

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2573 (Sharp-Collins) – As Amended April 7, 2026

Policy Committee: Elections Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill modifies the voter registration confidentiality program for elected officials and candidates for elective office.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires an elected official or candidate to make an affirmative written request to the county elections official to make their voter registration information confidential.
- 2) Permits the information of an elected official's immediate family member who lives at the same residence to be made confidential if certain conditions are met, requires a candidate to qualify to appear on the ballot for the candidate's information to be made confidential, and provides that members of and candidates for political party county central committees are not eligible for confidentiality, but individuals appointed to elective office are eligible.
- 3) Provides the different time periods for which confidentiality remains in effect for an elected official, unsuccessful candidate, and successful candidate.
- 4) Requires various information sharing procedures between the Secretary of State (SOS) and county elections officials to communicate confidentiality status, such as requiring a county elections official to notify the SOS on a form prescribed by the SOS, as well as any other relevant elections official, when the elections official adds or removes the confidential delegation from a federal or state elected official's or candidate's voter registration record.
- 5) Requires the SOS and county elections officials to implement this program immediately once the statewide voter registration database and county election management systems have made conforming changes, but authorizes, through December 31, 2028, county elections officials to make their best efforts to manually implement this program before such conforming changes are complete.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) One-time costs of approximately \$135,000 to the SOS to make modifications to VoteCal, the statewide voter registration database system, and the Election Management System to ensure data synchronization between the two platforms needed to implement this bill's information sharing procedures with counties (General Fund (GF)).

- 2) Costs in excess of \$150,000 annually across the state's 58 county elections officials to comply with this bill's information sharing procedures. For reference, a survey of counties identifies average annual costs in the mid-tens of thousands of dollars per county. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs to counties (GF).

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 2573 is a technical clean-up bill that ensures counties can properly and consistently implement the confidential voter registration protections enacted through AB 1392. As counties began administering the program, elections officials identified areas where additional statutory clarity was needed around eligibility, procedures, and timelines. At a time when threats and harassment against public officials are increasing nationwide, it is critical that the protections authorized by the Legislature work as intended.

This bill is sponsored by SOS Shirely N. Weber and supported by a labor organization and a local agency association.

- 2) **Voter Registration Confidentiality.** Existing law provides that all voter registration information is confidential, although certain information (excluding a voter's driver's license number, identification number, partial Social Security number, and signature) may be released for approved election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes. To access allowable information, an individual must apply to the SOS or a county elections official. The applicant must provide their personal identifying and contact information, along with a statement of the intended use of the information. The elections official must verify the applicant's identity before providing the information and retain the application for five years.

Existing law provides a higher level of confidentiality for voter records in certain situations, prohibiting the release of a voter's residence address, phone number, and email address for any purpose. Such protections apply to an individual enrolled in California's Safe at Home address confidentiality program, a voter who requests a court declare the voter's information confidential upon showing a life-threatening circumstance exists for the voter or a household member, and a public safety officer or individual performing elections-related work who attests to threats affecting them or their families.

In response to increasing threats against public officials, AB 1392 (Sharp-Collins), Chapter 300, Statutes of 2025, made the voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elective office confidential for election, scholarly, or political purposes. Unlike other voter registration confidentiality programs, however, an elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address may still be disclosed for certain bona fide journalistic or governmental purposes, and the program operates on an opt-out, instead of an opt-in, basis. According to the Assembly Elections Committee analysis of this bill:

Since the adoption of AB 1392, elections officials have raised several questions and concerns regarding its provisions and implementation. Among other issues, officials have identified ambiguities about whether the confidentiality protections must be affirmatively requested or are automatically granted to certain individuals. They have also questioned which specific elective officers are covered by the bill.

In addition, officials have expressed concern that implementing the bill may be burdensome – particularly until state and local election systems are updated to reduce the amount of manual processing needed for confidential voter registration records. There is also concern that candidates and elected officials may not fully understand that opting into the bill’s confidentiality protections would prevent them from casting a nonprovisional ballot at an in-person voting location.

This bill makes various changes to clarify and resolve ambiguities in AB 1392, including granting confidentiality only upon affirmative written request from the candidate or elected official and allowing for phased implementation.

Analysis Prepared by: Irene Ho / APPR. / (916) 319-2081