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SF SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PROTECTS BALLOTS, REGISTERS VOTERS FOR JUNE ELECTION

San Francisco, Calif., May 8, 2018 -- One of the city's top law enforcement agencies is poised to play a pivotal role in the June 5, 2018 election.

The San Francisco Sheriff's Department will collect and protect Election Day ballots for all 583 of the city's precincts. Leading up to the election, Sheriff's Department staff, with support from Stanford University law student interns, will register San Francisco County Jail inmates who are eligible to vote.

Sheriff's Deputies Protect the Voted Ballot

Since 2003, the Sheriff's Department has been safeguarding Election Day ballots after voters passed a reform measure, which assigned this responsibility to the Sheriff's Department. This election year, Deputy Sheriffs will once again fan out across the city in some 120 rental vans to pick up ballots and deliver them safely to Pier 48 for processing.

"The Sheriff's Department is proud to serve as guardian for one of the most sacred of constitutional rights: the right of citizens to vote," says Sheriff Vicki Hennessy. "The Sheriff's role reinforces public confidence in our voting process, which is critical to encouraging more people to vote, engage with the government and sustain a healthy democracy."

Sheriff's Deputies patrol all areas where "live" or voted ballots are processed, stored, or transported until the election is certified by the Secretary of State. The certification process can take up to 28 days.

Inmate Voter Registration at County Jails

The Sheriff's Department Prisoner Legal Services (PLS) unit began registering voters at San Francisco's three custodial jails in late April and will continue through May 21. To date, PLS has provided voter services to 380 prisoners for the June 5, 2018 election.

"Expanding voting rights to include inmates at San Francisco County Jails is at the heart of the Sheriff's Department mission," says Sheriff Hennessy. "Voting is one of the ways inmates function in a

productive, lawful manner.” [Studies](#) show that efforts to preserve or restore individual civil rights help reduce the likelihood of recidivism.”

San Francisco’s Department of Elections provides registered inmate voters vote-by-mail ballots and local voter information pamphlets. The California Secretary of State’s office supplies the state’s voter information guide.

PLS has registered San Francisco County jail inmates to vote since the year 2000. By California law, the only persons in county jails disqualified from voting are those who are on parole or serving a prison sentence. Approximately 85 percent of San Francisco County jail inmates are awaiting trial including who are eligible to vote. The Department of Elections confirms eligibility to vote prior to a ballot being issued.

“Prisoners can be highly motivated,” says Nick Gregoratos, PLS Director. “For many, it is their first time voting. They believed that they were not allowed to vote due to prior convictions. Once inmates understand they are eligible to vote, they become excited about the opportunity and spend time studying the issues to make informed choices.”

Led by elected Sheriff Vicki Hennessy, the San Francisco Sheriff’s Department serves the people of San Francisco by administering the county jails, providing security for the Superior Court and other high-profile public buildings, performing civil court orders and protecting the voted ballot. The Sheriff’s Department employs more than 850 sworn staff and almost 200 non-sworn employees.