



March 27, 2017

Mr. Dean Logan  
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk  
12400 Imperial Highway  
Norwalk, CA 90650

**RE: Erroneous Korean sample ballots in Special Election for Congressional District 34**

Dear Mr. Logan:

On behalf of the Korean American Coalition-Los Angeles (KAC) and its over 2,000 members, partner organizations, and countless additional supporters, we urge the Los Angeles County Registrar's Office to further investigate, provide timely updates, propose remedies to the disenfranchised, and remain transparent and accountable to the Korean-American voters who received erroneous sample ballots in the special election for Congressional District 34.

In 1975, the Voting Rights Act was amended (Section 203) to allow absentee ballots and other election materials, including sample ballots, to be provided in minority languages where there are more than 10,000 or over 5% in a single political subdivision such as a county. Section 203 was established to allow more citizens to be informed voters when they participate in our democracy by reducing language barriers in the voting process. However, the recent revelation of the unknown number of erroneous sample ballots that were mailed to strictly Korean-language voters, as reported by the [Los Angeles Times on March 22, 2017](#), fails to comply with Section 203 and the federally protected voting rights of Korean Americans. Moreover, should the erroneous sample ballots result in discriminatory vote dilution, it is possible that results of the election could be set aside by a federal court in a post-election lawsuit.

On March 24, 2017, the LA County Registrar's Office held a joint press conference with KAC to address the community's concerns about the erroneous sample ballots, which may have caused Korean-American voters to inadvertently vote for the wrong candidate. During the conference, Brenda Duran, the County's representative, stated that the County has been reaching out to potentially impacted voters. Despite the County's efforts, KAC has received phone calls and visits to the office from Korean-American voters who stated that when they called the hotlines 800-481-8683 (Korean) and 800-815-2666 (English), no one from the County picked up.



The County first received notification about misprinted sample ballots from a voter on March 22. Since the original report, six days have passed and the County has yet to determine how widespread the problem is, leaving many voters uncertain of whether or not they inadvertently voted for the wrong candidate. With the special election seven days away, it is deeply disconcerting to learn that Korean-American voters still lack access to critical voter information protected under federal law.

To that end, we respectfully ask you to:

- Immediately provide 24 hour Korean language speaking personnel to assist with the hotline.
- Quantify for public record the amount of mislabeled sample ballots sent to the Korean-American community before Friday, March 31.
- Be available and respond to affected voters in a timely manner.
- Allow the Korean American Coalition-Los Angeles to act as the County's community partner to assist potentially impacted Korean-American voters.
- Provide a detailed timeline and explanation from the County and vendor on how the erroneous sample ballots were printed and mailed to only Korean-American voters.
- Hold the County employee(s) who oversaw communications with the vendor accountable.
- Provide a detailed explanation on how the County staff failed to notice the mistake, given its impact on potentially thousands of Korean-American voters, and follow-up with an action plan on how to prevent this from occurring to Korean-American voters and other minority voters in the future.
- Extend the voting deadline for voters impacted by misprinted sample ballots.
- Provide a Korean language public education campaign leading up to the election on radio/TV/newspapers, which includes: Radio Korea, Radio Seoul, Woori Radio, YTN, Korea Times, Korea Daily, LA18, SBS, KBS, MBC, and RKTU.

Taking measurable actions to help mitigate the aggravated situation will demonstrate to Korean-American voters that the LA County Registrar's Office understands how the thousands of erroneous sample ballots and the County's failure to notice the mistake impedes limited English proficient voters from exercising their right to vote. A [2016 report](#) found that 84% of Korean Americans, 50 years old and up, in LA County are limited English proficient.

Historically, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been disenfranchised by discriminatory laws that denied them citizenship and, in turn, the right to vote. It was only in 1943 through the Magnuson Act, which repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, that Chinese Americans were granted



the right to vote. For Korean Americans and other Asian Americans, the right to vote did not come until 1952.

At a time when many Korean Americans are fearful of the current administration's positions on immigration, health care, affordable housing, and more, it is essential that Korean-American voters are allowed to exercise their right to vote—without obstruction—for the congressional candidate who they believe will best represent one of the largest Korean American diasporas at our nation's capital.

We hope you will use the remaining days before the special election, and after, to truly regain the trust of the thousands of impacted Korean-American voters in Los Angeles County who simply want to exercise their most fundamental right: the right to vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joon Bang'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joon Bang  
Executive Director  
Korean American Coalition-Los Angeles

cc: Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman of the Board, Supervisor, Second District  
Hilda L. Solis, Supervisor, First District  
Sheila James Kuehl, Supervisor, Third District  
Janice Hahn, Supervisor, Fourth District  
Kathryn Barger, Supervisor, Fifth District  
Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer



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**KOREAN AMERICAN COALITION**  
**Los Angeles**

EST. 1983

**Organizations In Support**

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Korean American Federation of Los Angeles

OCA – Greater Los Angeles (OCA-GLA)

Unification of Disabled Latin Americans