

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 1562 (Jackson)
As Amended February 11, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes a county elections official to adopt a system in which individuals are randomly selected to serve as precinct board members (also referred to as poll workers).

Major Provisions

- 1) Permits an elections official for each election to adopt a system in which individuals are randomly selected to serve as precinct board members.
- 2) Provides that every citizen who resides in the jurisdiction and is at least 18 years of age is eligible to be selected to serve as a precinct board member.
- 3) Prohibits an eligible person from being excluded from service as a precinct board member on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- 4) Allows an eligible person to be excused from service as a precinct board member for undue hardship upon themselves or the public.
- 5) Requires an elections official to assign the individuals selected to precincts within the jurisdiction in which the election will occur. Requires the assigned individuals to constitute the precinct board for that precinct.

COMMENTS

In California, a United States (US) citizen, a legal permanent resident of the US who would be eligible to vote except for their citizenship status, and an eligible high school student may serve as poll workers.

According to National Conference of State Legislatures, Nebraska is the only state that permits jurisdictions to "draft" poll workers in the same fashion as courts select jury members.

According to Nebraska state law, all draftee poll workers are randomly selected from the county's list of registered voters and are required to be of good repute and character and be able to read and write the English language, except as provided. Additionally, under Nebraska's law, no citizen is excluded from serving as a draftee poll worker unless excused by reason of ill health or other good and sufficient reason. A person who is selected and fails to serve can be found guilty of neglecting their duties. Only two counties in Nebraska avail themselves of this statutory authority: Douglas County and Sarpy County.

As currently written, this bill lacks sufficient detail regarding how a county elections official would implement a system to randomly select individuals to serve as poll workers. For example, it is unclear how elections officials would obtain a comprehensive list of US citizens residing in

the county who are at least 18 years old. By comparison, Nebraska law relies on its registered voter file for random selection.

Additionally, while the bill allows individuals to be excused from poll worker service due to "undue hardship," it does not define the criteria for what constitutes undue hardship or specify who is responsible for determining whether an individual meets that standard.

According to the Author

"When people do not understand how democracy works, it becomes easier to manipulate and easier to break. When only a small group of people are running our elections, public trust begins to erode. AB 1562 strengthens our democracy and encourages civic engagement by authorizing county election officials to adopt a system in which individuals are randomly selected to serve as poll workers for elections. This bill is intended to bring more people closer to the democratic process, recognizing democracy works best when more people are inside the room, not locked out of it."

Arguments in Support

In support of this bill, Power California Action writes: "At a time when voter confidence has declined and participation, especially among historically underrepresented communities, has dropped, California must take proactive steps to strengthen civic engagement and trust in our democratic institutions. AB 1562 provides a meaningful opportunity to do just that. By expanding how poll workers are recruited, this bill creates more pathways for Californians, particularly young people and communities of color, to engage directly in the electoral process. Increased exposure to how elections function can deepen civic understanding, build trust, and encourage life-long participation."

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

None. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

VOTES

ASM ELECTIONS: 7-1-0

YES: Pellerin, Gallagher, Addis, Berman, Elhawary, Solache, Stefani

NO: Johnson

UPDATED

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