A Voting Rights Minute!



VRP Legal Director Led Oral Arguments in *Cervantes v. Bianco* Hearing

On Monday, VRP Legal Director, **Chad Dunn**, argued in front of the California Supreme Court that Riverside Sheriff, Chad Bianco, failed to follow California Elections law on contesting election results when he seized approximately 650,000 voted ballots from the November 2025 special election.

"The elections code provides a process. Citizens could have triggered a recount within, I think, it's five days of the canvass, and they chose not to do that. They could ask the attorney general, the secretary of state, and there's other officials to trigger an official recount," Dunn told the court.

Former Attorney General, **Xavier Becerra**, was present for the conference and urged for a quick ruling from the court. "We hope that the Supreme Court of California will issue a swift decision protecting the right to vote, protecting the

ballots that are cast by our voters, so we can once again give our voters the confidence to know that when they go out and do their democratic duty and cast their vote, it not only will be counted, it will be protected."

Visit the *VRP in the News s*ection of this newsletter for additional coverage on the argument and press conference. Watch the full press conference below.



CVRA SB 1164 Passes Senate, Heads for Governor Newsom's Desk

This week, the **California Voting Rights Act SB 1164** passed through both the assembly and the Senate. This means that the bill will now go to Governor Newsom’s desk to be signed. SB 1164 amends the current California voting rates act to add additional protections for all voters against vote suppression and vote dilution.

Texas Supreme Court Awaits Additional Briefing in Galveston, TX Case

The Texas Supreme Court gave Galveston County until Monday, August 31st to provide additional briefing in response to Relators' (represented by UCLA VRP) brief and defend the enactment of a newly redistricted map. Relators' brief, filed in August, argued that the new County map, enacted after the 2026 Primary election had already taken place, could not lawfully be used for the 2026 general elections.

New Trump Order Puts Delivery of Millions of California VBM Ballots at Risk

Of the approximately 10.3 million vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots cast in the 2025 Special Election, more than 5.2 million, approximately 51.0%, were returned through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Among those VBM ballots returned by mail, approximately 44.6% were cast by non-white voters. The 2026 Primary had 8.4 million VBM ballots cast. 3.3 million were returned by mail, accounting for approximately 38.8% of the VBM ballots.



VRP in the News

Sonni Waknin, Senior Staff Attorney at UCLA's Voting Rights Project, appeared on 'Mornings on 2' to discuss its challenges to Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco for seizing 650,000 ballots, for what he called "voting irregularities."

Waknin explains that "Having an open and transparent process for counting ballots is critical to ensuring voters have confidence in the reported election results."

VRP Legal Director, **Chad Dunn**, is captured in a video clip of the press conference stating, "What happened here today, doesn't just spread throughout Riverside County. It won't just spread around the 57 counties in the state of California, but instead, it's going to send a message around the country, that our election ballots are the voter's ballots, to be protected at all costs."

Chad Dunn, Legal Director and co-founder of the UCLA Voting Rights Project, outlined to the court the mechanisms to contest election results that Sheriff Bianco failed to follow. “Nowhere else in election law, in this state, in any other that I’m familiar with, does anybody get to handle ballots on their own in the back room with their deputies,” Dunn told the judges.

💼Employment Opportunities - Come work with the VRP!🚨

Staff Attorney

The UCLA Voting Rights Project (VRP) seeks an experienced litigation, trial, and appellate attorney to work on a new project focused on California county, city, school, and state redistricting plans and election policies. Reporting to the Legal Director, the staff attorney/California Voting Rights Counsel will play a critical role in the VRP, developing a new program along with data scientists, to track and analyze redistricting plans and proposed changes within local jurisdictions throughout the state of California. See the full job description here.

Research Data Analyst

The UCLA Voting Rights Project (VRP) seeks a Research Data Analyst to support research projects focused on voting rights, elections, and democracy. Under the direction of the Data Scientist, Faculty Director, and research team, the incumbent will assist with research activities involving demographic, electoral, and geographic data to support policy research, public reports, and other project deliverables. See the full job description here.

How else can I support the VRP?

We will be sure to update you on community events, opportunities, or individual actions you can take that support our mission. If you are interested in collaborating or sponsoring our work on a larger scale, please reach out to us at info@uclavrp.org.

If you would like to support research, policy advocacy, and impact litigation to promote equal access to voting for all Americans, please donate here. We appreciate your support!

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