

Date of Hearing: June 26, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS
Gail Pellerin, Chair
SB 1493 (Blakespear) – As Amended March 18, 2024

SENATE VOTE: 38-0

SUBJECT: Elections.

SUMMARY: Reduces the initial number of copies of the state voter information guide (VIG) that the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to mail to specified individuals and educational institutions. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Reduces the number of copies of the state VIG and the full text of the all state ballot measures that the SOS must mail as follows:
 - a) One copy instead of 5 copies to each county elections official or registrar of voters.
 - b) One copy instead of six copies to each city elections officials.
 - c) One copy instead of five copies to each Member of the Legislature.
 - d) One copy instead of five copies to proponents of each state ballot measure.
 - e) One copy instead of two copies to each public library and branch of each public library.
 - f) One copy instead of 12 copies to each public high school or other public school teaching at least 11th and 12th grades.
 - g) One copy instead of 25 copies to each public postsecondary education institution.
- 2) Requires the SOS, upon request, to furnish additional copies of the state VIG to any of the persons or institutions listed above.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the SOS to produce a state VIG that contains specified information, including, but not limited to, arguments and rebuttals for and against each state ballot measure, and an analysis of each state ballot measure. (Elections Code §§9081, 9084, 9086)
- 2) Requires that a state VIG be mailed to every postal address at which one or more persons are registered to vote starting the 29th day before a statewide election. (Elections Code §13300)
- 3) Requires the SOS to establish a process that allows a voter to choose to opt out of receiving a paper copy of the state VIG, and instead to receive it by electronic mail, as specified. (Elections Code §§9094.5, 13300.7)

- 4) Requires the SOS, as soon as copies of the VIG and copies of the full text of state ballot measures are available, to immediately mail the following number of copies and to the listed individuals and places:
 - a) Five copies to each county elections official or registrar of voters, Member of the Legislature, and proponents of each ballot measure.
 - b) Two copies to each public library and branch of each public library.
 - c) Six copies to each city elections official.
 - d) Twelve copies to each high school or other public school teaching at least the 11th and 12th grades.
 - e) Twenty-five copies to each public postsecondary education institution. (Elections Code §9096)
- 5) Provides that upon request, and at the discretion of the SOS, additional copies of the state VIG may be furnished to these persons and institutions listed above. (Elections Code §9096)

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

COMMENTS:

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

In an age where we can access voter information guides with electronic devices that fit into the palm of our hands, it is redundant to send multiple copies of this easily accessible information to elected officials, the legislature, public libraries or schools. Reducing this requirement to one copy each is reasonable and will prevent unnecessary waste, as each office or entity may request additional copies if they wish to.

- 2) **State Voter Information Costs:** Numerous factors go into determining the total cost for the SOS to prepare and mail the state VIG including, but not limited to, the total number of pages required, the total number of copies required, as well as translation costs. The state VIG for the November 8, 2022 statewide general election was 128 pages and the state VIG for the March 5, 2024 statewide primary election was 121 pages in length. According to the SOS's office, the total cost to produce and mail the state VIG for the November 8, 2022 statewide general election was \$12,335,979.
- 3) **Previous Legislation:** SB 664 (Allen) of 2019 proposed reducing the required number of state VIGs sent to each county elections official or registrar of voters, each city elections official, each Member of the Legislature, and the proponents of each ballot measure to one copy. SB 664 subsequently was amended to deal with another subject, and was never heard by this committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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