



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

## **Vote Safe in 2024 and a Little More**

### **Part 5 – Signature Verification, Duplication and Adjudication**

Processing vote by mail ballots is a time- and labor-intensive, expensive endeavor.

In fact, the entire vote by mail system is wasteful and ill-conceived. Each election California sends conservatively half a million ballots to individuals who are deceased or have left the state.

**Some of these ballots are returned to the sender,  
but many “go missing”,  
a clear and present danger to election integrity.**

To make matters worse, California sends volumes of ballots to registered voters who, given the election turn-out rates, do not want them. With approximately 22 million active voters on the rolls, and an average turn out rate of 60% (a generously high estimate), an average of 8,800,000 ballot packets (paper, ink, postage, carbon footprint for transport) go unused and are therefore wasted, winding up in landfills, each and every election.

**Each election is a triple punch, hitting the ecology,  
the economy and election integrity all at once.**

As so many states and other countries can attest, there are safer, wiser and saner ways to conduct elections.

But for the foreseeable future, California elections offices will be processing millions of ballots in a manner that is far more subjective than objective, **which gives all concerned citizens an excellent incentive to observe that process.**

Citizens must do what they can to assure themselves that the ballots are well taken care of and processed with the care and attention they deserve.

**Three steps in that processing** where ballots may be particularly vulnerable to error or malfeasance are

- signature verification,
- duplication (AKA re-making) and
- adjudication.

## Signature Verification:

**In California, signature verifiers are limited by state law and regulations, which mandate they start with the assumption that the signatures are legitimate.**

**In addition, the signature on the return envelope does not have to “match” the signature on file for the voter to be accepted.**

- It just has to “compare” at one, two or three points, depending on the policy of the individual county.

Ostensibly, even with a three-point comparison policy, if both signatures, for example, are in cursive (1), all Ts are crossed (2) and all Is are dotted (3), the signature comparison is likely to be accepted.

However, the law and regulations also require further review of any signature that shows **multiple, significant and obvious differences** when compared to the signature on file.

**Verifiers are obligated to spend enough time on each signature to look for not only the similarities but the differences.**

**Verifiers have a grueling, mind-numbing job.** Some may therefore tend to work at a speed that does not allow for the necessary scrutiny.

**The presence of Observers helps workers to remain more alert, vigilant and careful.** If you feel a verifier is working too quickly to make legitimate decisions, you may signal a supervisor, express your concern, and ask if the verifier can be instructed to slow down.

## Duplication (AKA re-making)

Ballots that are deemed soiled, torn or otherwise damaged are set aside during inspection and sent to be duplicated.

- **All Remote Access ballots must also be duplicated onto an official ballot.**
- **This process is in great need of Observers.**

Counties have their own regulations for duplicating ballots, but there should always be two people checking each other’s work. **Accuracy is everything!**

## Adjudication

When a tabulator cannot reliably read a voter’s marking on any ballot choice, it rejects the ballot.

A digital scan of that ballot is inspected by an adjudicator, whose job it is to determine the voter's intent, change the digital image of the ballot accordingly, and send the finished product for tabulation.

Most adjudicators work without a second person as a check and balance. **Observers need to be there!!**

**California citizens have an opportunity to make a very big difference by regularly observing the sensitive elements of ballot processing.**

Be sure to **thoroughly understand your rights and responsibilities as a Citizen Observer** by reading and studying [EIPCa's Observer Guidelines](#).

Remember you have the right to **observe every element** of the process, **to be close enough** to see and hear, and to **ask questions**, whether they be from curiosity or concern.

[EIPCa's Citizen Observer Hotlines](#) are available should you need answers or feel intervention is necessary.

**Counties will begin ballot processing soon after October 7.**

**If you are looking for a way to make a positive difference:**

**...Ready...Set...Observe!!**

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