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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

**PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING
THE FUTURE OF VOTING IN CALIFORNIA
"THE PEOPLE, THE EQUIPMENT, THE COSTS"**

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE
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*Opening Remarks of
Dean C. Logan
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Good morning.

First, I want to thank Secretary Bowen and her staff for holding this informational hearing. This is an important dialogue that can and should play an important role in guiding election administrators in California as we pursue efforts to best serve the electorate. I also want to thank the panel members who have committed their time to come and present to us today and members of the public who are in attendance or are joining us through the live webcast.

Elections in the 21st Century hold great promise. We are witnessing greater participation with greater diversity; a stronger democracy with greater transparency and accountability. More importantly, we are on the threshold of major changes that will modernize our electoral process from the manner in which we process voter registrations to the equipment and technology used for voting. At the same time we are witnessing the development of new democracies around the world, many of which look to us to model the effectiveness of an open, accountable electoral process.

Today's conversation is not only timely, but it is a significant contribution to the critical dialogue we need to be having about how elections are conducted in California; both the promise and the challenges. As part of the discussion, I want to briefly offer some background and perspective on these issues in relation to Los Angeles County.

Los Angeles County is the nation's largest county and is made up of some of the most diverse communities in the country. With 4.3 million registered voters, our electorate is larger than the voting populations in thirty-eight of the fifty states in the union.

Additionally, the County provides election information and assistance in six different languages other than English and serves a broad spectrum of socio-economic demographics and a highly mobile population. While these complexities are not unique to Los Angeles County, they are compounded not only by the size, geography and diversity of the County, but also by the current state of our voting systems.

Los Angeles County's *InkaVote Plus* and *Microcomputer Tally* voting systems have served the voters of Los Angeles County with accuracy and integrity for more than thirty years, but the design of these systems and the age of the technology on which they are based do not offer the technical and functional elasticity necessary to meet the future needs of a growing electorate; its diversity and the needed innovations to improve the accessibility and efficiency of elections. The simple reality is that the systems have outlived their needed flexibility in today's ever changing regulatory environment.

Over the past decade, the demands under which elections in Los Angeles County are administered have become increasingly complex; challenged by a growing and diverse electorate, an aging voting system, a fluid regulatory environment that has limited voting systems development, and the recent phenomenon of special vacancy elections. In addition, the costs of procuring and maintaining voting systems have significantly increased throughout the country, ranging in the tens or hundreds of millions, depending on the size of the jurisdiction.

For too long the acquisition of voting systems has been about election officials reacting to the regulatory environment and the commercial voting systems market, rather than the market and the regulatory environment reacting to the needs of voters. The focus on systems and technology has been disproportionate to the expectations and needs of the electorate. It is with that in mind that Los Angeles County recently launched a Voting Systems Assessment Project designed to collect data through community outreach, focus groups and stakeholder engagement to identify common principles and approaches to modernizing our voting systems.

I am pleased that the focus today is on looking toward the future and I look forward to engaging the panels in discussions related to community needs-based process and linking those with the public's expectation of secure, transparent and accountable elections.

Finally, I believe it is important in any discussion about the future that we reflect on the sustainability and flexibility of our systems and processes. Much time and many resources have been devoted in recent years to looking back at past voting experiences to identify lessons learned and to make improvements, while little has been explored in terms of pro-active development for the future. It is incumbent upon us to look forward to consider the expectations and needs of our future voters. Any investment in voting systems today must allow the flexibility to meet the demands of tomorrow.

So, as we engage in discussion today, I hope we are guided by the dynamics of the voting public we serve – **seniors** whose needs include accessibility and readability of materials; **persons with disabilities** who have a reasonable expectation of fair and respectful service that allows for a private and secure voting experience; **busy professionals** who seek options for voting that fit with their mobile lifestyles – before and on Election Day; **citizens with an array of cultural and ethnic backgrounds** who depend on increased language accessibility and voter assistance; and **future voters** whose expectations may include things we have not yet considered.

As we sit in the hearing today we should be mindful of the high school sophomores and juniors who will cast ballots in the 2012 Presidential election and of the sixth grade students who will begin voting in 2016 – the second graders who will be voters in 2020. Our obligations extend to their voting experiences as well.

Again, I want to thank the Secretary for providing this venue and everyone who is participating today for their commitment to the future of voting in California. I look forward to a productive and forward thinking discussion.