



April 12, 2016

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Honorable Richard Roth, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
State Capitol, Room 4034
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Ben Allen, Chair
Senate Elections & Constitutional Amendments Committee
State Capitol, Room 2203
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 2016 Elections Administration Funding Assistance – Notice of Support

Dear Senator Roth and Senator Allen:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I write in support of the Secretary of State's request for elections administration funding assistance for the 2016 primary and general elections. Additional staffing and materials will be needed to accommodate elections officials and California's voters statewide in light of the unusual, early growth in voter interest and the unusually long list of ballot initiatives that could require petition verification.

Elections administration is a basic and important duty assigned to counties on behalf of the state for candidate contests and policy decisions at all levels of government, from the smallest school district to the national stage. Voter excitement in light of the Presidential contest will now have California play a bigger role on that national stage with our June primary, despite the decades-long trend and forecasts as recent as February and March saying otherwise. Primary election day preparation is well underway but staffing needs will abruptly need to shift to complete the petition verification process for ballot initiatives seeking voter approval in November. Nearly a dozen late-breaking submissions could come to county offices all at the same time with strict statutory deadlines for processing. Counties made appropriate preparations for this year's primary election demands, but the voter participation now expected and the potential list of initiatives could not have been easily anticipated.

We greatly appreciate the collaboration between the Secretary of State and county elections officials to respond to this development and determine the cost impacts given the diversity of California's counties and the numerous variables in play. The current estimate for needed county assistance totals approximately \$19 million statewide. This is a reasonable, one-time investment with great returns that will provide efficient and accessible elections. We look forward to working with the Legislature, Administration and Secretary of State to ensure that any additional funding made available for this purpose is used responsibly and with accountability.

In our support for this request it should be noted that counties already have existing, significant elections-related funding needs. This is due to a number of factors including rapidly aging voting technology and equipment as well as an \$87 million dollar backlog on election mandates debt repayment. In addition, the 2016 election outcomes will inevitably trigger a series of special elections to fill legislative vacancies for which counties must bear the cost burden. These will require longer-term solutions but in the short-term, the current needs of counties must be addressed. We have every confidence that counties will continue to faithfully and expertly administer elections on behalf of the state to the best of their ability. We strongly

believe a one-time investment now ensures successful outcomes for all who are involved, elections officials and voters alike. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding our position at (916) 327-7500, ext. 515.

Sincerely,



Dorothy Holzem
Legislative Representative

cc: Honorable Alex Padilla, California Secretary of State
Honorable Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
Honorable Members, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Samantha Lui, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Darren Chesin, Chief Consultant, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee