
CONSENT

Bill No: SB 1429
Author: Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments
Introduced: 3/5/26
Vote: 21

SENATE ELECTIONS & C.A. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/21/26
AYES: Wiener, Choi, Allen, Cervantes, Umberg

SUBJECT: Elections

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This omnibus bill makes various changes to the Elections Code.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires local districts, cities, or other political subdivisions to file a resolution with the board of supervisors and a copy with the county elections official containing information about the local jurisdiction's election at least 88 days prior to the date of the election. This resolution must include a request that the district, city, or other political subdivision election be consolidated with the statewide election.
- 2) Permits the governing body of local districts, cities, or other political subdivisions to authorize the board of supervisors to canvass the returns of an election.
- 3) Requires county election officials to provide between six and 12 instruction cards to each polling location for the guidance of voters in obtaining and marking their ballots.
- 4) Requires the precinct board to proclaim aloud that the polls have opened and closed.

- 5) Defines “precinct board” as “the board appointed by the elections official to serve at a single precinct or a consolidated precinct,” and a “precinct board member” as “a member of the precinct board and includes an election officer.”

This bill:

- 1) Permits local districts, cities, or other political subdivisions to file the resolution with only the elections official if, at least 88 days before the date of the election, either of the following requirements are met:
 - a) The elections official provides the resolution to the board of supervisors.
 - b) The board of supervisors authorizes the elections official to receive resolutions and consolidate elections without seeking new approval by the board of supervisors for each election.
- 2) Provides that the county elections official, instead of the board of supervisors, is authorized to canvass the returns of a local bond election. A local jurisdiction's governing body may authorize the county elections official, instead of the board of supervisors, to canvass the returns of an election for the jurisdiction that is consolidated with an election held in the county.
- 3) Removes the limitation of 12 instruction cards to be at each polling location.
- 4) Specifies that a precinct board member, instead of the precinct board, is required to proclaim aloud that the polls have opened and closed.
- 5) Makes technical and conforming changes.

Background

Canvassing an Election. Current law allows entities to authorize county boards of supervisors to canvass the returns of the election. This conflicts with other provisions of the Elections Code relating to the canvass and the duties of county election officials. For example, the elections official is required to report the final results of an election to the governing board. If a county board of supervisors is the governing board being elected, the county elections official has the responsibility for conducting the canvass, as the governing board cannot report to itself. This could lead to confusion and unnecessary involvement of boards of supervisors in the election canvass process.

Polling Place Materials and Instruction Cards. In addition to instruction cards, current law requires the Secretary of State or the county elections official to provide specific informational and administrative materials to each polling place. Some of the materials sent to a polling place include an accessible copy of the voter list, an American flag, a ballot container, a sufficient number of cards on how to obtain information about a voter's polling place, name badges, ballots, facsimile copies of the ballot, translated materials for voters, a roster, and various notices relating to election and voting procedures.

Each instruction card is required to have specified instructions and provisions of the Elections Code related to obtaining and marking a voter's ballot. Provisions on the instruction card include Election Day procedures, issuing a ballot, instructions for marking and submitting a ballot, procedures following the closure of a polling place, and Penal Code provisions related to electioneering, vandalism, and voting.

AB 586 (Robertson, Chapter 580, Statutes of 1945) set the range of at least six and not more than 12 instruction cards. Since 1945, while the range of six to 12 instruction cards has remained the same, the wording for where these instruction cards are sent was changed through subsequent legislation to "polling places" and includes polls, polling locations, and vote centers. Vote centers, in particular, may house more than 12 voting stations at a location.

Comments

Committee Bill. This bill is one of the Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments' committee bills. This bill contains changes requested by the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials and by committee staff.

Filing Resolutions. Current law requires that a jurisdiction calling for an election do so by filing the original resolution with the board of supervisors and a copy with the elections official. Some jurisdictions may only deliver the resolution to one of the two entities. A jurisdiction delivering a resolution to only one of the two locations could be legally challenged even if accepted by an elections official.

Precinct Boards. A member of the precinct board proclaims aloud that fact when the polls open and close. This bill clarifies that the entire precinct board does not need to announce the opening or closing of a polling location since it is typically announced by an individual board member.

Senate Bill 851. A version of SB 851 (Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments) of 2025 contained the provisions in this bill. In the days leading up to the bill's final passage, it was amended in the Assembly to reflect another elections-related topic relating to interference in elections. This bill is nearly identical to the language in SB 851 prior to the measure being amended.

Related/Prior legislation

SB 851 (Cervantes, Chapter 238, Statutes of 2025) made various changes to state law to protect California's elections from interference. Prior to SB 851 being amended to reflect the language that was ultimately chaptered, it contained many provisions in this bill, SB 1429.

SB 729 (Glazer) of 2021 would have removed the limitation of 12 instruction cards. The bill passed by the Senate, but was not heard by the Assembly.

SB 696 (Umberg) of 2019 would have removed the limitation of 12 instruction cards. The bill was amended in the Assembly to another elections-related subject.

AB 586 (Robertson, Chapter 580, Statutes of 1945) required the county clerk to furnish each precinct with not less than six nor more than 12 instruction cards.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 4/22/26)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 4/22/26)

None received

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