

The County Of Nevada



CLERK RECORDER-REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

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PRESS RELEASE

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Voter Concerns Addressed Regarding Access To Voting At The Rood Center

The Nevada County Registrar of Voters has received concern from voters about personal safety while voting in person at the Rood Center, as well as the drive-up ballot drop box located in the Rood Center parking lot. The Registrar, in partnership with the County Executive Officer and County Counsel are working together on a solution that will protect the rights of all citizens, including preserving the right to vote.

On Sunday, October 11, a Pro-Trump rally was held in the parking lot at the Rood Center. Participants drove in vehicles decorated with campaign materials, used a microphone and amplifier to express their support for President Trump, and sold campaign items (e.g., shirts, hats, etc.) at a pop-up vendor booth. The rally lasted for approximately 60 minutes and was peaceful.

Some Nevada County voters who were not participating in the rally drove or walked to the Rood Center intending to drop off a ballot, and were either unable to drive to the drop box due to the number of cars present in the parking lot, or unwilling to approach the ballot box.

Some of the rally participants parked close to the drop box, which made it difficult for others to drive up to the box to drop off their voted ballot.

All voters, regardless of political affiliation or preferences, have the right to cast a ballot freely at any voting or drop box location of their choice. Any voter who feels unable to safely cast a ballot should call the Registrar's office at 530-265-1298 so that action can be taken to ameliorate the situation.

Section 319.5 of the California Elections Code defines electioneering as "the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any candidate or measure on the ballot within 100 feet of a polling place, a vote center, an elections official's office, or a satellite location." Section 319.5(e) further states that prohibited electioneering information includes activities "at vote by mail ballot drop boxes, loitering near or disseminating visible or audible electioneering information." This prohibition is intended to provide a calm and nonpartisan environment for all voters to cast a ballot free from intimidation or other distraction.

The Nevada County Registrar of Voters values the right to free political expression, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Registrar is also sworn to protect the rights of voters, including but not limited to the right to cast a ballot at any official location—including a ballot drop box. County Counsel has been informed and has reached out to the Nevada County Republican Central Committee, which has expressed interest in reaching a mutually agreeable solution.

The Registrar is responding by placing signs around the drop box reminding all citizens of the prohibition on electioneering. Staff are working with the County on placement of the signs so that citizens who wish to engage in free political expression may do so, while also providing all voters with a nonpartisan zone where ballots can be cast. A rally planned for October 17 has apparently been cancelled, according to rally

organizers, in an effort to quell public concerns over voter suppression and intimidation.

Media questions regarding this press release can be directed to the Nevada County Elections Office, 530-265-1227 or natalie.adona@co.nevada.ca.us.