



## CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

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For Immediate Release  
December 21, 2007

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#### **Denver Clerk and Recorder Urges Optional, Not Mandatory, Mail Ballot**

While Denver Clerk and Recorder Stephanie O'Malley supports the decision of the Colorado County Clerks Association to consider all-mail balloting in Colorado in 2008, she strongly objects to making all-mail voting mandatory.

"I strenuously object to mandatory mail balloting. Denver should not be stripped of its ability to determine an election model that works best for its voting public," said O'Malley. "While mail balloting has its advantages, it also has disadvantages. In addition, in Denver we have heard a very strong message from our voters that they want the option to go to a precinct voting location in order to vote."

The clerks' association is calling for an all-mail election process in 2008 in the wake of Secretary of State Mike Coffman's decertification of much of Colorado's electronic voting equipment. Not all voting machines were affected by the Secretary of State's ruling; however, the use of electronic voting machines that were not decertified is problematic due to the taint of mistrust caused by studies done in other states and by growing voter skepticism. This includes about 75 percent of Denver's voting machines that were not decertified, but which are not accessible to disabled voters.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires voting systems that allow voters with disabilities to cast their ballots with privacy and independence, as other voters do. Mail ballots will not help those voters who require assistive technology in order to vote.

O'Malley also noted that Colorado's voter registration statute is restrictive, requiring counties to inactivate voters who miss voting in a major election. The result will be that anyone who did not vote in 2006 will not be automatically mailed a ballot in a 2008 all-mail ballot election. This could disenfranchise many thousands of voters in 2008 if they

do not know they must request a ballot in order to vote. With precinct voting, an inactivated voter can be re-activated by walking into the appropriate precinct voting location on election day. Additionally, there is potential for vote tampering in all-mail balloting because all ballots are outside of the control of election officials for a significant period of time.

O'Malley supports the right of other counties to decide they want to conduct an all-mail ballot. She also wants to preserve Denver's option for precinct voting.

Editors: For more information, contact Nancy Reubert, Director of Communications and Public Outreach, Denver Clerk and Recorder's Office, 720-913-8650.

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