

Political Grab Bag

By Steve Bagby, Sr., Political Action Committee Chair

When the news reports started coming out about the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and how the Taliban was marching across the country in a manner and at a pace said to be unanticipated by the U.S., I became very distressed. President Biden was not even a year into his Presidency and in addition to all of the troubling issues associated with the domestic state of affairs with which he was grappling, now there was a major foreign crises that was unraveling. I felt that the Republicans would “jump all over this” and use it to further their “march against the Democrats” in all areas, especially if we were unable to get all of the Americans out of the country. I’m sure I wasn’t then, and I’m not now, alone in my thinking on this issue. The midterm elections were going to be “a challenge” anyway in terms of retaining Congressional seats (Senate and House of Representatives) throughout the country, especially considering both the numerous voter suppression laws that have been passed in various states (the restrictive law in Arizona was recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court which is now stacked with conservatives) and the general tenor of the conversation in this country regarding voting and racial relations. Now, with the further impact of the difficult withdrawal from Afghanistan being the lead news story, Republicans are especially enthused and feel that they now have even more “fuel” and “talking points” to challenge the “effectiveness” of the Democratic Presidency and will use that alleged leverage to stir up animosity and vitriol in their attempt to “take back the Senate” and gain further Republican House seats during the midterm elections. However, when we consider our history as a people and the history of

this country, we must view the current state of events not as a foregone conclusion, but as a motivating factor . . . as a challenge . . . as a call to do more than we were going to do before as it relates to the upcoming elections. When we think about the various leaders who have put their lives on the line or who have otherwise forcefully advocated for our inclusion and for the advancement of Democratic values, we must be inspired to do more than less to maintain or even expand the current balance of representation in the Senate and the House.

We must be mindful of what is happening on the state level, too, as it is the Governors of various states who have signed those restrictive voting bills in an effort to impact the outcome of future elections. In California, we are currently faced with a Recall Election . . . where the Trump inspired Republicans are trying to unseat the Democratic Governor, Gavin Newsom. We must do our part to resist those efforts as we want California to remain a progressive state. We know what some other Republican Governors have done in their effort to restrict access to the vote and we don't want California to be impacted in that manner. We want California to progress, not regress!!!

By now, all California registered voters should have received a ballot in the mail for the September 14th Recall Election. If not, call the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office at 800-815-2666. As in the Presidential Election that took place in November 2020, **your ballot can be returned by U.S. mail** (no postage necessary . . . must be postmarked on or before Election Day), **by dropping it off at a Vote-by-Mail Drop Box** (local Drop Box locations are listed in the packet containing your Official Ballot), or **by dropping it off at a Vote Center**, which will open beginning September 4th through Election Day, September 14th. The locations of your local Vote Centers are listed on a separate mailing received

from the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office. Of course **you may Vote-In-Person** by going into any Vote Center starting on September 4th through 8 p.m. on Election Day, September 14th. The Vote Centers also offer **Curbside Voting** for any voter who cannot physically enter a polling place. By calling the number on the curbside voting sign located outside of every polling location, a poll worker will bring the ballot and vote recorder out to the voter. In addition, at certain inaccessible locations, voters can communicate their need for curbside voting assistance by pushing a Ballot Call button located in front of the Vote Center that wirelessly alerts a poll worker inside about a voter waiting outside. Yes, **L. A. County has provided many ways for its citizens to vote, so make sure you exercise your right to vote!**

The question on the Recall ballot asks "Shall Gavin Newsom be recalled (removed) from the office of Governor?" A **NO** vote means that you **do not want Governor Newsom recalled**. If you are mailing or dropping off your ballot, make sure you place your ballot in the Return Envelope and date and sign the back of the Return Envelope making sure you include your address. The date you include is the day you sign, not your birth date, and you must sign the Return Envelope in your own handwriting . . . do not print because your signature will be compared to the signature used when you previously registered. Per the information printed on the Return Envelope, "[i]f a voter is unable to sign, the voter can make a mark witnessed by one person" and there is a space provided for the witness to sign. Also, if you need assistance returning your ballot, another person can return it for you . . . there is a space at the top of the back of the Return Envelope where the person returning the ballot for another person should sign and print their name as well as indicate their relationship to the voter.

It is very important for us to vote in this Recall Election because, in addition to the Governor's authority to sign legislation, the Governor has appointment power which extends over significant areas of state government. The Governor has the power to appoint a large number of positions throughout the executive department and regulatory commissions, as well as the authority to fill vacancies in the judiciary (Municipal, Superior, Appeals and Supreme Courts) and fill newly created judgeships. That is a lot of power and we want that power to be held by someone who will be more inclusive in their thinking than narrow-minded and exclusive. We've seen what can happen in states under Republican leadership . . . and we don't want California to experience a "Republican power grab" and a setback. We all know the issues associated with Republicans appointing/nominating conservative judges. Yes, we are aware that Republican led jurisdictions, including the former Presidency of the United States, have nominated folks for judicial vacancies with right leaning/conservative beliefs and whose thinking impacts court decisions that have been in effect and upheld for years, but which are now being challenged. (Note: By a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court recently denied an emergency request for an injunction to block a Republican led Texas ban on abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, leaving the law in place to take effect on September 1, 2021, [although the court allowed the underlying substantive legal challenges to proceed].) There is a reason the Republicans are so adamant about the Recall Election. . . . they must have plans to further their conservative policies and practices and we certainly don't want that outcome for our state so we must do our part to keep that from happening!! We want to go forward in our thinking. . . not, as some might consider, backwards!

We definitely cannot sit out this Recall Election nor take the outcome for granted. It is so important for us to participate and vote, as we don't want the Republicans to "win by default" because of a low voter turnout due to voter apathy or thoughts that our votes don't matter. The 2020 Presidential Election made it abundantly clear that each vote is so very important. Let us all do our part!! Contact your neighbors, friends and associates to encourage them to vote. Find out if they need any assistance of any kind. Contact the young people you know, including those who recently turned 18 or will turn 18 before the election, to encourage them to register to vote. If any U.S. citizen missed the August 30th registration deadline, they can still go to any Vote Center to register and cast a ballot through Conditional Voter Registration. So tell the young folks you know that they can still register and vote by September 14th. This ability for some to register even up to the date of the election, is an example of a state doing all it can to *allow* folks to vote . . . in contrast to Republican led states who are *restricting the access to vote!!* Let's keep California under Democratic leadership!! If there is anyone who needs assistance with their ballot or otherwise needs someone to mail the ballot for them or drop it off at a Drop Box or Vote Center, please contact the Church office at 213/748-0318 and leave your name and number. You will be contacted and you will be assisted!

Thank you for reading!

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