

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 852 (Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments) – As Amended June 17, 2025

Policy Committee: Elections

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill makes various changes to the administration of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) and the Political Reform Act (PRA).

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Repeals the requirement in certain years that the CRC fill a vacant commissioner position within 90 days, and instead generally authorizes the CRC to fill the vacancy.
- 2) Repeals the requirement that a bill amending the PRA must be delivered to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) for distribution to the news media and other interested persons, and instead requires the bill be printed and distributed to the Members of the Legislature and published on the internet.
- 3) Adds public officials who manage public investments to the list of individuals for whom the FPPC is the filing officer for statements of economic interest (SEIs) and requires those officials to electronically file their SEIs with the FPPC.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Potential minor cost savings to the CRC by no longer requiring the CRC to urgently vet potential commissioners and meet to fill a vacancy.
- 2) Minor cost savings to the FPPC by no longer requiring the FPPC to distribute copies of bills amending the PRA, and minor and absorbable costs to the FPPC to receive additional electronic SEIs.

COMMENTS:

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

This bill is the Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments' Government Code omnibus bill and contains two changes to the PRA that the FPPC requested as well as a change the [CRC] requested to its own governance. These changes eliminate an obsolete requirement for the FPPC to send a notification to subscribers to inform them of bills that would amend the PRA; fix a drafting error in AB 1170 of 2024 that omitted public officials who manage public

investments from those who must file their Form 700s electronically; and permit, rather than require, the CRC to fill a vacancy that occurs on the commission after its work is completed.

This bill is supported by the CRC and FPPC.

- 2) **Background. CRC.** The CRC was enacted via an initiative measure to draw the district lines for various elective offices every 10 years. Existing law requires the CRC to fill a vacancy within 30 days if the vacancy occurs before December 31 of a year ending in the number “two,” and within 90 days for a vacancy occurring after that point in time. In December 2024, one of the CRC commissioners passed away, which required the CRC to subsequently hold a public meeting on March 28, 2025, to discuss and fill the resulting vacancy. The CRC also voted at that meeting to change existing law to make it discretionary, rather than mandatory, for the CRC to quickly fill a vacancy that occurs later in the decade. This bill enacts the change proposed by the CRC.

PRA. When the PRA was first enacted in 1974, the initiative measure provided two processes by which it could be amended: (a) through a statute that takes effect only when approved by voters and (b) through a statute without voter approval if the bill’s amendments further the purpose of the initiative, the bill is approved by a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature, and the bill in its final form is delivered to the FPPC for distribution to the news media and interested persons at least 40 days prior to passage in each house. Since that time, the 40-day final form requirement has been reduced to 20 days, then 12 days, and then to the current 8-day requirement. SB 681 (Allen), Chapter 499, Statutes of 2023, set the eight-day final form requirement and required the Legislative Counsel to allow the public to subscribe to receive email updates about the status of bills amending the PRA. In light of this new public tracking service, this bill ends the FPPC’s related distribution requirement.

The PRA requires certain elected and other state and local officials and candidates to file SEIs. The information that must be disclosed on an SEI and filing location of the SEI varies depending on the filer’s position. AB 1170 (Valencia), Chapter 211, Statute of 2024, eliminated the paper filing option for individuals who file their SEIs with the FPPC and required such filers to use the FPPC’s electronic filing system. According to the FPPC, which sponsored AB 1170, one category of high-level public officials – those who manage public investments – were inadvertently excluded from AB 1170. This bill adds public officials who manage public investments to the FPPC’s electronic filing requirement.

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