

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS
Gail Pellerin, Chair
AB 2573 (Sharp-Collins) – As Amended April 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Voter registration information: elected officials and candidates.

SUMMARY: Changes a program that makes the voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elective office confidential from an opt-out to an opt-in program. Allows immediate family members of an elected official who opts-in to the program to have their registration records made confidential. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires a candidate or elected official to make an affirmative written request to the county elections official to receive confidential voter registration status.
- 2) Clarifies that the confidentiality program is only available for a candidate if the candidate has qualified to appear on the ballot.
- 3) Clarifies that members of and candidates for political party county central committees are not eligible for the confidentiality provided under the law, but individuals who were appointed to an elective office are eligible.
- 4) Defines “immediate family member,” for the purpose of this bill, as the spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child of an elected official who lives at the same residence.
- 5) Permits an immediate family member of an elected official who lives at the same residence as the official to receive confidentiality upon request if that family member is named in the written request by the elected official and the family member confirms in writing that they want confidential voter status and understand that they will lose their ability to vote a nonprovisional ballot at the polls, as specified.
- 6) Provides for an elected official’s confidentiality to remain in effect until two years after the official leaves office.
- 7) Specifies, for an unsuccessful candidate, that the confidentiality granted by the law ends upon the completion of the official canvass of election results for the election at which the candidate was defeated, as specified.
- 8) Provides that for a successful candidate, the confidentiality granted by the law continues when the person takes office and until the person opts out or until two years after the person leaves office.
- 9) Requires each county elections official to exclude confidential information for candidates and elected officials from any list created by the official. Requires each county elections official to notify the Secretary of State (SOS) and any other relevant county elections official when the official adds or removes the confidential designation from a federal or state elected official’s or candidate’s voter registration record.

- 10) Establishes a process for an elected official who has received confidential voter registration status to opt out of that status by submitting a written request, as specified, and to opt back in after previously having opted out.
- 11) Requires the SOS and county elections officials to implement the law allowing candidates and election officials to receive confidential voter registration status immediately once the statewide voter registration database and county election management systems have made conforming changes. Permits county elections officials to make best efforts to manually implement the law to the maximum degree possible before the completion of those changes and provides that this shall not be construed to authorize any reduction in ongoing implementation efforts.
- 12) Makes clarifying and conforming changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides that the home address, telephone number, email address, precinct number, or other number specified by the SOS for voter registration purposes, and prior registration information shown on the voter registration affidavit for all registered voters, are confidential, and shall not be disclosed to any person, except that such information shall be provided with respect to any voter to any candidate for public office, to any committee for or against any initiative or referendum measure, as specified, and to any person for election, scholarly, journalistic, or political purposes, or for governmental purposes, as determined by the SOS, as specified. (Elections Code §2194; Government Code §7924.000)
- 2) Provides, notwithstanding 1) above, that a voter's address, telephone number, and email address from the voter's registration may be declared confidential, and shall not be provided to entities that otherwise can access that information, in the following circumstances:
 - a) By a court order upon a showing that a life-threatening circumstance exists to the voter or a member of the voter's household, as specified (Elections Code §2166);
 - b) If the voter is a participant in one of two existing address confidentiality programs that protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or elder or dependent adult abuse; reproductive health care service providers, employees, volunteers, and patients; and other individuals who face threats or violence because of work for a public entity (Elections Code §2166.5; Government Code §§6205 et seq., §6215 et seq.);
 - c) If the voter is a public safety officer for whom a life-threatening circumstance exists, as specified, and the board of supervisors in the voter's county authorized such confidentiality for public safety officers (Elections Code §2166.7); or,
 - d) If the voter is employed by or contracts with the SOS or a local elections official, performs elections-related work, interacts with the public, and a life-threatening circumstance exists to the voter or a member of the voter's household, as specified. (Elections Code §2166.8)

- 3) Provides, notwithstanding 1) above, that the address, telephone number, and email address from the voter registration of an elected official or candidate shall be made confidential unless the elected official opts out, as specified. Provides that information made confidential under this provision shall not be provided to entities that otherwise can access that information, except that such information may be disclosed for bona fide journalistic or governmental purposes, as specified. (Elections Code §2166.9)

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

COMMENTS:

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

AB 2573 is a technical clean-up bill that ensures counties can properly and consistently implement the confidential voter registration protections enacted through AB 1392. As counties began administering the program, elections officials identified areas where additional statutory clarity was needed around eligibility, procedures, and timelines. At a time when threats and harassment against public officials are increasing nationwide, it is critical that the protections authorized by the Legislature work as intended.

- 2) **Voter Registration Confidentiality and Prior Legislation:** Under current law, all voter registration information is confidential, though certain information from voter registration records may be released for approved election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes. However, a voter's driver's license number, ID number, partial Social Security number, and signature are never disclosed under these provisions.

To access permitted information, individuals or organizations must apply to the SOS or a county elections official, providing their name, address, phone number, and driver's license or approved ID number; the specific information requested; and a statement of the intended use of the information. The elections official must verify the applicant's identity before providing any information. Completed applications must be retained by the elections official for five years.

In certain situations, state law provides a higher level of confidentiality for voter registration records, prohibiting the release of a voter's residence address, phone number, and email address even for election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes. Individuals enrolled in California's Safe at Home program—which includes two address confidentiality programs for those at higher risk of threats or violence—are eligible for these protections. Additionally, a voter may request a court to declare their address and contact information confidential if they can show that a life-threatening circumstance exists for the voter or a household member. Similar protections are also available to public safety officers and individuals who perform elections-related work for state or county elections officials who attest to such threats affecting them or their families.

Last year, in response to increasing threats against public officials, including the shooting of two Minnesota legislators and their spouses in June 2025, the Legislature approved and

Governor Newsom signed AB 1392 (Sharp-Collins), Chapter 300, Statutes of 2025. That bill made the voter registration records of elected officials and candidates for elective office confidential, thereby making information from those records unavailable for election, scholarly, or political purposes. Unlike other voter registration confidentiality programs, however, an elected official or candidate's residence address, telephone number, and email address may still be disclosed for bona fide journalistic or governmental purposes, as specified. Also unlike other such programs, AB 1392 largely was structured in an “opt-out” fashion; instead of applying to be in the confidentiality program, eligible candidates generally are added to the program automatically unless they opt-out.

AB 1392 is expected to substantially increase the number of voters in California who have confidential voter registrations. Prior to the adoption of AB 1392, fewer than 2,500 voters statewide had confidential voter registration status, including approximately 1,100 voters who have confidential voter registration status as part of the Safe at Home program.

- 3) **Implementation Questions and Concerns:** Since the adoption of AB 1392, elections officials have raised several questions and concerns regarding its provisions and implementation. Among other issues, officials have identified ambiguities about whether the confidentiality protections must be affirmatively requested or are automatically granted to certain individuals. They have also questioned which specific elective offices are covered by the bill.

In addition, officials have expressed concern that implementing the bill may be burdensome—particularly until state and local systems are updated to reduce the amount of manual processing needed for confidential voter registration records. There is also concern that candidates and elected officials may not fully understand that opting into the bill’s confidentiality protections would prevent them from casting a nonprovisional ballot at an in-person voting location.

This bill makes several changes to the confidentiality process established by AB 1392 to support effective implementation and resolve ambiguities in the original legislation. Most notably, it clarifies that confidentiality is granted only upon an affirmative written request from the candidate or elected official. It also allows for a phased implementation of the program as necessary updates are made to state and local election systems, provided that elections officials continue ongoing implementation efforts.

- 4) **Arguments in Support:** The sponsor of this bill, Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., writes in support:

AB 2573 is a targeted cleanup of AB 1392 (2025), strengthening the privacy and helping protect the safety of elected officials and their families by safeguarding sensitive voter registration information.

AB 1392 was developed through thoughtful collaboration with counties, journalists, and elections officials across the state. AB 2573 is a refinement addressing counties' needs to facilitate implementation. It clarifies the definition of "immediate family member," strengthens the request process ensuring

confidential status is affirmatively sought by the elected official or candidate themselves, and addresses extent of coverage issues.

The result is an improved framework that will protect the personal information of elected officials, candidates, and their families while ensuring that our elections officials can administer the program efficiently. In an era of heightened threats and harassment of public officials, this legislation is both timely and necessary.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D. (Sponsor)
California Association of Clerks & Election Officials (if amended, prior version)
California Special Districts Association
CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO (prior version)

Opposition

None on file.

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