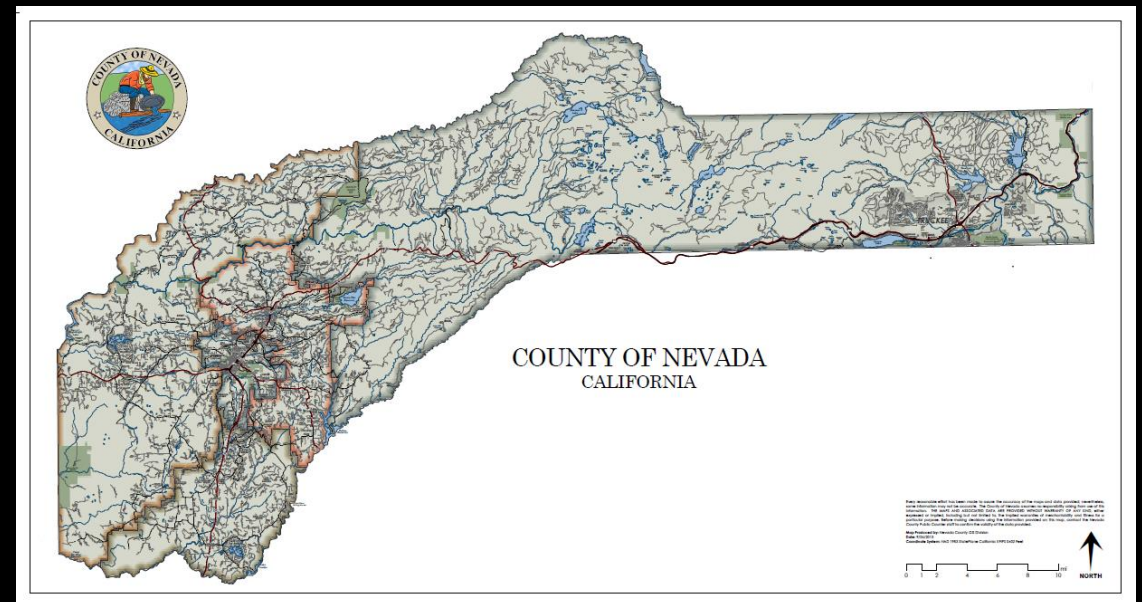


- Our LAAC has brought the Town of Truckee largely into the fold as a major populous of second language speakers.
- Creating an Outreach and Education Committee , while not required, helped us to address broader issues which were not covered by other committees.



# LOCATION COMMITTEE

- We also created a Location Committee to help with locations for Vote Centers and Drop Boxes.
- We reached out to prospective locations, and documented their details.



# WEIGHING THE EXCURSION

## Advantages

- No wrong place to vote
- Ballot Security
- Ballot Accountability
- Cost Efficiency
- Cost Savings
- Following Voter Trends
- Increased transparency
- Community involvement
- Increased Turnout in Other States
- Faster Canvas
- CVR Processing
- Less provisionals

## Disadvantages

- EAP Requirements / Regulations
- Requirements, and guidelines are given to Counties that already have strong knowledge of their own landscapes
- The legislation is too prescriptive, and needs to be more goal oriented.
- Initial Start-Up Costs
- More flexibility for staffing Vote Centers (open on Memorial Day; Double time...really!)
- More discretion about how we inform our voters of changes, i.e. two direct contacts.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Engaging with our community, accepting new perspectives has strengthened, and made more transparent our planning, and the implementation of our new voting model.



# STARTING THE JOURNEY

- We ventured into the details of the VCA through research, and analysis.
- We explored how we would provide each of the required services at Vote Centers. We created mock layouts of vote centers. We looked at hours of operation, as well as the amount of staff needed at each location.
- We sited drop boxes, and vote centers based on the 14 requirements specified in the bill.
- We looked at what our voter education, and outreach plan would be for Nevada County.

# STEPS TO STAFFING

- Staffing Vote Centers will require:
  - Well trained staff, training will need to be more in-depth
  - Staff will work more days/hours than poll workers
  - Chain of command documentation
  - Detailed Manuals
  - Plan A and Plan B

# STEPS TO BETTER ACCESSIBILITY

- Having multiple sets of accessible voting equipment at a Vote Center
- More days to vote in person allows people to get to the Vote Center for more convenience.
- Ability to get an accessible ballot to mark on a home device.



# ADVANTAGES

- As society changes, and technology advances, the County Registrars' should have the ability to adjust with trends. The VCA allows for the Counties of California to do just that. Vote center staffing hours can be adjusted according to increasing vote by mail usage.
- The VCA allows for multiple ways to cast a ballot, and with that follows added convenience.

# COST SAVINGS

- The potential cost savings could be realized down the road. The purchase of voting equipment could have a 65% decrease based upon the lower number of Vote Centers in comparison to Polling Places.
- The voting equipment purchase price could be cut in half based upon Governor Brown's proposed 2018 State Budget.



# INCREASED VOTER PARTICIPATION

- Based upon Colorado's Voter Access and Modernization Act, the voter turnout has increased dramatically. Additionally as a bonus, the number of provisionally cast votes dramatically decreased due to no "wrong place" to vote.

# BALLOT SECURITY

- The VCA makes elections more secure.
- In lieu of 48 polling places, we will have 7 Vote Centers.
- With less polling places there are less variables to manage.
- The ballot chain of custody will be more manageable.

# SHORTER CANVASS

- It shows on paper there should be a significant cost savings during canvassing.
- In the 2016 General Election we had more than 2000 provisionally cast ballots in Nevada County. The VCA will allow us a much shorter canvass.
- In order for the VCA to reach full potential, there will need more focus on certain details, including a better method for the 1% manual tally.

# CVR PROCESSING

- The new Conditional Voter Registration Bill AB-1436 allows citizens over the age of 18 to register to vote after the traditional 15-day close of registration.
- CVR processing would be more difficult without Vote Centers to register new voters or update voter registration.

# DISADVANTAGES OF VCA

- More counties should have been directly involved in the formation of this legislation.
- Some recommendations are made without consideration of the processes, and duties that counties perform.

# SB 450 REQUIREMENTS

- Registrars in counties are either appointed by their county directly or elected to administer an election, and there needs to be confidence in their ability to do so.
- The stringent EAP requirements do not demonstrate trust in the Registrars' ability to know what's in the best interest of their counties.
- Consideration should have been given to procedures like the 1% Manual Tally; this one thing could potentially affect a large portion of cost savings.

# STARTUP COSTS

- The initial startup costs for the VCA are significant hurdles to counties adopting the VCA.
- We had to seek approval from our Board of Supervisors as the cost was significant, and this leads to more problems with planning.

# VOTE CENTER GUIDELINES

- It would be more helpful to have guidelines, in lieu of rules.
- The requirements for Vote Centers feel restrictive.
- I am confident in making decisions based on the needs of my constituents in Nevada County.



# MAILING REQUIREMENTS

- The cost to send out two direct mailings is significant, and not being able to include them with other direct contacts puts our office in a difficult position.
- My County would appreciate the cost savings in consolidating different mailings.
- I believe the Nevada County Elections Department knows our voters well enough to educate our community regarding the VCA.

# MY THOUGHTS

- While there are problems with some of the requirements of the VCA, there is a lot of potential to bring the voters of California a modern democratic process.
- Part of my role as the Registrar, is to share my experience, and to highlight things that can be improved.
- The VCA is a huge step in the right direction for our voters with the added convenience of voting.
- California is heading in the right direction on this brand new journey.