

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 715 (Allen)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Changes the deadline by which the Secretary of State (SOS) must notify candidates of the other candidates running for the same office. Requires a candidate to certify under penalty of perjury to the truth and accuracy of the content of their ballot designation worksheet.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the SOS to notify each candidate for partisan office and voter-nominated office of the names, addresses, offices, occupations, and party preferences of all other candidates who have filed for the same office at least 78 days before the election, instead of at least 73 days before the election (or at least 10 days, instead of at least five days, before the SOS transmits the certified list of candidates to the county elections official).
- 2) Moves other specified election-related deadlines, including the candidate filing deadline, four to five days earlier in the election calendar.
- 3) Requires a candidate to certify the truth and accuracy of the content of their ballot designation worksheet under penalty of perjury. Requires a candidate who submits a ballot designation worksheet to provide documentary evidence that supports each of their proposed ballot designations. Provides that examples of acceptable documentary evidence include a current teaching credential issued by the State of California, a business license, or letter from an employer verifying current employment.

COMMENTS

All candidates who want a ballot designation printed under their name must complete and file a ballot designation worksheet that supports the use of that ballot designation by the candidate, as specified. The SOS's office has final approval of ballot designations for state and federal candidates and county elections officials have jurisdiction over local candidates. If a ballot designation does not comply with the law, a candidate will be notified and have an opportunity to provide an alternative ballot designation within three business days of the notification.

Additionally, current law permits an elector to challenge the validity of a candidate's ballot designation by seeking a writ of mandate, as specified.

Existing law specifies that the candidate filing period starts 113 days before the election and ends 88 days before the election. After required candidate filing documents are submitted they must be verified by the elections official to ensure compliance. This verification process must be completed within a very short time period. For instance, the SOS must complete its verification process by 73 days before Election Day which is the deadline for the SOS to provide notice to candidates of the ballot designations of other people for the office that the candidate is seeking. Subsequently, not less than 68 days before Election Day, the SOS must release the final certified list of candidates. It is unclear whether it is feasible to cut the amount of time that the SOS has to prepare the notice to candidates after the candidate filing deadline. Moreover, changing one deadline on the election calendar will affect every other deadline in the election process.

The author contends that the existing timelines under which a candidate receives notification of the other candidates running for the same office and time to initiate and resolve a ballot designation legal challenge (only five days) is insufficient. To address this concern, this bill moves the deadline for the SOS to notify candidates of the other candidates for the same office from no less than 73 days before an election to no less than 78 days before an election. Additionally, this bill moves other specified election-related deadlines to earlier dates on the election calendar. For instance, this bill moves the deadline for the SOS to publicly announce a list of candidates and the availability of specified forms and documents. In addition, this bill requires a candidate to certify the truth and accuracy of the content of their ballot designation worksheet under penalty of perjury and to provide documentary evidence that supports each of their proposed ballot designations.

Please see the policy committee analysis for a full discussion of this bill.

According to the Author

"Under existing law, the Secretary of State must transmit the certified list of candidates, along with their ballot designations, to county elections officials 68 days before the election. The Secretary of State also provides the list to all candidates 73 days before the election which affords candidates the opportunity to issue legal challenges against any information they believe is inaccurate or may mislead voters.

"With the existing deadlines, candidates have only five days to review designations and file legal challenges before the list is officially certified on the 68th day before an election. Additionally, the deadline for the list to be provided to the candidates always falls on a Saturday which further limits the ability to process challenges during traditional business hours. SB 715 addresses this issue by moving the deadline for providing the list to candidates to 78 days before the election. This five-day extension gives candidates a more reasonable opportunity to identify inaccuracies and pursue challenges."

Arguments in Support

None received.

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, costs of an unknown amount, potentially in the tens of thousands of dollars, to the SOS in additional staff overtime to provide the notice to candidates five days earlier during the primary and general election periods for each statewide election cycle (General Fund).

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 27-8-5**

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson

NO: Alvarado-Gil, Grove, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Choi, Dahle, Durazo, Reyes, Valladares

ASM ELECTIONS: 8-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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