



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **KEVIN SHELLEY**

KS03:086

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 2, 2003

Contact: Terri Carbaugh
Doug Stone
916/653-6575

Secretary of State Shelley Examines San Diego County Elections Efforts For Next Tuesday's Statewide Special Election

More than 1.3 Million Absentee Ballots Turned In

SAN DIEGO — Calling attention to the challenges and demands county elections face in the days leading up to the October 7th Statewide Special Election, Secretary of State Kevin Shelley met today with San Diego County Registrar of Voters Sally McPherson to see first-hand the progress of Election Day preparations.

"You can't really get a realistic picture of how much preparation and timing is involved into holding an election until you see it at the county level," said Secretary of State Kevin Shelley as he toured San Diego's facility. "Whether it's processing absentee ballots, preparing ballots to go to the precincts or helping voters locate their polling places, this is where the rubber hits the road."

The Secretary noted that his office is assisting the counties in identifying additional poll workers, especially bilingual poll workers where they may be needed, and making sure that counties have the necessary assistance and advice personnel ready to trouble-shoot if problems arise.

In addition, Shelley has been encouraging voters who still have their absentee ballots to complete the ballots, sign and mail them back to ensure ballots are received by county elections officials by the close of the polls at 8 p.m. on Election Day.

"Over the past few weeks we've been emphasizing to voters that they should take advantage of voting by mail and our efforts clearly seem to be paying off," said Shelley. "As of Thursday morning, nearly a million and a half Californians have voted by absentee ballot out of the more than 3 million ballots that have been mailed to voters statewide. This is an indisputable indicator of the significant public interest in this unprecedented election."

Shelley called upon voters to do their part to prepare for next Tuesday's election.

"I encourage all California voters to study the issues, mark their sample ballots and mail their absentee ballots today" stated Shelley. "For voters planning to vote at the polls, your county sample ballot is a voter's road map to a successful voting experience. Read it, mark your choices and bring it with you to the polls."

-more-

The Secretary also reiterated the comprehensive media campaign that his office has initiated to educate voters about the October 7th election. Some of those activities include:

- Public Service Announcements being aired statewide on TV and radio along with informational ads appearing in newspapers and community newsletters;
- A new web site-- www.myvotecounts.org --that provides all the information voters need including links to each county web site so that voters can locate their polling place;
- Toll-free voter assistance hotlines in seven languages, including Chinese (Mandarin), English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese; and
- Election specialists dispatched statewide to assist county officials.