

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Q – *Who can vote?*

A – U.S. citizens, 18 years or older, who are registered to vote in San Francisco on or before the registration deadline.

Q – *What is the deadline to register to vote or to update my registration information?*

A – The registration deadline is October 19, 2009, fifteen days prior to Election Day.

Q – *When and where can I vote on Election Day?*

A – You may vote at your polling place or at the Department of Elections on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Your polling place address is shown on the back cover of your Voter Information Pamphlet. You can also find it at www.sfelections.org or call 415-554-4375. The Department of Elections is located at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48.

Q – *Is there any way to vote before Election Day?*

A – Yes, to vote before Election Day, you have the following options:

- **Vote by mail.** Fill out and mail the Vote-by-Mail Application printed on the back cover of this pamphlet or complete one online at www.sfelections.org. Once your request is processed, a vote-by-mail ballot will be sent to you. Your request must be **received** by the Department of Elections no later than 5 p.m. on October 27, 2009; or
- **Vote in person** at the Department of Elections at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48, during early voting hours (see page X for dates and times).

Q – *If I don't use an application, can I get a vote-by-mail ballot some other way?*

A – You can send a written request to the Department of Elections. This request **must** include: your printed home address, the address where you want the ballot mailed, your birth date, your printed name and your **signature**. Mail your request to the address on the front cover of this pamphlet or fax it to 415-554-4372. Your request must be **received** by the Department of Elections no later than 5 p.m. on October 27, 2009.

Q – *My 18th birthday is after the registration deadline but on or before Election Day. Can I vote in this election?*

A – Yes, if your 18th birthday is on or before Election Day, you can register to vote on or before the registration deadline and vote in this election — even though you are not 18 when you register.

Q – *If I was convicted of a crime, can I still vote?*

A – If you have been convicted of a crime, California law allows you to register and vote if you:

- Have completed your prison term for a felony, including any period of parole or supervised release.
- Are on federal or state probation.

- Are incarcerated in county jail as a condition of felony probation or as a result of a misdemeanor sentence.

Additionally, if you have been convicted of a misdemeanor, you can register and vote even while on probation, supervised release, or incarcerated in county jail.

After completing your prison term for a felony conviction, including any period of parole or supervised release, you must complete and return a voter registration form in order to restore your right to vote. No other documentation is required.

Q – *I have just become a U.S. citizen. Can I vote in this election?*

A – Yes.

- If you became a U.S. citizen on or before the registration deadline (October 19, 2009), you can vote in this election, but you must register to vote by the registration deadline;
- If you became a U.S. citizen *after* the registration deadline but on or before October 27, you may register **and** vote at the Department of Elections office by October 27 with proof of citizenship.

Q – *I have moved within San Francisco but have not updated my registration prior to the registration deadline. Can I vote in this election?*

A – Yes. You have the following options:

- Come to the Department of Elections at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48, on or before Election Day, complete a new voter registration form **and** vote at the Department of Elections; or
- Go to your new polling place on Election Day and cast a provisional ballot. You can look up the address of your new polling place by entering your new home address on the Department of Elections website (www.sfelections.org) or call 415-554-4375.

Q – *I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country. How can I vote?*

A – You can register to vote and be sent a vote-by-mail ballot by completing the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The application can be downloaded from <http://www.fvap.gov> or obtained from embassies, consulates or military voting assistance officers. Please note that non-military U.S. citizens living abroad indefinitely can vote only in federal elections.

Q – *What do I do if my polling place is not open on Election Day?*

A – Check the back cover of this pamphlet to make sure you have gone to the right place. Polling places often change. If you **are** at the right place, call the Department of Elections immediately at 415-554-4375 for assistance.

Q – *If I don't know what to do when I get to my polling place, is there someone there to help me?*

A – Yes, the pollworkers at the polling place will help you, or you may call the Department of Elections at 415-554-4375 for assistance on or before Election Day. (See page X for information about voting at your polling place.)

Q – *Can I take my Sample Ballot or my own list into the voting booth?*

A – Yes. Deciding your votes before you get to the polls is helpful. Your Sample Ballot is located inside this voter pamphlet, or you may use the Ballot Worksheet included in this pamphlet for this purpose.

Q – Do I have to vote on every contest and measure on the ballot?

A – No, you do not. The votes you cast will be counted whether you have voted on every contest and measure or not.