

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Gail Pellerin, Chair

SB 715 (Allen) – As Amended June 11, 2026

SENATE VOTE: [not relevant]

SUBJECT: Elections: notice of candidates.

SUMMARY: Changes the deadline by which the Secretary of State (SOS) must notify candidates of the other candidates running for the same office. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the SOS to notify each candidate for partisan office and voter-nominated office of the names, addresses, offices, occupations, and party preferences of all other persons who have filed for the same office not less than 10 days before the SOS transmits the certified list of candidates to the county elections officials, instead not less than 5 days before transmitting the certified list of candidates to county elections officials as is the case under existing law.
- 2) Makes conforming changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the SOS, at least 68 days before a primary or general election, to transmit to each county elections official a certified list of candidates who are eligible to be voted on within each county. (Elections Code §§8120, 8148, 8149)
- 2) Requires the certified list of candidates sent to each county elections official by the SOS to show all of the following:
 - a) The name of each candidate;
 - b) The office for which each person is a candidate;
 - c) With respect to candidates for partisan offices, the party each person represents;
 - d) With respect to candidates for voter-nominated offices, the political party preference designation made by the candidate; and,
 - e) If applicable, each candidate's ballot designation, as specified. (Elections Code §8124)
- 3) Require the SOS, not less than five days before the SOS transmits the certified list of candidates to the county elections officials (73 days before the election), to notify each candidate for partisan office and voter-nominated office of the names, addresses, offices, occupations, and party preferences of all other persons who have filed for the same office. (Elections Code §§8121(a), 8147.5)

- 4) Requires a candidate running for office to submit certain documents to the elections official in order to appear on the ballot. (Elections Code §§8020, 8040, 8041, 8061-8064, 8100, 8106)
- 5) Permits a candidate to have a ballot designation appear on the ballot, as specified. Authorizes an elections official to reject proposed ballot designations that fail to comply with existing law. (Elections Code §§13107, 13107.3, 13107.5; 2 CCR § 20710, et seq.)
- 6) Permits an elector to challenge the validity of a candidate's ballot designation by seeking a writ of mandate, and requires a peremptory writ of mandate to be issued upon proof that the error, omission, or neglect is in violation of the law, as specified. (Elections Code §13314)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

- 1) **New Bill:** This bill recently was amended at the request of the author to delete its prior contents and add the current provisions. As a result, prior votes and analyses are not relevant. The current version of this bill proposes policy changes that have not been heard in an Assembly or Senate policy committee during this legislative session.
- 2) **Purpose of the Bill:** According to the author:

The names of candidates for elected office appear on the ballot alongside a ballot designation that the candidate has chosen to describe their current occupation or employment to inform voters of their professional background. Under existing law, the Secretary of State must transmit the certified list of candidates, along with their ballot designations, to county elections officials 68 days before the election. The Secretary of State also provides the list to all candidates 73 days before the election which affords candidates the opportunity to issue legal challenges against any information they believe is inaccurate or may mislead voters.

With the existing deadlines, candidates have only five days to review designations and file legal challenges before the list is officially certified on the 68th day before an election. Additionally, the deadline for the list to be provided to the candidates always falls on a Saturday which further limits the ability to process challenges during traditional business hours.

SB 715 addresses this issue by moving the deadline for providing the list to candidates to 78 days before the election. This five-day extension gives candidates a more reasonable opportunity to identify inaccuracies and pursue challenges.

- 3) **Candidate Filing:** All federal, state, and local candidates running for office are required to complete and submit certain candidate filing documents in order to have their name appear on the ballot. For instance, forms required to be submitted may include, but are not limited

to, the declaration of candidacy, nomination papers, and ballot designation worksheet.

A ballot designation is a word or group of words that appear on the ballot under the candidate's name, designating the principal profession, vocation, or occupation of the candidate. All candidates who want a ballot designation printed under their name must complete and file a ballot designation worksheet that supports the use of that ballot designation by the candidate, as specified. The worksheet allows a candidate to indicate their preferred ballot designation and provide alternatives to be used if their preferred designation is determined to be noncompliant with the existing law. The SOS's office has final approval of ballot designations for state and federal candidates and county elections officials have jurisdiction over local candidates. If a ballot designation does not comply with the law, a candidate will be notified and have an opportunity to provide an alternative ballot designation within three business days of the notification. Ballot designations cannot be changed by the candidate after the final date for filing nomination documents.

Additionally, current law permits an elector to challenge the validity of a candidate's ballot designation by seeking a writ of mandate. A peremptory writ of mandate may be issued only upon proof that the error, omission, or neglect is in violation of the Elections Code or the California Constitution, and where issuance of the writ will not substantially interfere with the conduct of the election.

- 4) **Election Process:** Existing law specifies that the candidate filing period starts 113 days before the election and ends 88 days before the election (approximately 25 days). For example, the candidate filing period for the June 2026 statewide primary election began February 9, 2026, and ended March 6, 2026. While there are circumstances when the candidate filing deadline may be extended, such as when an eligible incumbent does not file for reelection, the candidate filing deadline typically is 88 days before Election Day. After required candidate filing documents are submitted they must be verified by the elections official to ensure compliance. This verification process must be completed within a very short time period. For instance, the SOS must complete its verification process by 73 days before Election Day which is the deadline for the SOS to provide notice to candidates of the ballot designations of other people for the office that the candidate is seeking. Subsequently, not less than 68 days before Election Day, the SOS must release the final certified list of candidates. According to the SOS, for the June statewide primary election, the SOS had to verify over 800 candidate filings.

The author contends that the existing timelines under which a candidate receives notification of the other candidates running for the same office and time to initiate and resolve a ballot designation legal challenge (only 5 days) is insufficient. Additionally, the deadline to notify candidates falls on a Saturday, meaning limited weekend business hours further limit the ability of candidates to challenge opponents' ballot designations in court.

To address this concern, this bill moves the deadline for the SOS to notify candidates of the other candidates for the same office from no less than 73 days before an election to no less than 78 days before an election.

If this bill is signed into law, the SOS will have less time to verify candidate filings. It is

unclear whether it is feasible to cut the amount of time that the SOS has to prepare the notice to candidates after the candidate filing deadline. Additionally, changing one deadline on the election calendar will affect every other deadline in the election process.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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