



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Costa Mesa Woman Charged with Five Felonies for Illegally Registering Her Dog
to Vote,
Casting Mail-in Ballots Sent to Dog in Two Elections**
***Canine's vote in California's 2021 gubernatorial recall election was successfully counted;
2022 primary election ballot was rejected.***

Santa Ana – A Costa Mesa woman has been charged with five felonies for illegally registering her dog to vote and casting ballots in her dog's name in the 2021 California gubernatorial recall election and the 2022 primary election. The dog's vote was successfully counted in the 2021 gubernatorial recall election but was rejected in the 2022 primary.

Laura Lee Yourex, 62, of Costa Mesa, has been charged with one felony count of perjury, one felony count of procuring or offering a false or forged document to be filed, two felony counts of casting a ballot when not entitled to vote, and one felony count of registering a non-existent person to vote. Yourex is scheduled to be arraigned at the Stephen K. Tamura West Justice Center in Westminster on September 9, 2025, in Department W12. She faces a maximum sentence of six years in state prison if convicted on all counts.

On October 28, 2024, the Orange County District Attorney's Office was contacted by the Orange County Registrar of Voter's Office about a resident who self-reported that she had registered her dog to vote and had in fact cast a mail-in ballot she received addressed to her dog, Maya Jean Yourex, for the 2021 gubernatorial recall election and the 2022 primary election.

According to the California Elections Code, in order to vote a person must be registered as a voter by filling out and submitting an Affidavit of Registration which includes the voter's name, residence, mailing address, date of birth, political party preference and a certification that the voter is a citizen of the United States. The affidavit must be signed under penalty of perjury.

Proof of residence or identification is not required for citizens to register to vote in state elections nor is it required to cast a ballot in state elections. However, proof of residence and registration is required for first-time voters to vote in a federal election. As a result, the 2022 primary ballot cast in Maya Jean's name was challenged and rejected. The 2021 election to recall California Governor Gavin Newsom was voted down by 61.9% of voters.

Following an investigation by the Orange County District Attorney's Office Bureau of Investigation, sufficient evidence was discovered to file criminal charges against Yourex for illegally registering her dog to vote and then casting mail-in ballots issued to her dog based on the fraudulent voter registration. On her social media, Yourex posted in January 2022 a picture of her dog wearing an "I voted" sticker and posing with her ballot. Another post from October 2024, showed a photograph of Maya's dog tag and a vote-by-mail ballot with the caption "maya is still getting her ballot" even though the dog had previously passed away.

Anyone with information regarding any suspected election-related irregularities is asked to call the Orange County District Attorney's Election Fraud Hotline at 657-707-4048 or by emailing 2024.elections@ocdapa.org

Deputy District Attorney Heather Heslep-Morrissey of the Special Prosecutions Unit is prosecuting this case.

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