



128974

DATE: May 19, 2026
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Matt Moreles, Registrar of Voters
SUBJECT: Registrar of Voters Fees Schedule

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adoption of Ordinance No. NS-300.1009, an Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara amending Section A34-24 of Chapter III of Division A34 of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code relating to fees collected by the Office of the Registrar of Voters.

- Introduce and preliminarily adopt on May 19, 2026.
- Adopt (Final) on June 2, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

If the Board of Supervisors approves the recommendation to amend Section A34-24 to increase the fees, the Registrar of Voters (ROV) is projected to realize an ongoing increase in election and services revenue of fees collected by the Office of the Registrar of Voters \$2,129,353 to offset a comparable increase in expenditures for labor and materials. Of this amount, \$2,070,223 will come from billings to cities, school districts, and special districts.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the County management auditor's recommendation and the County Controller-Treasurer's policies, ROV's schedule of fees and charges is updated periodically. The current schedule of fees and charges was last adjusted on July 1, 2024. Attached to this transmittal as Attachment 1 is a schedule of fees to be charged and collected under proposed Ordinance No. NS-300.1009. The schedule lists the categories of the fees charged, current charges, and proposed charges. Attachment 2 is the Fees and Charges Review Checklist, signed by the Controller-Treasurer Department on March 26, 2026.

Item A1. Primary and General Elections Base Charges

The ROV conducts elections on behalf of jurisdictions within the county, including cities, school districts, and special districts. The fees are intended to cover the Registrar's actual cost of conducting those elections. The proposed election charges for the November 2026 general election and March 2028 primary election were developed by allocating the total

projected cost of the election to all participating jurisdictions (i.e., allocating shared costs to both billable jurisdictions and non-billable jurisdictions based on number of registered voters, as well as number of contests on the ballot, as well as identifying separable costs to be billed directly). The listed rates are based on the ROV's estimated cost for each election, considering the estimated number of registered voters and the projected number of first and additional item(s) on the ballots for each jurisdiction. The increase in the proposed election fees and charges per registered voter is primarily due to the increase in inflation over the last two years. The base charge per registered voter for the first item on the ballot will increase by \$0.56, to \$ 3.91, and any additional item(s) on the ballot with the same registration will increase by \$0.16, to \$ 1.12.

Item A2. Special Elections (Other than Primary and General Elections)

Elections other than primary and general elections are usually limited to local issues and typically do not involve all voters countywide. The actual costs incurred in preparing for, conducting, and certifying these elections are tracked and billed only to the jurisdictions that participate in these elections. Any cost incurred is passed on directly to the participating jurisdictions, thus resulting in zero net cost to the County, unless the County or State calls for a special election for an office vacancy or measure, in which case the cost for the County or State special election is borne by the County, to the extent not reimbursed by the State. No fixed fee is set, since the actual costs to hold the election will depend on the number of local jurisdictions holding elections, the size of the jurisdictions, and whether economies of scale can be realized.

Item A3. Minimum Charge for Jurisdictions Participating in Primary or General Elections

There are minimum costs incurred in preparing for and conducting elections, including but not limited to assistance with filing of candidacy papers; layout, translation, and proofreading of ballots, the County Voter Information Guide (CVIG), eBooks, Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballots (RAVBM), and CVIGs printed in the mandated languages; recruitment and training of bilingual election workers; and provision of election supplies. Ballots are prepared in the following formats: Optical Scan Ballots (paper ballots), Touch Screen Ballots, Audio Ballots, and RAVBM ballots. In addition, the CVIG contains a sample of the ballot. Logic and accuracy tests are performed on Ballot Marking Devices. Equipment and supplies are delivered and picked up from the vote centers. Due to increases in labor costs, services, and supplies, the proposed amendment increases the minimum charge from \$7,977 to \$9,686 for the first item, and \$2,778 for each additional item on the ballot with the same registration, plus the costs of legal publications and ballot printing in all mandated languages per contest for jurisdictions participating in an election.

Item A4. Minimum Charge for Jurisdictions That Do Not Go to Election Due to Insufficient Nominees

During nominations, ROV staff assists with the filing of the candidacy papers. If, after the close of nominations, there are insufficient candidates, the Elections Code allows the designated governing body to appoint a qualified candidate to the office. This process requires hours of staff time. Staff updates contests in the Election Management Information System (EIMS) and prepares cover letters, certificates, notices of eligibility, oaths of office,

and the board transmittal and resolutions. In lieu of the election base fees, a minimum fee is charged, plus a share in the cost of legal publications per district per contest. Due to increases in labor costs, services, and supplies, the proposed amendment increases the minimum charge for special districts in which the candidates are appointed by the Board of Supervisors from \$2,406 to \$2,700. For a school district that makes its own appointment, the proposed minimum fee is \$2,298. For a city that makes its own appointment and has a city election official primarily interfacing with candidates, the proposed minimum fee is \$1,632.

Items A5.1 to A5.4. Voter Information Pages – Measure

The voter information pages in a measure may include text pages, County Counsel or city attorney impartial analysis, argument in favor of the measure, argument against the measure, rebuttal to argument in favor of the measure, and rebuttal to argument against the measure. The fixed fees for measure pages are comprised of the charges from the vendor for the typeset and proofing in five languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog), and translation in four languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog). It also includes the ROV staff time spent formatting, proofing, and handling both paper and Web versions of CVIGs in the above five languages. The proposed amendment increases the fixed fees for the text of the measure per half page of 400 words from \$4,821 to \$5,005; for impartial analysis with up to 500 words from \$6,072 to \$6,341; for a page for argument in favor or argument against with up to 300 words from \$4,377 to \$4,645; and for a page for rebuttal to argument in favor or rebuttal to argument against with up to 250 words from \$3,542 to \$3,894. Additional costs for the printing of the measure pages for five languages in the CVIG will continue to apply.

Items A6.1 to A6.4. Voter Information Pages - Candidate Statements

Candidate statements are usually in 400-word, 250-word, or 200-word template pages. The fixed fees for candidate statements are comprised of the charges from the vendor for typeset and proofing in five languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog), and translation in four languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog). It also includes ROV staff time spent formatting, proofing, and handling both paper and Web versions for CVIGs in the above five languages. In the proposed amendment, the cost of a 200-word candidate statement for Superior Court Judge remains unchanged at 1% of annual salary. The proposed amendment increases the fixed fees for a 400-word candidate statement from \$4,711 to \$5,005; for a 250-word candidate statement from \$3,625 to \$3,926; and for a 200-word candidate statement from \$3,100 to \$3,392. Additional costs for the printing of the candidate statements for five languages in the CVIG will continue to apply.

Items A7 to A8. Research and Compilation, Certification Services, and Retrieval Services

These fees are charged most frequently to law firms that require certified documents related to bond issues and to other persons or entities that request certain information that requires staff time. The proposed amendment increases research fees from \$128 to \$136 minimum, and certification services fees from \$102 to \$116 per certificate.

Items B1 to B2. Miscellaneous Voter and Election Information

These fees are charged for various voter and election related information, such as voter files

countywide, by district, by party, by precincts, street and vote center listings, voter turnout, and consolidations cross references. The proposed amendment increases fees for both the electronic version of the Voter File and other miscellaneous election information from \$152 to \$176.

Items C1 to C2. Vote by Mail Voter Information

These fees usually involve an initial request followed by daily or weekly updates. The proposed amendment increases the fee for the initial request from \$151 to \$212, and the fees for updates from \$75 to \$106.

Items D1 to D2. Precinct Maps

These are fees charged for the sale of various maps to the public. The fees vary with map sizes. The proposed amendment increases the set-up fee for printer or plotter maps and digital custom maps by district from \$130 to \$150. Additionally, the proposed amendment keeps the printing fee for various map sizes unchanged: \$20 for size 17" x 22"; \$30 for size 22" x 34"; \$40 for size 34" x 44"; and \$50 for size 40" x 60".

Items E1 to E2. Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Reports

No changes are proposed for these fees, because State law sets these fees, and State law has not changed these fees.

Items F1 to F2. Photocopies, Postage, and Handling

No changes are proposed for the copy fees. Actual costs are charged for the postage and handling.

Items G1 to G3. Miscellaneous Services

For services related to petition signature verification, redistricting, and recount charges, the requesting jurisdictions and members of the public are charged with the actual costs of labor, services, and supplies.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Supervisors has the authority to increase or decrease fees which are otherwise authorized based on the amount reasonably necessary to recover the cost of providing the product or service. The cost recovery for the various fees is authorized by California Elections Code §§ 2184, 10002, 10520, 13307, 13307.5, and 15624; California Education Code §§ 5421 and 5422; and California Government Code §§ 6253.9, 26831, 26854, 27364, 54985, 54986, and 81008. The fee may be an average cost and may include certain indirect

costs incurred to provide the product or service.

The Board of Supervisors enacted Section A34-24 of the County of Santa Clara Ordinance Code on January 29, 2002, which authorizes the ROV to charge and collect fees for various services.

The fees are calculated based on the current year's annual budget, operating expenditures less adjustments, excludable expenditures, and reimbursements from federal, state, and other sources. The costs of County, state, and federal elections are borne by the ROV to the extent not offset by state and federal funds. The proposed fees are therefore intended to cover only the costs for administering city, school district, and special district elections and are not intended to pass along any County, state, or federal election costs. With the increase in inflation over the past two years, the operating costs of ROV have increased, but fees that are not recovering actual costs have not increased. Therefore, ROV recommends adjusting the fees as listed in Attachment A.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Registrar of Voters will be unable to implement the reviewed and updated fee schedule and recover actual costs incurred.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, the ordinance amending Section A34-24 will be effective after the second reading by the Board of Supervisors in the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Clerk of the Board will update Section A34-24 of the Ordinance Code of the County Ordinance to reflect the approved new fee schedule, and shall notify Matt Moreles, Virginia Bloom, and Vanessa Hamm in the Office of the Registrar of Voters.

ATTACHMENTS:

- NS. 300.1009 Fees Ordinance - Red Line Version (PDF)
- NS. 300.1009 Signed Fees Ordinance (PDF)
- Attachment 1 - 2026 Registrar of Voters Fees Schedule (PDF)
- Attachment 2 - 2026 Registrar of Voters Fees and Charges Review Checklist(PDF)