

# ADEM Election Analysis

February 9, 2021

## Executive Summary

Over the course of 80 days, CADEM staff implemented an all vote-by-mail ADEMs Election, the first of its kind. During the 57-day registration window, 169,770 voters and 2,716 candidates signed up. This was a 300% increase from the last ADEMs Elections in 2019. CADEM contracted with PDI, Scantron, and BaughmanMerrill to execute the election. The final number of ballots submitted were 60,998. During the election, CADEM staff responded to 9,500 emails and answered over 400 calls, assisting candidates and voters.

## ADEM Reform and All Vote-by-Mail

### AD Hoc Committee on ADEM

In September 2019, the Ad Hoc Committee on Reforming the ADEMs Elections (Ad Hoc Committee) held its first meeting. The Ad Hoc Committee discussed how to improve the ADEM Elections process. The Committee started its work by individually reviewing all the testimony (oral and written) provided by members of the public and the California Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC). The testimony and suggestions were all considered and informed the various deliberations. After 6 months of reviewing the process, the committee recommended streamlining an election process with a single registration system that verified all voters and better-collected voter information. It was also recommended that there be more election meeting location variances. As a result, the new registration process and more election locations would improve communications between the Party and participants. The Ad Hoc Committees' report was submitted before the 2020 Primary. Shortly thereafter, stay-at-home orders were issued in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

### Introduction of Vote-by-Mail Option:

After the August 2020 Executive Board, the Rules Subcommittee on ADEMs Elections discussed how to incorporate a vote-by-mail option in place of the in-person ADEMs Elections. The focus was to provide an early-vote option to the ADEMs process that prioritized the health and safety of every Democrat.

The original proposal drafted by the Rules Subcommittee gave voters 24 days from the close of registration, January 1 - January 24, 2021, to when ballots were due to be counted.

### Adoption of all Vote-by-Mail at the November 2020 E-Board

During the November 2020 Executive Board, the Rules Committee - after taking testimony from a number of Executive Board Members - passed a provision moving forward with a vote-by-mail

process while temporarily eliminating all in-person voting options, including staff proposed drop off locations.

The Executive Board voted to shorten the amount of time that voters would have to turn in their ballots from 24 days to 16 days, setting the new dates to:

- **January 11, 2021**, for the close of registration;
- **January 27, 2021** when ballots were due.

CADEM staff raised concerns stating that without an in-person component, the tight deadline limited the response time for our vendors to correct potential errors related to the vote-by-mail process during the election. However, CADEM staff quickly adapted to the changes agreed upon by the Executive Board and proceeded to expedite an all vote-by-mail voting process. The provisions were ultimately passed by the full Executive Board in a Special Meeting on January 16, 2021.

## **Ballot Design**

### Scantron Company

Working in close coordination with members of the Ad Hoc Committee, CADEM contracted with the Scantron Company to create and count ballots for the ADEMs Election. Scantron was chosen because they would be able to handle an election in the tens of thousands and provide digital copies of all ballots post-election.

### Ballot Goals

During the Ballot Design process, Staff instructed Scantron to design a ballot that would have the following features:

1. Space to include the Voter ID number and fillable bubbles to verify the number;
2. A uniform ballot for all districts, with only the district number and the candidate names being different;
3. Columns for each candidate, which included a number and fillable bubble;
4. And space for bilingual instructions.

## **Registration**

### PDI Form for Instant Eligibility Check

CADEM staff began working with PDI in Fall of 2020 to design a voter registration form. The original discussions were about a form that would be for in-person voters to be pre-verified. The form was adapted to accommodate vote-by-mail registration and then finally changed to be for an all vote-by-mail registration.

The goal was to provide instantaneous voter verification, so staff could solely focus on troubleshooting any issues. Traditionally, staff/volunteers had to check eligible candidates in PDI.

Over the course of a couple of weeks, PDI developers designed the online registration form and performed last-minute changes after the Executive Board meeting.

A candidate/voter was checked against the voter file to ensure that only registered voters in the Assembly District could register to vote in the ADEM's election. If the voter's/candidate's eligibility was verified, CADEM would mail a ballot through USPS to the voter.

In the case of voters who had trouble signing up through the online form, the ADEM Procedures instructed CADEM staff to assist anyone who reached out for help. 4 - 7 staff managed the ADEM email account and CADEM main phone line day to day to help individual callers fill in the online-voter registration form over the phone. The staff estimates that it assisted no more than 1200 voters with their candidate and voter registrations during the registration process.

### Separate Registration Forms

Separate registration forms were created for Candidates and Voters. Candidate registration forms required the participant to fill out more information related to being a candidate. Once the application form was filled, candidates were directed to a page to pay their candidate dues. The ADEM voter registration, non-candidate form, only required the information needed to verify them as a registered democrat in the district and provide contact information to communicate with them.

### Participant Privacy

CADEM worked with PDI to create a secure registration process that was separate from PDI's main database. All participants' information and the information they provided at no point was shared with anyone and is only being used for CADEM purposes.

CADEM and PDI performed multiple tests during the ADEM's Election to confirm the systems were secure.

### Voter Registration Excess

CADEM staff identified early on that emails were being used multiple times to register voters. CADEM staff relayed this information to members of the Rules Committee to seek guidance if the ADEM Procedures gave staff any power to stop this from happening or to remove those voter registrations. The members of the Rules committee agreed that this was not the best practice, but that there was nothing in the rules that gave staff the ability to restrict registration. The staff could only restrict registration if someone was not a registered Democrat or registered at all.

In mid-January, there were reports from voters that they were not getting confirmation emails. CADEM inquired with PDI about the emails not being received. Due to confirmation emails being sent to one email address repeatedly, GMAIL tagged the ADEM Email server as spam. As

a result, staff instructed PDI to stop sending confirmation emails to that email to avoid any further deliverability issues.

## **Mailing Ballots**

### Printing Timeline

After a competitive request for proposal process, CADEM contracted with BaughmanMerrill to draft, design, print, assemble and distribute the ADEM's vote-by-mail ballot packet materials.

BaughmanMerrill is an LGBTQ woman-led firm powered by a majority-minority staff of campaign strategists providing strategy, direct mail, media, and digital support.

Planning for the vote-by-mail process began with CADEM, Baughman Merrill, and Scantron immediately following the November 2020 Executive Board.

BaughmanMerrill began having regular meetings with the USPS to inform them about the ADEMs election and began discussing the best practices to work with the USPS and how to avoid any delays. CADEM decided to use First Class Mail Postage for outgoing and incoming mail, and not use Non-Profit Postage or Business Reply Mail. The Non-Profit or Business Reply Mail postage options would have saved CADEM money, but would have delayed USPS processing. The USPS tagged the CADEM Mail to expedite its movement through their postal sorting facilities.

### Ballots and Assembly

Ballot packets included an exterior 6x9" window carrier envelope, #9 postage-paid return envelopes, informational letters in four different languages, bilingual buck slips with an easy to follow, three-step guide to simplify the voting process, and a district-specific ballot. The informational letter was personalized by the voter and appended with the voter's name and their own secure and unique voter ID number. All informational letters were bilingual in English and Spanish.

CADEM delivered multilingual instructions to specific districts that contained 1.5% of registered Democrats whose first or second languages were Mandarin, Vietnamese, or Korean. Two variations of pre-paid return envelopes were created with Sacramento (Northern CA) and Van Nuys (Southern CA) return addresses. Print materials were produced while the mail firm awaited ballots forms.

Once ballots were shipped from Scantron and received by the BaughmanMerrill's mail house, district-specific ballots were matched with the appropriate district and print materials and assembled into mail ballot packets. Each ballot packet was mailed either presort first-class or affixed with a first-class stamp, to ensure delivery within 2 to 3 days.

The program's ballot drops were processed in two waves. The first wave consisted of 47,263 voters (those registered by January 5) and was dropped in the mail between January 6-12. The

second wave of 122,549 voters (those registered by January 12) was dropped in the mail between January 14-20.

Ballot packets were dropped every evening at the Oakland Bulk Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) where they were processed by USPS and delivered within 2 to 3 days. BaughmanMerrill conducted evening real-time updates with our mail shop, CADEM staff, and supervisors at USPS to confirm timely and accurate mail deliveries.

BaughmanMerrill issued 1,125 replacement packets for lost, soiled, or damaged ballots.

## Ballot Ordering

For the initial ballot order, CADEM staff used the 2019 turnout and registration trends to project future participation.

The first order of ballots was for 70,750 ballots on 12/20/20. Scantron requested that ballots be ordered by December 20th to meet the first wave of registered voters on January 5th. The holidays impacted production times.

The second order of ballots was for 19,000 on 1/6/21. Immediately after the first wave, a list was pulled for mailing. The 19,000 additional ballots would meet the projected numbers of voters in specific districts as well as complete the election.

The final order of ballots was for 104,300 ballots, on 1/12/21, immediately following the close of registration. This order was for 76 of the 80 districts. 70% of all registrations took place between 1/6/20 and 1/11/20. CADEM was also required to order more of all print materials to accommodate the surge in late voter registration.

While waiting for the final order to be delivered, CADEM was only able to mail out to the 4 districts that did not require additional ballots. After those ballots were mailed, the mail house started pre-assembling ballot packages. All ballots were mailed out by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

During the ballot assembly process, the Mailhouse contracted by BaughmanMerrill mistakenly sent some voters in AD59 two ballots while not sending other voters a ballot at all. At their expense, BaughmanMerrill ordered more ballots and had the mailhouse resend the ballots to the addresses that had not been sent a ballot yet. The voters whose ballots were not sent out on time, were given a 7 day extension to the deadline, and those ballots were to be received by February 10th. The results for AD59 will be available on February 15th.

## Processing rates

BaughmanMerrill averaged a drop of at least 9,000 packets per day during Wave One and over 10,000 packets per day in Wave Two, including a drop of over 58,000 ballots during the Martin Luther King Day Jr. holiday weekend.

## Extension in Due Date

The original ballot due date set by the Executive Board in November 2020 was January 27th.

During the Special January Executive Board, the due date was extended to be postmarked by January 27th and received in the PO Box by January 30th.

On January 22nd, CADEM staff sent a letter to CADEM Officers requesting the DSCC lists timeline be extended to allow enough time to complete each portion. The executive officers met on January 22 and voted to approve the staff's request to extend the deadline to receive ballots to February 3 - one full week after the original January 27 deadline.

## Support

### Support Setup

CADEM staff set up a single email account to be the central database and archive for all ADEM related activities, [ADEM@CADEM.ORG](mailto:ADEM@CADEM.ORG). All registration confirmations, ballot statement registrations, and support requests went through this email account.

Staff created a separate website domain dedicated to the 2021 ADEMs election, and designing in short order a homepage where the candidate and voter registration application forms could be found, an ADEM Tool & Resources page, FAQ Sheet page, 80 individual candidate lookup pages that included candidate statements and videos if provided by the candidate, and a Ballot Packet review page, that included ballot directions in English, Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

### Email Support

The [ADEM@CADEM.ORG](mailto:ADEM@CADEM.ORG) email account was activated on November 15, 2020. The staff has responded to over 9,500 emails. The email account was generally answered daily between 9 am-6pm M/F, 8 am-10am Sat/Sun. During select times, staff was answering emails until after midnight. Teams of 1-6 staff responded depending on email volume. Near the end of registration windows, staff would have 6 or more people answering emails, but would still not be able to respond fast enough to keep up with the volume of emails. It took staff 3 days following the close of voter registration to respond to 1600 emails that were received prior to the close of registration.

### Phone

Staff answered phone calls Monday - Friday 9am-6pm. Calls and voicemails ranged from Voter Registration help, registration confirmation, ballot status, FAQ on voting, fixing mistakes, ballot replacements, ballot request, confirming if ballot received, and more. Every voicemail received a call back from CADEM staff. Returned and answered calls were made throughout the holiday break and weekends leading up to January 11, 2021 deadline. ATT Collaborate App

discontinued its activation in January 2021- inhibiting staff from answering calls and only receiving voicemails Team of 1-2 staff responding depending on call volume.

## Reviewed Candidate Statements/Videos

CADEM staff reviewed every single ballot statement prior to posting and reviewed all videos before posting links. This created some delays as staff had to work through the holidays to review all of the material submitted.

## Vote Counting

All ballots were mailed to a P.O. Box in Sacramento (Northern CA) and Van Nuys (Southern, CA). Staff went to the Post Office every day to collect ballots and took them to a mail house nearby. The Mail House would open all the envelopes, straighten the ballots, and overnighted them to the Scantron Counting Facility in the Midwest.

Below are the procedures that were provided to CADEM by Scantron.

### Receiving

Drivers are required to request access to our secure facility via our intercom system and sign a login sheet at the shipping/receiving desk once inside. All deliveries to Scantron are received and signed for by a material handler in our secure warehouse and/or shipping dock area. Deliveries are then sorted and delivered internally to each department. CADEM ballots are delivered into the Mail Data Prep Area that requires additional security badges for select employees.

### Logging Packages

CADEM provides Scantron with expected delivery information in a shared document that displays tracking numbers, drop off date and origin location. Scantron updates the document when each package is received.

Scantron also created an internal log that lists the date received and tracking numbers of each package.

### Preparing Ballots for Scanning

All packages are opened, prepped for scanning, weighed for an estimated count, and turned into the scanning department. All miscellaneous mail received is set aside and stored to be returned to CADEM and the end of the project. A traveling document follows the ballots throughout the rest of the process.

### Scanning

Ballots are moved into our secure scanning room and scanned on Scantron's Insight 150 scanners. Scantron designed a unique scan application to recognize the ballots and markings on

each form while creating images of each form. Ballots that do not successfully scan due to their physical condition are pulled and labeled as damaged. All scanned forms are then boxed, labeled, and stored until the end of the project.

### Key Entry/Data Verification

After the physical forms are scanned, the data is created by running it through the scanning application and data verification program. The program recognizes marks that it can identify and brings up questionable marks for human verification. “Keyers” are able to review questionable marks from the images that the scanner created. The most questionable marks for CADEM’s ballot are the Voter Registration Id # because it is handwritten by the voters.

### Data Review

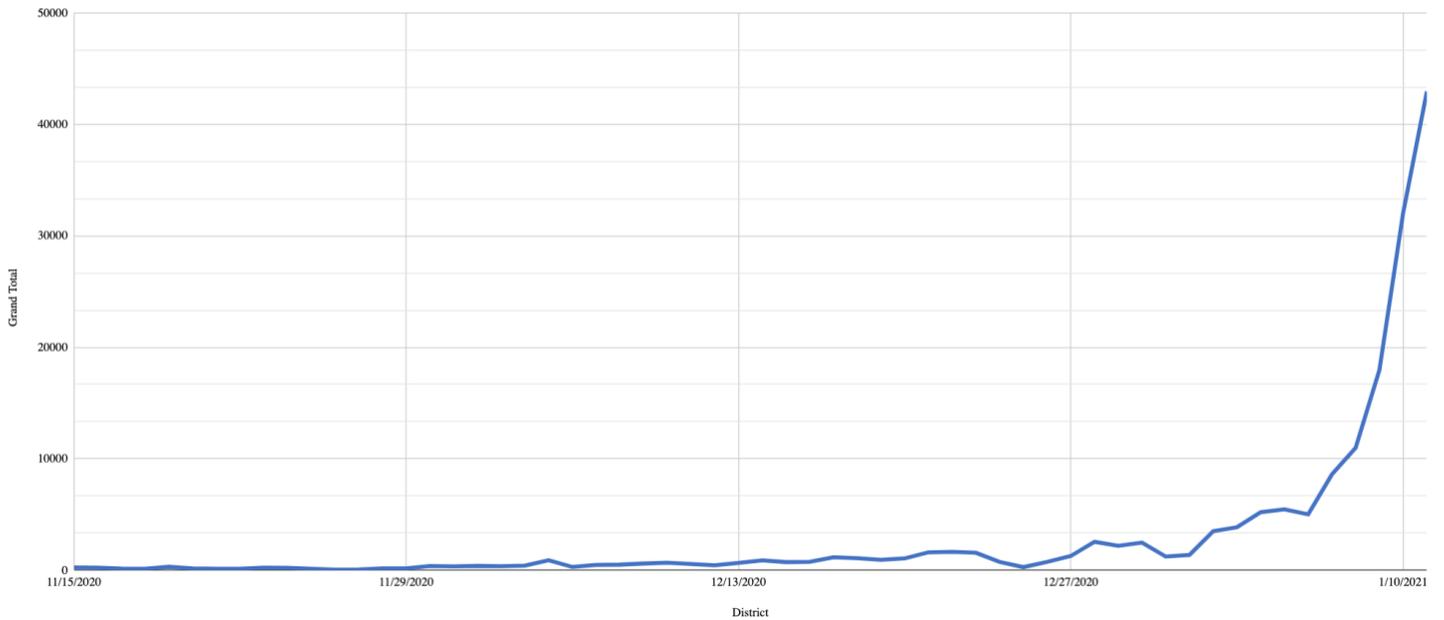
After Key Entry Verification, batches are exported into an access table where the invalids are reviewed. **Invalids include** duplicate ID’s, invalid ID’s, missing all or part of the id’s, and ballots with more than 14 selections. Once the invalids are reviewed, the data is exported to an excel data file. An internal program then updates the website counts and sorts images into each districts’ assigned valid and invalid folders.

## Statistics

The record-breaking 2021 ADEM elections had 169,770 registered voters with 60,998 ballots being submitted. During the election, CADEM staff answered over 9,500 emails and 400 phone calls.

The chart below highlights the daily registration from the opening of registration to the close of registration. Over 50% of all registration happened during the last 3 days of voter registration.

Grand Total vs. District



## Cost

The Cost to operate the 2021 ADEM elections was just over \$475,000. The Party raised just under \$100,000, for a net loss of \$ (376,803.48).

	Total
Income	\$ 98,567.47
Expenditures	\$ 475,370.95
Total	\$ (376,803.48)

Source	State	Notes
PDI	\$ 15,600.00	Registration Form
Scantron	\$ 62,923.00	Ballot printing and Counting
Baughman Merrill	\$ 375,844.12	Printing, envelopes and postage
Ballot Sorting and Shipping	\$ 21,003.83	Shipping Ballots to Counting Facility
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 475,370.95</b>	