CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS John Arntz, Director

Memorandum

To: Elections Commission

From: John Arntz, Director

Date: November 12, 2026

RE: Director's Report: November 18, 2026, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief summary of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on September 16, 2026.

I. The Department completed all pre-election and Election Day activities for the November 3 Election and released preliminary election results.

A. To ensure the November 3 Election was free, fair, secure, and functional, the Department carried out a broad range of election administration activities that included processing new voter registrations and record updates; administering vote-by-mail services for over 500,000 voters; recruiting, training, and assigning nearly 2,700 poll workers; providing accessible in-person voting during the 30-day early voting period and at 501 polling places on Election Day; coordinating the secure collection and transport of ballots and election materials on Election Night; and initiating the official canvass process to verify and certify election results in accordance with legal requirements.

i. One issue the Department identified in administering the election involved reports from some voters that their vote-by-mail ballot packets had arrived with tears on the edge of one side of the outer mailing envelopes. The Department promptly contacted the United States Postal Service (USPS), which traced the tears to its processing equipment and switched to manual processing for the remaining packets. The Department advised voters that they could use their ballots if all four ballot cards and the return envelope were intact or request a replacement ballot if needed. The Department shared this guidance in a press release, during outreach presentations, through its phone bank, and on social media, while Director Arntz conveyed the same guidance in interviews with the media.

B. To help voters prepare for the election, the Department conducted voter outreach and provided direct voter assistance in the months leading up to Election Day. The Department shared election information at neighborhood events and through partnerships with community-based organizations and public agencies, sent several direct mailings to voters, posted updates on social media, and during the six weeks preceding the Election, responded to nearly 8,000 public inquiries by phone and email. The following comments reflect the feedback the Department received from members of the public and its community partners:

"Thank you for coming all the way here to pick up my ballot while I am immobile and my aide only comes once a week. I have no other choice and you guys really helped." – JS

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"Deepest thanks to ALL of you for helping my son the Marine Engineer to vote from his deployment. We are so grateful to you for your efforts. He was heartbroken to miss the primaries, but Trevor is finally able to cast his first vote!" – RW

"I love the San Francisco Elections Department. It is by far the best run department in San Francisco." – SJ

"So grateful for the ongoing partnership we have with the Department of Elections and your constant commitment to help keep our students informed. Your willingness to work with us to identify the best opportunities is so appreciated. Appreciate the work y'all do in the community" – Jacquie Martin, Director of Student Life and Leadership, City College of San Francisco

"Thank you for always being present and active on the importance of the elections. We truly appreciate your presence and outreach efforts here at the hubs." – Alondra Gallardo-Rodriguez, Latino Task Force (LTF) Community Job Center Hubs

C. To provide the public with timely updates on Election Night, the Department issued four preliminary results reports. The first report included vote-by-mail ballots received before Election Day, while the subsequent reports added results from ballots cast at polling places, as precincts reported. The Department also securely transmitted election results to the Secretary of State using the reporting system that had met all testing and certification requirements.

   i. Since Election Night, the Department has released 11 updated preliminary results reports, announced each release through a press release, and facilitated question-and-answer sessions with Director Arntz for members of the media and the public at City Hall.

   ii. Beginning on November 4 and with each subsequent release of preliminary results, the Department posted on its website an updated estimate of the number of ballots remaining to be counted.

   iii. The Department expects to certify the local election results on December 2, 2026.

II. The Department continues to count ballots and conduct other post-election tasks for the November 3 Election.

A. For the November 3 Election, the Department expanded its ballot processing capacity by adjusting its procedures and adding equipment, which enabled the Department to count more ballots in the days following Election Day and release more complete preliminary results earlier in the canvass.

   i. On Election Night, the Department received approximately 166,000 ballots for processing. This total included about 154,000 vote-by-mail ballots returned by mail, at drop boxes, or at polling places, and about 12,000 provisional ballots cast at polling places and the City Hall Voting Center. With four cards per ballot, this volume represented approximately 660,000 ballot cards to process. By Monday, November 9, the Department had counted nearly all of these ballots and included votes in the preliminary results.

   ii. Based on the number of ballots counted to date, voter turnout for the November 3 Election in San Francisco is approximately 66%. This percentage is expected to increase slightly as the Department reviews and counts additional valid ballots.

B. To date, the Department has accepted nearly 310,000 vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots. Approximately 900 VBM ballots remain in curable challenge status, meaning voters can still resolve the issues that prevent their ballots from being

accepted. The Department will continue assisting these voters through the cure deadline of 5 p.m. on November 25 so that eligible ballots can be included in the certified election results.

i. Within 24 hours of identifying a curable challenge, the Department notified each affected voter through multiple communication channels, explaining the reason for the challenge and the steps for resolving it.

ii. San Francisco continues to have one of the lowest ballot challenge rates in the state, reflecting the Department's clear voter instructions for returning the ballot and timely follow-up with affected voters.

C. The Department completed reviewing more than 12,000 provisional (PV) ballots cast at polling places and the City Hall Voting Center. As with VBM ballots, the Department notified voters whose PV ballots had curable issues, contacting approximately 470 voters. The Department will continue helping those voters cure their ballots through November 25.

D. The Department began the official post-election Canvass on November 4. As part of the canvass, the Department will conduct the legally required 1% manual tally to verify the accuracy of the voting system's tabulation and reporting of election results. The tally will include ballots cast at polling places, vote-by-mail ballots, and provisional ballots.

i. The Department will hold a public random selection for the 1% manual tally at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 17. The tally will begin at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, November 18. Members of the public may observe both the selection and the tally in person or via live stream.

E. The Department continues to retrieve election supplies and voting equipment from the 501 polling places and transport them to its warehouse. As items arrive, Department staff conduct inventories to ensure that all equipment and supplies are accounted for and stored in accordance with chain-of-custody and security procedures.

F. The Department has completed processing stipend payments for nearly 2,700 poll workers and 501 polling place providers who supported the November 3 Election.

III. The Department continues to provide voter outreach and education to communities across the City.

A. In the two months leading up to Election Day, the Department expanded its social media outreach, publishing 165 posts across Facebook, Instagram, Threads and X. The posts covered National Voter Registration Day, poll worker recruitment, vote-by-mail ballot delivery and return, the voter registration deadline and same-day registration, Voting Center hours and accessible voting services, how to find a polling place, Election Day reminders, and results reporting. The Department also shared multilingual information, short-form videos, and behind-the-scenes coverage from the Voting Equipment Lab, the Pier 31 warehouse, and City Hall on Election Day. Across the four platforms, the posts generated 1.13 million impressions, 20,310 engagements, 13,794 clicks to official election resources, and 73,561 video views.

B. Throughout the election cycle, the Department issued nearly 30 press releases and posted each on its website to keep the public and the media informed. The releases highlighted the voter registration deadline, explained when voters could expect to receive their election materials, and outlined how to vote in person or return and track a vote-by-mail ballot, addressed concerns about the federal ballot-mail rule by clarifying that USPS ballot delivery and return services would continue as usual for the election, provided results reporting schedule as well as updates on preliminary results and estimates of the number of ballots remaining to be counted.

C. The Department's Outreach Team continued to work with local partners to bring voter registration assistance and election information directly to San Francisco residents, including people with disabilities, linguistically diverse communities, residents experiencing housing insecurity, and youth.

   i. Staff partnered with organizations such as the Glide Foundation, the Latino Task Force, and the San Francisco Public Library to help residents register and prepare for the November 3 Election. This outreach included information for non-citizen parents eligible to vote in the Board of Education election.

   ii. Staff also hosted voter resource tables at community events across the city, including Fiesta de las Américas, the Autumn Moon Festival and Street Fair, and Valkyries games at Chase Center.

   iii. At youth-focused events, including the BaySpark Youth Summit and the Larkin Street Youth Services resource fair, staff helped eligible youth pre-register to vote and promoted opportunities such as high school poll worker service.

D. The Department continued to engage with hundreds of community partners through its monthly Outreach Community Newsletter. The September and October editions addressed questions about voting options, ballot delivery and return, voter assistance, and preliminary results. Both editions explained how to report voter intimidation or interference and included messages that outreach partners could share with their communities.

   i. The September edition focused on explaining how to receive, return, and track vote-by-mail ballots and addressed concerns about a federal ballot-mail rule by clarifying that USPS would not enforce the rule in 2026 and that ballot delivery and return services would continue as usual for the November 3 Election. The edition also advised voters mailing their ballots on Election Day to request a hand postmark at a USPS retail counter and covered voter information guides, ranked-choice voting, and in-person voting options. The newsletter is available at **https://www.sf.gov/outreach-community-newsletter-september-2026**.

   ii. The October edition highlighted assistance available in the final days of voting, including emergency ballot delivery and pickup and the option to register and vote through Election Day. It also explained when preliminary results would be released and why ballot counting continues after Election Night. The newsletter is available at **https://www.sf.gov/outreach-community-newsletter-october-2026**.

IV. Responses to the Commission's request for information to be included in the Director's monthly report.

Data on registration rates and outreach events: 1) Total new registrations, 2) New registrations by supervisory districts, 3) Tactics employed (outreach, community engagement, grant funding, etc.) and in which districts, 4) Tactics employed by districts.

A. Between September 1 and October 31, the Department processed a total of 7,031 affidavits from new registrants. These registrants resided in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 592; SD 2 – 801; SD 3 – 766; SD 4 – 440; SD 5 – 767; SD 6 – 855; SD 7 – 593; SD 8 – 708; SD 9 – 642; SD 10 – 490; and SD 11 – 377.

B. Between September 1 and October 31, the Department conducted 114 outreach events, reaching an estimated 9,252 attendees. These events were distributed across Supervisorial Districts (SD) as follows: SD 1 – 8; SD 2 – 2; SD 3 – 9; SD 4 – 4; SD 5 – 26; SD 6 – 20; SD 7 – 11; SD 8 – 3; SD 9 – 19; SD 10 – 7; and SD 11 – 5.