**News Release**

Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections

701 Ocean St., Room 310

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

831-454-2060 / Fax: 831-454-2445

E-mail: gail.pellerin@santacruzcounty.us

Website: [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com) & [www.sccoclerk.com](http://www.sccoclerk.com)

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Contact: Gail L. Pellerin, County Clerk

831-454-2419 / 408-316-9745 (cell)

**Last Day to Request a Ballot by Mail is Tuesday, February 25**

The deadline to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot for the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election is Tuesday, February 25.

As of today, 119,650 of Santa Cruz County’s 163,341 registered voters have requested to vote by mail.

To request a vote-by-mail ballot or to request a replacement ballot be mailed to you, voters can do one of the following:

* Go online to [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com) and fill out the online application
* Call our office at 831-454-2060, or
* Complete the application that can be found on the back cover of the county’s Voter Information Guide that has been mailed to voters and either bring it in or FAX it to 831-454-2445.

Vote-by-mail ballot applications are also available at the City Clerk’s Offices in Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville.

“We have more than 4,600 voters who have requested a replacement ballot,” County Clerk Gail Pellerin said explaining that the voter’s political party affiliation will determine which ballot you may vote.

Voters who are registered as no party preference, declined to state, or nonpartisan were mailed a ballot without the office of President unless they contacted the elections office to let them know which party ballot they wanted to vote. There are three choices: Democratic, American Independent or Libertarian.

As a result, thousands of people are now contacting the county elections office asking for a party ballot so they can vote in the presidential primary of their choice.

However, ballots cannot be mailed after Tuesday, February 25, so voters who are voting by mail are encouraged to open the ballot mailed to them and make sure it is the ballot they want to vote.

“If it is not the ballot you want to vote,” Pellerin said, “We can mail you a replacement ballot if that request is made by Tuesday. If not, voters will have to appear in person to obtain the Presidential Primary ballot of their choice.”

To ensure voters have plenty of opportunity to obtain a ballot and update their registration if necessary, there are two voter service centers open this week, and eight more will be open starting the weekend of Saturday, February 29.

Voters can get a ballot in person or update their registration to obtain the ballot of their choice at the County Elections Office or Watsonville City Clerk’s Office up to and including Election Day. Early voting at the County Clerk/Elections Department at 701 Ocean Street in Santa Cruz and the Watsonville City Clerk’s Office at 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, continues to be available during regular weekday hours from 8am to 5pm. In addition to the regular business hours, the offices will offer weekend voting on February 29 and March 1,from 9am to 5pm. For a list of additional Voter Service Centers open starting February 29, please visit the website at [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com).

Voters may return their ballot by mail or they may drop it off in one of the convenient drive-up drop boxes until 8pm, Tuesday, March 3. The drop boxes are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, no postage required. Drop box locations are:

* Aptos – Public Library, 7695 Soquel Dr.
* Aptos - Polo Grounds near the dog park, 2255 Huntington Dr.
* Aptos – Cabrillo College Parking lot R by the stadium, 3732 Cabrillo College Dr.
* Ben Lomond – Highlands Park, 8500 Highway 9
* Capitola – 420 Capitola Ave. in the City Hall parking lot
* Felton – Covered Bridge Park – at Mt. Hermon and Graham Hill Rd.
* Santa Cruz - 701 Ocean St. in front of the County Government Center
* Santa Cruz – 212 Church St. in the public parking lot
* Santa Cruz – UCSC Quarry Plaza
* Scotts Valley – 1 Civic Center Dr. in the City Hall parking lot
* Watsonville – 316 Rodriguez St. in the municipal public parking lot 14
* Watsonville – County Health Center, 1430 Freedom Blvd.

Voters may also drop their voted ballot off at any polling place in Santa Cruz County on Election Day, or they may drop off their ballot at one of the Voter Service Centers. A list of polling places and Voter Service Centers can be found online at [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com). In addition, voters may return their voted ballot during regular business hours to the County Clerk/Elections Department in Santa Cruz, or the City Clerks' offices in Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley or Watsonville during regular business hours.

Ballots hand delivered or dropped off must be received by an elections official in the State of California no later than 8pm on Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

Ballots mailed must postmarked on or before March 3 and received in the mail by the elections official no later than the 3rd day after the election, which is Friday, March 6. Voters are advised that mail delivery can take anywhere from 3 to 7 days or more.

It is extremely important for voters to sign their vote-by-mail ballot return envelope in their own handwriting, in addition to printing their name, dating the envelope, writing their address where they live in Santa Cruz County, and providing a phone number or email if the office needs to contact the voter.

Unfortunately, if there is no signature on the vote-by-mail ballot return envelope or if the signature on the envelope does not compare to the voter’s signature on his or her voter’s registration card, elections officials cannot count the ballot. Voters will be contacted by the Elections Office to cure their signature if there is no signature or if the signature does not compare.

After February 25, voters may still obtain a ballot in person at the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department and Watsonville City Clerk’s Office through Election Day or at one of the Voter Service Centers that will be open beginning Saturday, February 29.

If voters are unable to come in and obtain a ballot personally during the six days before and including Election Day, they may provide a written statement allowing an authorized representative of the voter to obtain the ballot on the voter’s behalf.

If any voter requires assistance with voting or needs a ballot delivered to them, please contact the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department and arrangements will be made to deliver a ballot to your home.

For more information, please call the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department at 831-454-2060, 1-866-282-5900 (toll-free), or visit our website at [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com).