



Team,

The Iowa caucuses are not just the symbolic start to presidential primary season, they are the culmination of months and months (and more months!) of voters being bombarded with campaign ads, events, phone calls, and text messages. They are also the culmination of presidential candidates visiting the Hawkeye State as often as possible. And they are a rite of passage for countless volunteers, especially young people who uproot their lives and work day and night for a candidate they believe in.

At the end of all this, it's only natural that voters, candidates, campaign staff, and hard working volunteers want to see the election results — and celebrate — right away. As *California's Chief Elections Officer*, *it's more important for me to make sure that election results are reported accurately than to be reported immediately.*

Over the last few days, we've all observed some confusion, some frustration, and much speculation about what happened in Iowa on Monday. Given the many questions that are out there, I think there are some important distinctions to highlight between what happened in the Iowa caucuses, which were administered by a political party, and what you can expect during the California Primary Election, which will be administered by elections officials.

The problems in Iowa originated with an app that was developed for the reporting of caucus results to the Iowa Democratic Party. **In California, we don't use apps to cast ballots, to count ballots, or to report results.** In fact, *state law prohibits our voting systems from even being connected to the internet.* And we require paper ballots and a voter verified paper audit trail.

Additionally, while the reporting from Iowa was frustrating and confusing, the Iowa Democratic Party has tried to remind the public and the press that there are paper records of every caucus' results, precisely for this potential scenario. In the event of any issues — technological or otherwise — they are relying on the paper record to determine the results. This is also why **California law requires paper ballots and a voter verified paper audit trail, for all voters and for votes cast.** We also require

each county to conduct a post-election audit after every election before certifying final results.

Finally, there were a lot of theories about what went wrong between the time the Iowa Democratic Party first noticed the discrepancies in reporting and the time they identified the coding errors in their app. Since 2016, we've all been subject to a lot of election misinformation and disinformation.

We should all exercise a little patience and common sense by understanding the safeguards in place to protect the integrity of California's elections. And we should all exercise good judgement by asking questions when we have them, and *seeking answers to our questions from the reliable, trusted, and official sources of voter registration and election information: your county election office, or the Secretary of State.*

The California presidential primary is approaching quickly. Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 3rd. Many Californians have already begun voting as they receive, complete, and return vote-by-mail ballots or by visiting their county elections offices to vote early. For voters in counties who have adopted the Voters Choice Act, vote centers begin to open on Saturday, Feb. 22 with many more opening on Saturday, Feb. 29. For more information on early voting, to verify your registration status, the rules for voting for president, and more, visit vote.ca.gov and make your plan to vote. And if you have any questions call your county elections office or the California Voter Hotline at (800) 345-VOTE.

No matter how you prefer to vote, vote with confidence knowing that your vote — and every vote — will be counted and counted as cast. And when the final numbers are announced, know that they have been audited to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the results.

Thank you again for your support and engagement. And please share this important message with your networks.

Sincerely,

Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State

This email was sent to Padilla for Secretary of State email subscribers. If you'd like to sign up to receive updates like this, [please click here](#).