

DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports A Continued Increase in Voter Registration

SACRAMENTO – More than 1.6 million Californians have registered to vote over the past two years, keeping voter registration at a record level, Secretary of State Debra Bowen announced today.

Voter registration numbers have continued to tick upwards even after the historic 2008 presidential election, according to the Secretary of State's newest Report of Registration. The report, issued every odd-numbered year, reflects updates to voter registration rolls including the removal of registrants who have passed away, moved out of state, or been determined to be ineligible to vote, as well the addition of new registrants.

"It was a thrill to see record numbers of Californians register to vote and cast ballots in November," said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. "Public participation is vital every year, not just in presidential election years. I hope Californians continue to play an active role in their democracy in the coming May 19 Special Election."

In all, more than 17.3 million Californians were registered to vote last month, compared to nearly 15.7 million in February 2007. The percentage of people who are eligible to vote and are registered also increased to 74.4%, compared to 68.9% two years ago.

The registration totals for the six qualified political parties and voters who decline to state their political affiliation are:

	<u>Feb. 10, 2009</u>		<u>Feb. 10, 2007</u>	
<u>Political Party</u>	<u># Registered</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u># Registered</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
American Independent	376,849	2.17 %	313,461	2.00 %
Democratic	7,716,790	44.52 %	6,667,437	42.52 %
Green	116,048	0.67 %	138,861	0.89 %
Libertarian	83,786	0.48 %	83,420	0.53 %
Peace and Freedom	56,116	0.32 %	58,264	0.37 %
Republican	5,397,434	31.14 %	5,362,473	34.19 %
Decline to State	3,465,345	19.99 %	2,953,414	18.83 %
Miscellaneous	121,907	0.70 %	105,028	0.67 %
TOTAL	17,334,275	100 %	15,682,358	100 %

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Of the 58 counties in California, 31 counties have a Republican plurality and 27 have a Democratic plurality of registered voters.

By law, voter registration updates must occur 154, 60, and 15 days before each primary election, and 60 days and 15 days before each general election. There is one “off-year” update reporting registration totals in February of years with no regularly scheduled statewide elections.

Because a special election was called for May 19, additional registration reports will be released in early April and mid-May this year.

The complete February 10, 2009, Report of Registration can be found on the Secretary of State’s website at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ror/ror-pages/ror-odd-year-09/ror-021009.htm>.

The last day to register to vote in the May 19 special election is May 4. The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is May 12.

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