
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2785 (Committee on Elections) - Elections: redistricting information

Version: April 16, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: E. & C.A. 5 - 0, JUD. 13 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Robert Ingenito

Bill Summary: AB 2785 would require the Legislature or an appropriate designee of the Legislature, in conjunction with the Secretary of State (SOS), to establish a secure electronic process for county election officials to submit required data and information for redistricting, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- By requiring local elections officials to perform additional, specified duties, 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 could exceed \$50,000 per year (General Fund).
- The bill would likely result in minor and absorbable costs to the Legislature to maintain the database as specified..
- SOS would incur minor and absorbable costs to establish a secure electronic reporting process with the Legislature.

Background: The Statewide Database (SWDB) is California's official redistricting database, providing the electoral and demographic data used for federal, state, and local redistricting. Established in 1981 for the California State Assembly, the database was transferred in 1993 to a nonpartisan setting at the University of California. It is currently housed at the UC Berkeley School of Law, where its data is maintained and made publicly available at no cost.

The SWDB compiles data from several sources to create California's official redistricting database. County elections officials provide precinct-level voter registration and election results, forming the electoral dataset. The U.S. Census Bureau provides demographic information through the decennial Census Redistricting Data Summary Files and annual Citizen Voting Age Population estimates, which include race, ethnicity, and citizenship information for the voting-age population. These datasets are integrated into a single statewide database used by the California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) to draw congressional, state legislative, and Board of Equalization districts, as well as by local jurisdictions conducting their own redistricting. The Legislature supports the continued maintenance and accuracy of the SWDB to ensure the availability of reliable redistricting data.

Proposed Law: This bill, among other things, would do the following:

- Specify that county election officials are to compile and make available to the Legislature complete, unredacted election returns for each election precinct, as well as election returns for each registration and election precinct reflecting the number of registered voters and the vote total for all ballots cast, including both the number of ballots cast by mail ballots and the number of ballots cast at polling places. The bill would also require a master street index file that may be used to identify the associated precinct for a given street address in the county.
- Require the Legislature or any appropriate designee of the Legislature, in conjunction with SOS, to take all steps necessary to establish a secure electronic process that allows county elections officials to submit the information and data required.
 - This process shall include safeguards to protect the security and integrity of the submitted information.
 - Precinct maps submitted shall be submitted in geographic information system format, and election returns shall be submitted in comma-separated values files or tab-separated values files.
 - Other information and data submitted shall be submitted in an open format that is machine-readable.
- Provide that the complete, unredacted election returns for each precinct shall be received and maintained on a confidential basis and protected from public disclosure, as specified.

Related Legislation: AB 1734 (Elections & Redistricting Committee, Chapter 515, Statutes of 2007) required elections officials to send election results to SOS in an electronic format, as provided.

Staff Comments: As noted above, this bill could result in a state-reimbursable mandate. The magnitude of costs to the counties would depend on (1) the volume of data each county must report, and (2) its existing reporting processes. For example, some counties report negligible costs, but other counties report costs in the mid-tens of thousands of dollars per 10-year redistricting cycle.

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