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Riverside County  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **State's rules on primary elections cause some confusion, require that some voters receive two ballots**

As the June 7 primary election nears, California's rules covering primary elections have created some confusion for vote-by-mail voters, especially among voters who might receive two ballots if they changed their political party preference or registered as "No Party Preference."

The Registrar of Voters has handled more than 19,000 ballot requests from voters who changed their political-party preference this primary election cycle. The registrar also has processed about 17,000 requests from "No Party Preference" voters, who are not automatically eligible to vote in presidential primary elections but want to vote in a political party's primary.

Approximately 550,000 vote-by-mail ballots for the primary election started going into the mail on May 17 after being prepared for printing on April 12. Because of state-imposed mailing deadlines, some voters' ballots were mailed before they asked to change their party registration. Under California law, voters who change parties must then be sent a second ballot that reflects the requested registration change.

“A voter who changed political parties should fill out and cast the ballot that reflects their new party registration,” Registrar of Voters Rebecca Spencer said. When two ballots are issued because of a party change, only one ballot can be counted. As soon as a valid ballot is cast and returned to the registrar, the other ballot is voided, she said.

Voters only had until May 23 to change their party preference in order to join a new party and vote in that party’s primary.

The number of requests to change parties also has been fueled by state law, which dictates that “No Party Preference” voters who do not want to change parties must take specific steps in order to vote in a political party’s presidential primary. Those voters cannot automatically vote in the presidential primary because they do not belong to a party with candidates vying for the office. “No Party Preference” voters can only vote in the presidential primary by changing political parties or by requesting a party “crossover” ballot, which will include the names of candidates for a party that allows crossover voting.

Under state law, “No Party Preference” voters may keep their no-party status and ask the Registrar of Voters for a crossover ballot to vote in the primaries for the American Independent Party, the Democratic Party or the Libertarian Party. Vote-by-Mail voters without a party preference were mailed pink cards detailing their options if they wanted to vote in the presidential primary.

The Republican Party, Peace and Freedom Party and Green Party chose not to allow crossover voting in its primary.

“No-Party Preference” vote-by-mail voters have until Tuesday (5/31) to request a crossover ballot from the Registrar of Voters. Because of the nearing deadline, voters should go in person to the registrar’s office, 2724 Gateway Drive in Riverside. “No Party Preference” voters also may request a crossover ballot at the polls for parties that allow crossover voting.

Throughout the election cycle, replacement ballots required because of changes to political party have been processed and mailed on a daily basis. A vendor programming error had prevented 2,900 political party replacement ballots from being processed earlier in the month, but that error was corrected and those replacement ballot requests were processed on Friday.

For further information about the June 7 election, or if you have questions about your eligibility to vote, call the registrar’s office at (951) 486-7200.

Important information regarding the presidential primary election:

\* There are 34 candidates for U.S. senator on the ballot. Look at your ballot carefully and be sure to cast only one vote for U.S. senator or your vote will not count.

More voter information is available at [www.voteinfo.net](http://www.voteinfo.net).