
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1411
Author: Sharp-Collins (D)
Amended: 7/16/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE ELECTIONS & C.A. COMMITTEE: 4-1, 7/15/25
AYES: Cervantes, Allen, Limón, Umberg
NOES: Choi

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 8/29/25
AYES: Caballero, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab
NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 62-2, 6/3/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Voter education and outreach plans

SOURCE: California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.

DIGEST: This bill requires counties that do not conduct their elections using the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) to design a voter education and outreach plan.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to adopt regulations requiring all counties to design and implement programs intended to identify qualified electors who are not registered voters and to register those persons to vote. The SOS is also required to adopt regulations prescribing minimum requirements for those programs.
- 2) Provides that if the SOS finds a county has not designed and implemented a program meeting the prescribed minimum requirements, the SOS shall design a

program for the county and report the violation to the California Attorney General.

- 3) Authorizes any county, pursuant to the VCA, to conduct elections in which every registered voter is mailed a vote by mail (VBM) ballot and in which vote centers and ballot drop-off locations are available prior to and on Election Day, in lieu of operating polling places for the election. Counties must meet a number of planning and outreach requirements for counties adopting and conducting elections pursuant to the VCA.
- 4) Requires a county that conducts its elections using the VCA to develop an election administration plan and requires the draft plan to include a voter education and outreach plan. The SOS is required to approve, approve with modifications, or reject the education and outreach plan.

This bill:

- 1) Repeals the requirement from 1) and 2) of existing law.
- 2) Requires a county that does not conduct its elections in accordance with the VCA, to design and implement a voter education and outreach plan to identify and register qualified electors who are not registered to vote and to encourage participation in the electoral process.
- 3) Requires each voter education and outreach plan, at a minimum, to provide information to the public about online voter registration, preregistration opportunities, VBM procedures, ballot tracking services, options for military and overseas voters, options for in-person voting opportunities, language accessibility, and key election dates and deadlines.
- 4) Requires the SOS to provide county election officials with a template for their voter education and outreach plans and to make the most current version of each voter education and outreach plan available on the websites of the SOS and the county elections official.
- 5) Requires county election officials to submit any amendment to their voter education and outreach plans to the SOS by October 1 of each odd-numbered year.

Background

Voter's Choice Act. In 2016, the Legislature passed and Governor Brown signed SB 450 (Allen, Chapter 832, Statutes of 2016) which enacted the VCA and

provided a new model for counties to administer elections. This election model was based on of a Colorado election model where every registered voter is mailed a VBM ballot and may visit any voting location, known as vote centers, within the voter's county prior to and on Election Day to vote or seek assistance with voting.

As part of the VCA, county election officials are also required to create and submit to the SOS a voter education and outreach plan for approval. The SOS is required to approve, approve with modifications, or reject the voter outreach and education plan within 14 days after the plan is submitted by the county elections official. The draft plan, the amended draft plan, and the adopted final plan for the administration of elections must be posted on the website of the county elections official in each language in which the county is required to provide voting materials and assistance under state and federal law and on the SOS's website in a format that is accessible for people with disabilities.

Counties using the VCA are also required to create three committees under the county elections official: a language accessibility advisory committee (LAAC), a voting accessibility advisory committee (VAAC), and a voter education and outreach advisory committee (VEOAC). A local LAAC is comprised of representatives of language minority communities. A local VAAC is comprised of voters with disabilities. This is similar to the statewide LAAC and VAAC. The local VEOAC is comprised of voter engagement, education, and community outreach advocates.

Following the enactment of SB 450, five counties elected to change their election model to the VCA for the 2018 elections. In 2020, 10 counties made the switch and in 2022, 12 more counties opted to conduct their elections using the VCA model. For the November 2024 statewide presidential general election, 29 counties conducted their elections using the VCA model. For upcoming elections, Imperial County has indicated it will use the VCA model.

Comments

- 1) *Author's Statement.* The lack of uniformity in California's voting process disproportionately harms voters with accessibility concerns. This bill advances equity in voting by requiring either an all-mail ballot election pursuant to the VCA or a voter education and outreach plan, thereby addressing the unique barriers faced by different communities' barriers to voting.
- 2) *Voter Registration and Outreach Plans.* AB 822 (Keysor, Chapter 704, Statutes of 1975) first permitted completed voter registration affidavits to be submitted by mail. Among other provisions, AB 822 also required the SOS to

adopt regulations requiring counties to design and implement programs to identify qualified electors who are not registered to vote and to register them to vote. In 1976, the SOS adopted emergency regulations that require counties to submit voter outreach plans for review by the SOS.

According the SOS, 54 of the 58 counties initially submitted plans. By the 1980s, many counties stopped submitting updated plans, interpreting the requirement as a one-time obligation. It is unknown whether the SOS has reported any violations to the Attorney General.

- 3) *Effect on the VCA.* One of the pillars and requirements of the VCA was that counties needed to submit an election administration plan. One of the requirements of an election administration plan is to include an education and outreach plan, which is subject to SOS approval. By requiring non-VCA counties to submit an education and outreach plan, this bill would bring these counties one step closer to implementing VCA. This could potentially make it easier for counties to transition from a polling place county or an all-mail county to a VCA county. That being said, alternatively, VCA counties may view this bill as a way to maintain services and opt of the VCA and move from vote centers back to polling places.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 855 (Low) of 2017 would have required the SOS to adopt regulations to prescribe minimum requirements for county programs intended to identify qualified electors who are not registered voters, and to register those people to vote, and required counties to periodically update voter registration programs.

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

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations:

- By requiring local elections officials to develop voter education and outreach plans, as specified, this bill creates a state-mandated local program. To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines that the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on local agencies, local agencies could claim reimbursement of those costs. The magnitude is unknown, but potentially in excess of \$50,000 annually (General Fund).
- The SOS indicates that this bill would result in negligible costs.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/25)

California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D. (Source)
NAACP California-Hawaii State Conference

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/29/25)

Election Integrity Project California, Inc.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 62-2, 6/3/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: DeMaio, Gallagher

NO VOTE RECORDED: Castillo, Chen, Davies, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa

Prepared by: Scott Matsumoto / E. & C.A. / (916) 651-4106
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