



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chairman, Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 423 (Umberg) – as amended on May 27, 2020 - Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Chairman Berman:

The County of San Bernardino regrettably opposes unless amended SB 423, which would authorize certain counties to open polling places for four days and limit each polling place to no more than 10,000 voters and no more than 10 precincts.

The County is committed to ensuring every voter in our county can exercise their right to vote in a safe and secure manner during the COVID-19 pandemic. Presently, we can accommodate mailing a ballot to every registered voter and provide a reasonable amount of in-person voting opportunities. Further, in collaboration with community and voter advocacy groups, the County intends to implement a voter outreach plan.

We appreciate the State's commitment to provide counties with alternatives for in-person voting services, however we advocate for a balanced approach to those alternative requirements that consider the financial responsibilities to provide these changes, consider adequate staffing, provide voters with options, and provide a safe voting environment for workers and voters. We believe SB 423 provides an unbalanced approach to ensuring every voter in our county can exercise their right to vote.

Besides the significant cost at a time when the State and counties are experiencing an unprecedented financial crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, our County alone is projecting a significant revenue shortfall.

Prior to the declaration of the COVID-19 emergency, the County had estimated the 2020 Presidential General Election would cost about \$11 million to conduct. The alternative polling place requirements in SB 423 plus implementation of new health safety measures are expected to significantly increase the County's cost to conduct the election.

As an alternative to this proposal, the County recommends the alternative requirements in SB 423 not exceed:

- One polling place for every 10,000 voters open on Election Day without a cap on the number of precincts assigned to each polling place
- One polling place for every 30,000 polling place voters open for at least three days prior to Election Day

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This would ensure that those voters that traditionally vote in a polling place still have that option if they do not wish to return their mail ballot through the mail or by depositing it in a ballot drop box. Under this scenario, the County would provide 113 polling places on Election Day and 12 from Saturday through Monday. This would be a more manageable change, doubling the number of early voting locations the County has provided in prior statewide elections.

We urge the committee to consider our alternative language that provides for more flexibility for counties that can be significantly impacted by the sudden change in policy.

For the reasons listed above, the County is opposed to SB 423 unless amended. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please contact Josh Candelaria, Governmental and Legislative Director, at 909 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hagman", with a long, sweeping underline.

Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chair, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Thomas Umberg
Members and Consultants, Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting
San Bernardino County State Legislative Delegation