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FROM: Barbara J. Levey, Registrar of Voters

SUBJECT: **November 3, 2020 Election – Official Ballot Drop Boxes**

There have been recent reports of groups promoting unofficial ballot drop boxes that are not affiliated with Merced County Elections. In some instances, they are promoting these ballot drop boxes as “official” or “secure.” The use of unauthorized, non-official ballot drop boxes is prohibited by state law. “Although no unofficial ballot drop boxes have been reported to be in use in Merced County, I do want our voters aware of this situation” said Barbara Levey, Registrar of Voters.

Voters who want to return their ballot at a drop box, should use only official county drop boxes. Official ballot drop boxes are clearly recognizable, designed to meet state standards for security, and bear the official Merced County Elections logo. Merced County’s Official Ballot Drop Boxes look like this:

For images and locations of the official Merced County Elections drop boxes please click on the following link: <https://www.co.merced.ca.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1935>

“Merced County Elections is continuing to work hard to ensure that the election is secure and accurate and to ensure that our voters can have confidence in the process. Merced County official ballot drop boxes are available to provide options as to how a voter may return their vote by mail ballot to us. It is a violation of state law to place or provide unofficial ballot drop boxes and we encourage voters to contact my office at (209) 385-7541 to report any concerns.”

Tips for voters:

- Make a plan to vote. You can return your vote-by-mail using the prepaid postage return envelope or by bringing it to any official drop box, voting location, or county elections office.
- Voters can also choose someone to return their ballot. Only choose someone you trust to return your ballot. You and the other person must sign the back of the return envelope. Never give your ballot to someone else unless you have completed, signed, and sealed the return envelope.
- Sign up for ballot tracking. You can sign-up at wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov to get automatic notifications by text message (SMS), email, or voice message about the status of your vote-by-mail ballot. You’ll be notified once your county has received your ballot, once it has been counted, and if there are any issues with the ballot.
- Get information on voting from trusted, official sources—the county elections office and the Secretary of State. Resources for Merced County voters are available at: www.mercedelections.org. The Secretary of State has resources for California voters at vote.ca.gov.

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