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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### AB 1164 (Ransom) - Elections: Voter Bill of Rights

**Version:** July 16, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** August 18, 2025

**Policy Vote:** E. & C.A. 5 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Robert Ingenito

**Bill Summary:** AB 1164 would update the Voter Bill of Rights (VBOR) to revise the language about replacement ballots.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Secretary of State (SOS) indicates that this bill would result in one-time costs of \$131,000 to revise and reprint the VBOR for public distribution, including costs for formatting, translations, and shipping (General Fund).

**Background:** Current law permits a registered voter to request a replacement ballot if they did not receive their vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot, or lost or destroyed the original ballot. In order to receive a replacement ballot, a voter must submit a request or application for a replacement ballot to their county elections office by phone, email, fax, or other electronic means. Once the application is verified and approved, a replacement ballot will be mailed to the voter. Most county election officials make the replacement ballot application available on their county elections website.

Existing law establishes the VBOR to provide a listing of voter's basic rights and requires that a voter receives notification of these rights in the sample ballot and at polling places. Accordingly, SOS makes the VBOR available before each election and on Election Day by printing the VBOR verbatim in the state voter information guide and on posters or other printed materials included in precinct supplies. The VBOR is also posted on the SOS website in various languages.

In 2015, SB 505 (Mendoza, 2015) authorized SOS to revise the wording of the VBOR as necessary to ensure that the language used is clear and concise and free from technical terms. Prior to SB 505, SOS had limited authority to ensure that election materials were prepared and provided in plain language. SB 505 formally allowed the SOS to inform voters using plain language text to describe the VBOR.

**Proposed Law:** This bill would do the following:

- Require the VBOR to inform a voter that they can request a replacement ballot and require the following specified language to be included in the VBOR:
  - You have the right to request and receive a replacement ballot from a poll worker or your local elections official before the closing of the polls under the following circumstances: (1) you do not have your ballot, (2) your ballot has been damaged, or (3) you made a mistake on your ballot and have not yet submitted it.

- Modify the placement of a toll-free telephone number for voters to use if they have been denied a voting right or to report election fraud or misconduct from beneath the VBOR to anywhere on the VBOR.

**Related Legislation:**

- AB 1072 (Pellerin) would requires SOS to develop uniform standards and guidelines for a voter to correct mistakes when voting. The bill is currently pending in this Committee.
- SB 505 (Mendoza, Chapter 236, Statutes of 2015) authorized SOS to revise the wording of the VBOR as necessary to ensure that the language used is clear and concise and free from technical terms.
- AB 177 (Oropeza, Chapter 425, Statutes of 2003) established the VBOR and enumerated the rights of voters.

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