

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2785 (Committee on Elections)

As Amended August 19, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Clarifies the information that county elections officials are required to submit to the Legislature or its designee for the purpose of building the statewide redistricting database, and streamlines the process for submitting that information.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Specify that when county elections officials submit official election results to the Secretary of State (SOS) following a statewide election, those results must include the complete, unredacted election returns for each election precinct reflecting the number of registered voters and vote total for all ballots cast, including ballots cast by mail ballot and the number of ballots cast at polling places.
- 2) Permit the Legislature or its designee to request the unredacted election returns for a county from the SOS if the county has not provided that information to the Legislature as required by this bill.
- 3) Make conforming changes.

COMMENTS

Since 1993, the University of California (UC) system has housed the Statewide Database, which is the official redistricting database for California. According to information from the Statewide Database, it originally emerged from a database that was created by the Assembly for the 1981 redistricting process. In 1993, the state budget included funding to the UC system for the purpose of transferring the Assembly's redistricting database to the Institute of Governmental Studies at UC Berkeley, and for maintaining that database. The Statewide Database subsequently has moved and is now housed at the UC Berkeley School of Law.

Since voting to house the Statewide Database in the UC system, the Legislature has played an ongoing role in ensuring that the state's redistricting database remains complete and accurate. Section 21000 of the Elections Code requires county elections officials to make relevant information available to the Legislature for use in redrawing legislative and congressional districts, including precinct maps and election returns. The SOS regularly works with Statewide Database staff, with the involvement of legislative staff as needed, to collect that information from county elections officials for inclusion in the redistricting dataset.

The official redistricting database is used not only by the Citizens Redistricting Commission when redrawing legislative, congressional, and Board of Equalization districts, but also is required to be used for local redistricting in California. Maintaining the completeness and accuracy of that database is essential for compliance with state and federal law governing the adoption of district boundaries for governmental bodies throughout the state. Collecting data from county elections officials has been time- and labor-intensive for Statewide Database staff. Moreover, some county officials have raised concerns that releasing precinct-level election results could compromise ballot secrecy in precincts with very few voters.

This bill seeks to streamline and improve that data collection process, while providing legal assurance of the protection of the privacy of election results in precincts with small numbers of voters. Before each statewide election, Statewide Database staff works with the SOS to develop a memo that the SOS sends to county elections officials outlining the data the Statewide Database needs to receive from counties, along with instructions for sending that data. This bill codifies in the Elections Code the information that counties regularly have been asked to submit for recent statewide elections. It also ensures that a secure electronic process is available for data submission. Finally, this bill codifies a practice of the Statewide Database that is designed to protect voter privacy. In precincts with fewer than ten voters, the Statewide Database masks the results, and contest-specific vote counts are not reported for these precincts.

The Senate amendments provide a backup mechanism for the Statewide Database to obtain the election results it needs if they are unable to get this information directly from one or more counties. Counties already transmit precinct-level election results to the SOS when they submit certified election results for statewide elections. The Senate amendments codify the precinct-level information that counties provide and provide statutory authority for the Statewide Database to request that data from the SOS if a county doesn't provide it directly. This bill, as amended in the Senate, is consistent with prior Assembly actions.

According to the Author

"Although Propositions 11 (2008) and 20 (2010) transferred responsibility for drawing legislative, congressional, and BOE district boundaries to the Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC), Proposition 11 expressly preserved the Legislature's longstanding role in preparing and maintaining the state's official redistricting database. Maintaining that database involves ongoing data collection and processing, including the collection of precinct maps and precinct-level election returns from every county for each statewide election. AB 2785 streamlines that data collection process. It also takes steps to protect voter privacy and to codify the categories of information counties have been required to provide for redistricting purposes in recent statewide elections."

Arguments in Support

None received.

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) 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).
- 2) The bill would likely result in minor and absorbable costs to the Legislature to maintain the database as specified.

- 3) SOS would incur minor and absorbable costs to establish a secure electronic reporting process with the Legislature.

VOTES:

ASM ELECTIONS: 8-0-0

YES: Pellerin, Gallagher, Bennett, Berman, Elhawary, Johnson, Solache, Stefani

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0-2

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 40-0-0

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

UPDATED

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