



Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Judicial Branch Offers Help to Voters

Judges will be available after business hours on Election Day

SAN FRANCISCO—In an effort to safeguard the fundamental right to vote, the judicial branch has established a procedure for voters and others to seek urgent court relief after regular business hours on the day of the General Election, Tuesday, Nov 6, 2012.

On Election Day, if a voter or other individual or entity concludes after the superior court closes that immediate court action is needed to avoid irreparable harm, the voter or entity should telephone or visit the office of the local registrar of voters. The registrar will explore with the requesting party whether election laws provide an immediate method of resolving the issue short of court intervention. If not, the registrar will take appropriate action to contact court officials.

The Secretary of State's website includes a [page](#) listing the addresses and contact information for the registrar of voters in each of the state's 58 counties. Those considering seeking urgent after-hours court relief on an elections issue also may want to review rules 3.1200-3.1207 of the California Rules of Court, which describe the "ex parte" procedures that apply in such cases. Those rules are available [here](#) on the California Courts website under Ex Parte Applications.

Working with Sacramento Superior Court Presiding Judge Laurie Earl, Chair of the Judicial Council's Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has assembled a panel of three experienced judges who have agreed to be available after hours on Election Day to hear urgent requests. Forty-seven superior courts plan to use the services of the panel judges and the Chief Justice has assigned the panel judges to those courts. The remaining eleven superior courts (Alameda, Butte, Kern, Lassen, Mono, Plumas, Placer, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Sonoma, and Ventura) have designated a local judge to hear any urgent after-hours matters.

The Secretary of State's office will ask the registrar of voters in each county to notify AOC staff if the registrar receives a request to submit an urgent petition for court relief after hours on Election Day that cannot otherwise be resolved. The AOC will route any such requests either to one of the judges on the panel or to a local judge as appropriate. If a panel judge is handling the matter and a hearing is needed, it will be conducted by telephone using a reserved conference line. AOC staff will work with the registrar of voters to ensure all necessary parties are in attendance and any documentary evidence is forwarded to the assigned judge. If a local judge is handling the matter, that judge will advise the registrar of voters and parties of the procedure.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.