



April 8, 2015

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Assembly Member Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
Chair, Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee
State Capitol, Room 2176
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 971 (Chang) – Support**
As Introduced on February 26, 2015

Dear Assembly Member Ridley-Thomas:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I write to express our support for AB 971, which would add a provision to law that the state is to pay expenses directly related to special elections for legislative vacancies. It would only apply to expenses incurred after January 1, 2015.

A statute to this effect was in effect for many years up through the end of 2008. Since the beginning of 2009, counties have borne the cost of special vacancy elections.

Every other level of government in California pays its share of election costs, but counties are required to pick up the state's share. The costs of state and federal vacancies come to counties unexpectedly, after their budgets have passed, and these unexpected costs can have a significant impact on county general funds.

This is not the only source of state funding the state has eliminated in recent years. The state has also stopped paying for election-related mandates, so while the amount counties spend on elections has nearly tripled in less than 20 years, the state's share of election funding has dropped to zero.

We would like to work with the Legislature and the Administration to find a system of funding elections that includes the state. We believe reimbursement for legislative vacancies is an important component of this involvement.

For these reasons, we support AB 971. Should you have any questions about our position, please contact me at (916) 650-8115 or gneill@counties.org.

Respectfully,

/ signed /

Geoffrey Neill
Principal Policy and Fiscal Analyst

Cc: The Honorable Ling-Ling Chang, California State Assembly
Members and Consultants, Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee