



March 27, 2017

Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Phil Ting, Chair  
Assembly Budget Committee

Honorable Ricardo Lara, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair  
Assembly Appropriations Committee

### **ELECTIONS MANDATES SURVEY**

The Department of Finance respectfully submits the following Elections Mandates Survey pursuant to Chapter 25, Statutes of 2015 (SB 84).

An electronic copy of the survey can be found on the Department of Finance's website.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this matter, please call Chris Hill, Principal Program Budget Analyst, at (916) 445-3274.

MICHAEL COHEN

Director

By:



AMY M. COSTA  
Chief Deputy Director

Attachment

cc: On following page

cc: Honorable Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Honorable Jay Obernolte, Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
Mr. Mac Taylor, Legislative Analyst (3)  
Mr. Mark Ibele, Staff Director, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Mr. Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Mr. Kirk Feely, Budget Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Fiscal Office  
Mr. Craig Cornett, Senate President pro Tempore's Office (2)  
Mr. Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee  
Mr. Pedro R. Reyes, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Ms. Cyndi Hillery, Staff Director, Assembly Republican Fiscal Committee  
Mr. Seren Taylor, Director of Strategic Policy, Assembly Republican Leader's Office  
Mr. Jim Richardson, Policy and Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Leader's Office  
Mr. Christopher W. Woods, Assembly Speaker's Office (2)

## **INTRODUCTION**

As required by Chapter 25, Statutes of 2015 (SB 84) the Department of Finance (Finance) conducted an anonymous survey of county election officials following the 2016 general election to determine whether counties carried out requirements set forth in the following suspended mandates:

1. Absentee Ballots
2. Absentee Ballots - Tabulation by Precinct
3. Modified Primary Election
4. Permanent Absentee Voters II
5. Voter Identification Procedures
6. Voter Registration Procedures

## **METHODOLOGY**

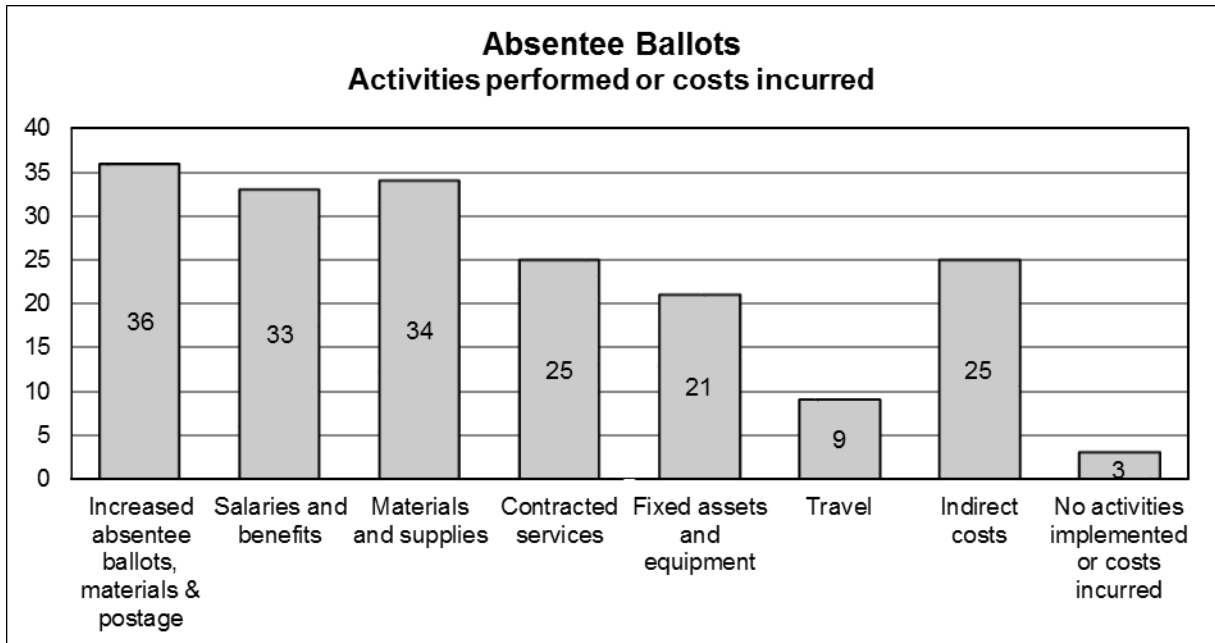
The survey was sent to 58 counties on December 13, 2016. The survey consisted of six questions targeting the specified suspended mandates as well as an additional question inquiring to the source of funds used to carry out the activities. Finance received 47 responses, of which 40 were complete and deemed usable.

## **RESULT SUMMARY**

1. Absentee Ballots: Requires absentee ballots be made available to any registered voter. Ninety-five percent of respondents fulfilled some or all of the activities associated with this mandate.
2. Absentee Ballots - Tabulation by Precinct: Requires the county's list of absentee voters to include the voter's election precinct. All 40 respondents fulfilled this mandate.
3. Modified Primary Election: Requires partisan primary ballots to be provided to non-affiliated voters who request such a ballot. All 40 respondents fulfilled this mandate.
4. Permanent Absentee Voters II: Requires county elections officials to allow any voter to apply for permanent absent voter status. All 40 respondents fulfilled this mandate.
5. Voter Identification Procedures: Requires elections officials to compare the signature on each provisional ballot envelop with the signature on the voter's affidavit of registration. Only two respondents failed to perform this mandate.
6. Voter Registration Procedures: Requires county clerks to accept affidavits of registration at any time up to 28 days before any election. All respondents performed this activity.
7. Of 40 respondents, 38 reported using county general funds to carry out the requirements of the suspended mandates. Two respondents identified no funding sources.

## MANDATE SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. Absentee Ballots:

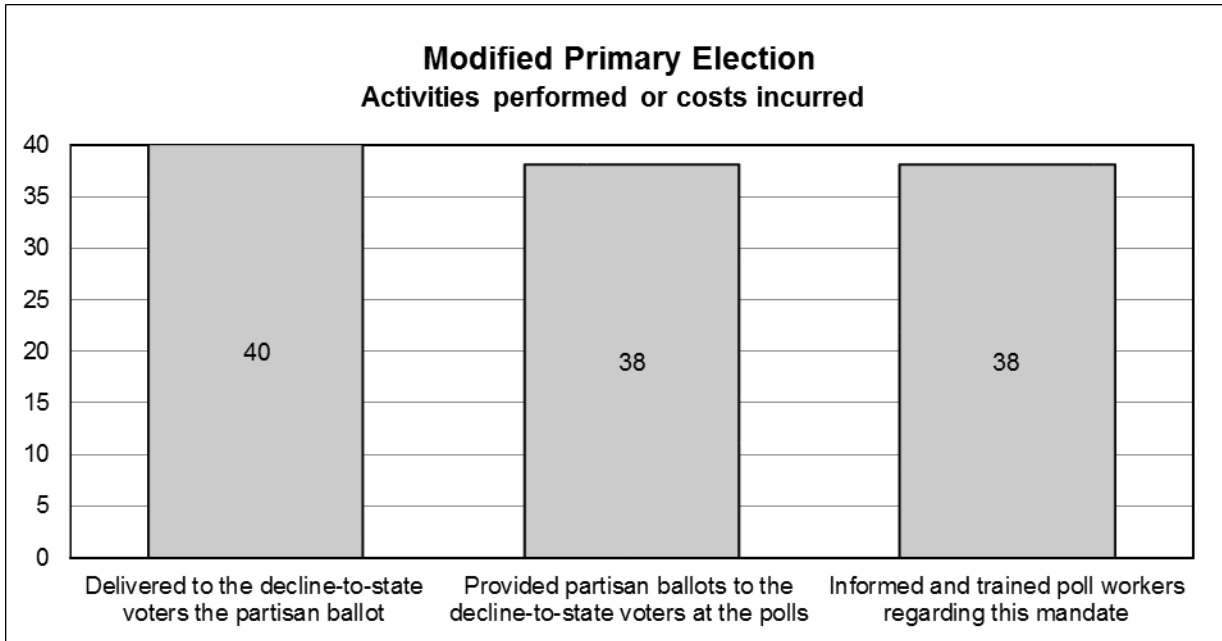


- Only three of the 40 respondent counties state they either incurred no cost related to fulfilling this mandate, or otherwise performed none of the activities generally associated with the mandate.
- One of the three respondents that claimed no associated costs is a vote-by-mail county.
- Based on the above, we conclude that all but two of the 40 respondents substantively fulfilled this mandate.

### 2. Absentee Ballots - Tabulation by Precinct:

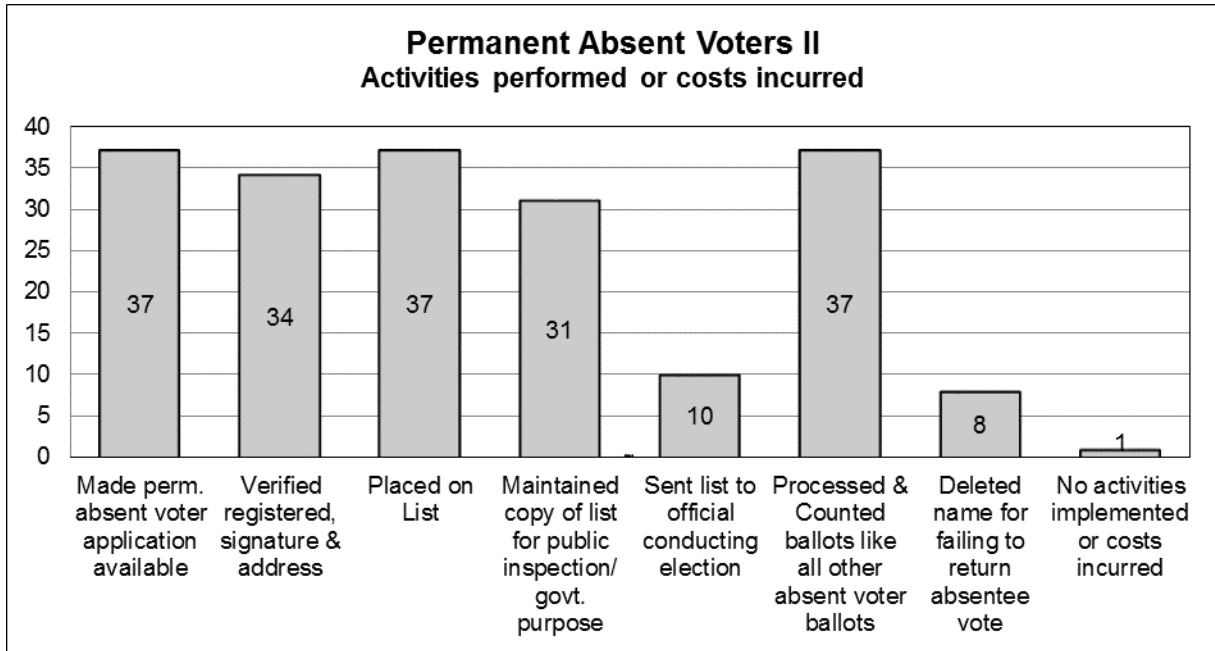
- All 40 respondents state they included the precinct of each voter on the county's list of voters who voted by absentee ballot.

3. Modified Primary Election:



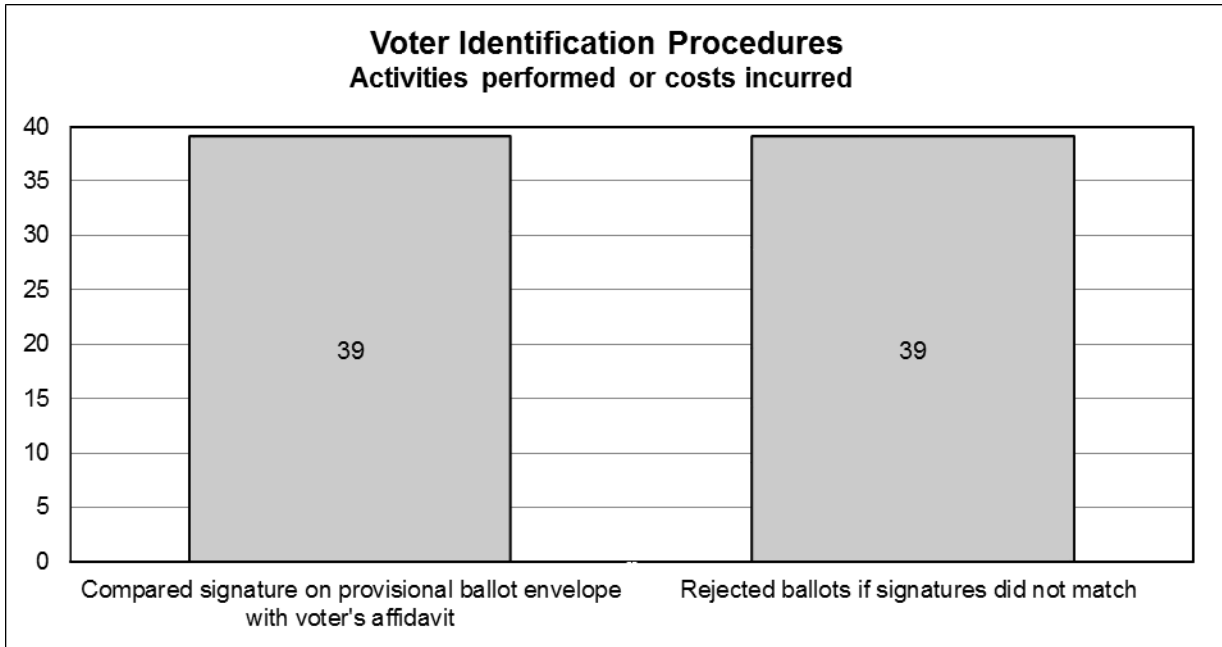
- All 40 respondents fulfilled the requirements of this mandate.
- Two respondents are entirely vote-by-mail and therefore did not perform the mandate activities at physical polling places.

4. Permanent Absent Voters II:



- Thirty-nine of 40 respondents incurred costs to perform some or all of the following activities:
  - i. Making an application for permanent absent voter status available to any voter.
  - ii. Placing the voter's name on a list of those to whom an absentee ballot has been sent each time there is an election within the voter's precinct.
  - iii. Processing and counting ballots received from voters on the permanent voter list in the same manner as all other absent voter ballots.
- Of the seven possible categories, the average county performed or incurred costs related to approximately five categories.
- One respondent states it incurred no costs associated with this mandate because it is a vote-by-mail county.

5. Voter Identification Procedures:

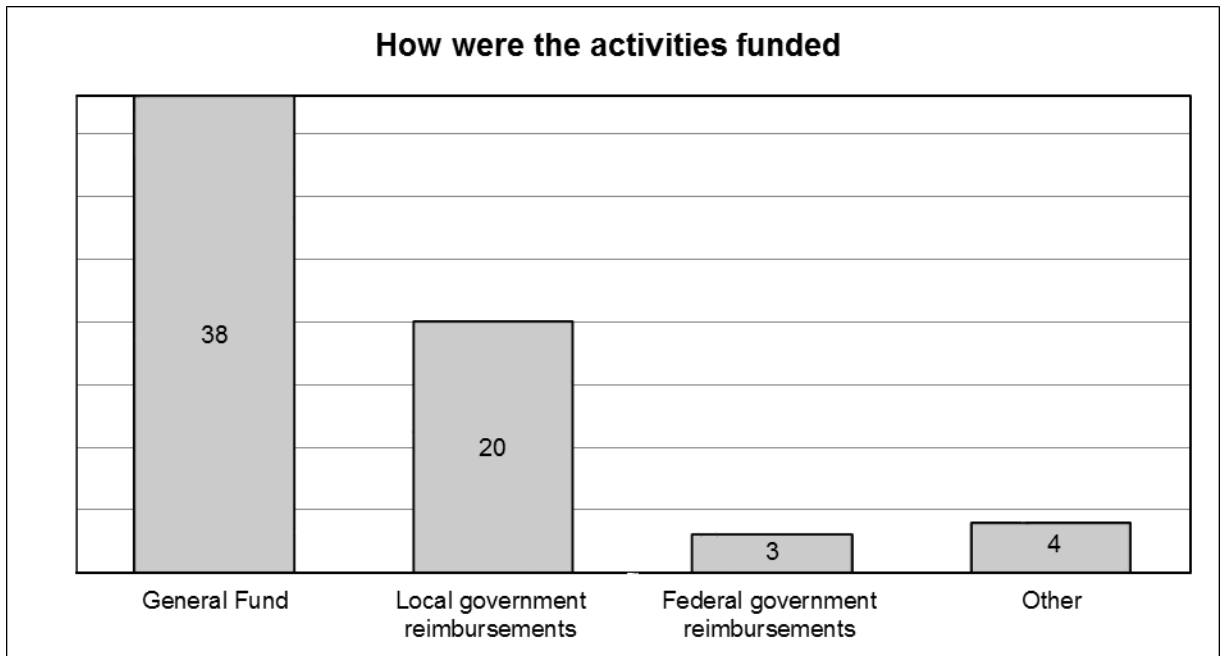


- All 40 respondents performed at least one of the activities under this mandate.

6. Voter Registration Procedures mandate:

- All of the respondents processed voter registration affidavits.

7. Funding Source used to carry out mandates:



- Of the 40 respondents, 38 used county general funds to carry out requirements set forth in the state mandates despite their suspended status.
- The four respondents that selected 'other' stated that some cost were passed on to jurisdictions that consolidated their elections with the statewide election. Other identified funding sources were candidate statement and filing fees.
- Two respondents did not identify the source of funds used to fulfill the mandated activities they performed.