

Date of Hearing: June 11, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS AND REDISTRICTING
Paul Fong, Chair
SB 111 (Beall) – As Amended: March 6, 2013

SENATE VOTE: 36-0

SUBJECT: Elections: voter signature.

SUMMARY: Authorizes a registered voter or any person who is eligible to vote and who qualifies as an authorized user, as specified under existing law, to use a signature stamp that has been approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and transmitted to the Secretary of State (SOS) to submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically on SOS's Internet Web site. Makes other corresponding changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes certain persons to use a signature stamp to affix a signature to various elections documents. Prohibits a voter from using a signature stamp until the signature stamp is used by the voter to sign an affidavit of registration in the presence of a county elections official.
- 2) Requires the DMV and the SOS to develop a process and infrastructure to allow the electronic copy of a person's signature and other information to be transferred to the SOS and to the county election management systems for the purpose of allowing a person to register to vote electronically on the SOS's Internet Web site.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to the Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) Purpose of the Bill: According to the author:

SB 111 updates the law by allowing a person who is unable to sign their name, due to a disability, to use a signature stamp that is filed with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to complete their online voter registration application.

The DMV currently allows people who cannot sign their names to use a signature stamp when applying for a driver's license or California identification card. After the DMV confirms the applicant's identity, it stores an electronic copy of the signature stamp just as it stores traditional signatures.

Under current law, people who use a signature stamp to sign a voter registration affidavit must do so in the presence of an election official, necessitating a trip to the local elections office -- a task that may be burdensome for a person with a disability.

SB 111 will streamline the voter registration process for people who cannot sign their name by allowing them to register vote online, thus creating equal access to online voter

registration for people using signature stamps.

- 2) Warren Mattingly Signature Stamp Act: In 2007, the Warren Mattingly Signature Stamp Act was established by AB 18 (Blakeslee), Chapter 485, Statutes of 2007, and enabled a person who, due to a disability, is unable to provide a handwritten signature, to use a signature stamp in situations where the California Elections Code requires a signature. For example, a signature stamp can be used to sign a vote by mail ballot identification envelope or an initiative petition. Currently, after the DMV confirms an applicant's identity, it stores an electronic copy of the signature stamp just as it stores traditional signatures.

However, as mentioned above, current law only allows a registered voter or any person who is eligible to vote and an authorized user, as specified, to use a signature stamp only after they submit an affidavit of registration in the presence of a county elections official, using the signature stamp to sign the affidavit.

- 3) Online Voter Registration: Last session, the Governor signed SB 397 (Yee), Chapter 561, Statutes of 2011, which allowed online voter registration to begin prior to the completion of a new statewide voter registration database, if certain conditions were met. One of the conditions required the DMV and the SOS to develop a process and infrastructure necessary to transfer the electronic copy of a person's signature from the DMV to the SOS. Currently, a person can fill out an application online and authorize the use of their signature on file with the DMV to "sign" the application. This bill expands online voter registration and allows an authorized person, as specified under existing law, who has a signature stamp approved for use by and on file with the DMV to use that stamp to submit a voter registration application online without having to also use the signature stamp in the presence of their county elections official. According to the author, this bill will not only streamline the voter registration process for people who cannot sign their name by allowing them to register to vote online, but it will also create equal access to online voter registration for people using signature stamps.
- 4) Arguments in Support: The National Multiple Sclerosis Society – California Action Network (MS-CAN) writes in support:

MS-CAN has recognized the value of signature stamps for disabled people in conducting their business and legal activities and was a strong supporter of the Warren Mattingly Signature Act, AB 18 (Blakeslee, Chapter 485, Statutes of 2007). Use of a signature stamp to register to vote online will be of enormous assistance for disabled individuals by removing a remaining obstacle to vote.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Secretary of State (sponsor)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO
Association of Regional Center Agencies
California Association of Clerks and Election Officials
California Common Cause
California Council of the Blind
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers
California State Council of the Service Employees International Union
California Teachers Association
Disability Rights California
National Multiple Sclerosis Society-California Action Network
The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy in California
United Cerebral Palsy of Sacramento and Northern California

Opposition

None on file.

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