



# Voters glad end of recall saga in sight

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SAN DIEGO — Californians used words like chaotic, meltdown and madhouse Tuesday as they gird for two more weeks of prime-time politics in the Golden State.

Many voters breathed a sigh of relief that a federal court cleared the way for an unprecedented gubernatorial recall election Oct. 7 and welcomed a conclusion to a matter that has transfixed the state.

"Now that we've been given a firm green light, it's pedal to metal," says San Diego GOP consultant and lobbyist John Dadian, who is undecided on how to vote. "Everybody I talk to says, 'Gee, now that this is really going to happen, I'm going to have to decide what to do.' "

Mark Muir, 47, a division chief at the Encinitas fire department north of San Diego, was delighted to hear Tuesday that his absentee ballot — already mailed — will be counted.

"We need to start fixing things in this state, not delaying them," he says.

Muir said he voted to recall Gov. Gray Davis and replace him with Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger. More than 60,000 absentee ballots have already been cast in San Diego County and 600,000 statewide.

San Diego County's election headquarters stayed open until midnight Monday, the deadline for registering to vote Oct. 7.

"We had just short of 2,000 people in our office yesterday registering to vote and voting absentee," says Sally McPherson, registrar of voters who was "relieved" by Tuesday's court action. Greg Cox, Republican chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, says he expected to see a lot of the candidates in the coming weeks.

"For most people in California, it's providing a bit of befuddled amusement," he says.

In Los Angeles, lawyer William Driscoll, a Democrat and a recall opponent, says, "We're embarking on a process that is going to result in abject meltdown of this state. ... The recall process was designed when we had 50,000 people in this state. The thing is just a mess."

In San Francisco, Art Torres, a former state senator and chairman of the California Democratic Party, says the party is working to help Davis and Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante.

"It's going to be an infantry war on the streets of California. We'll be battling it out neighborhood by neighborhood," he says. "It's going to be very chaotic."

Downtown Los Angeles residential developer Tom Gilmore, 50, a native New Yorker who moved to California in 1992, says the election will be a "madhouse."

"New York is bare-knuckles politics; California is more schizophrenic," he says. "In New York they know what they want to do, and they're going to beat the hell out of you to get it done. In California, we don't know exactly what we want to do, but we'll all feel good when it's over."