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L E G I S L A T I V E A N A L Y S T ' S O F F I C E

LAO
75
YEARS OF
SERVICE

State and County Roles in Administering Elections in California

Presented to:

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 4

On State Administration and General Government

Hon. Richard D. Roth, Chair

and

Senate Committee on

Elections and Constitutional Amendments

Hon. Ben Allen, Chair



Secretary of State



Serves as Chief Elections Officer. In addition to other responsibilities, the Secretary of State oversees all federal and state elections within California. The Secretary's duties as the chief elections officer of the state include:

- Maintaining a statewide database of all registered voters.
- Tracking and certifying ballot measures.
- Certifying candidates.
- Publishing the *Voter Information Guide*.
- Testing and certifying voting equipment.
- Certifying election results.



State Costs for Elections Vary. Some years have no statewide elections. In other years—like 2016, a presidential election year—the state has a major statewide election that includes a number of ballot measures and federal, state, and local candidates. Costs—especially related to the *Voter Information Guide*—vary by type of election year.



County Governments

- Counties Administer Elections.** In California, county governments administer most elections. This means that county governments:
 - Supervise registration of all voters.
 - Conduct county and statewide elections.
 - Process local and statewide petitions.
 - Assist in conduct of municipal elections.
 - Establish and maintain precinct boundaries.
 - Equip polling places on election day.
 - Appoint and train polling place election officers.
 - Tabulate election returns.

- County Costs for Elections Vary.** The costs incurred by a county to administer an election depend on a number of factors, including the number of residents submitting voter registration information leading up to an election, the number of signatures on petitions that need to be verified, the length of the ballot, the number of precincts participating in the election, voter turnout, and the voting method used.