EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-64-20

WHEREAS on March 4, 2020, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS on November 3, 2020, California—like the other states of the United States—will hold a General Election, and Californians throughout the state will exercise their right to vote; and

WHEREAS it is unknown to what degree COVID-19 will pose a threat to public health in November, and California and its counties must begin taking action now—to procure supplies, secure polling places, enlist volunteers, and draw up plans, among other steps—to ensure that the November 3, 2020 General Election is held in a manner that is accessible, secure, and safe; and

WHEREAS to preserve public health in the face of the threat of COVID-19, and to ensure that the November election is accessible, secure, and safe, all Californians must be empowered to vote by mail, from the safety of their own homes; and

WHEREAS it is also essential to ensure that all Californians who may need access to in-person voting opportunities—including individuals with disabilities, individuals who speak languages other than English, individuals experiencing homelessness, and others who may find vote-by-mail less accessible than in-person voting—are able to access such opportunities and exercise their right to vote; and

WHEREAS the Secretary of State has been working with California elections officials, voting rights advocates, and other stakeholders to explore how best to implement procedures for the November election that will make in-person voting opportunities available, give county elections officials needed flexibility, and preserve public health; and

WHEREAS discussions concerning the November election have been informed, and should continue to be informed, by the ways in which existing California law—including, in particular, the California Voter's Choice Act—provide standards to ensure that, even in the context of an "all-mail ballot" election, voters are able to access in-person voting opportunities; and

WHEREAS work in partnership with the Legislature and the Secretary of State, guided by the standards in existing California law and the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be essential to ensure that the November election is accessible, secure, and safe; and

WHEREAS confirming that every voter will be able to vote by mail in the November election will allow California and its counties to begin preparing for that election now—even as planning continues to determine how details of that election (including requirements concerning the availability of in-person voting opportunities) will be implemented; and

WHEREAS it is critical that counties have clarity regarding requirements for in-person voting opportunities and other details of the November election by no later than May 30, 2020, which may require a subsequent Executive Order; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes specified in this Order would prevent, hinder, or delay appropriate actions to prevent and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes of the State of California, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567, 8571, and 8627, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1) Notwithstanding any limitation on the distribution of vote-by-mail ballots in Elections Code sections 1500 and 4000-4007, or any other provision of state law, each county elections officials shall transmit vote-by-mail ballots for the November 3, 2020 General Election to all voters who are, as of the last day on which vote-by-mail ballots may be transmitted to voters in connection with that election, registered to vote in that election. As set forth in this paragraph, every Californian who is eligible to vote in the November 3, 2020 General Election shall receive a vote-by-mail ballot.

2) Nothing in this Order shall be construed to limit the extent to which in-person voting opportunities are made available in connection with the November 3, 2020 General Election. It is the intent of this Order that my Administration continue to work with the Legislature and the Secretary of State to determine how requirements for in-person voting opportunities and other details of the November election will be implemented—guided by California's longstanding commitment to making its elections accessible, as enshrined in existing California law, while recognizing the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) My Administration continues working in partnership with the Secretary of State and the Legislature on requirements for in-person voting opportunities and on how other details of the November election will be implemented. Nothing in this Order is intended, or shall be construed, to limit the enactment of legislation on that subject.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 8th day of May 2020.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State