

TO: Charter Review Committee

FROM: Ellen Day

DATE: 2 November 2017

REGARDING: Item 3./4. Registrar of Voters as an elected position

Read to Committee  
Did not submit written

Please- consider moving the matter of the Registrar of Voters forward to the Board of Supervisors for the Board of Supervisors to continue the position as an 'elected' representative. The Registrar of Voters is under the Secretary of State and that is an elected position.

Want to add by stating our Nation is a "Republic" – "We the People" elect others to represent us. Every time "We" say the Pledge of Allegiance - we re-affirm –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands..."

Our form of government needs more elected representation and individuals accountable to the people who elected them.

Ellen Day  
Pride Realty  
547 Main St.  
Diamond Springs CA 95619

# Good reasons to vote at polling places

A different Thanksgiving this is. According to an annual survey from the American Farm Bureau Federation, a turkey dinner with all the trimmings is its cheapest in four years. Perhaps that's why 50 percent more folks will have dined out on Thursday than any Thanksgiving this decade.

How will Americans burn off those calories? One traditional venue — shopping malls — is on the wane. Given the choice of hunting bargains online or fighting for a parking space, more consumers are choosing the former. Even the way the nation communicates has transformed. Your holiday call likely was made with a cellphone; a majority of U.S. households are now cellular only, compared to barely 10 percent a decade ago.

Another American tradition is about to change — in California, anyway: in-person voting.

Starting next year, California voters will automat-



BY BILL WHALEN  
Special to The Bee

ically receive their ballots by mail four weeks before the election. Voters can still mosey down to their local "vote center" if they so decide, but the temptation will be to decide days or weeks before primary or election day, or so history suggests.

In June 1974, the first time Jerry Brown's name appeared on a gubernatorial ballot, a mere 3 percent of the 5.1 million ballots cast in the June primary were by mail. Forty summers later, in Brown's last gubernatorial primary, nearly 70 percent of the vote was absentee.

By now, you're familiar with the argument in favor of voting by mail: It's convenient and more lifestyle-accommodating,

plus there's not the challenge of working a touch screen.

But there's an argument against. What happens when you surrender your ballot three weeks ahead of time only to discover that the candidate you thought was a Boy Scout is a fraud?

Early voting also deprives citizens of being more physically and spiritually involved in the democratic process. Neighbors don't mingle with neighbors; parents don't bring along their children and perhaps teach a civics lesson. Voting becomes less intimate; the impersonal nature of mailing in a slip fuels a sense of cynicism and detachment.

Do we need to amend the voting system so that Californians are more engaged?

First, let's see what happens in next year's elections, when in theory, at least, spirited races for governor and U.S. Senate should juice the turnout. The benchmarks are 33

percent of registered voters in the primary and 60 percent in the general election. Those are the totals from 2010, the last statewide vote before California's shift to the top-two primary system.

Should California not reach those numbers, it's time to have a discussion about the following:

- Is turnout lower because two candidates from the same party are on the November ballot?
- Should we make Election Day a statewide holiday?

- Should voting be required? In California's wealthier communities, the state would need a punishment more draconian than Australia's \$20 fine.

- Should we instead encourage more Californians to vote in person, the day of the election?

The goal is to avoid more turkeys like the record-low turnout in the last gubernatorial election — and, ultimately, a second day in November when Americans will feel like giving thanks.

*Bill Whalen is a Hoover Institution research fellow and former speechwriter for Gov. Pete Wilson. Whalen can be reached at [whalenoped@gmail.com](mailto:whalenoped@gmail.com)*