
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1214
Author: Patterson (R), et al.
Amended: 4/22/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE ELECTIONS & C.A. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 7/15/25
AYES: Cervantes, Choi, Allen, Limón, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/23/25 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Elections: official canvass

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires election officials to post updated election results during the official canvass at least twice per week, instead of at least once per week.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Defines “semiofficial canvass” as the public process of collecting, processing, and tallying ballots and, for state or statewide elections, reporting results to the Secretary of State on Election Night. The semifinal official canvass may include some or all of the vote by mail (VBM) and provisional vote totals.
- 2) Requires an elections official to conduct a semifinal official canvass of each election by tabulating VBM and precinct ballots and compiling the results. The semifinal official canvass begins immediately upon the closing of the polls and continues until all precincts are accounted for.

- 3) Defines “official canvass” as the public process of processing and tallying all ballots received in an election, including, but not limited to, provisional ballots and VBM ballots not included in the semifinal official canvass. The official canvass also includes the process of reconciling ballots, attempting to prohibit duplicate voting by VBM and provisional voters, and performance of the manual tally of one percent of all precincts.
- 4) Requires an official canvass of the election to commence no later than the Thursday following the election. The official canvass must be open to the public and, for state elections, concludes in a report of results to the Secretary of State. The official canvass must be continued daily (except for Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) for not less than six hours each day until completed.
- 5) Requires an elections official, beginning no later than the Thursday following an election, to post updated information regarding the election on their website at least once per week, unless certain conditions are met. The update must include the following information:
 - a) Updated results for any candidate or measure appearing on the ballot.
 - b) The number of ballots processed and an estimated number of outstanding ballots remaining unprocessed for each of the following categories:
 - i) Ballots voted at a polling place.
 - ii) VBM ballots received on or before Election Day.
 - iii) VBM ballots received after Election Day, provisional ballots, and conditional registration ballots.
 - c) The date and time when it is expected that the next results will be posted.

This bill requires election officials to post updated election results during the official canvass at least twice per week, instead of at least once per week.

Background

Semiofficial Canvass, the Official Canvass, and Updated Results. Existing law allows election officials to begin processing VBM ballots before Election Day, provided election officials do not access or release election results before 8 p.m. on Election Day. Election officials typically process most VBM ballots that have arrived in the weeks prior to the week of the election. Most VBM ballots get to

election officials on the day before Election Day, on Election Day, and in the days immediately following Election Day.

Once the polls close on Election Day, election officials begin the semiofficial canvass. The semiofficial canvass is the process of collecting, processing, and tallying ballots and, for state or statewide elections, reporting results to the Secretary of State on Election Night. The first batch of results election officials release shortly after the polls close on Election Day are primarily VBM ballots the elections official received and processed before Election Day. State law requires election officials to update election results at least every two hours during the semiofficial official canvass. The subsequent updates that follow primarily are ballots that were cast at in-person voting locations on Election Day.

The vast amount of other ballots are tabulated as part of the official canvass and must begin no later than the Thursday after Election Day. This includes VBM ballots, provisional ballots, and other ballots that require additional verification or processing.

AB 63 (Cervantes, Chapter 514, Statutes of 2023) among other provisions, required election officials to publicly update election results at least once a week during the official canvass, beginning the Thursday after the election. Prior to AB 63, state law did not expressly require election results to be updated on any particular schedule during the official canvass. AB 63 was enacted, in part, due to a recognition that there was a stronger public interest in requiring regular updates to election results during the official canvass in light of the fact that a smaller percentage of ballots were being included in the “election night results.”

Comments

Author’s Statement. Trust in democracy is inseparable from trust in our election system. Unfortunately, given the length of time it takes to accurately count ballots, a shadow of doubt has been cast onto our process. This bill takes a small step in restoring trust in our election system by simply requiring election officials to update the public and the media at least twice a week on how many votes are left to be counted. This simple change increases transparency and allows democracy to flourish.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 3 (Cervantes) of 2025, among other provisions relating to the signature curing process, requires election officials post updated election results at least twice

before the Thursday following Election Day and twice per week thereafter on their websites, instead of at least once per week. SB 3 is currently pending in Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 63 (Cervantes, Chapter 514, Statutes of 2023), among other provisions, required election officials to update election results at least once a week until the results are complete unless certain conditions are met.

SB 718 (Wilk) of 2023 would have required unprocessed ballot reports prepared by county election officials to include the number of VBM ballots that have been processed but not counted because the identification envelope is missing the voter's signature or has a signature that does not compare to the signature on file. The bill failed passage in the Assembly Committee on Elections.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/21/25)

California Association of Clerks and Election Officials
Election Integrity Project California, Inc.
One individual

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/21/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/23/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bryan, Chen, Ellis, Nguyen, Sanchez, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Wicks

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8/21/25 16:45:43

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