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EDITOR'S NOTE



# The campaign sprint

California's March 3 presidential  
primary accelerates local races

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counties in California could have stuck with a separate June primary for local races. But the Secretary of State's office doesn't know of any that have. In Sacramento County, the county elections office estimates that would have cost another \$6 million-plus, which no officeholder wants to spend in an election year.

So we're full speed ahead to March 3. Key races include the crowded contest for Sacramento County supervisor in District 3.

Susan Peters is not seeking reelection, and local Democrats say if they can win the seat, that would flip control of the board—and change policy on cannabis, climate change and homelessness.

There's also an open seat on the Sacramento City Council in District 8, with incumbent Larry Carr not running, along with three other district council races. Of course, the race for Sacramento mayor is crucial, though Darrell Steinberg seems to be skating to a second term.

And there could be a citywide ballot measure that would lock in more funding for children and youth services by changing the city charter to reserve 2.5% of unrestricted revenues, or about \$12 million a year. Supporters are pushing for March, but the council has yet to put it on the ballot.

For those candidates in local races fortunate enough to win outright on March 3, it will mean eight months to prepare for office. But for those forced into a Nov. 3 runoff, it means an even longer—and likely more expensive—campaign for the general election. (Sacramento County's other cities—Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton and Rancho Cordova—don't hold their elections until Nov. 3.)

Helping choose the Democratic nominee to go up against President Trump is absolutely critical, of course. But so is picking local officeholders who will have more control of daily life.

So get ready: it's going to be an exciting, exhausting sprint to March 3.

**A year from now—Nov. 3, 2020—America will be**  
electing the next president.

But first things first.

Democrats in the Legislature moved up California's 2020 primary from June 2 to March 3 to give the state a bigger say in the presidential race, though 13 other states have also picked that date.

The earlier California presidential primary also means a much shorter schedule for state and local elections.

For candidates, filing starts Nov. 12 and ends Dec. 6 (or Dec. 11 if the incumbent doesn't file), so there's not much time to decide whether to run. After that, there's only three months to organize, raise money and reach out to voters.

For voters, expect your mailboxes and Facebook feeds to be full of campaign appeals right after the holidays, if not earlier. Mail ballots go out Feb. 3, and drop-off locations open the following day, so decision time will be here before you know it.

If you haven't registered to vote yet, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill that expands the right to register and cast a conditional vote the same day. So if you're eligible to vote, there's not much of an excuse any more.

This schedule is different than the last time California moved up its presidential primary—in February 2008—when the statewide primary was held separately in June.

In 2020, while the state primary must be held at the same time as the presidential contest, cities and