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October 20, 2006

Via Facsimile and U.S. Mail

Bruce McPherson, California Secretary of State
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Neal Kelley, Orange County Registrar of Voters
1300 Building C
South Grand Avenue
Santa Ana, California 92705

Dear Secretary McPherson and Registrar Kelley:

On behalf of the ACLU of Southern California and concerned residents, I write regarding the pernicious letter, purportedly from the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, which was sent to Latino voters in Orange County.

While I am pleased that a thorough investigation has been promptly ordered, and I am certain that everything will be done to hold those involved accountable, this does not address the harm the letter has already done by misinforming thousands of naturalized citizens that they will be jailed and deported for exercising their fundamental right to vote. As officials with a profound responsibility to ensure the fairness of elections and to encourage eligible voters to participate, you must take affirmative steps to dispel the misimpression the letter has created. Otherwise, those responsible for the letter, regardless of what consequences they may ultimately suffer, will have succeeded in their goal to suppress voter participation and affect the results of the election.

There is still time to right this wrong and correctly inform voters before November 7. I suggest that you immediately publish a refutation of the letter and mail it to all those in receipt of it, for this will ensure that the voters specifically targeted will have an official statement of their rights.

Sincerely,

Hector O. Villagra
Director, ACLU-SC Orange County