

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 408 (Choi) – As Amended April 3, 2025

Policy Committee: Elections

Vote: 6 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires a county elections official to use two specified methods, instead of one method, to confirm voters' residencies before the primary election.

Specifically, this bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS) or a county elections official to contract with the United States Postal Service (USPS) or a USPS licensee to obtain use of the USPS's change-of-address data to confirm voters' residencies before the primary election. The SOS or county elections official must contract with the USPS for such data in addition to the existing requirement that a county elections official mail a residency confirmation postcard to each registered voter in the county, instead of allowing the contract for USPS data to serve as one of three alternative methods by which an official may confirm voters' residencies in lieu of mailing the postcard.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Negligible costs to the SOS, as the data usage required by this bill is already programmed into the functionality of the SOS's statewide voter registration database (VoteCal). The SOS notes it currently contracts with the Employment Development Department, which has a license from the USPS to obtain use of the National Change of Address system (NCOA). When a voter in VoteCal submits a change-of-address request to the USPS, the NCOA information is used to update the voter's VoteCal record and the SOS sends a confirmation notice to the voter to verify the change.
- 2) Costs in excess of \$2 million per election cycle across the counties (most notably, Los Angeles County) that do not currently mail a residency confirmation postcard to each registered voter in the county or utilize one of the remaining two alternative methods by which a county elections official may confirm voters' residencies. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs to counties (General Fund).

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Voters across the state have expressed the need for California to "clean up" its voter rolls. As Californians actively move from one residence to another, they sometimes find that their ballots continue to be mailed

to their previous addresses...These issues ultimately lead to a lack of trust in our elections system. SB 408 updates California's voter registration residency confirmation process by requiring the [SOS] or a county elections official to contract with the USPS or its licensees to obtain use of postal service change-of-address data, such as [NCOA] and Operation Mail.

This bill is supported by Election Integrity Project California and the Shasta County Board of Supervisors.

- 2) **Voter Residency Confirmation.** Existing law requires a county elections official to conduct a pre-election residency confirmation of each registered voter before each statewide primary election by mailing a non-forwardable postcard to each voter. In lieu of mailing the postcard, existing law allows a county elections official to meet this requirement by: (a) either the SOS or county elections official contracting with the USPS or a USPS licensee to obtain use of postal service change-of-address data, (b) following certain residency verification procedures when distributing the county voter information guide, or (c) using data from consumer credit reporting agencies.

This bill modifies existing law allowing a county elections official to use USPS data in lieu of mailing the postcard to meet pre-election residency confirmation requirements. This bill requires the county elections official to use USPS data in addition to the existing requirement for the official to mail the postcard. Since each county already complies with this bill's requirement to use USPS data by virtue of VoteCal's existing functionality, this bill effectively provides that solely relying on USPS data to verify voters' residencies is insufficient and requires the county elections official to utilize one of the three other prescribed verification methods.

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