

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS  
Gail Pellerin, Chair  
AB 17 (Alanis) – As Amended February 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Elections: precinct maps.

**SUMMARY:** Requires an elections official to make digital precinct maps available to the public. Specifically, **this bill** requires a registrar of voters in each county to make available, upon request by any member of the public, a map in digital form provided free of charge that shows the effective boundaries of each precinct within the county.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Defines a “precinct” to mean a geographical area within a county that is made up of voters and provides that all voters from the same precinct are assigned to a specific polling place for an election. Provides that in an election conducted using vote centers, eligible voters from any precinct within the county can use any vote center located within the county. (Elections Code §338.6)
- 2) Requires an elections official to divide the jurisdiction into precincts and prepare detail maps or exterior descriptions thereof, or both, and as many copies as the elections official may determine. (Elections Code §12220)
- 3) Requires a precinct boundary to be fixed in a manner so that the number of voters in the precinct does not exceed 1,000 on the 88th day prior to the day of election, except as otherwise provided. (Elections Code §12223)
- 4) Allows an elections official conducting a local, special, or consolidated election, or statewide elections other than the direct primary, presidential primary, or general election, to divide the territory within which the election is to be held into special election or consolidated election precincts by consolidating existing precincts, and to change and alter the precincts for those elections as often as occasion requires, as specified. Provides that not more than six existing precincts may be consolidated into one special election or consolidated election precinct and requires the polling place used for a consolidated precinct to be located within the boundaries of the consolidated precinct. (Elections Code §12241)
- 5) Permits an elections official to change or alter any precinct boundaries and requires an elections official, if any changes or alterations are made, to prepare new detail maps or exterior descriptions thereof, or both. (Elections Code §12260 (a), (b))
- 6) Requires an elections official to provide, at the request of any interested person, the following information:
  - a) All precinct boundary changes and alterations made within the current calendar year and the immediately preceding two calendar years.
  - b) All precinct consolidations made within the current calendar year and the immediately preceding two calendar years, specifying the election or elections in which the

consolidations were made.

Requires the information provided to persons to include the precinct numbers before the change or alteration and then a description, including precinct numbers, of the changes or alterations. Permits the description to include maps. (Elections Code §12260 (c), (d))

- 7) Allows an elections official to charge a person requesting information about changes or alterations to precinct boundaries the amount needed to reimburse the jurisdiction for the actual expenses incurred in providing copies of the information required. (Elections Code §12260 (f))
- 8) Requires the boundaries of precincts for the general election to be the same as those established for the direct primary election, except to the extent necessary to add or subtract precincts as the result of population change or to divide precincts containing more than 1,000 voters or to change precinct boundaries due to jurisdictional boundary changes, or consolidations of elections. (Elections Code §12261)
- 9) Permits an elections official, if there are 250 or fewer persons registered to vote in any precinct, to furnish each voter with a vote by mail ballot along with a statement that there will be no polling place for the election. (Elections Code §3005)
- 10) Authorizes any county, pursuant to the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), to conduct elections in which every registered voter is mailed a ballot and vote centers and ballot drop-off locations are available prior to and on election day, in lieu of operating polling places for the election, subject to certain conditions. (Elections Code §4005)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown. State-mandated local program; contains reimbursement direction.

**COMMENTS:**

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

Right now, precinct boundary maps are not required to be publicly available in a digital format. This lack of transparency can lead to confusion, lower turnout, and frustration, especially when precincts change close to an election. AB 17 aims to combat this problem directly by modernizing how we provide precinct maps, giving voters more confidence in the election process. This will also help candidates, potential officeholders, and organizers by making it simpler to engage with voters and run for public office. When precinct information is clear and reliable, the entire system benefits. Precinct maps being easily available in a digital format will standardize election information statewide, enhance transparency and modernize our public records, remove barriers that prevent participation in our democracy, and will improve engagement of voters in the electoral process.

- 2) **Precincts:** Current law requires an elections official to divide a jurisdiction into precincts and prepare detailed maps or exterior descriptions of the precincts. A precinct is defined as a geographical area within a county that is made up of voters. In traditional polling place counties, all voters from the same precinct are assigned to a specific polling place for an

election. In VCA counties, eligible voters from any precinct within the county can use any vote center located within the county.

Under current law, copies of precinct maps are available to the public upon request, though the elections official may charge a person requesting those copies the amount needed to reimburse the jurisdiction for actual expenses incurred in providing copies of precinct maps. The law, however, does not specify any specific format in which precinct maps must be made available to the public. To the extent that a county has produced precinct maps in a digital format, the actual cost of distributing copies of those precinct maps in digital form to members of the public should be minimal.

Research by committee staff found that many county elections officials' websites allow access to digital precinct maps. For instance, many counties post precinct maps in portable document format (pdf) on their website some of which can be downloaded and printed for free. However, the clarity of the maps differ. Other counties have online interactive mapping tools that allow a voter to look up district and precinct maps, and download and print the digital maps for free.

This bill requires an elections official to make digital precinct maps available to the public, upon request, free of charge. According to the author, there is not a consistent requirement for digital maps to be made easily available to the public. While this bill will ensure that digital precinct maps are available free of charge from all counties in the state, it does not establish requirements for the format or level of detail of those maps. Accordingly, as is the case with existing county maps, it likely will continue to be the case that the quality and level of detail in precinct maps will vary considerably from county to county.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file.

**Opposition**

None on file.

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