



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

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CONNIE B. McCORMACK

REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

May 9, 2006

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

REQUEST TO INCREASE POLLWORKER STIPEND (ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

Dear Supervisors:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the proposed increase in the stipend for Los Angeles County pollworkers by \$25 for both Inspectors and Clerks to be effective beginning with the June 6, 2006 Gubernatorial Primary Election.

PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Department of Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) recruits approximately 25,000 pollworkers for over 5,000 voting precincts for a countywide election. The last increase was approved by your Board in 1999 and provided for compensation of \$75 for Inspectors and \$55 for Clerks. The proposed increased stipend to \$100 for Inspectors and \$80 for Clerks will assist pollworker recruitment and retention, both of which are at an all-time low. Based on the attached survey of larger and surrounding counties, Los Angeles County currently compensates pollworkers substantially less than other counties.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal No. 1: Service Excellence: Provide the public with effective delivery of services within the County by implementing strategies related to recruitment and retention of pollworkers to work on Election day.

JUSTIFICATION:

No other issue has dominated the long-term planning of election administrators nationwide over the past few years than the question, "Who is going to staff the polls?" In years past, the pool of pollworkers was fairly stable, consisting primarily of retired persons and housewives. However, the number of experienced, trained volunteers has diminished alarmingly with the aging of the traditional pollworker corps (many are now in their 80's and are no longer able or willing to continue serving). Long-time pollworkers are saying that working a 14+ hour day for a very small stipend, coupled with the increasing complexity of election procedures and new, unfamiliar voting equipment, has led to their decision to retire from pollworker service. Having contacted the County's pool of long-time pollworkers to request their service for the June 6, 2006 Primary Election, less than 50% are available to serve.

Pollworker recruitment consists of a combination of traditional telephone contact augmented by outreach to community-based organizations, colleges, high schools, County and other government employees and corporate employees. The County Employees Voluntary Pollworker program, which became effective in July 2002 following a motion by your Board, has assisted in placing over 3,000 County employees as pollworkers in past major elections. This program will undoubtedly assist in alleviating some of the pollworker shortages for the upcoming Primary Election.

Additionally, moving the date of the Primary Election this year from March to June has resulted in further eroding pollworker recruitment efforts. Many potential pollworkers are unavailable in June due to graduations and vacations occurring at this time of year. Since 2000, we have come to rely heavily upon our partnership with high schools to recruit seniors to serve at the voting precincts. However, the number of available high school seniors, as well as college students, has plummeted for this election due to the June date.

The recruitment crisis is compounded by a recent change in state law limiting the size of voting precincts. As a result, the number of precincts increased by 10% this year (from 4,635 in the November 2004 election to 5,065 precincts for the June 6, 2006 election). Consequently, 2,200 more pollworkers are required to staff the additional 430 precincts for the upcoming Primary Election. Pollworker recruitment is further complicated by the requirement to recruit thousands of multilingual pollworkers fluent in one or more of the six languages required under provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act. As a result of all of these factors, the County is currently in need of approximately 9,000 pollworkers to staff the voting precincts on June 6, 2006.

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FISCAL IMPACT/ FINANCING:

Approval of this proposed increase to pollworker stipends is estimated to cost approximately \$625,000 per major election. It will be paid through adjustments within the Department's operational budget and, therefore, will not increase net County cost.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

The Department of Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is requesting approval for the proposed stipend increase in order to facilitate the recruitment and retention of pollworkers essential to the successful conduct of elections in Los Angeles County. Election Code Section 12310 allows each pollworker to receive a stipend for services as determined by the governing board of the jurisdiction and indicates that pollworkers shall be paid out of the treasury of the jurisdiction in which the election is held. Election Code Section 12310 further states that the inspector may receive more compensation than the other members of the precinct board as they perform significant additional duties directed by the elections official.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES:

The proposed stipend increase will assist with recruitment and retention of pollworkers for current and future elections. Pollworkers perform a critical function that is essential to insure the ability of millions of voters to cast their ballots at over 5,000 voting precincts throughout the County.

Respectfully submitted,

CONNOR B. McCORMACK
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

KC:ds:eb

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
County Counsel

COUNTY POLLWORKER STIPEND

COUNTY	INSPECTOR	CLERKS
Alameda	\$150	\$110
Contra Costa	\$95	\$75
Kern	\$90	\$80
Los Angeles (proposed)	\$100	\$80
Orange	\$70	\$50
Riverside	\$100	\$65
Sacramento	\$100	\$75
Sonoma	\$100	\$75
San Bernardino	\$135	\$100
San Diego	\$150	\$75
San Francisco	\$105	\$82
San Joaquin	\$95	\$65
San Mateo	\$125	\$80
Santa Clara	\$110	\$85
Ventura	\$100	\$70