



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

VACANT
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: November 7, 2023 and December 5, 2023

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 438 TO ARTICLE XXIV-A OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, RELATING TO VOLUNTEER ELECTION POLL WORKERS AND ELECTION SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS (11/07/2023 – First Reading; 12/05/2023 – Second Reading, unless ordinance is modified on second reading) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

With over 1.9 million active registered voters, the mission of the Registrar of Voters (ROV) is to conduct voter registration and voting processes with the highest level of professional election standards, including accountability, security and integrity, thereby earning and maintaining public confidence in the electoral process. The ROV conducts elections on behalf of the more than 500 political districts in San Diego County.

Today's actions request that the Board of Supervisors review and approve an ordinance to add Section 438 to Article XXIV-A of the San Diego County Administrative Code related to stipends and expense allowances for volunteer poll workers and other election support volunteers. This recommended action recognizes the exceptional commitment involved in order to perform an important civic function. Under the County's vote center model, voting is open for eleven or four days, including Election Day. Service as a poll worker involves long hours to open, close and operate vote centers and many are called upon to transport election materials. Costs and expense for transportation, parking, meals, child or elder care, and other incidentals can be a deterrent for individuals who have an interest in becoming a poll worker.

The ROV, Auditor & Controller and Department of Human Resources have faced many challenges with each election in the recruitment, training, on-boarding, time tracking, and pay warrants for thousands of poll workers. With the change to the multi-day vote center model that began in June 2022, the prior stipend/allowance structure for volunteer poll workers working on Election Day was replaced with an hourly rate based on the number of hours of service. However, this caused significant County personnel time and administrative demands for time tracking and processing payroll. A stipend and/or expense allowance is similar to the County's previous model and that of many other counties for their volunteer poll workers. This will provide greater flexibility and reduce administrative burdens associated with administering the County's volunteer poll worker and election support volunteer programs.

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Today's actions include introducing an Ordinance adding Section 438 to Article XXIV-A of the San Diego County Administrative Code (first reading) and if approved, it will be scheduled for adoption on December 5, 2023. If the proposed ordinance is altered on December 5, 2023, then on that date a subsequent meeting date will be selected for the ordinance's adoption.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

On November 7, 2023:

1. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading):

AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 438 TO ARTICLE XXIV-A OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, RELATING TO VOLUNTEER ELECTION POLL WORKERS AND ELECTION SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

If on November 7, 2023, the Board takes action as recommended on Item 1 above, then on December 5, 2023:

2. Approve the adoption of the following Ordinance (second reading):

AN ORDINANCE ADDING SECTION 438 TO ARTICLE XXIV-A OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, RELATING TO VOLUNTEER ELECTION POLL WORKERS AND ELECTION SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

If the proposed ordinance is altered on December 5, 2023, then on that date a subsequent meeting date will be selected for the ordinance's adoption.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

A person's vote can influence policy and who represents them in government, which in turn impacts their environment, health, and quality of life. Having the appropriate resources to conduct a fair, accurate and transparent election allows all eligible citizens to have a part in matters that affect them.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

A person's vote has a direct influence on the sustainability of their neighborhood, community, and local region. By voting, San Diego residents have a direct impact on their health, equity, the economy and environment. With the County's implementation of the vote center model, all active registered voters receive a ballot in the mail as required by current law. This increases accessibility by providing voters with the opportunity to consider the method that is most convenient for them to return their ballot and has the possibility of reducing vehicle miles traveled to cast their vote. In addition, voters have the option of receiving their voter information guides electronically to reduce paper waste. The recommended action today aligns with the County of San Diego Sustainability Goal of providing just and equitable access to County services.

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FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operational Plan in the Registrar of Voters. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Registrar of Voters (ROV) depend on a reliable, dedicated team of poll workers to make every election run smoothly and to help residents exercise their right to vote in person. Poll workers set up, operate, and close vote centers, help voters understand their rights, and protect ballots and voting equipment when vote centers are open to the public. Before the vote center model began in June 2022, poll workers were paid an expense allowance to offset the costs they incurred for working on a single Election Day. The expense allowance included separate amounts for meals and transportation to the election site. These amounts were based on the level of assignment received, such as Touchscreen Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and Precinct Inspectors. Additional expense allowance was also provided for transportation and attendance to election training, and for transportation and delivery of poll equipment and election materials both to the polling place and to election night collection centers. In addition, poll workers who were designated to provide bilingual assistance to voters were paid an additional nominal fee for their services.

With the change to the vote center model that began with the June 2022 election, the prior allowance structure for poll workers who only worked one-day (Election Day) and attended a 4-hour training class, was replaced with an hourly rate based on the number of hours worked for multiple days of training and service. However, this caused significant County personnel time and administrative demands for time tracking and processing payments for thousands of temporary poll workers in a short timeframe. It also creates an inequity among poll workers who may experience the same personal expense for a full day of service (e.g., meals and transportation), but one is paid a different amount simply because they worked one or two hours less than another poll worker. This will provide equitable payments to poll workers for a day of service, greater flexibility, and reduce administrative burdens associated with administering the County's volunteer poll worker and election support volunteer programs for thousands of temporary poll workers. Based on the ROV's analysis, the amount budgeted for poll worker payments in FY 23-25 is sufficient to support the change to stipend payments.

The ROV proposes paying poll workers a daily stipend based on their assignment which is intended to offset the personal expenses they may incur for their service and for their time commitment. This method to pay poll workers is being used by other vote center counties in

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California and the amounts are within the average range for poll workers across the state. Below are San Diego County proposed stipends:

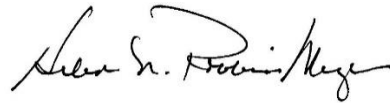
Poll Worker Assignment	Training Day	Setup or Tear Down (if applicable)	Voting Day	Election Day	Voting Day Bilingual	Election Day Bilingual
Precinct Inspector	\$95	\$45	\$160	\$270	\$5	\$10
Technical Inspector	\$95	\$45	\$145	\$240	\$5	\$10
Clerk	\$95	\$45	\$135	\$220	\$5	\$10

Note: Vote Centers are open for 9 hours on Voting Days and 13 hours on Election Day.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Operational Excellence Strategic Initiative in the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan by aligning services to available resources to maintain fiscal stability.

Respectfully submitted,



HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: Administrative Code XXIV-A

Attachment B: Summary of Proposed Ordinance