*T*his is California's first presidential primary to be conducted under the provisions of the Open Primary Law, enacted when voters adopted Proposition 198 in November 1996. The open primary allows voters to cast their ballots for any partisan candidate for state and/or federal office even though they are registered with another party or are not registered with any party at all; i.e. independents. However, national political party rules require that only party members may vote for presidential candidates to whom delegates to the party's presidential nominating convention are pledged.

In order to maintain the open primary as adopted by California voters, and also provide the political parties with the information they need, the State Legislature authorized a method by which county elections officials can determine party vote. Voters who are registered with a political party receive ballots marked to indicate their party. As the ballots are being counted on election night, the county's computer vote tallying program is able to report the vote cast by all voters for each of the presidential candidates, as well as

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how presidential delegates are selected

the vote cast by voters of each party for these candidates. It will, for example, report how Democrats voted for all candidates, how Republicans voted for all candidates, etc. Using these results, the Secretary of State's office can easily determine how many votes each of the party candidates received from members of their own party, without having you, the voter, change the method by which you vote on election day. For further information regarding these procedures, visit the Secretary of State's website at: www.ss.ca.gov.