

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1431 (Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments) – As Introduced March 5, 2026

Policy Committee: Elections

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill updates various provisions of the Elections Code regarding the administration of elections.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Removes obsolete provisions of law that require a military or overseas voter to apply for a vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot, as existing law requires an elections official to mail a VBM ballot to each active registered voter, including military and overseas voters.
- 2) Modifies the nomination process for a candidate to appear on the ballot by requiring a candidate to submit only a minimum number of signatures, instead of a range of signatures with a maximum limit, and allowing a candidate to continuously submit signatures until the county elections official verifies the requisite number of signatures.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable costs to the Secretary of State and local elections officials to update elections procedures and related informational materials. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill's requirements for local elections officials to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs to counties.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, "The Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments...is authoring this bill to make a number of noncontroversial changes to the Elections Code. The [SOS] requested all changes currently included in this bill." This bill is sponsored by SOS Shirley N. Weber.
- 2) **Background. *VBM Ballots.*** During the COVID-19 pandemic, AB 860 (Berman), Chapter 4, Statutes of 2020, required county elections officials to mail a ballot to every active registered voter for the November 3, 2020, statewide general election, with subsequent legislation making the policy permanent for all future elections. This bill makes further conforming changes to reflect this policy and removes provisions of law that require a military and overseas voter to apply for a VBM ballot.

Nomination Signatures. Existing law requires candidates for certain federal, state, and local offices to submit nomination papers to the county elections official with a specified range of signatures in order to appear on the ballot for the primary election. The author and sponsor note that counties use different practices when accepting these signatures and intend this bill to standardize such practices to ensure candidates are treated fairly statewide. This bill removes the maximum limit on the number of signatures a candidate may submit and specifies a candidate may continuously submit signatures until the elections official verifies the minimum number of requisite signatures are submitted.

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