



OCTOBER

COUNTY OF FRESNO

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
AWARENESS MONTH

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 13, 2020

### **Fresno County District Attorney's Office Reviewing Complaints of Unauthorized Ballot Boxes in Fresno County**

The Fresno County District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit has received complaints involving the placement of unauthorized and non-official vote-by-mail drop boxes at various locations within the County of Fresno. These complaints were submitted by concerned citizens to the Fresno County Clerk/Registrar of Voters and subsequently sent to the Fresno County District Attorney's Office.

The California Secretary of State and California Attorney General have responded to these allegations by issuing a 'Cease and Desist' letter addressed to the California Republican Party, as well as each county's Party Chairperson. The letter requires the parties to cease and desist the coordination, use and/or false or misleading promotion of unauthorized and non-official vote-by-mail drop boxes. It also requires the parties to surrender any ballots retrieved from unauthorized vote-by-mail drop boxes to the appropriate county elections official. The parties were also asked to provide the number and location of each unauthorized drop box deployed. The parties are required to contact the Secretary of State, by close of business on Thursday, October 15, 2020, to provide county elections officials with the names, addresses and birthdate information of voters who have dropped off their ballots in these unauthorized drop boxes. The County Clerk/Registrar of Voters will be contacting the affected voters to advise them of their options and to verify the return status of their vote-by-mail ballot.

Elections Code § 3025 generally defines a "vote by mail ballot drop box" as a secure receptacle established by a county or city and county elections official. A "vote by mail drop off location" means a location consisting of an official "vote by mail ballot drop box." Additionally, the state regulates the design, use, and security of vote-by-mail ballot drop boxes. Elections Code § 18575 proscribes a criminal penalty to anyone who, at any election, acts as an election officer without first having been appointed and qualified or performs or discharges any of the duties of an election officer in regard to the handling, counting, or canvassing of any ballots.

Authorized methods for return of vote-by-mail ballots are covered under Elections Code § 3017. Individuals who knowingly and willingly engage in criminal acts related to ballots returned pursuant to that section, including, but not limited to, fraud, bribery, intimidation, and tampering with or failing to deliver the ballot in a timely fashion are subject to the penal provisions of the Elections Code.

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office will investigate and, when appropriate, prosecute any criminal violations of the Elections Code and will work in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office in these matters.

The Media may direct inquiries to [FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov) or (559) 600-4442.