

DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports Record Percentage of Votes by Mail in May 19 Special Election

SACRAMENTO – More than 62% of voters cast their ballots by mail in the May 19 Statewide Special Election, according to final results certified today by Secretary of State Debra Bowen. That sets a new California record for the percentage of vote-by-mail ballots cast in a statewide election, besting the prior record of 58.7% set in June 2008.

Total turnout for the Statewide Special Election was 28.4% of registered voters. The lowest turnout ever in a California statewide election was 17.5% in 1935.

“There is no question the turnout was disappointing, especially in the wake of November’s record numbers. Interestingly, voting by mail is more popular than ever,” said Secretary Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer. “Vote-by-mail voting (formerly called “absentee voting”) has been steadily increasing in nearly every election since 1979 when California law was changed to allow any registered voter to vote by mail. Thirty years ago, just 4.4% of the ballots in a statewide general election were cast by mail.”

The counties with the highest voter turnout on a percentage basis were Sierra (53.6%), Inyo (47.8%), and Amador (46.8%). Countywide turnout was lowest in Imperial (19.9%), Los Angeles (20%), and Merced (22.4%).

The Statement of Vote shows final results for the six statewide ballot measures, the special general election in State Senate District 26, and the special primary election in Congressional District 32. The certified election results, including county-by-county numbers and historical statistics on voter eligibility, registration, and turnout, are available on the Secretary of State’s website at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sov/2009-special/index.htm.

The Secretary of State’s office will release a Supplement to the Statement of Vote by October 25. It will include more details on how votes were cast by each Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization, and county supervisorial district, as well as by city.

California’s next regularly scheduled statewide election is the June 8, 2010, Direct Primary Election. More information about state elections is available at www.sos.ca.gov/elections.

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