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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**  
Senator Scott Wiener, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 2573 **Hearing Date:** 6/30/26  
**Author:** Sharp-Collins  
**Version:** 5/19/26  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Scott Matsumoto

**Subject:** Voter registration information: elected officials and candidates

**DIGEST**

This bill modifies the program that makes confidential an elected official's or a candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address from the individual's affidavit of registration.

**ANALYSIS**

Existing law:

- 1) Defines "elected official or candidate" as a federal, state, or local elected official or a candidate for an elected federal, state, or local office.
- 2) Requires an elected official or candidate to have their residence address, telephone number, and email address appearing on the affidavit of registration be made confidential, unless the elected official or candidate opts out.
- 3) Requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to provide to each county elections official a list identifying elected officials and candidates residing in each respective county when a person files nomination papers for an elected federal or state office.
- 4) Requires the county elections official to add the individual's name to a list identifying elected officials and candidates residing in that county when a person files nomination papers for an elected local office. The county elections official must periodically update the list for each election cycle. Within five business days of receipt of the list from the SOS or within five business days of the filing of nomination papers with the county elections official, the county elections official must make confidential that elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address appearing on the affidavit of registration.
- 5) Requires the county elections official, in producing any list, roster, or index, to exclude voters with a confidential voter status. An elected official or candidate must apply for confidential voter status within 60 days of moving to a new county, if available in the new county. The elections official of the new county, upon notice of the confidential voter moving into the county, must do all of the following:

- a) Contact the confidential voter and provide information regarding the application for confidential voter status in the new county.
  - b) Honor the confidential voter status from the former county for 60 days from the date of notice.
  - c) Exclude the confidential voter in any list, roster, or index during the 60-day period.
  - d) Remove the confidential voter status if the new voter has not obtained or cannot obtain confidential voter status in the new county during the 60-day period.
- 6) Requires an elected official or candidate to contact their county elections official to ensure their voter registration record has been made confidential. County election officials must make the elected official's information confidential when contacted by the elected official or candidate.
  - 7) Provides an elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address must remain confidential until the official no longer holds the office or, for a candidate, the winning candidate takes office.
  - 8) Provides a county or county elections official is not liable for taking or failing to take the action when the county or county elections official has received erroneous information from the SOS.
  - 9) Provides an action in negligence is not maintained against any government entity or officer or employee thereof as a result of the disclosure of specified information, except by a showing of gross negligence or willfulness.
  - 10) Provides when a notification is received from an elected official or candidate about a request to opt-out of confidential voter status, the county elections official must remove the confidential designation from the individual's voter registration record within five business days and notify the SOS and any other relevant local election officials of the decision to opt out within five business days of processing the request.
  - 11) Provides an elected official who opts out may reapply for confidential voter status at any time while serving in or running for office, and confidential voter status must be reinstated upon receipt of the request.
  - 12) Provides, notwithstanding any other law, an elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address made confidential may be disclosed only for bona fide journalistic or governmental purposes using a specified process. The county elections official must retain records of all requests for, and disclosures of, a local elected official or candidate's confidential residence address, telephone number, and email address for journalistic purposes. The county elections official may reject a request that does not clearly adhere to specified requirements.

This bill:

- 1) Changes the ability for an elected official or candidate to have their residence address, telephone number, and email address from the individual's affidavit of registration made confidential from an opt-out to an opt-in process. An elected official or candidate must submit a written request for confidential status to the county elections official.
- 2) Defines "election official or candidate" as a federal, state, or local elected official or candidate who has qualified to appear on the ballot for a federal, state, or local office. This definition does not include a member of a political party's county central committee or a candidate for that office.
- 3) Permits the residence address, telephone number, and email address of an elected official's immediate family member be included in a written request for confidentiality, if the immediate family member is named in the request and the request is accompanied by a statement from the immediate family member confirming they want confidential voter status and understand the ramifications of being made confidential.
  - a) "Immediate family member" means an elected official's spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child who lives at the same residence.
- 4) Provides, upon a written request for confidentiality, the county elections official must make the information confidential. The elections official may provide written notice to the household of the election official or candidate that persons whose information would be confidential would lose their ability to vote a nonprovisional ballot in person at a polling location.
- 5) Provides that in addition to rosters, voter lists, or indexes, any other list created by an elections official must not include any confidential information of the elected official or candidate.
- 6) Requires an elected official's information remain confidential until two years after the official leaves office. For candidates, the information remains confidential until the completion of the canvass for which the candidate was listed on the ballot. Candidates in a local special election must remain confidential until the vote for the special election has been certified by the local elections official.
- 7) Provides that a candidate who opts into confidential status and is elected to the office automatically retains confidential status after being sworn into office.
- 8) Requires the county elections official to determine and identify the federal, state, and local elected officials residing in their county.
- 9) Removes the 60-day timeframe for when an elected official or candidate must apply for confidential voter status when moving to a new county and the requirement for an elections official to make an elected official's information confidential. Instead, the elections official must make the information confidential upon request by the elected official.

- 10) Permits an elected official to opt-out of and re-enroll in confidential voter status at any time while serving in the official's current office or while running for another office.
- 11) Requires county election officials to notify the SOS on a form prescribed by the SOS when a county elections official adds or removes the confidential designation to a federal or state elected official's voter registration record.
- 12) Requires the county elections official to notify an elected official at least 60 days before removing the confidential designation from a federal, state, or local elected official's voter registration record.
- 13) Provides an elected official or candidate who opts-out of confidential voter status consents to the placement of their residence address, telephone number, and email address in the roster of voters.
- 14) Provides the SOS and county election officials implement the remaining provisions of existing law, as it relates to confidential voter statuses and the provisions of this bill, immediately once the statewide voter registration database and county election management systems have made conforming changes.
- 15) Provides, for elections through December 31, 2028, county election officials may make best efforts to manually implement the provisions of existing law as it related to confidential voter statuses and the provisions of this bill to the maximum degree possible before the completion of conforming changes to the statewide voter registration database and their own county election management systems. This is not to be construed to authorize any reduction in current, ongoing implementation efforts.
- 16) Provides that the confidential voter program does not override and cannot revoke confidentiality ordered by a county or confidentiality granted by another specified program.

### **BACKGROUND**

Voter Registration Information. Under existing law, all voter registration information is confidential, except in specified circumstances. These circumstances include the release of voter registration records for approved election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes. A voter's driver's license number, ID number, partial Social Security number, and signature are not disclosed under these provisions.

To access permitted information, individuals or organizations must apply to the SOS or a county elections official, providing identifying information (name, address, phone number, and driver's license or approved ID number), the specific information requested, and a statement of the intended use of the information. The elections official must verify the applicant's identity before providing any information. Completed applications must be retained by the elections official for five years.

In certain situations, state law provides a higher level of confidentiality for voter registration records, prohibiting the release of a voter's residence address, phone

number, and email address even for election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes. Individuals enrolled in California's Safe at Home program, which includes two address confidentiality programs for those at higher risk of threats or violence, are eligible for these protections. Additionally, a voter may request a court to declare their address and contact information confidential, if they can show that a life-threatening circumstance exists for the voter or a household member. Similar protections are also available to public safety officers and individuals who perform election-related work for state or county election officials who attest to such threats affecting them or their families.

Assembly Bill 1392 (Sharp-Collins). In response to increasing threats against public officials, including the shooting of two Minnesota legislators and their spouses in June of 2025, the Legislature approved and Governor Newsom signed AB 1392 (Sharp-Collins), Chapter 300, Statutes of 2025, making the voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elective office confidential. Unlike other voter registration confidentiality programs, an elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address may still be disclosed for bona fide journalistic or governmental purposes if certain conditions are met. The bill was largely structured as an "opt-out" program and eligible individuals are added to the program automatically unless they opt-out.

### **COMMENTS**

- 1) Author's Statement. 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.
- 2) Voting In-Person. An unforeseen consequence of AB 1392 that made elected officials' and candidates' voter registration information confidential also made them unable to vote in person at a polling location. Elected officials and candidates may wish to be able to have their voter registration information confidential but also be able to vote in person.
- 3) Discretion to Provide Written Notice – Suggested Amendment. Upon receipt of a written request for confidentiality, the county elections official must make the specific voter registration information confidential. Additionally, the county elections official may, at the official's discretion, provide written notice to the household of the elected official or candidate that persons whose information would be confidential would lose their ability to vote a nonprovisional ballot in person at the polls. In order to provide uniformity throughout California, committee staff recommends this bill be amended to make the delivery of this notice a requirement so that individuals enrolled in this confidential program are fully aware that they will not be able to vote in person at a polling location.
- 4) Opting-In, Opting-Out, Opting-In – Suggested Amendment. This bill changes the current confidential voter status program from an opt-out to an opt-in scheme. For elected officials, there is a process to opt-out of the confidential voter status program and reenter this program at a later date. This same option does not apply to

candidates. Candidates are allowed to opt-out once in the confidential voter status program, but not explicitly permitted to reenter the program. Committee staff recommends amending the bill to allow candidates the same options that exist for elected officials for being able to leave or re-enroll in the confidential voter status program.

- 5) Consistency in Wording – Suggested Amendment. The phrases, “confidential voter status” and “confidential status,” are used interchangeably throughout the bill. Committee staff recommends amending references of “confidential status” to “confidential voter status” to maintain consistency in this bill and to avoid potential confusion.
- 6) Definition of Immediate Family Member. This bill defines “immediate family member” as an elected official’s spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child who lives at the same residence. This bill permits an elected official’s immediate family, with the consent from each immediate family member, living at the residence to have their voter registration made confidential. It is possible a family member outside of the definition prescribed by this bill lives at the elected official’s residence, such as an in-law or grandparent. By having a family member outside of the definition of “immediate family member” who is registered to vote and lives at the same residence as the elected official, it may create a situation where someone could still find an elected official’s residence. The committee should consider whether the definition of “immediate family member” is sufficient in protecting the elected official and the elected official’s family.
- 7) Immediate Family Members for Candidates. As previously mentioned, this bill permits an elected official’s immediate family, with the consent from each immediate family member, living at the residence to have their voter registration made confidential. It is unclear whether the same protections would apply to a candidate’s immediate family.
- 8) Definition of “Elected Official or Candidate.” This bill redefines “elected official or candidate” as a federal, state, or local elected official or a candidate *who has qualified to appear on the ballot* for an elected federal, state, or local office. While this includes the vast majority of candidates, write-in candidates would no longer be included because they do not appear on a ballot. There are circumstances where a write-in would appear on a future ballot, such as in a two-top election, where the candidate would receive confidential voter status, but that would only happen after the candidate qualifies to appear on a ballot instead of qualifying as a candidate. The committee and author should consider whether the point of entry for candidates to be in the confidential voter status program is when an individual becomes a candidate or when they qualify to appear on a ballot.
- 9) What Happens to the Current Program? Elected officials and candidates are currently enrolled in this confidential voter status program unless the individual opts out. This bill changes the system from an opt-out to an opt-in system. It is unclear what happens to the individuals currently enrolled in the program when this bill takes effect. The individuals currently in the program may not have affirmatively opted into the program, and it is not clear if they would remain in the program because they did not take the action required by this bill to opt-in. The author should consider how a

transition period would work for current enrollees and how the SOS and county election officials plan to notify elected officials and candidates currently enrolled in the confidential voter status of the changes prescribed by this bill.

**RELATED/PRIOR LEGISLATION**

AB 1392 (Sharp-Collins), Chapter 300, Statutes of 2025, made the voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elective office confidential unless the elected official or candidate opts out.

**PRIOR ACTION**

Assembly Floor:	78 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15 - 0
Assembly Elections Committee:	8 - 0

**POSITIONS**

**Sponsor:** Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.

**Support:** California Special District Association  
CFT – A Union of Educators and Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO

**Oppose:** None received

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