

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Gail Pellerin, Chair

SB 1429 (Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments) – As Introduced March 5, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 37-0

SUBJECT: Elections.

SUMMARY: Makes various minor changes to the Elections Code. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Clarifies that election returns are canvassed by elections officials, rather than by county boards of supervisors or by the governing bodies of the governmental entities that called the election.
- 2) Eliminates a requirement that a local jurisdiction file a request to consolidate its election with a statewide election with the board of supervisors, and allows the request to be filed only with the county elections official, if at least 88 days before the date of the election, either of the following requirements are met:
 - a) The elections official provides the resolution to the board of supervisors.
 - b) The board of supervisors authorizes the elections official to receive resolutions and consolidate elections without seeking new approval by the board of supervisors for each election.
- 3) Deletes provisions of law that prohibit an elections official from providing more than 12 instruction cards to each polling place.
- 4) Makes technical and clarifying changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Permits two or more elections that are held on the same day and that have territory in common to be consolidated upon order of those calling the election. Provides, generally, for the canvassing of election returns in consolidated elections and specifies in certain circumstances that election returns may be canvassed by a county board of supervisors or by the governing body of a city, district, or other political subdivision. (Elections Code §§10400, 10410, 10411, 10412, 10413)
- 2) Requires, generally, that the canvass of an election be conducted by the elections official and requires the elections official, upon the completion of the canvass, to certify the results to the governing body. (Elections Code §§10262, 10543, 10547, 10550, 15150, 15300-15377)
- 3) Requires a district, city, or other political subdivision, when it calls an election that is to be consolidated with a statewide election, to file a resolution with the board of supervisors and a copy with the county elections official at least 88 days prior to the date of the election that

contains information about the local jurisdiction's election. Requires the resolution to include a request that the district, city, or other political subdivision election be consolidated with the statewide election. (Elections Code §10403)

- 4) Requires a county elections official to provide not fewer than six and not more than 12 instruction cards to each polling location for the guidance of voters in obtaining and marking their ballots. (Elections Code §14105)
- 5) Defines a "precinct board" to mean the board appointed by the elections official to serve at a single precinct or a consolidated precinct or vote center. Defines a "precinct board member" to mean a member of the precinct board and includes an election officer. Requires a precinct board to proclaim aloud that the polls have opened and closed, as specified. (Elections Code §§339, 14213, 14401)

FISCAL EFFECT: None. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose of the Bill:** According to the author, "This bill is a Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments' omnibus bill. This bill contains changes requested by the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials [CACEO] and by committee staff. The bill contains noncontroversial, but needed, changes to the Elections Code."
- 2) **Elections Canvass:** For the first few decades of California's existence as a state, state elections law generally provided for election returns to be canvassed by the board of supervisors of each county, or by the governing board of the local jurisdiction holding the election (e.g., the city council for a city election). Over time, state law was amended to permit the county board of supervisors to instead direct the registrar of voters (or county clerk) to canvass election returns, and then to require the canvass to be conducted by the relevant elections official. Several provisions of the Elections Code, however, contain now-obsolete language that provides for election returns to be canvassed by a county board of supervisors or other governing body of a local agency. This bill makes conforming changes to those sections of the Elections Code by specifying that election returns will be canvassed by the relevant elections official in all circumstances. Some of these changes were requested by CACEO, while others were suggested by committee staff to conform to the changes CACEO requested.
- 3) **Consolidation Requests:** Under current law, a local jurisdiction seeking to consolidate its local election with a statewide election must submit a request to the county board of supervisors and provide a copy to the county elections official. County elections officials report that some jurisdictions mistakenly submit the request to only one of these entities, potentially exposing the consolidation to a legal challenge.

To streamline the election consolidation process and reduce the risk of procedural errors, this bill allows a local jurisdiction to submit the request solely to the county elections official. Unless the board of supervisors adopts a policy authorizing the elections official to accept consolidation requests without board approval, the elections official would then be responsible for presenting the request to the board. These changes were requested by

CACEO.

- 4) **Polling Place Materials:** Existing law requires elections officials to provide specified informational and administrative materials to each polling location. Materials required to be available at each polling place include an accessible copy of the voter list, an American flag, a ballot container, ballots, a roster, instruction cards that guide voters on obtaining and marking ballots, and various notices relating to election and voting procedures.

With respect to the instruction cards, existing law requires an elections official to provide at least six and not more than 12 cards. This limit on the number of instruction cards dates to at least 1939. This bill removes the 12-card limit, thereby allowing an elections official to provide as many instruction cards as appropriate.

- 5) **Previous Legislation:** This bill is similar to the September 3, 2025, version of SB 851 (Elections & Constitutional Amendments Committee). That bill was approved by this committee on by a 7-0 vote, but subsequently was amended and used for another purpose.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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