

# Implementing the **Voter's Choice Act** in California

National Association of Secretaries of State  
2023 Summer Conference

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Office of Policy Planning and Implementation



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# Overview

- History and Background
- Expanded Voting Options
- Impact on California Voters
- Emphasis on Voter Education & Outreach



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# California's Demographic

"Our state's value and our strength is our diversity." – Dr. Shirley N. Weber Ph.D.

- The 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world.
- ~ 27 million eligible voters
- Nearly 23 million registered voters
- Over 1 million corporations and businesses
- 25 major languages (Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, Khmer, Hindi, and more)



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# What is VCA?

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- The Voter's Choice Act (VCA) was chaptered into law in 2016 under Senate Bill 450 (Allen).
- The result of large collaborative effort between advocates, legislators, and the Secretary of State's Office
- Goals: 1) Expanded voting options, 2) inclusion and engagement of diverse populations in planning voter education and outreach efforts. 3) mitigate barriers to access voting



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# The Vote Center Model

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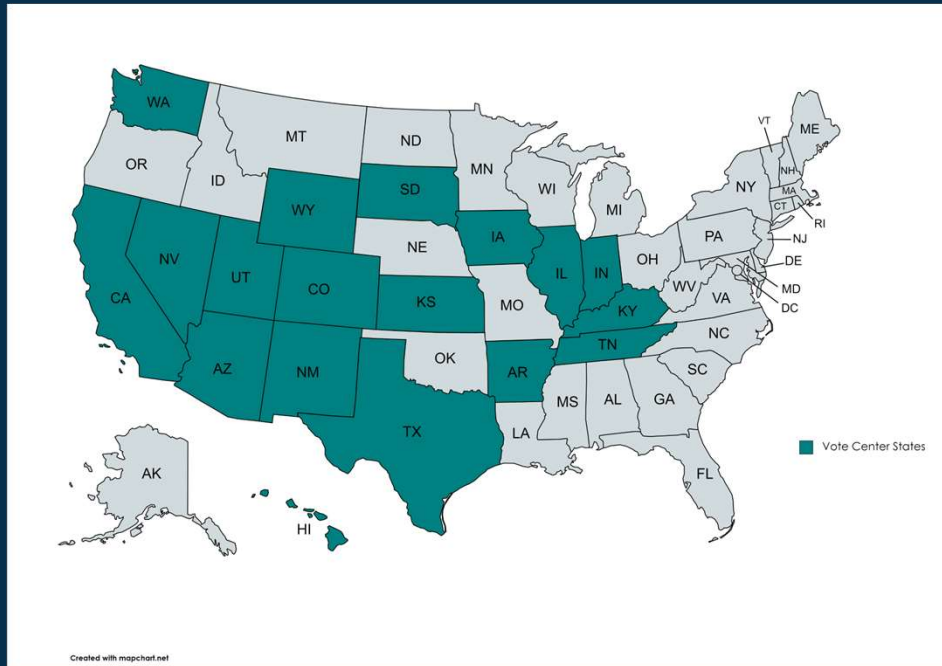
- Pioneered by Colorado in 2004.
- Replaces pre-designated polling places to allow voters to vote anywhere in the county or local jurisdiction.
- VBM ballots to voters at their homes
- To date, 18 states utilize the vote center election model. Some even have adopted Universal voting models to allow voters to vote anywhere in the state.



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# States that use Vote Centers

- Arkansas
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas



- Kentucky
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- South Dakota
- Washington
- Wyoming



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# Expanded Voting Options

- In California, voters have the option of either:
- 11-days of in-person voting
- Returning their ballot by U.S. mail, OR
- Dropping their Vote by Mail ballot in a drobox location.



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# Voter Education and VCA

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- Voter education and outreach and voter engagement throughout each phase of planning elections.
- Representation for a variety of demographics, including language and accessibility communities that allows the county to develop an inclusive strategy.
- Messaging and communication to voters.
- During Covid targeted messaging and legislation helped expand statewide usage of vote-by-mail to include non-VCA/ traditional polling place counties



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# Voter Education & Outreach

VCA counties are required to educate voters by:

- Creating PSAs in the media.
- Holding public workshops.
- Establishing two direct contacts with each voter.

## THE GENERAL ELECTION IS NOVEMBER 8, 2022

Your Official Ballot will automatically be mailed to you during mid-October. Need to check your registration status? Visit our website or scan the QR code below to make sure your information is up to date!



All registered voters will receive their ballot and voting materials in English-Spanish. To receive your Official Ballot and Election materials in English-Chinese or English-Vietnamese, scan the QR code below to update your language preference!

¿Necesita los materiales de elección en otro idioma que no sea inglés? ¡Escanee el código QR para actualizar su preferencia de idioma!

Quý vị cần tài liệu bầu cử bằng ngôn ngữ khác ngoài tiếng Anh hay không? Quét mã QR để cập nhật tùy chọn ngôn ngữ của quý vị!

您需要除英文以外的另一種語言版本的選舉資料?請掃描二維碼以更新您的語言偏好!



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# Voter Education & Outreach

VCA counties are required to educate voters by:

- Creating public hearings
- Developing a toll-free voter assistance hotline.
- Posting election resources on county websites.

## OFFICIAL VOTING INFORMATION

Dear Voters:

We are now preparing for the November 8, 2022, Consolidated Statewide General Election. Fresno County is a Voter's Choice Act county – your official ballot will be mailed to you on October 10.



Voters may sign up to track their ballot and receive notifications on the status of their vote-by-mail ballot. Sign-up at <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/> to receive automatic email, text, or voice call notifications about your ballot.



Fresno County's new Vote by Mail return envelope was well received in June 2022. When returning your voted Vote by Mail ballot, please remember to sign and date the envelope before you seal the envelope. Vote-By-Mail ballots may be returned to a secure Ballot Drop Box four weeks prior to Election Day and Election Day up to 8:00 p.m. Over Sixty Ballot Drop Boxes will be available this election. Ballots may also be returned by mail, postage free, or to a vote center.



Information on Vote Center locations and dates of opening will be mailed to each voter and available on the Fresno County Clerk's website at [votefresnocounty.com](http://votefresnocounty.com).

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact our office at (559) 600-VOTE (8683); email: [clerk-elections@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:clerk-elections@fresnocountyca.gov) or visit [votefresnocounty.com](http://votefresnocounty.com)

James A. Kus  
Fresno County Clerk/Registrar of Voters

MAIL IT.

DROP IT.

VISIT.

[votefresnocounty.com](http://votefresnocounty.com)



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# Advisory Committees

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VCA counties are required to work with their local communities. State-level engagement also occurs.

- ***Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC).***
  - Encourages representation of language minority groups in development of election materials and outreach.
- ***Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).***
  - Encourages representation of voters with special access needs are reflected in voting materials and outreach.

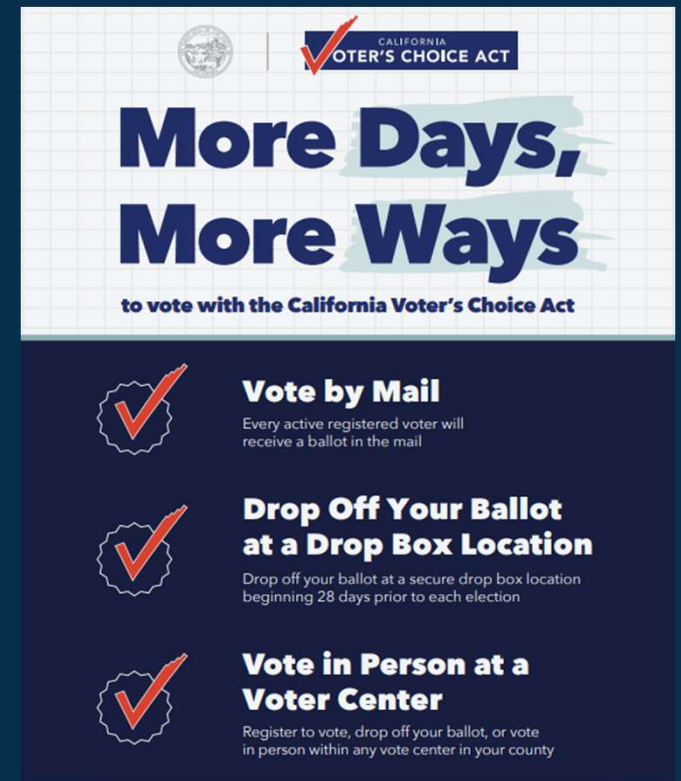


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# VCA Impacts

VCA has Grown in size each election cycle.

- Shown higher voter registration rates than Non-VCA counties.
- Displayed higher voter turnout rates than Non-VCA counties.



The poster features the California State Seal and the text 'CALIFORNIA VOTER'S CHOICE ACT' at the top. The main headline reads 'More Days, More Ways' in large, bold, blue letters. Below this, it says 'to vote with the California Voter's Choice Act'. The poster is divided into three sections, each with a red checkmark icon in a white circle:

- Vote by Mail**  
Every active registered voter will receive a ballot in the mail
- Drop Off Your Ballot at a Drop Box Location**  
Drop off your ballot at a secure drop box location beginning 28 days prior to each election
- Vote in Person at a Voter Center**  
Register to vote, drop off your ballot, or vote in person within any vote center in your county



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# VCA Implementation

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- VCA is passed (2016)
- During 2017, five counties prepare to participate in the pilot.
- (2018) the first VCA Election



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# VCA and COVID

- 15 Counties in 2020
- First VCA election under COVID conditions
- Emergency regulations
- Expanded options protected voters during the 2021 Recall election



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# VCA Over Time

- In 2021, Secretary Weber is appointed
- Prepping for Election
- Program nearly doubles in size from, increases with 12 new counties for a total of 27 VCA counties
- Secured funding to support education and outreach efforts



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# VCA in 2024

- ~30 counties in 2024
- Smaller counties joining now
- Some rural counties say VCA helps expand access - more days to vote
- Mobile vote centers



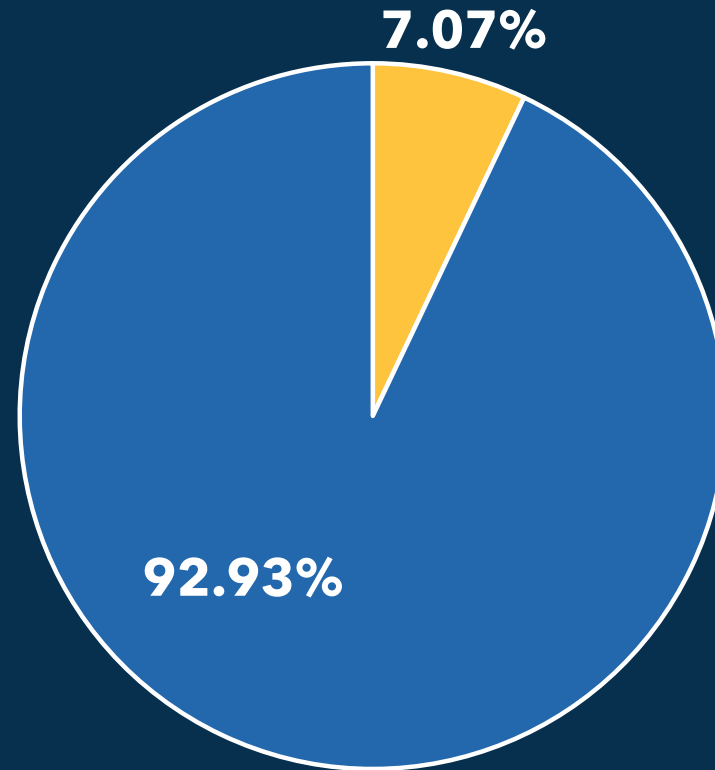
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# VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2018

- **1,781,734** registered voters



■ VCA County    □ Non-VCA County

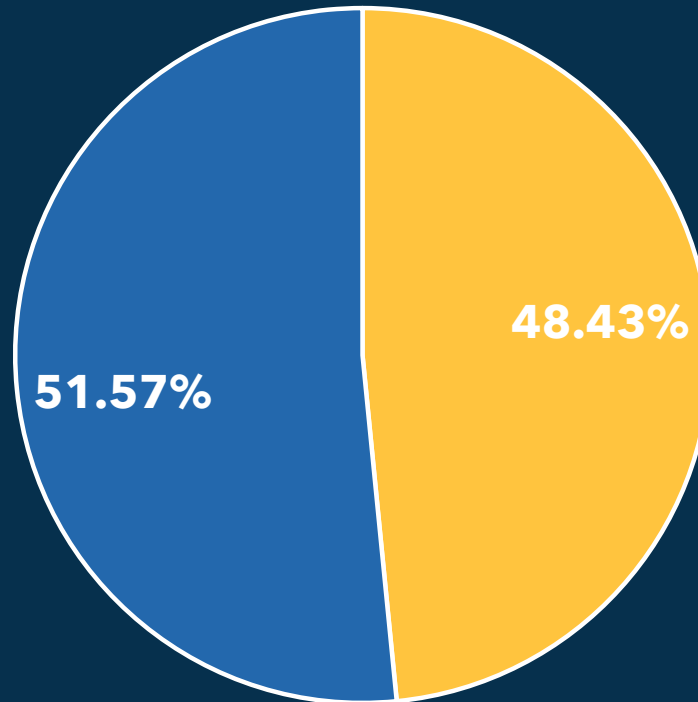


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# VCA Eligible Voter Population

## Eligible Voter Population: 2020

- **12,150,578**  
**Registered Voters**



■ VCA ■ Non VCA

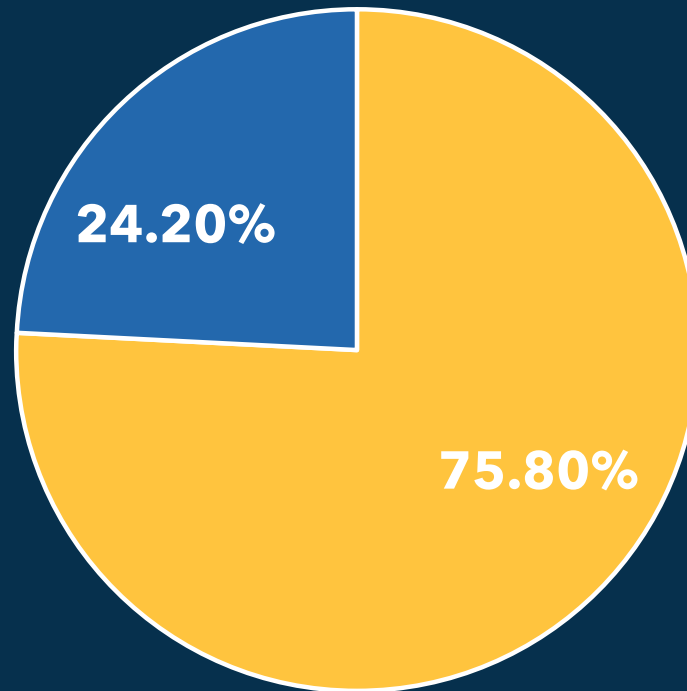


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# VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2022

- **20,372,611**  
**Registered Voters**



■ VCA ■ Non VCA

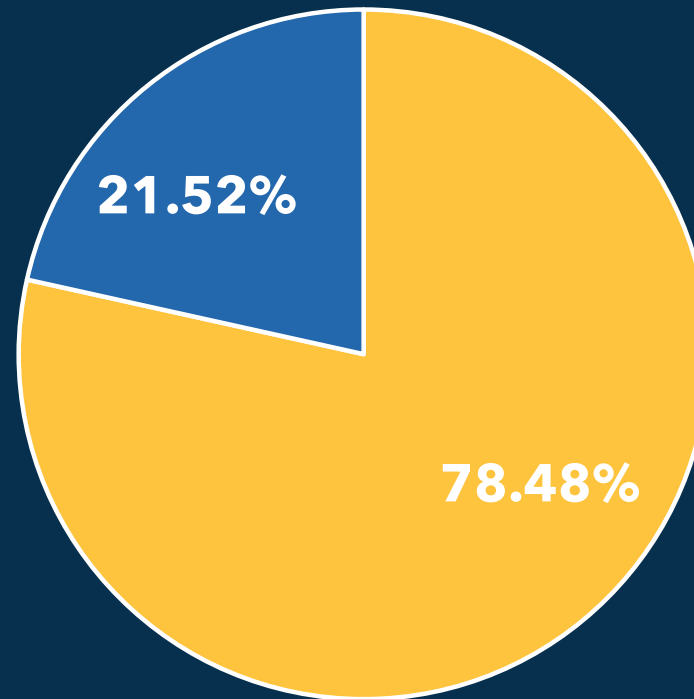


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# VCA Eligible Voter Population

Eligible Voter Population: 2023

- **20,968,782**  
**Registered Voters**



■ VCA ■ Non-VCA



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# Future Direction

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VCA started as the exception, but has slowly become the standard statewide

- Universal Vote-by-mail under AB 37 in 2021 (Berman)
- Ensuring all counties have an EAP.
- Guaranteeing that voters of all populations are aware of their voting options and access.
- Strengthening relationship with advocates and county election officials .
- Evaluate the effectiveness and utilization of each voting option through data and reporting.



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# Thank You!

For more information, please contact:

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