



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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TOP COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICIAL TO DEPART

Despite some of the highest turnout rates in the state of California, Santa Cruz County elections are known to be fair, transparent and orderly.

After more than 27 years as the chief elections official in Santa Cruz County – an era that included the elections of five presidents, several U.S. Senators and Congresspersons, and countless county supervisors, city councilmembers, school board members, water district directors and more – Santa Cruz County Clerk Gail Pellerin is resigning to pursue other interests. Her last day will be December 30, 2020.

“I am humbled and honored to have worked with so many amazing people over the years. I am eternally grateful to my staff, and especially appreciative of the voters who put their faith in me to protect their democracy,” Pellerin said. “I often tell my children, ‘The only thing permanent in life is change,’ and it is time for me to make a change.”

Pellerin is a recognized as a leading voice on California elections, and is an expert on election integrity and the future of elections. She previously served as president of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials from 2010 to 2012, has served on California’s Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee since 2006 (which she co-chairs), and has been a member of the Future of California Elections since 2011. She is the author of several guidebooks to assist voters in navigating through various election procedures including initiatives, recalls and referendums.

In addition to elections and voter registration duties, Pellerin is also responsible for other services such as passports and marriage licenses. As County Clerk, Pellerin even created a wedding chapel for Valentine’s Day weddings, and married countless happy couples over the years.



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“Gail Pellerin is at the top of her class among county and state election officials. When I was California Secretary of State, her colleagues continually asked her about how to implement safe and legal election procedures,” Supervisor Bruce McPherson said. “That’s why they elected her to lead their state association. We have been very fortunate in Santa Cruz County to have had Gail lead us through so many election cycles.”

“Gail has dedicated her career to ensuring the right to vote is protected and expanded,” Supervisor Zach Friend said. “As a time when many have created barriers, she has broken down walls. Because of her, we are a national model for voting access.”

After brief careers as a journalist and as a legislative staffer in Sacramento, Pellerin moved to Santa Cruz. From 1993 to 2004 she was elections manager under then-County Clerk Richard Bedal, and was eventually appointed to the permanent role after some of the duties of that office were split.

She went on to win reelection four times, running unopposed each time.