

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contact:

ACLUF-SDIC, [media@aclu-sdic.org](mailto:media@aclu-sdic.org) (619) 501-3540

Helen Hutchison, [hhutchison@lwvc.org](mailto:hhutchison@lwvc.org) 916 442-7215

Adam Ginsburg, [aginsburg@lwv.org](mailto:aginsburg@lwv.org) (914) 481-7053

### **League of Women Voters of California Acts to Protect Mailed Ballots in California**

*Rep. Issa's lawsuit is an attack on voting rights and fair, accurate elections in nation's most populous state*

SAN DIEGO - Hundreds of thousands of California voters could have their ballots wrongfully discounted, according to a motion to intervene filed by the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) on Friday against a lawsuit seeking to block counting mailed ballots received after Election Day.

The LWVC, represented by the ACLU and the ACLU Foundations of Northern California, Southern California, and San Diego & Imperial Counties, seeks to intervene in a lawsuit brought last month by California Congressman Darrell Issa. Issa's suit alleges that the state is violating federal election laws by allowing voters who cast and mail their mail ballots by Election Day to have those ballots counted if they are received within seven days after Election Day. Issa's lawsuit, if successful, would require voters to cast and mail their ballots well in advance of Election Day or risk that their vote will not be counted.

In 2014, California legislators voted to implement a grace period of three days after Election Day for mail ballots postmarked by Election Day to be delivered. After a temporary extension to 17 days during the COVID-19 pandemic, state legislators in 2021 settled on the current window of seven days post-Election Day.

"In his lawsuit, Congressman Issa openly admits that he wants to disenfranchise voters simply because they might not vote for him," said **Julia Gomez, interim managing legal director of the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties**. "He is putting his own partisan interests above elections that accurately reflect the will of the people and his arguments are meritless."

"California's vote-by-mail system follows a common-sense principle: voters who mail their ballot in by Election Day should have their vote counted," said **Chris Carson**,

**president of the League of Women Voters of California.** “This dangerous lawsuit seeks to rob Californians of the opportunity to make their voices heard in the way most accessible to them – and the League of Women Voters of California will not stand for that.”

“Across the country, we are seeing a sustained attack on the freedom to vote – and Rep. Issa’s alarming lawsuit is just the latest example,” said **Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States.** “We all know mail can take days to reach its destination, and no Californian – or American – who casts their ballot in time should have their vote disregarded because of that. Our democracy is stronger when everyone can participate. What are anti-voter groups and politicians so afraid of?”

“Many states sensibly allow voters who complete and mail their ballot by Election Day a few extra days for their ballot to arrive in the mail. But now election deniers are attacking those rules with a bogus legal theory based on century-old federal laws having nothing to do with mail ballot voting,” said **Ari Savitzky, senior staff attorney at the ACLU Voting Rights Project.** “This effort to cast doubt on voting by mail and on our elections will fail.”

Read the motion: <https://www.aclu-sdic.org/sites/default/files/utf-88-1.pdf>

*The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) is a non-partisan grassroots membership organization that seeks to promote informed and active participation in government, including by helping California voters navigate the voting process, including voting by mail. Serving the entire state of California, the LWVC has more than 7,000 members in the state, a significant number of whom vote by mail ballot.*

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