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BAY AREA VOTER TURNOUT

# 1.3 million have cast ballots

What it means for Proposition 50 is unclear as Election Day draws near

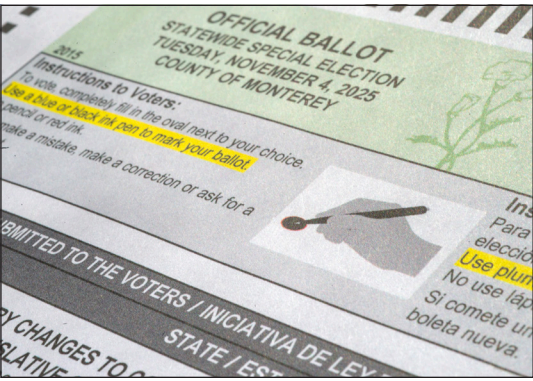
By Grant Stringer  
GSTRINGER@  
BAYAREANEWSGROUP.COM

About a quarter of voters in the Bay Area already have returned their ballot for Tuesday's special election, when California will decide the fate of a gerrymandering plan backed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, former President Barack Obama

and other Democrats. Election officials have received and accepted about 1.3 million ballots in the nine Bay Area counties, according to the most recent figures from the California Secretary of State's office Friday. That's about 28% of all ballots sent to Bay Area voters. Statewide, about 25% of all voters have returned a ballot. The Bay Area accounts for 23% of

ballots returned so far in California. What that means for Proposition 50, the only statewide contest on the ballot, is still unclear. Millions of voters still have plenty of time to return their ballots, and campaigns on both sides are making their final appeals. To be counted, mailed ballots must be postmarked on or before Tuesday and received by a local elections office by Nov. 12 at the latest. Ballots dropped off in person must be delivered before the polls close at 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

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A special election will have voters across the state casting ballots on Prop. 50. **DOUG DURAN — STAFF**

**VOTE 2025**

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SHOWERING THE PRESIDENT WITH CASH

## Silicon Valley tech firms' snug relationship with Trump deepens, bears fruit



ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF DURHAM — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

# BUILDING MORE THAN A BALLROOM

By Ethan Baron  
EBARON@  
BAYAREANEWSGROUP.COM

Silicon Valley technology companies' cozy relationship with President Donald Trump appears to be deepening and bearing fruit, as firms and their leaders show fealty with gifts, policies, and public statements of support, and CEOs show their ability to influence the President on matters of politics and business. In recent weeks, the White House has confirmed that Google, Meta, Apple, and HP donated to the construction of Trump's new White House ballroom, with Santa Clara chip giant Nvidia's CEO Jensen Huang later saying he was "delighted to be part of it." The companies and the White House did not respond to questions about specific amounts given. Google and YouTube parent Alphabet in late September agreed to pay

*"They need to protect the assets of their companies from the very real threats that they could face." While governments and officials in other countries may hit companies for fees and other payments outside formal tax systems she said, "the United States doesn't necessarily come to mind as a place where that has to happen."*

**JAN ENGLISH-LUECK**, San Jose State University anthropology professor, who has studied the tech industry for 30 years

\$22 million toward the ballroom, in a settlement over a lawsuit by Trump over his suspension from YouTube after the January 6 insurrection. In similar cases, Meta agreed to pay \$22 million toward Trump's presidential library, and X agreed to pay a settlement of about \$10 million. At Trump's inauguration in January, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, and Apple CEO Tim Cook sat behind the President. Google and Meta donated \$1 million each to Trump's inauguration committee, as did Cook and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman personally. In August, Trump announced that the U.S. was taking a 10 percent stake in Intel, and chipmakers Nvidia and AMD agreed to pay the government 15 percent of their AI chip sales in China. The same month, Apple's Cook, facing the possibility of steep tariffs affecting the price of iPhones, gave

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CALIFORNIA

## Homeless sweeps on the decline

Encampment clearings also down

By Ethan Varian  
EVARIAN@  
BAYAREANEWSGROUP.COM

In July 2024, Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered California agencies to "urgently" close homeless encampments on state property, aiming to show local officials that the state is leading by example in responding to homelessness. "There are simply no more excuses," the governor said in a statement announcing the directive. "It's time for everyone to do their part." But during the four months after Newsom's announcement, the number of encampment closures initiated by the California Department of Transportation — the primary state agency tasked with clearing camps from along highways and under freeway overpasses



**Newsom**

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GOVERNMENT

## Concern over federal food aid deepens

By Stephen Groves, Ali Swenson and Susan Haigh  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The crises at the heart of the government shutdown fight in Washington were coming to a head Saturday as the federal food assistance program faced delays and millions of Americans were set to see a dramatic rise in their health insurance bills. The impacts on basic needs — food and medical care — underscored how the impasse is hitting homes across the United States. Plans by the Trump administration to freeze payments to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Saturday were halted by federal judges, but the delay in payouts will still likely leave millions of people short on their grocery bills.

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