

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 884 (Umberg) – As Amended July 2, 2026

Policy Committee:	Public Safety	Vote:	7 - 1
	Elections		6 - 2

Urgency: Yes State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill modifies election procedures for an election held on November 3, 2026, as well as subsequent elections held through 2029.

Specifically, this bill, for a regular or special election held in 2026, beginning with the November 3, 2026, statewide general election, through 2029, inclusive, or proclaimed in 2029:

- 1) Extends, by two days earlier, the period a ballot drop-off location must be open (to at least 30 days, instead of 28 days, before the election).
- 2) Prohibits a law enforcement officer from making an arrest within 200 feet of an open polling place on election day, unless the crime relates to disrupting the operation of the polling place or is against a person or property.
- 3) Authorizes a county board of supervisors to expand the existing prohibition on electioneering activities within 100 feet of a voting location to a perimeter of up to 200 feet, and provides that a violation of the expanded perimeter is also a misdemeanor.
- 4) Requires a law enforcement officer to: (a) abide by and enforce the prohibition on arrests and electioneering activities at applicable voting locations, and (b) notify the Secretary of State (SOS) and Attorney General (AG) of a suspected, planned, or actual violation.
- 5) Encourages county election officials to use public buildings for polling places and allows state and local governments to place reasonable restrictions on polling places located on government property to enforce these provisions.
- 6) Authorizes a county elections official to extend polling place hours if the official determines in consultation with county counsel that voting at the polling place was disrupted due to a violation of the prohibition on arrests and electioneering activities, with extended-hours votes cast by provisional ballot.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) By requiring a county elections official to open all ballot drop-off locations two days earlier, this bill likely creates a state-mandated local program. Per county costs will depend on when the elections official actually begins mailing ballots to voters and the impact on schedule changes to retrieve ballots from drop-off locations, with one larger county estimating costs of

approximately \$11,000 per election. Thus, this bill may result in costs in excess of \$150,000 across the state's 58 counties.

Additionally, by requiring a law enforcement officer to provide specified notices to the SOS and AG, this bill likely creates a state-mandated local program. If the Commission on State Mandates determines the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service for which the state must reimburse local costs, the local agency may seek reimbursement from the state (General Fund (GF)).

- 2) Cost pressures of an unknown amount to state and local law enforcement to the extent this bill's provisions stating the "Governor is encouraged to use law enforcement to enforce this act" and requiring a law enforcement officer to enforce the prohibition on arrests and electioneering activities, with a violation of the latter being a misdemeanor, result in law enforcement reprioritizing resources on criminal enforcement of the misdemeanor. Additional misdemeanor prosecutions would also create ongoing cost pressures to the courts for adjudication and counties for incarceration (Trial Court Trust Fund, GF, local funds).
- 3) Absorbable costs to the SOS to provide additional guidance and respond to inquiries to help the public understand varying county electioneering distance requirements. The SOS notes that allowing counties to establish different electioneering perimeters of up to 200 feet may result in inconsistent rules throughout the state, increasing the potential for confusion among voters, candidates, campaign staff, elections officials, and law enforcement agencies. Thus, the SOS recommends establishing a statewide uniform electioneering distance to promote more clear and consistent election administration.
- 4) Minor and absorbable costs to the SOS and AG to receive notices from law enforcement.

COMMENTS:

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

Our state is facing serious threats from the Trump administration, and we will not treat them as idle or theoretical. We know that the President Trump's allies seek to suppress voter turnout, especially among minority communities, by deploying ICE and military forces on election day. California has both the constitutional right and responsibility to run our own safe and secure elections, and we intend to do exactly that.

- 2) **Background. *Law Enforcement Interference.*** In an effort to address potential federal interference in California's elections, SB 851 (Cervantes), Chapter 238, Statutes of 2025, expanded an existing crime making it illegal to hire or arrange for a federal law enforcement officer to be stationed in the immediate vicinity of a polling place without authorization from the appropriate elections official or a federal court. Additionally, SB 73 (Cervantes), Chapter 10, Statutes of 2026, was enacted as an urgency measure to prohibit a peace officer (not inclusive of federal law enforcement) from interfering with the administration of an election and allow the SOS or AG to override a county's decision to authorize a peace officer, private guard, or security personnel to be stationed at a voting location.

This bill prohibits a law enforcement officer from arresting a person within 200 feet of a polling place on election day, except for a crime related to disrupting the polling place or against a person or property. The prohibition applies to an officer of any jurisdiction, including the federal government. As noted in the Assembly Public Safety Committee's analysis of this bill:

Because the bill applies to all law enforcement, and does not single out federal officers, this bill does not facially discriminate against the federal government. A challenge to this law, therefore, would likely turn on whether this restriction 'affects incidentally the mode of carrying out federal employment or rather seeks to control federal functions.'"

To the extent this bill is challenged in court, defense costs would be borne by the Department of Justice.

Electioneering. Existing law provides a 100-foot buffer zone around voting locations and prohibits a person from engaging in campaign-related activities within the perimeter, a violation of which is a misdemeanor. This bill allows a county to expand the buffer zone to up to 200 feet, a violation of which would also be a misdemeanor. As noted in the Assembly Elections Committee's analysis of this bill, "This extension may be confusing and challenging to enforce for elections officials and law enforcement as they would need to communicate, mark and monitor different electioneering distances from past elections." This bill also allows a county elections official to extend polling place hours if a violation of the prohibition on arrests and electioneering activities disrupts voting.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is supported by community and social justice groups, labor organizations, and the League of Women Voters of California, which argue this bill "is a direct response to federal overreach and the misuse of law enforcement authority – real and escalating threats to California's elections."

This bill is opposed by law enforcement associations, with the Peace Officers' Research Association of California arguing "public safety decisions should be guided by the circumstances of each incident, not arbitrary geographic restrictions that may hinder law enforcement's ability to respond to criminal activity and protect voters, election workers, and the public."

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