

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: May 24, 2011
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: SB 199
AUTHOR: L. Correa

BILL SUMMARY: Elections: Vote-By-Mail Ballots

This bill would allow a voter to return a vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot to any polling place in the state. This bill would require that when a VBM ballot is returned to a polling place located in a county other than the county of the elections official who issued the ballot, the elections official who received the ballot must forward the ballot to the appropriate elections official.

FISCAL SUMMARY

This measure would likely create a reimbursable state mandate of unknown cost by requiring an elections official to accept and forward VBM ballots from other counties that are returned to polling places within his/her county. Costs could be significant if a large number of VBM voters choose to return their ballots to polling places outside of their registered county. Additionally, this measure would likely result in delays associated with the forwarding and canvassing of VBM ballots following an election.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The amendment to this bill since our analysis of the introduced version is minor and does not alter our position.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is opposed to this bill because it would likely result in a reimbursable state mandate of unknown General Fund cost (that could be significant), and delay post-election processes. Further, given that VBM voters currently have several options for which to return their ballots, this bill seems unnecessary.

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) indicates that the time needed to retrieve out-of-county VBM ballots from election materials is significant given the increasing number of VBM voters and the significant percentage of these voters that return their ballots at the polls. The CACEO also anticipates that this bill would likely result in a significant increase in out-of-county VBM ballots, especially from college campuses with large numbers of out-of-county students. Additionally, the CACEO notes that the requirements of this bill would likely delay the canvassing of votes for both small and large counties.

A substantially similar bill, AB 773 (Blakeslee), was vetoed in 2007 by Governor Schwarzenegger, who stated, "Absentee voters already have sufficient options for returning their ballot. If they choose not to return their ballot by mail, they can return it to any polling place in their home county. This is ample flexibility. While it may be convenient for a small number of voters to return their ballots in counties other than their county of residence, the extra costs to counties and inherent delays associated with this measure do not justify the provisions of this bill."

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Analyst/Principal (0222) J. Fitzpatrick	Date	Program Budget Manager Todd Jerue	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

BILL ANALYSIS Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

AUTHOR

AMENDMENT DATE

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COMMENTS (Cont'd)

Existing law requires VBM ballots to be returned by mail or in person to the elections official who issued the ballot, or in person to any member of a precinct board at any polling place within the jurisdiction of the elections official who issued the ballot (before the close of polls on election day).

This bill would permit a voter to return a VBM ballot to any polling place in the state and would require an elections official who receives an out-of-county VBM ballot to forward this ballot to the appropriate elections official.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO LA CO RV	PROP 98	FC	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)			Fund Code
				2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	
8885/Comm St Mndt	SO	No		----- See Fiscal Summary -----			0001