1	BILL LOCKYER Attorney General of the State of California		
2	LOUIS VERDUGO, JR. Senior Assistant Attorney General		
3	ANGELA SIERRA, State Bar No. 126374 Supervising Deputy Attorney General		
4	NANCY A. BENINATI, State Bar No. 177999 Deputy Attorney General		
5	1515 Clay Street, Suite 2000 P.O. Box 70550		
6	Oakland, CA 94612		
7	Telephone: Fax:		
8	Attorneys for Petitioner/Plaintiff The People of the State of California, Ex rel. Bill		
9	Lockyer, Attorney General of the State of California		
10	IN THE SUPEDIO	D COUDT	
11	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ		
12			
13	THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, EX REL. BILL LOCKYER,	CASE NO.	
14	Attorney General of the State of California,	PETITION FOR WRIT OF	
15	Petitioner/Plaintiff,	MANDATE (Code Civ. Proc., § 1085) AND COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF	
16	V.	(42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.)	
17	COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ; GAIL PELLERIN in		
18	her Official Capacity as County Clerk and		
19	Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Cruz, and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,		
20	Respondents/Defendants.		
21			
22	INTRODUCTION		
23	The right to vote is fundamental in American society. This right inures to the benefit		
24	of all citizens regardless of their visual acuity, walking ability, ability to climb stairs, ascend		
25	steep inclines, or maneuver doors and latches. Voters with	h disabilities are entitled to participate	
26	in the American tradition of voting at public polling sites on an equal basis with voters who do		
27	not have disabilities and in an integrated setting, along with their friends, neighbors, and		
28	colleagues. The right to vote should not depend on the ab	ility of individuals to surmount	

physical obstacles which violate state and federal accessibility laws.

Recognizing the irreparable harm caused by inaccessible polling sites, Bill Lockyer, the Attorney General of the State of California, with the assistance of the Independent Living Centers, conducted informal surveys during the March 2 and November 2, 2002 statewide elections to determine if California counties were meeting their obligation to ensure that their polling sites are accessible to individuals with disabilities as required by state and federal law. The survey results identified the County of Santa Cruz as a jurisdiction whose polling sites possibly had a significant number of disability access law violations. The results for the County of Santa Cruz from the surveys conducted during the March 2 and November 2, 2002 elections were provided to the County in September 2002 and October 2003, respectively.

The Attorney General concluded that a further review of Santa Cruz's polling sites was warranted. Accordingly, the Attorney General conducted an investigation of Santa Cruz's polling sites during the March 2 and November 2, 2004 statewide elections. The results of that investigation confirmed that the County of Santa Cruz is selecting polling sites that have an unacceptable large number of access barriers that violate state and federal law and could make access especially difficult, hazardous, or even impossible for voters with physical disabilities. The People of the State of California ex rel. Bill Lockyer, Attorney General of the State of California thus bring this action against the County of Santa Cruz and Gail Pellerin, in her official capacity as County Clerk and Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Cruz, to compel them to take all necessary steps to bring the County's polling sites into compliance with state and federal disability access laws.

ALLEGATIONS

Petitioner/Plaintiff, the People of the State of California, ex rel. Bill Lockyer, Attorney General of the State of California (hereinafter "Attorney General," "People" and/or "Petitioner"), allege the following:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. Elections Code section 12280 requires elections officials to undertake necessary measures in the selection of polling places to ensure that polling places meet the guidelines

promulgated by the California Secretary of State for accessibility by individuals with physical disabilities.

2. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), United States Code, title 42, section 12131 et seq., which became effective on January 26, 1992, and the regulations promulgated thereunder, also require elections officials to ensure that the polling sites they designate be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities on election day.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 3. This Court has jurisdiction over causes of action for mandamus relief pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1085 alleging the failure to carry out mandatory statutory responsibilities pursuant to Elections Code 12280. This court also has concurrent jurisdiction with the federal courts over causes of action alleging violations of the ADA.
- 4. Venue is proper in this court because the unlawful acts complained of in this Petition/Complaint occurred within the County of Santa Cruz.

PARTIES

- 5. Petitioner Bill Lockyer is the duly elected Attorney General of the State of California. Under the California Constitution, Article V, section 13, the Attorney General has the duty to see that the State's laws are uniformly and adequately enforced for the protection of public rights and interests. The Attorney General also possesses *parens patriae* standing to commence legal actions for violations of any federal laws concerning the health and welfare of the State's citizens, including the ADA.
- 6. The Attorney General brings this action to protect the rights of individuals who have visual and/or mobility impairments, including those that use a wheelchair, walking aid, and are substantially limited in one or more of the major life activities, such as walking, or have an anatomical, physiological, or neurological condition that prevents the exercise of normal bodily function. These individuals have a qualified disability as that term is defined by applicable law.
- 7. The Attorney General invokes his *parens patriae* standing because Respondents/Defendants' failure to ensure that Santa Cruz County's polling sites are accessible affects a large number of California residents. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, as

of 2004, Santa Cruz County's population was estimated to be approximately 250,633 people. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that of this population, approximately 15.9% or roughly 37,895 individuals aged 5 and over have disabilities. Absent Attorney General action, many of these individuals who are eligible to vote will be deterred from exercising or unable to exercise their fundamental right to vote on an equal basis with individuals without disabilities and will suffer irreparable harm.

- 8. The Attorney General has an interest in the health and well being of the People of the State of California. An important component of that well being is the ability of its citizens to exercise the fundamental right to vote in an integrated setting. Santa Cruz County employs approximately 135-140 polling sites during statewide elections. A voter with a disability who does not discover that his or her polling site is inaccessible until election day would be unable to obtain legal relief before the polls closed and his or her right to vote in that election would be irretrievably lost or compromised.
- 9. The Attorney General also has a substantial sovereign interest in assuring that all citizens are free to exercise their fundamental right to vote and to do so in an integrated setting without discrimination on the basis of their disability. Such discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of California's citizens, and jeopardizes the integrity of the democratic process.
- 10. Respondent/Defendant County of Santa Cruz ("County" and/or "Santa Cruz") is a public entity incorporated under the laws of the State of California under the California Constitution, Article XI, section 1. The County operating through its County Elections Department is responsible for conducting elections under the California Elections Code. This responsibility includes designating polling site locations to enable voters to cast their ballots on election day. The County is responsible for ensuring, among other access requirements, that every polling site that offers off-street parking has accessible parking and that every polling site has accessible exterior routes of travel to the entrance, as well as accessible entrances and interior access.
- 11. Respondent/Defendant Gail Pellerin ("Pellerin") is the County Clerk and Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Cruz. Pellerin is the official responsible for designating polling

sites in Santa Cruz County and ensuring that these sites meet state and federal accessibility laws, including the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines, on election day.

- 12. The true names and capacities of Respondents/Defendants sued herein under the fictitious names Does 1 through 10 are unknown to the People. The People will seek leave of court to amend this Petition/Complaint to allege such names and capacities as soon as they are ascertained.
- 13. All references in this Petition/Complaint to any of the Respondents/Defendants shall also include all of them, unless otherwise specified. Whenever reference is made in this Petition/Complaint to any act of Respondents/Defendants, such allegation shall mean that each Respondent/Defendant acted individually and jointly with the other Respondents/Defendants.
- 14. At all relevant times, each Respondent/Defendant has committed the acts, caused others to commit the acts, or permitted others to commit the acts alleged in this Petition/Complaint.
- 15. Any allegation about any acts of the County of Santa Cruz shall mean that the County did the acts alleged through its officers, elected officials, directors, employees, agents, and/or representatives while they were acting within the actual or ostensible scope of their authority.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 16. During the March 2 and November 2, 2004 statewide elections, Petitioner surveyed Santa Cruz's polling sites to determine the County and Pellerin's (collectively "Respondents") compliance with state and federal disability access laws.
- 17. The surveys conducted during both the March 2 and November 2, 2004 elections examined three major access issues: 1) parking; 2) exterior travel routes; and 3) interior-site access. The specific items surveyed under each access issue are as follows:

1. Parking:

- Off-street parking availability
 - < Number of parking spaces
 - < Number of disabled designated spaces
 - < Location of disabled spaces to the facility

1	< Parking elevation
2	< Disabled signage
3	< Accessible pathways to the facility
4	2. Exterior Routes of Travel:
5	Accessible routes including ramps to travel to the entrance
6	Adequate path widths to accommodate wheelchairs
7	Slip resistant surfaces
8	• Obstructions
9	Ramp adequacy: width, level landings, handrails, and guardrails
10	Entrance accessability
11	Adequate signage for disabled entrances
12	3. Interior of Polling Site:
13	Adequate doorway clearances
14	Adequate doorway thresholds
15	Door operation
16	Accessible exit doors
17	Accessible panic hardware for doors
18	Adequate clearance on each side of a doorway
19	Accessible hallways and corridors
20	Interior obstructions
21	Accessible voting booths
22	Adequate voting privacy
23	Adequate lighting
24	Adequate ramps
25	Adequate flooring: Stable, slip resistant
26	If applicable, adequacy of any elevators
27	If applicable, accessability of the restrooms
28	Responsiveness of poll workers to accommodation requests

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18. The surveys assessed those violations which were most easily observable and potentially most significant in hampering or precluding access to the polling sites by voters with disabilities. For instance, since January 1992, in order for a polling site to provide meaningful access and be readily accessible to voters with disabilities in conformance with the ADA, the following accessibility conditions, among others, set forth in the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), codified at 28 C.F.R. Pt. 36, App A, must be present at polling sites on election day: if off-street parking is provided at the polling site, there must be at least one disabled parking spaces with an eight-foot aisle to allow for the loading and unloading of a passenger with a wheelchair; there must be at least one accessible route from the parking area to the entrance that is not interrupted by unramped steps or abrupt level changes greater than half an inch; ramps must be equipped with level landings, handrails, edge protections and a non-slip surface and not exceed an 8.3% slope; doorways must be at least 32-inches wide with the door open at 90 degrees; door thresholds must be no greater than a half-inch in height; if the main entrance is not accessible, the accessible alternative entrance must be clearly marked; and, any obstructions that overhang a pedestrian's way must be sufficiently high so that a person with a visual impairment would not bump into them. The above-referenced accessibility requirements are also required by the current Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines that were in effect during the November 2004 election. A number of these requirements were also included in the Secretary of State's former accessibility guidelines that were in effect during the March 2, 2004 general election.

19. During the March 2, 2004 statewide election, Petitioner surveyed 114 of the 140 polling sites in Santa Cruz County. The survey results revealed that of the sites surveyed, 65% had at least one "high-priority barrier." High-priority barriers are those violations of the ADAAG's requirements governing parking, exterior route of travel and interior of the site that are most likely to make access especially difficult, hazardous, or even impossible. A number of these high-priority barriers also violated the Secretary of States' accessibility guidelines. Of the sites surveyed, at least 25% had two or more high-priority barriers and the County averaged 4.45 violations of the ADAAG per site.

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- 20. Specific examples of violations of the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and the ADAAG at polling sites in Santa Cruz during the March 2, 2004 election disclosed by the survey results are as follows:
 - a. the Boulder Creek Fire House site required climbing eight steps with no alternative entrance;
 - b. the Boulder Creek Country Club site had a pathway with a 21% slope, almost three times the allowable slope;
 - c. the St. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church site had a ramp with a 23% slope, more than two and a half times the legal 8.3% limit;
 - d. The Pasatiempo Inn site had a ramp with a 17% slope, more than twice the allowable slope;
 - e. The Tradewinds Mobile Park site had a ramp with a 34% slope;
 - f. The Advent Christian Youth Lodge site had stairs with no alternative accessible entrance; and,
 - g. All three ramps at the Natural Bridges Elementary School site had slopes of 18-20%.
- 21. The survey results further revealed that of the Santa Cruz polling sites surveyed during the March 2, 2004 election, approximately 41% of the sites that provided off-street parking lacked accessible parking that was in conformity with the ADAAG; the parking deficiencies included a lack of adequate widths and adequate unloading aisles.
- 22. Approximately 20% of the sites surveyed in Santa Cruz during the March 2, 2004 election had sections of the exterior path of travel to the entrance that violated the ADAAG due to a failure to provide adequate ramps, including handrails, or ramps that were excessively steep; approximately 12% had non-complying routes from the parking due to conditions such as abrupt level changes, including stairs or damaged sidewalks; approximately 11% had inaccessible routes or stairs from the public right of way, such as from a bus stop, to the entrance; approximately 13% had door thresholds that were one inch or higher (double the half-inch limit); and approximately 11% failed to include adequate signage to an accessible entrance when the

primary entrance was inaccessible. A number of these conditions also violated the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines that were in effect during the March 2, 2004 election.

- 23. Approximately 55% of polling sites in Santa Cruz during the March 2, 2004 election had serious barriers to restroom access in violation of the ADAAG, including inaccessible entry doors or inadequate maneuvering space in the room.
- 24. The results from the Petitioner's survey of Santa Cruz's polling sites during the March 2, 2004 general election were provided to the County of Santa Cruz on or about July 2004.
- 25. During the November 2, 2004 election, Petitioner surveyed 98 of the 135 polling sites in Santa Cruz County. The survey results reflected that a substantial portion of the County's polling sites had high-priority barriers in violation of the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and the ADAAG. These high priority barriers were of the type that were most likely to make access especially difficult, hazardous, or even impossible. Of the sites surveyed, approximately 72% had at least one or more high-priority barriers, at least 41% had two or more high-priority barriers, and approximately 22% had three or more such barriers. Overall the County's polling sites were not readily accessible to and usable by voters with disabilities on the same basis as voters without disabilities.
- 26. Examples of violations of the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and the ADAAG at polling sites in Santa Cruz during the November 2, 2004 election as demonstrated by the survey results are as follows:
 - Approximately 28% of the sites surveyed that provided off-street parking failed to provide properly sized accessible parking spaces and/or properly sized access aisles;
 - b. Approximately 24% of the sites surveyed had inaccessible conditions on the route from the parking lot to the polling site entrance, including abrupt level changes greater than one-half inch, steep slopes exceeding 8.3%, and inadequate ramps;
 - c. Approximately 31% of the sites surveyed had inaccessible features on the exterior route of travel from the street or sidewalk to the polling site, including abrupt-level changes exceeding one-half inch, steep slopes exceeding 8.3%, and

- j. The Landmark Elementary School site had a van-accessible parking space sloping at 5%, more than double the allowed maximum;
- k. The First Methodist Church site had a parking lot ramp with an 11% slope, with only one handrail and no edge protection; and,
- 1. The Casserly Community Center site had a ramp with a 10% slope, noncompliant handrails and no level landing at the exterior door entrance.
- 28. Respondents' failure to comply with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and ADAAG with respect to its selection of polling sites harms those individuals who may use wheelchairs, or walk with the aid of crutches and walkers for whom steep slopes, distant parking, inadequate parking spaces, and stairs constitute obstacles to access. Furthermore, even individuals who are not presently disabled may, through accident or illness, become disabled, or at least temporarily so, and face the same types of barriers. These individuals may also find themselves shut out from their polling site because of insurmountable physical barriers or deterred from accessing these sites because of the County's violations of state and federal disabled access laws.
- 29. Respondents' failure to ensure that the County's polling places are accessible to voters with disabilities will cause those individuals irreparable harm.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDATE (CODE CIV. PROC. § 1085) FOR FAILURE TO PERFORM MINISTERIAL DUTY UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS CODE

(AGAINST ALL RESPONDENTS/DEFENDANTS)

- 30. The People reallege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 29 of this Complaint.
- 31. Since at least 1990, Respondents have had a clear, present and ministerial duty to ensure that their polling sites comply with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines.
- 32. The Attorney General, as chief law officer of the State of California has a clear, present and beneficial right to require the Respondents to comply with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and Elections Code section 12280. It is in the public's interest for all

polling sites to comply with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines to ensure that individuals with disabilities are given the opportunity to exercise their right to vote on an equal basis with voters who do not have disabilities.

- 33. During the March 2 and November 2, 2004 statewide elections, Respondents failed to ensure that on election day, all of its polling sites complied with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines that were in effect during each of the two-referenced elections.
- 34. By failing to ensure that their polling sites comply with the standards set forth in the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines during the March 2, and November 2, 2004 statewide elections, Respondents have violated their ministerial duties under Elections Code section 12280.
- 35. Based on Santa Cruz County's pattern of pervasive non-compliance with the ADA and the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines in its selection of polling sites, the Attorney General believes that unless enjoined, Respondents will continue to select and use polling sites that are not in conformity with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and Elections Code section 12280. Respondents' violations of Election Code section 12280 and the Secretary of State accessibility guidelines, unless enjoined, will cause irreparable harm to the People of the State of California.
- 36. With respect to Respondents' violations of the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines and Elections Code section 12280, the Attorney General has no plain, speedy and adequate remedy at law

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12134)

(AGAINST ALL RESPONDENTS/DEFENDANTS)

- 37. The People reallege and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 29 of this Complaint.
- 38. Respondents are public entities and public officials for purposes of Title II of the ADA, United States Code, title 42, section 12131.
 - 39. Title II of the ADA provides that "[s]ubject to the provisions of this subpart, no

qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of a public entity, or shall be subjected to discrimination by any such entity." 42 U.S.C., § 12132. This provision requires the County to ensure that the polling sites it selects provides voters with disabilities with meaningful access to voting sites on election day. Given the fundamental importance of voting in our society, meaningful access under the ADA in the context of voting requires that voters with disabilities have the opportunity to vote at their regularly designated polling sites on election day, in an integrated setting, along with friends, neighbors and colleagues. Meaningful access under the ADA in the context of voting thus requires elections officials to ensure that voters with disabilities are not confronted with architectural barriers that are expressly prohibited by ADAAG's requirements governing parking, exterior path of travel, and the interior of public and private facilities used as polling sites.

- 40. That elections officials comply with the ADAAG as to its selection of voting sites is also required by the federal regulations promulgated pursuant to the ADA. Those regulations require that when providing a service, a public entity may not "[a]fford a qualified individual with a disability an opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, or service that is not equal to that afforded to others." 28 C.F.R., § 35.130, subd. (b)(1)(ii). Further, when determining the site or location of a facility, a public entity may not make selections:
 - the benefits of, or otherwise subjecting them to discrimination; or "(ii) That have the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the service, program, or activity with respect to individuals with disabilities." 28 C.F.R., § 35.130 subd. (b)(4).

"(i) That have the effect of excluding individuals with disabilities from, denying them

41. During the March 2 and November 2, 2004 statewide elections, the County failed to provide voters with disabilities with meaningful access to its polling sites on election day in violation of the ADA and its implementing regulations. The County's voting program at the polling sites, and/or in its entirety, was not readily accessible to voters with disabilities in compliance with the ADA during the March 2 and November 2, 2004 statewide elections. By

failing to ensure that its polling sites comply with the ADAAG, respondents have violated the ADA and the regulations promulgated thereunder, including the United States Code, title 42, section 12132 and the Code of Federal Regulations, title 28, chapter 1, section 35.130.

42. In light of Santa Cruz County's pattern and practice of non-compliance with the ADA, the People believe that Respondents will continue to fail to ensure that the polling sites it selects are in conformity with the ADAAG and the ADA. Respondents' ongoing violations of the ADA, unless enjoined, will cause irreparable harm to the People of the State of California.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the People pray for judgment as follows:

- 1. That a preliminary injunction issue enjoining Respondents County of Santa Cruz and Gail Pellerin, in her Official Capacity as County Clerk and Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Cruz during the pendency of this litigation from violating Elections Code section 12280 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 12131-12134 and its implementing regulations, including, but not limited to, the violations alleged in this Petition/Complaint;
- 2. That a peremptory writ of mandate issue, under Code of Civil Procedure section 1085, directed to Respondents County of Santa Cruz and Gail Pellerin, in her Official Capacity as County Clerk and Registrar of Voters of the County of Santa Cruz and compelling said Respondents to ensure that all of the polling places in the County of Santa Cruz for every election comply with the Secretary of State's accessibility guidelines in effect at the time of the election.
- 3. That all Respondents, their agents, employees, officers, representatives, successors, partners, assigns, and all persons acting in concert or participating with them, be permanently enjoined from violating the Americans with Disabilities Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 12131-12134 and its implementing regulations and failing to comply with the disability access requirements set forth in the ADAAG when selecting polling sites in the County of Santa Cruz, including, but not limited to, the violations alleged in this Petition/Complaint;
 - 4. That a monitor, to be paid for by the County of Santa Cruz, be appointed by the Court

1	to oversee compliance with the peremptory writ of mandate and permanent injunction;	
2	5. That the People recover their costs and reasonable attorneys fees pursuant to 42	
3	U.S.C., § 12205; and,	
4	6. That the Court grant such other and further relief as it may deem just and proper.	
5	Dated: October 11, 2005 Respectfully submitted,	
6	BILL LOCKYER	
7	Attorney General of the State of California LOUIS VERDUGO, JR.	
8	Senior Assistant Attorney General NANCY A. BENINATI,	
9	Deputy Attorney General	
10	ANGEL A GIERRA	
11	ANGELA SIERRA Supervising Deputy Attorney General	
12	Attorneys for Petitioner/Plaintiff The People of the State of California, Ex Rel.	
13	Bill Lockyer, Attorney General of the State of California	
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