

**OFFICERS 2006-2008**

STEVE WEIR  
PRESIDENT  
Contra Costa County  
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REBECCA MARTINEZ  
VICE PRESIDENT  
Madera County

MIKEL HAAS  
TREASURER  
San Diego County

GAIL PELLERIN  
SECRETARY  
Santa Cruz County

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**APPOINTED:**

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Orange County  
CATHY DARLING  
Shasta County  
CANDACE GRUBBS  
Butte County  
JOSEPH HOLLAND  
Santa Barbara County  
DEAN LOGAN  
Los Angeles County  
JOHN MCKIBBEN  
Los Angeles County  
KATHIE MORAN  
Colusa County  
DOLORES PROVENCIO  
Imperial County  
ELMA ROSAS  
Santa Clara County  
KAY VINSON\*  
City Clerk, Murrieta  
\* non-voting member

**ELECTED:**

JULIE BUSTAMANTE  
Northern Area  
Lassen County  
BARBARA DUNMORE  
Southern Area  
Riverside County  
CANDY LOPEZ  
Bay Area  
Contra Costa County  
LEE LUNDRIGAN  
Central Area  
Stanislaus County  
JIM MCCAULEY  
Mother Lode Area  
Placer County

**ADVISORY COUNCIL**

CONNOR MCCORMACK  
Los Angeles County  
MARSHA WHARFF  
Mendocino County

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**

**CLERK OF THE BOARD:**

SACHI A. HAMAI  
Los Angeles County

**COUNTY CLERK:**

KATHIE MORAN  
Colusa County  
VICKI PETERSEN  
Sonoma County

**ELECTIONS:**

JILL LAVINE  
Sacramento County  
DEBORAH SEILER  
Solano County



# CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

March 24, 2008

Assembly Member Curren Price, Chairman  
Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting  
State Capitol, Room 2179  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0051

Re: AB 984

Dear Chairman Price:

On March 7, 2008, the Elections Legislative Committee of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) reviewed AB 984 (as introduced February 22, 2008), regarding providing notification to Vote by Mail voters of the amount of postage required, or the requisite number of first class postage stamps required to return a voted Vote by Mail ballot by mail.

While the intent of this proposal is commendable, there are logistical problems associated with implementing this requirement. In any election, the number of issues on a ballot varies from area to area, and thus, there can be different amounts of postage required to return ballots, depending on the number of issues on the ballot. The weight of the ballot also varies depending on what the voter includes with his or her voted ballot on return. First time federal voters are required to send identification with the voted ballot, and some voters fail to remove the ballot stub(s) prior to returning a ballot – the additional weight of these items can easily tip the cost of returning the ballot.

Further, postal rates are a moving target. A postal increase is currently slated for mid-May, 2008, after Vote by Mail ballots have been sent out for the June Primary election, and during the time the ballots are being returned. Depending on when the ballot is returned, the required postage could be a different amount. The procedure for initiating postal rate increases has recently changed, eliminating the necessity of congressional approval. It is our understanding that we can expect postal rate increases to be more frequent, and Postal Officials have also indicated that future Postal increases will likely occur in the month of May.

California Election Officials go to great lengths to be certain that all voted Vote by Mail ballots are received in a timely manner, regardless of the amount of postage applied by the voter. Most have set up "Postage Due" accounts with the Post Office to cover insufficient postage on Vote by Mail ballots. Election Officials have worked cooperatively with the Postal Service to collect voted ballots directly from Postal processing facilities on Election night, prior to 8:00 p.m. Postal regulations now prohibit the return or detention of Vote by Mail ballots without postage, or with insufficient postage affixed (Postal Operations Manual section 171.3 ....no absentee ballots or other election material may be detained or treated as unpaid mail....).

Because we will encounter significant problems associated with complying with this requirement, we felt the need to advise you of our concerns. We hope those will be resolved satisfactorily, and ask you to substitute the appropriate U.S.P.S. indicia directing voters to check with the Post Office for correct postage, in lieu of specific notification. *We certainly desire to work with you on this measure and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff on this issue.* Should you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Office, (707) 565-1877.

Very truly yours,

Janice Atkinson,  
Correspondence Secretary  
Elections Legislative Committee  
California Association of Clerks  
and Election Officials

c: Ethan Jones, Senior Consultant, Committee on Elections and Redistricting  
Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee  
Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee  
Barry Brokaw and Donne Brownsey, Sacramento Advocates, Inc.