Considerations for Expanding Vote-By-Mail in California’s November Election

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**Our Focus**

- urban, rural and suburban counties across the state
- new and infrequent voters
- young people
- communities of color
- poor and working-class neighborhoods
VBM is not a Silver Bullet

Safe, accessible in-person voting locations are needed to support voters that:

- don’t trust voting by mail
- need a replacement ballot for any reason,
- need in-person language or physical assistance,
- do not have an address to receive a vote-by-mail ballot,
- never hear or learn about the shifts to a new, all vote-by-mail model,
- are new to voting and need in-person assistance, and
- want to register and vote on the same-day.

NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR HEALTH OR HAVING SAY IN OUR DEMOCRACY.
Convergence of Factors for the November Election

• Presidential Election = higher voter turnout, esp. of new and infrequent voters

• COVID-19 Pandemic has disproportionate impact on low-income communities of color

• Government Distrust at an all-time high

• Historic Disenfranchisement
COVID-19 Impact on Communities of Color

If COVID-19 Doesn’t Discriminate, Then Why Are Black People Dying at Higher Rates?

To provide meaningful protection and support for all members of the community, a COVID-19 response must address the pervasive racial injustices at the federal, state, and local level.

The coronavirus pandemic is hitting black and brown Americans especially hard on all fronts.
Two Realities = Two Americas

America was founded by people who prayed vs. name the country built on the genocide of one race & the enslavement of another
Historic Disenfranchisement

- 13th Amendment (1864)
- Jim Crow (1865-1965)
- Vagrancy Act (1855)
- Bisbee Deportation (1917)
- Operation Wetback (1950s)
- Voter ID laws (2020)
- Purging of voter rolls (2020)
- Misinformation (2020)
- Long lines (2020)
- Elimination of early voting (2020)
- Voter intimidation
- Voting Rights Act overturning (2013)
- Mass Incarceration

8 of the 12 states with the largest Hispanic population growth between 2000 and 2010 passed laws making it harder to vote.

7 of the 11 states with the highest African American turnout in 2008 have new voting restrictions in place.
Societal Dynamics fueling Government Distrust

- Division: political, racial, socioeconomic
- Increasing White Supremacy
- Policies targeting specific communities
- Gerrymandering

CITIZENSHIP & THE CENSUS
Implications on our Work

• Early education on and conversion to VBM

• Education on health and safety protocols at in-person voting locations

• Partnerships between election officials and CBOs re: placement of voting locations

• Trusted messenger strategies to ensure infrequent voters know about the upcoming changes and their options to cast a ballot