DRAFT

California Secretary of State
Voter's Choice Task Force Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Co-Chair Petrina Branch called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

   Roll Call

   Task Force members Present: Co-Chair Petrina Branch, Deana Kitamura, Melvin E. Levey, Art Tinoco, Ellen Nash, Ethan Jones, Matt Moreles, Evelyn Mendez, Brittany Stonesifer, Dora Rose.

   Jesse Salinas joined the meeting at 2:07 p.m., Leslie Hernandez joined at 2:12 p.m.

   Task Force members Absent: Co-Chair Donna Linder, Carrie Cornwell, Bob Page, Gabriel Taylor, Camilla Chavez and Dean Logan.

   Declaration of Quorum: Elections staff confirmed that a quorum was present.

2. **Public Comment:** Co-Chair Petrina Branch opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were received.

3. **Discussion and Possible Action**: Review of the September 24, 2026, meeting minutes.

   Motion: Deanna Kitamura moved to approve September 24, 2026, meeting minutes with the following corrections:

   - Page 2: Petrina Branch review comment on page 8 of the document.
   - Page 2, Matt Moreles's last name. (corrected)

   Matt Moreles seconded the motion.

   Vote
   Ayes: Co-Chair Petrina Branch, Matt Moreles, Art Tinoco, Evelyn Mendez, Brittany Stonesifer, Deanna Kitamura.
   Noes: None
   Abstentions: Melvin E. Levey, Ellen Nash, Jesse Salinas, Dora Rose.
   Motion carried, 6-0.

4. **Final Review of CSU Sacramento Data Subcommittee Report:** The Task Force members discussed concerns regarding low participation in numbers in

certain communities and counties and the need to better understand language access barriers. Discussion included limitations of voter registration data, which captures only Section 203 covered languages and may not reflect state-covered language needs.

The members emphasized the importance of addressing these issues upstream while continuing local outreach efforts, including partnerships with community-based organizations, Spanish-language advertising, and grant-funded initiatives. Task Force members expressed support for exploring additional strategies to improve outreach and better reflect community needs.

One comment identified a necessary technical correction regarding ballot rejection rates, which staff agreed to incorporate into the draft report.

Following discussion, Task Force members agreed to proceed with the revisions to the draft report for consideration at the October 22 meeting. Election staff will compile and distribute the comments, and the subcommittee will incorporate the proposed changes. The revised draft would be made available for review before the meeting, with the goal of finalizing the report on October 22, 2026.

Public Comment: Co-Chair Petrina Branch opened the floor for public comment on this section of the report. No public comments were received.

5. **Purpose and History of the Voter's Choice Act (Introduction) – Final draft for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election Legislative Report.** This item was placed on the agenda, however, was finalized at a previous meeting.

6. **Final Review of "Unusual Nature of the June 2, 2026, Statewide Primary Election (Ballot Rejection Rate and USPS Changes)"**

   Task Force members reviewed the final draft and discussed the impact of USPS changes on ballot processing, voter confusion and ballot rejection rates.

   Discussion included clarifying the distinction between voters returning mailed ballots in person and voters issued ballots at polling places or vote centers, including how these ballots are classified and reported.

   Additional recommendations addressed USPS processing failures, ballot tracking, and expanding acceptable evidence of timely mailing when postmarks are missing or illegible.

   The Task Force discussed incorporating the recommended revisions and circulating the draft to the subcommittee.

   Public Comment: Co-Chair Petrina Branch opened the floor for public comment on this section of the report. No public comments were received.

Motion: Although the agenda identified this item for final review and did not expressly identify a recommendation for a vote, Jesse Salinas moved to approve the draft with the proposed revisions. Deanna Kitamura seconded the motion.

Vote
Ayes: Co-Chair Petrina Branch, Matt Moreles, Art Tinoco, Evelyn Mendez, Brittany Stonesifer, Deanna Kitamura, Melvin E. Levey, Leslie Hernandez, Ellen Nash, Jesse Salinas, Dora Rose.
Noes: None
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried, 11-0.

7. **Discussion: Ballot Processing Speed – First review of edits for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election Legislative Report.** The item was deferred to the next meeting for further discussion.

8. **Future Agenda Items:** Co-Chair Petrina Branch invited Task Force members to propose future agenda items. None were made.

9. **Adjournment:** Co-Chair Petrina Branch adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.