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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA
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April 27, 2010

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: DIRECTION TO CEO TO EVALUATE AUTOMATION OF ABSENTEE BALLOT
TABULATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the County Executive Officer, in concert with the Assistant County Clerk, to evaluate and report back to the Board on methods to automate and expedite the tabulation of absentee ballots including the identification of costs and benefits and potential funding sources.

DISCUSSION:

Over the last decade, the use of absentee ballots by Ventura County voters has greatly increased, with absentee ballots reaching 45% of ballots cast. In recent elections, sixty percent of these ballots were turned in on election day, thereby greatly adding to the work of the County Clerk's Elections Division because of the substantial additional processing tasks that are necessary for these ballots. This deluge of late absentee ballots has on occasion overwhelmed the ability of the Elections Division to promptly tabulate ballots and left important local races undecided for a protracted period.

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy. The public's faith in our electoral process is enhanced by the prompt tallying of votes and posting of election results. Recent technological advances have made possible the automation of some of the tasks of absentee ballot tabulation. This automation both increases processing speed and decreases potential security risks.

Our recommendation is to direct the CEO to work together with the Assistant County Clerk to evaluate the options for automation of absentee ballot tabulation and to report back to our Board with an analysis of the costs & benefits and potential funding sources for implementing ballot tabulation automation.

Cordially,

Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District

Kathy I. Long
Supervisor, Third District