



*Election Integrity Project*<sup>®</sup>*California*  
EVERY LAWFULLY CAST VOTE ACCURATELY COUNTED

## **On Your Honor Part 7 of 7**



Though there may be much more to say, for now this is our final article in a series designed to expose the vulnerable underbelly of California's over-lenient election process.

Parts 1-6 in this article series discussed California's "on your honor" policies of

- [lack of citizenship verification](#)
- [using faulty voter rolls as the basis for mass mailing ballots](#)
- [furnishing everyone on the voter rolls with ballots through the mail, making it possible for ballots to not reach the intended voters and/or end up in the wrong hands](#)
- [steering voters to return their ballots through ways that operate outside the view of observers and the public](#)
- [accepting almost all signatures during processing ballots through subjective and inadequate verification](#)
- [extending voting day to voting season while blurring the deadline, opening more doors to election manipulation](#)

If you have missed any of these articles, we urge you to use the links above to catch up.

**The topic of this On Your Honor series finale is Chain of Custody.**

Chain of custody means verifying and documenting every transfer of ballots, ensuring they are never unsupervised or unprotected. Proper chain of custody ensures that from the time counties issue ballots to the time they tally the results, no one can steal, divert, alter, inject extra or discard ballots.

In the vote-in-person model of voting, there is no break in the chain of custody:

- Blank ballots are issued directly from the hand of the elections official to the voter.
- Voters insert their ballots to a secured ballot box or through a scanner where results are stored.
- Poll workers, under supervision of other poll workers and observers, transfer those ballots or computer chips to a transport container, clearly labeled and tamper-evident sealed.
- That container is transported with at least a two-person chain of custody to the counting center, where it is opened (again with other election workers and observers supervising), and ballots are immediately counted.

**However, California's vote by mail system has NO chain of custody.**

- Counties send millions of blank ballots through the U.S. mail with no way to verify that the intended recipients actually receive them.
- Voters drop their completed ballots in U.S. mailboxes and unmonitored community drop boxes.
- USPS and ballot transport drivers move ballots from mailboxes and drop boxes.

If drivers mishandle, discard or fail to deliver ballots there will be no way to know, because counties do not know how many ballots these individuals retrieved.

- The State no longer requires voters at vote centers to surrender the ballot they received in the mail and mark it as surrendered.

In 2020, EIPCa observers documented election workers telling voters to throw their VBM envelopes and ballots into trash cans without invalidating them by tearing or bold markings.

This creates the possibility that someone could retrieve them from the trash and vote on them. The system is on its honor to keep proper records and deny duplicate votes.

**In addition, in 2016, California legalized ballot harvesting, meaning ANYONE** can now turn in an unlimited number of ballots, no matter their relationship to the voter whose name appears on the envelope. Worse, the State has not established any

requirements to verify that harvesters obtained those ballots legally, without coercion or reward to the voters.

Ballot harvesting creates numerous opportunities for election manipulation, all made possible by the elimination of chain of custody. For that reason, most states prohibit or restrict ballot harvesting and many states consider it a felony. But despite the obvious threat to election integrity, ballot harvesting is welcomed and encouraged in California, providing another sad illustration of the on your honor system.

**At vote centers, citizens may observe interactions between voters and election workers.**

**But it is impossible to identify and observe hundreds of thousands of interactions between voters and ballot harvesters.**

- Harvesters operate in any number of places, such as private homes, dormitories, nursing homes, and homeless shelters. Thus, they can coerce or wrongly influence voters without anyone knowing.

In fact, in states that allow ballot harvesting, citizens have observed cash payments for votes and harvesters preying upon and deceiving vulnerable populations such as the elderly, the homeless, the young.

- If a harvester were to decide to discard ballots, there would be no way to know unless a voter used the system to check. If not, the county will record that the voter simply chose not to vote.

In discussing a few of the many weaknesses of California's "on your honor" electoral process, this series has just scraped the surface of how the California legislature and elected officials, ostensibly in the name of "access" and "inclusion," have created a system that is insecure, manipulatable, porous and the object of disrespect and derision nationwide.

But worse, it is a system that utterly fails to instill faith and trust in those who deserve the most precious of all liberties - to fairly, honestly and transparently choose those who govern them.

**The California system is a betrayal of its citizens.**

**But let not your heart be troubled. Knowledge is power.**

California voters still have the choice to vote in a secure way (in-person on Election Day) with complete chain of custody, and to educate and encourage all around them to do the same. California voters can still make their votes count.

And Californians have EIPCa working with them. We are confident that our continued efforts, especially our work with Congress, will pave the way to a renewal of the California electoral process.

**We can and will restore the process and return faith, hope and trust  
to every legitimate voter in the once Golden State.**

EIPCa will not let California's citizens down. We ask for your prayers always, your support to spread the word further every day, and your financial (and deductible) gifts when possible.