

DROP BOX POWERPOINT SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

San Joaquin County Election Advisory Committee
Presented by Holly Moore and Jody Graham



Our Story

- We visited all 25 drop boxes in San Joaquin County and photographed them.
- This venture took us about a week.
- Votes are precious. Are our ballots safe or could they be stolen?
- What's the security like? Are ballots treated with the same security as a bank protects cash?
- Could ballot traffickers add ballots?
- Are the drop boxes under surveillance so criminals can be caught and prosecuted?
- How much do drop boxes cost the taxpayer?

Goals of this Presentation

- To see if the ballots placed in drop boxes are safe at every step so that voters have faith in the voting system.
- To show if there are deficiencies in San Joaquin County's ballot drop box system.
- To offer solutions to bolster our election system.

Drop Box Topics

- The Number of Drop Boxes
- Cost
- Security
- Chain of Custody
- USPS vs. Drop Boxes
- Location



Manteca City Hall

What is a Drop Box?

- A ballot drop box is a receptacle where voters can return absentee / mail ballots in sealed and signed envelopes. Definition from National Conference of State Legislatures



Ripon City Hall

Number: How Many Drop Boxes are Required?

- **California Election Code Section 3025.5.**
- (a) (1) *A county that does not conduct an election pursuant to either Section 4005 or 4007 shall provide at least two vote by mail ballot drop-off locations within the jurisdiction where the election is held or at least **one vote by mail ballot drop-off location for every 30,000 registered voters** within the jurisdiction where the election is held, whichever results in more vote by mail ballot drop-off locations.*
- **Bottom line:** One drop box for every 30,000 registered voters.

Number: How Many Drop Boxes are Required?

- Calculation: 1 drop box for every 30,000 registered voters.
- San Joaquin County had 385,940 registered voters, so only **13 drop boxes** were required.
- However, in the 2022 Election, the ROV placed **25 drop boxes** around SJ County.

Double the Number, Double the Cost



25 Drop Boxes



13 Drop Boxes

Nearly Double the Required Number

- Each drop box needs to be installed, monitored, cleared out, removed, and stored.
- The 12 extra drop boxes are an unnecessary drain on taxpayers.
- Drop boxes are targets for ballot trafficking, so the fewer boxes the better from a security aspect.

Solutions

- **Solution:** Use only 13 drop boxes.

**GAS PRICES ARE SO HIGH BALLOT
STUFFERS BE LIKE...**



The State Formula for How Often to Collect Ballots from Drop Boxes

California Code of Regulations 20136 (d)(1)(3) Collection Times

Ballots shall be retrieved from drop boxes at times determined by the elections official, but shall be subject to the following:

(1) Ballots shall be retrieved from both staffed and unstaffed drop boxes at least every 96 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, between the 29th day before the election and the 10th day before an election.

(3) Ballots shall be retrieved from unstaffed drop boxes every 48 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, hours after the 10th day prior to an election through the closing of the polls on Election Day.

The State Formula for How Often to Collect Ballots from Drop Boxes

Basic Formula:

Every 4 days from 29 days to 10 days before the election.

Every 2 days from day 9 before the election to Election Day.

That is 9 collection times for an Election Cycle.

More Collections = Greater Cost

- Drop box logs indicate that ballots were collected **23 times** rather than the 9 minimum required ballot collections.
- That's almost **three times** the number of collections required. The State gives Registrar of Voters (ROV) some discretion in this matter.
- The drop boxes were not close to being full, so no need for that many collections. The average daily total number of ballots was just 41, not including Election Day.
- Each collection over the minimum results in extra taxpayer cost.

And More Costs

- The ROV is asking to reappropriate \$194,516 to purchase 29 new, larger drop boxes that can be secured to the ground outside and are open 24 hours a day.
- In 2020 we spent \$50,000 on new drop boxes. (CTCL/Zuckerberg \$)
- Our drop boxes are only three years old and are perfectly functional.
- They have been used just four times: 2020 Election, 2021 Recall Election, 2022 Primary Election, and the 2022 General Election.
- According to the manufacturer, the current box capacity is 1,542 ballots.
- According to drop box logs provided by the ROV, the drop boxes are nowhere near filled to capacity, except on Election Day, but ballots are collected more often on Election Day to make up for that.
- Larger capacity units are not required and are an unnecessary expense.

Solutions

- **Solution:** Reduce costs by keeping the number of drop boxes to a minimum.
- **Solution:** Don't buy any more drop boxes.

Security Measures

- **California Code of Regulations 20135b**

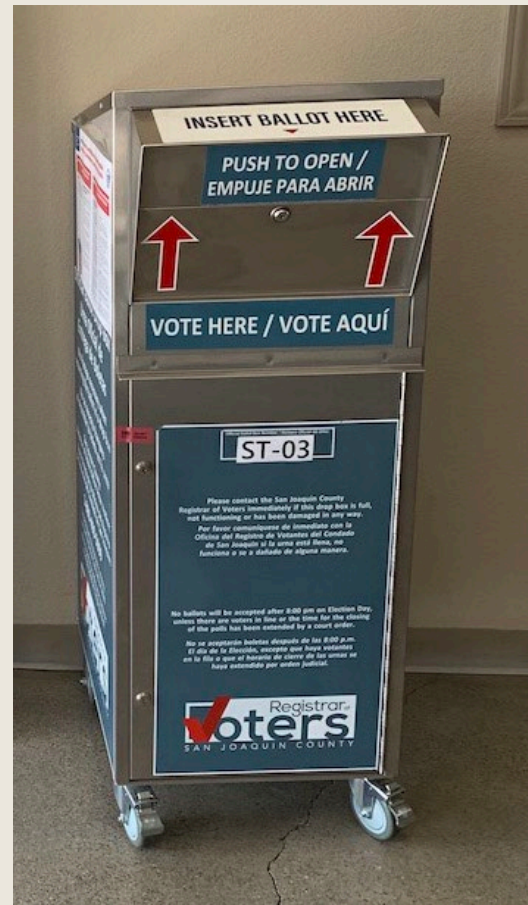
*An unstaffed drop box placed inside a building shall be **secured** in a manner that will prevent unauthorized removal.*

Secured Properly Tracy Motorsports in Tracy



Not Secured

Centro Vida Church in Stockton

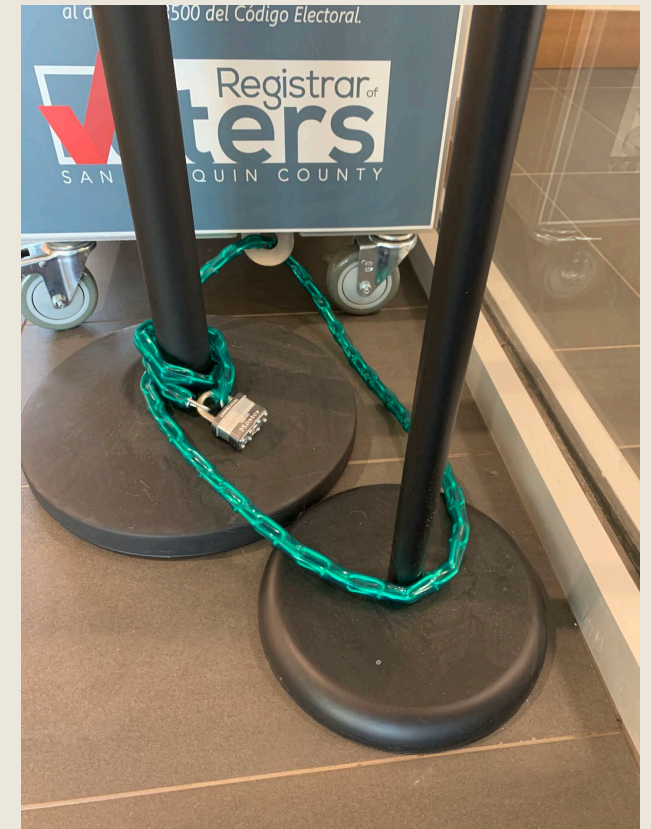
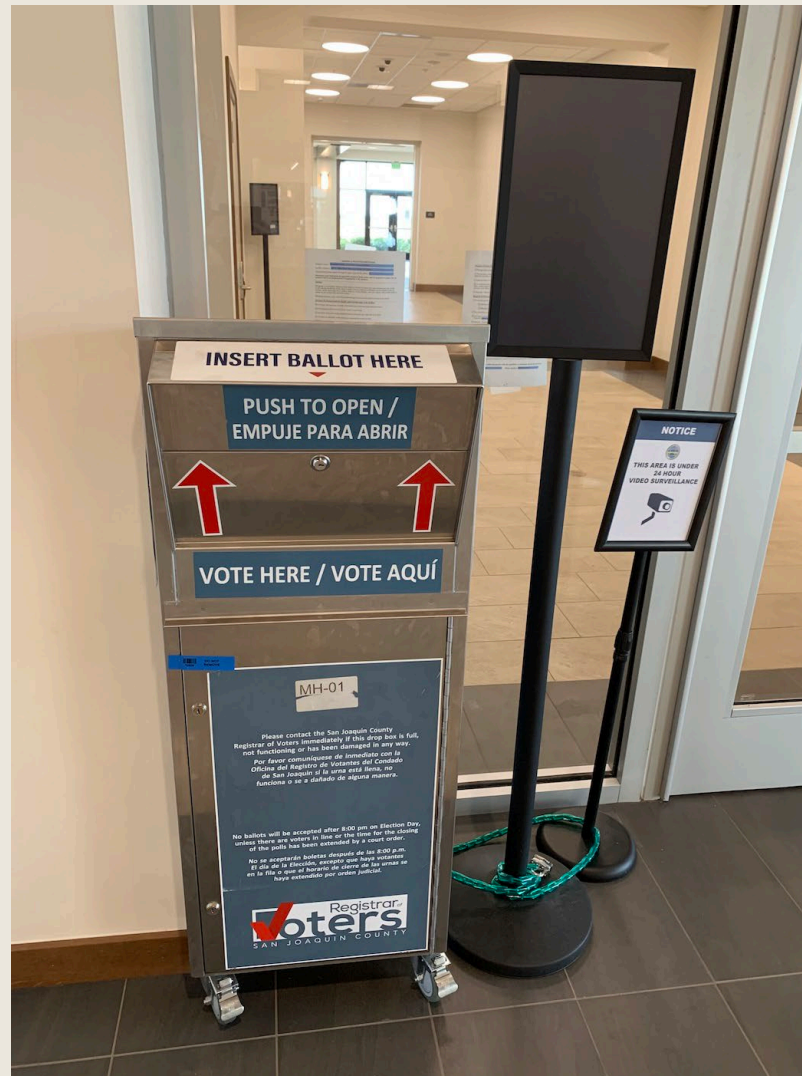


Not Secured

Four Corners Restaurant in Tracy - by front door



Not Secured Mountain House Community Center



Is this secure?



Van Ruiten Winery – Not Secured



Chained to a
removable fire grate.

Is this secure?



Other Security Measures

Election Code, Div. 3, Ch. 1, 3025.5

*(b) All vote by mail ballot drop-off locations shall be open **at least during regular business hours** beginning not less than 28 days before the day of the election, and on the day of the election.*

*(c) At least **one vote by mail ballot drop-off location** shall be an exterior drop box that is available for a **minimum of 12 hours per day**.*

- California's elections last for 28 days. Providing drop boxes during regular government M-F, 9-5 business hours is ample time to vote.

Security Solutions

- **Solution:** Only use police, sheriff and fire stations where drop boxes can be properly secured.
- **Solution:** Lock the drop boxes at 5:00 PM.
- **Solution:** Write local laws that ensure ballot safety.

Security: Video Surveillance

■ California Code of Regulations 20135(e)

If feasible, drop boxes shall be monitored by a video security surveillance system, or an internal camera that can capture digital images and/or video. A video security surveillance system can include existing systems on county, city, or private buildings.

■ According to CISA, many election offices monitor their drop boxes via 24-hour video surveillance.

<https://www.cisa.gov/rumor-vs-reality#rumor24>

Security: Video Surveillance

Videos are the best record of crimes at drop boxes.



Problem: Video cameras are often not trained directly at the drop boxes. Drop box was below this camera.



La Reina Supermarket, Lathrop

Problem: Videos are often deleted or recorded over which destroys evidence.



Security: Ballot Trafficking

- The movie “2,000 Mules” shows how critical video surveillance is to prove ballot trafficking.
- The public should be assured that ballot trafficking at drop boxes is actively deterred and prosecuted.



Security: Ballot Trafficking

- The photo the mule takes of the ballots at the drop boxes is the “receipt” for payment.



- Note: Ballot harvesting is legal in California, however, ballot trafficking is not. Any time money is paid to someone to steal, surrender, or deposit ballots, that is ballot trafficking.

Security: Ballot Trafficking

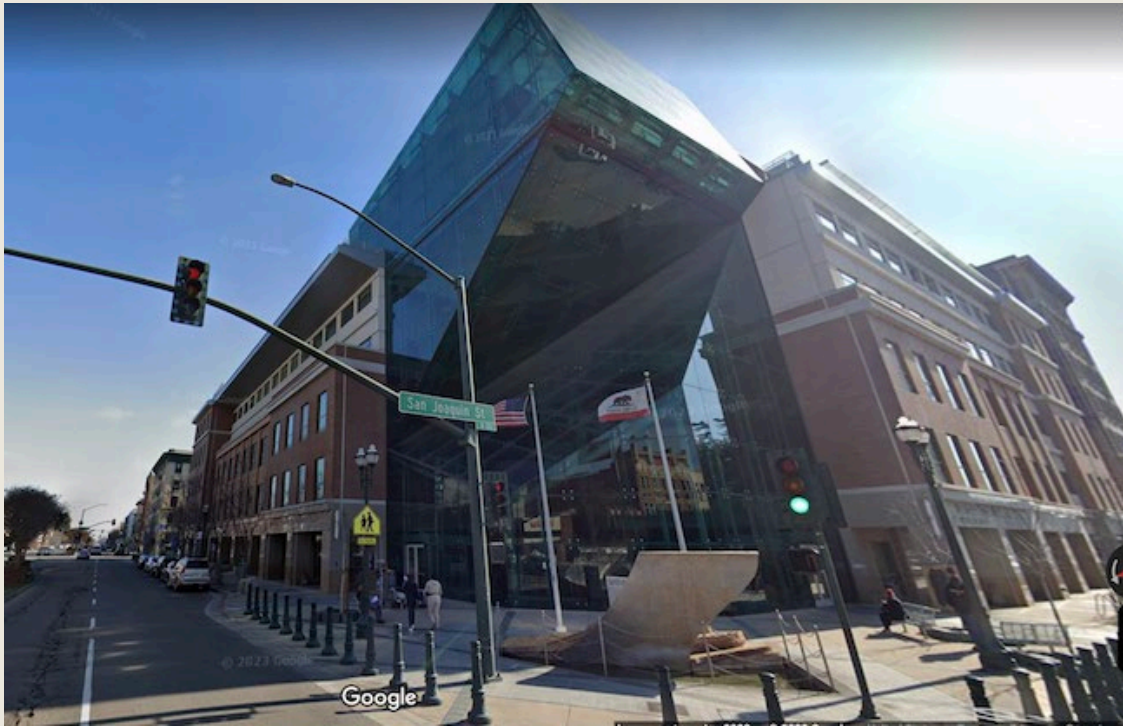
- Drop boxes must be heavily monitored to preserve election integrity.
- To discourage ballot trafficking, video surveillance must capture a front view to show the face of the person delivering the ballots and a side view to see if ballots are photographed before being deposited.



Security: Ballot Trafficking

- If a person visits multiple drop boxes in a day or over the course of several days or weeks, this may indicate ballot trafficking.
- Video is our only record of potential criminal activity. How would we know if there is ballot trafficking if the video is not reviewed **constantly** during the 28 days the drop boxes are in place? What good is it to see that video **after** the election?
- Ballot trafficking must be halted **immediately** so the elections are not jeopardized or influenced.

Are There Ballot Mules in San Joaquin County?



Yes. Citizens have witnessed ballot traffickers taking photos of ballots before depositing them.

Solutions

- **Solution:** Surveillance recordings must be clear, recording 24 hours per day, live-streamed, constantly monitored by the ROV and saved for 22 months, the same as ballots from a federal election.
- **Solution:** Add prominent signage to every drop box location which states, “You are being recorded.”
- **Solution:** The ROV must send out a strong public information campaign that it is illegal to traffic ballots, the County Supervisors must make it a crime to traffic ballots, and the Sheriff must prosecute.

Chain of Custody: Bipartisan Collection Teams

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (**CISA**) Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council provides guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials.

<https://www.cisa.gov/rumor-vs-reality#rumor24>:

- *Whether you are collecting ballots from a USPS facility, ballot drop boxes, or both, **you will need ballot drop box collection teams.***
- *Ideally, these are **bipartisan teams** (poll workers or temporary workers) hired to drive a collection route and pick up ballots on a regular basis.*



Chain of Custody: Bipartisan Collection Teams

- Election integrity shouldn't be a partisan issue. Bipartisan teams assure that all parties have confidence in the voting system.
- Bipartisan teams have hindered election fraud in other states.



Solutions

- **Solution:** Collection teams must be comprised of two people from different political parties for security and public perception.
- **Solution:** All temporary employees working at ROV must be San Joaquin residents and registered to vote as a requirement of employment.
- **Solution:** The County must hire equal numbers of people from various parties as temporary election workers.

The United States Postal Service vs Drop Boxes

- Ballots can be placed in either a post office box or a drop box.



Escalon City Hall

The United States Postal Service vs Drop Boxes

- Taxpayers already pay the USPS for mail transportation service. In fact, there are a total of 87 post offices and blue mailboxes in San Joaquin County.
- Why are we paying for TWO redundant mail transportation services? We did not pay for two services before 2020, and Covid is over.



The United States Postal Service vs Drop Box

- We have been told that people feel “safer” using drop boxes than mail boxes, so drop boxes have been promoted over the USPS. Why?
- The reason stated was because people knew their ballot would go straight to the ROV and arrive on time to be counted.
- That may have been the reason in 2020, but now **CA Elections Code, Division 3, Chapter 1, 3020(b)** states that ballots sent through the USPS can legally arrive **7 days after Election Day**.
- Timeliness is now a moot point. So why isn't the Post Office touted as safe?

The United States Postal Service vs Drop Box

- **KEY POINT: If a person puts a ballot into a USPS receptacle that they fraudulently filled out or trafficked, they are committing a federal crime.**
- There are no federal laws regarding the fraudulent use of drop boxes. Drop boxes make it more convenient and safer for criminals to inject fraudulent ballots into the election system.
- Drop boxes are used to avoid the penalties of federal law and circumvent the prosecution of election crimes.
- Is this is why drop boxes are used by mules? This may explain the huge push to use drop boxes instead of the USPS since they were introduced during Covid.

Location: Where to Put Drop Boxes?

California Code of Regulations 20133. Determination of Drop-off Locations:

Drop-off locations shall be determined by the county elections official. In determining locations, the elections official shall, at a minimum, consider concentrations of population, geographic areas, voter convenience, proximity to public transportation, community-based locations, security, and available funding.

- Distance to Post Offices and blue USPS mail boxes should be taken into consideration, as well.

Distance of Drop Boxes to Nearest Post Office or Mail Box

| Name of Location | Distance to Post Office / Mail Box |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stockton Ace Hardware | 50 feet |
| Lockeford Young's Payless Market | 50 feet |
| Clements Country Market | 180 feet |
| Stockton Registrar of Voters | 528 feet |
| Linden Orlando's Market | 528 feet |
| Farmington Circle K | 528 feet |
| Manteca City Hall | .2 mile |
| Lodi De Vinci's Restaurant | .2 mile |
| Ripon City Hall | .3 mile |
| Stockton Green's Nutrition | .3 mile |
| Lodi City Hall | .3 mile |
| Manteca Cabral Dealership | .5 mile |
| Tracy City Hall | .6 mile |
| Lathrop La Reina Supermarket | .7 mile |
| Escalon City Hall | .8 mile |
| Lodi Robinson's Feed Store | .9 mile |
| Stockton Espresso | .9 mile |
| Lodi - Van Ruiten Winery | 1.1 miles |
| Stockton Centro Vida Church | 1.4 miles |
| Stockton Rancho San Miguel | 1.5 miles |
| Mountain House Comm Service District | 1.7 miles |
| Tracy Motorsports | 2.5 miles |
| Lathrop City Hall | 2.7 miles |
| Acampo Viaggio Winery | 2.8 miles |
| Tracy Four Corners Restaurant | 4 miles |

17 of the 25 drop boxes are less than one mile from a Post Office or blue mail box.

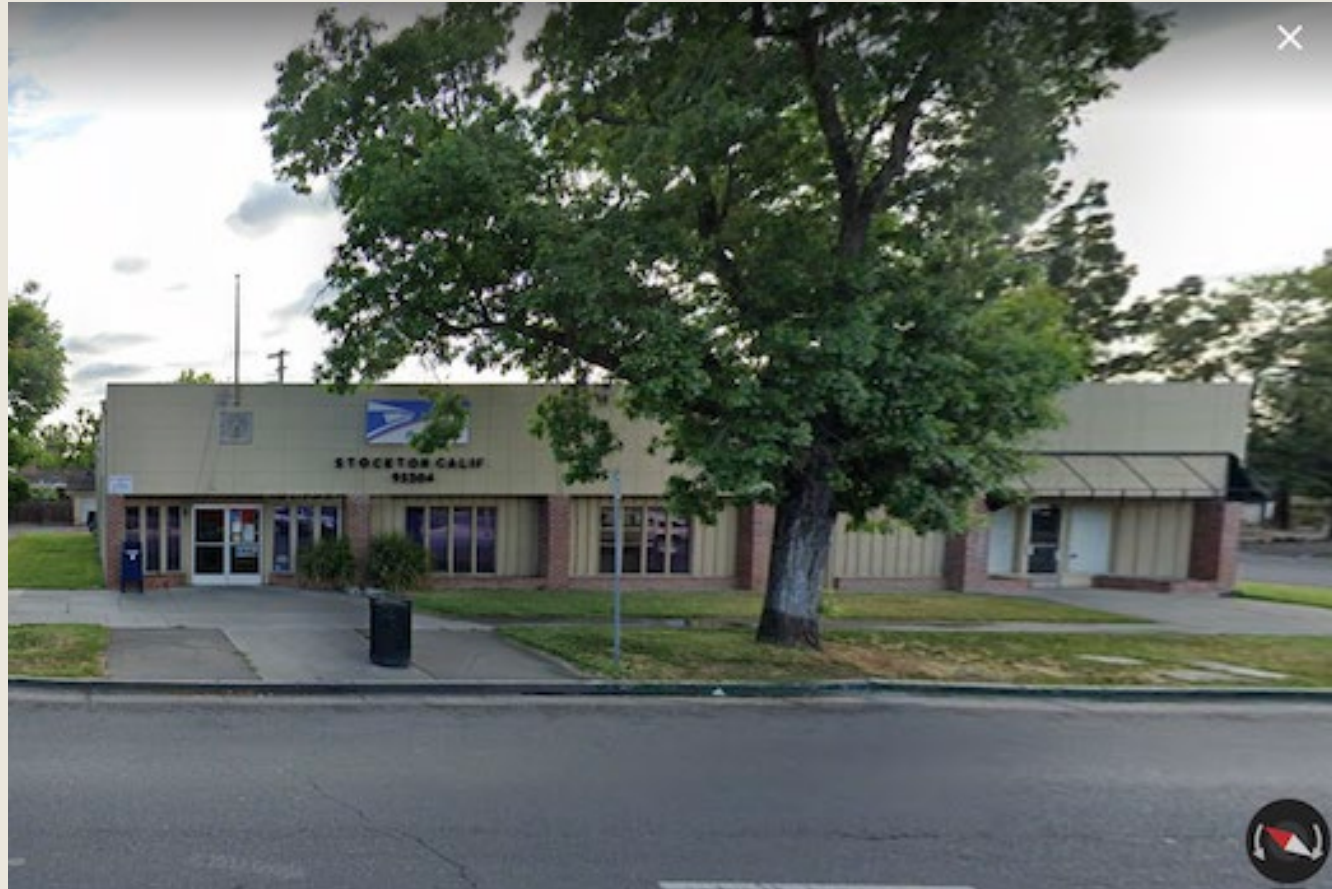
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12 of the 25 drop boxes are less than a ½ mile from a Post Office or blue mail box.

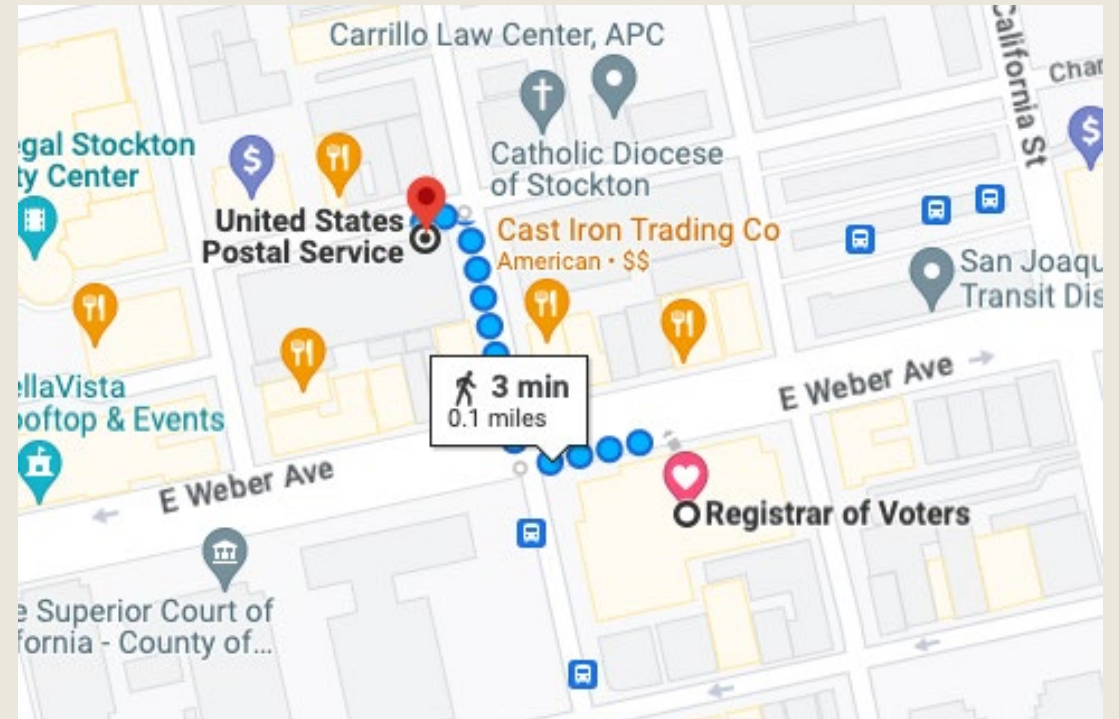
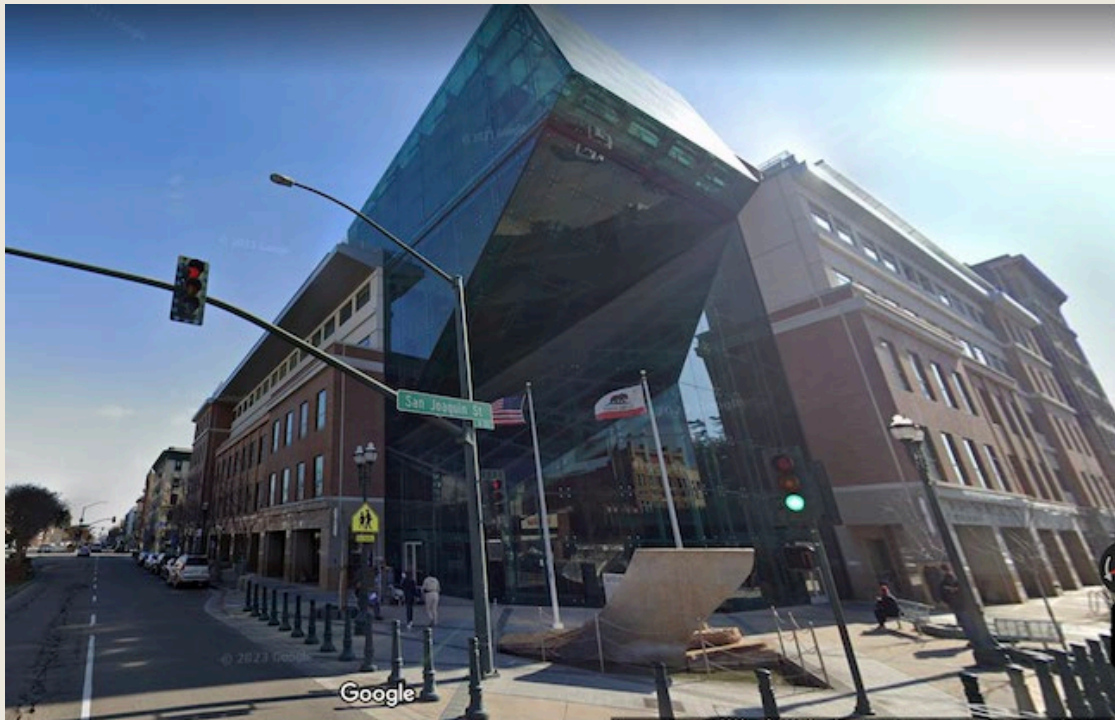
Those 12 boxes could easily be removed from our current system to reduce the total number to 13.

Nearly 50% of drop boxes in SJC are within a ½ mile of a Post Office or mail box. That's not convenience, it's waste.



Post Office on Pacific Avenue in Stockton

In fact, there is a Post Office just one block from here, but there's a drop box outside.



Six drop boxes (24%) are less than 1,000 feet from a Post Office or mail box.

Clements Market is just 180 feet away.



Post Offices are already conveniently located in every community.
Farmington Circle K is just 528 feet away.



Two drop boxes are about 50 feet from a blue USPS mail box. You have to walk past the mail box to get to the drop box.

Stockton Ace Hardware



Young's Payless Market in Lockeford



It's harder to park at Manteca City Hall and walk to the drop box inside than drive up to the mailbox outside.



Neighborhood USPS-managed mailboxes further lessen the need for more than 13 drop boxes.



In Mountain House

Solutions

Solution: Use the minimum number of drop boxes and put them in police and fire stations.

Recap of Solutions

- Stop the purchase of any more drop boxes.
- Use the minimum number of drop boxes required, utilizing the boxes that the ROV already owns.
- Only use police, sheriff and fire stations.
- Lock the drop boxes at 5:00 p.m.
- Surveillance recordings must be clear, recording 24 hours per day, live-streamed, constantly monitored by the ROV and saved for 22 months, the same timeframe as ballots in a federal election.
- Add prominent signage to every drop box location which states, “You are being recorded.”

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Recap of Solutions

- All temporary employees working at ROV must be a resident of San Joaquin County and registered to vote as a requirement of employment.
- The Board of Supervisors must write local laws that ensure election safety.

Questions?

End of Presentation