

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 08/06/2012
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: SB 35
AUTHOR: Padilla, Alex

BILL SUMMARY: Voter Registration Agencies

This bill would designate specified state agencies and offices as voter registration agencies and would require them to perform specified tasks related to voter registration including coordinating with the Secretary of State (SOS) and county elections officials.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The SOS indicates that this bill would result in additional costs of \$100,000 General Fund (GF) in 2012-13 and annually thereafter to implement the provisions of this bill.

The Employment Development Department (EDD) indicates this bill would result in additional costs of \$21.9 million GF in 2012-13 and 18.6 million GF annually thereafter to implement the provisions of this bill.

The Board of Equalization (BOE) indicates this bill would result in additional costs of \$85,000 GF in 2012-13, \$51,000 GF in 2013-14, and \$30,000 GF annually thereafter to implement the provisions of this bill.

The University of California (UC) indicates this bill would result in additional costs of \$200,000 GF in 2012-13 and annually thereafter to implement the provisions of this bill.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) and the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) do not have fiscal and workload estimates of this bill at this time, but do indicate that costs associated with implementing the provisions of this bill would be significant. The various other departments included in this measure do not have fiscal estimates at this time, but we would anticipate their costs to be significant as well.

Any request for additional expenditure authority is subject to review and approval through the annual budget process.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local entities for increased costs associated with any new program or higher level of service imposed by the state on local entities if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the new program or higher level of service is reimbursable and a state mandate. It appears this bill would create additional workload on county elections officials and community colleges and could create a reimbursable state mandate, which would result in unknown GF costs.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is opposed to this bill because it would result in significant additional GF costs that are inconsistent with the current Budget and because it is unnecessary since the state already complies with federal law by designating the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), county welfare

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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
BILL ANALYSIS			Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

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COMMENTS (continued)

department offices, Armed Services recruitment offices, specified FTB and BOE offices, and other local entities as voter registration agencies.

Existing federal law, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), requires states to offer voter registration services at motor vehicle agency offices, offices that provide services to the disabled, Armed Forces recruitment offices, and other state and local offices. NVRA-designated agencies are required to provide the same level of service for voter registration as is provided by the office in completing its own agency forms and to provide this assistance whether the transaction is conducted in person, by phone, or on the internet. The NVRA requires each state to designate a state officer or employee as the chief state election official to be responsible for coordinating the state responsibilities under the NVRA.

Existing state law conforms with federal law by designating local and state entities including the DMV, as an NVRA voter registration agency. The SOS acts as the state's coordinator for implementing the NVRA.

This bill would designate additional entities as NVRA voter registration agencies, including the California Department of Aging, California Health Benefit Exchange, CDVA, EDD, Office of AIDS, State Emergency Food Assistance Program, State Personnel Board, California Community Colleges, California State University system, and other state offices providing social service and health programs.

The SOS indicates that in 2010, 27 percent of California's eligible voters had not registered to vote. The purpose of this bill is to create more opportunities for individuals to register to vote in accordance with the NVRA. However, the NVRA does not provide federal funding for these purposes. By designating these state entities as NVRA voter registration agencies, the state would incur significant costs to provide these voter registration activities without funding from the federal government. Although this bill would provide additional access to voter registration services, it is unclear whether it would result in additional registrations since many voter registration services are already provided through the state, local, and other entities.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO LA CO RV	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)						Fund Code	
		PROP 98	FC	(Dollars in Thousands)					
				2012-2013	FC	2013-2014	FC		2014-2015
0860/Equalization	SO	No	C	85	C	61	C	30	0001
0890/Secty State	SO	No	C	100	C	100	C	100	0001
1730/FTB	SO	No		----- See Fiscal Summary -----					0001
6440/UC	SO	No	C	200	C	200	C	200	0001
7100/EDD	SO	No	C	21,900	C	18,600	C	18,600	0001
8885/Comm St Mndt	LA	No		----- See Fiscal Summary -----					0001
8950/Dept VetsAFF	SO	No		----- See Fiscal Summary -----					0001
9990/Var Depts	SO	No		----- See Fiscal Summary -----					0001