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SIGNATURE VERIFICATION

The signature image captured from every return envelope is compared to the signature image from the voter's registration card. Personnel who verify signatures have received training sponsored by the Secretary of State's Office. If the staff member determines that the signatures match, the ballot is accepted and can move on for further processing.

The return envelope may be coded for further action for several reasons. These ballots will then be pulled in the second scan pass. These reasons include:

- No signature is on the return envelope
- Signature on the envelope and on file don't match
- A different person has signed the envelope
- A change of name or address is indicated

A second, more experienced election staff member makes a second review of all the signatures which were initially challenged for further review. This staff member uses criteria established by the Secretary of State's office, including:

- Overall appearance is consistent
- Letters trail off in similar ways.
- Unique letters match.
- similar spacing between letters.
- Spacing between signature and line.
- Beginning, ending and slant match.

The Elections Division always follows up with voters whose signatures appear to be invalid after this second review.