

## Assembly Bill No. 190

### CHAPTER 808

An act to amend Section 14310 of Elections Code, relating to elections.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2003. Filed  
with Secretary of State October 11, 2003.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 190, Levine. Provisional ballots.

Existing law provides that a voter claiming to be properly registered but whose qualification or entitlement to vote cannot be immediately established shall be entitled to vote a provisional ballot. It prohibits the rejection of a provisional ballot because the voter did not cast his or her ballot in the precinct to which he or she was assigned by the elections official, if the ballot cast by the voter contained only the candidates and measures on which the voter would have been entitled to vote in his or her assigned precinct.

This bill would delete this condition and would instead provide that if a voter casts a provisional ballot that contains candidates or measures on which the voter would not have been entitled to vote in his or her assigned precinct, the elections official shall count the votes for the candidates and measures on which the voter was entitled to vote in his or her assigned precinct. By adding to the duties of local elections officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 14310 of the Elections Code is amended to read:



14310. (a) At all elections, a voter claiming to be properly registered but whose qualification or entitlement to vote cannot be immediately established upon examination of the index of registration for the precinct or upon examination of the records on file with the county elections official, shall be entitled to vote a provisional ballot.

(b) Once voted, the voter's ballot shall be sealed in a provisional ballot envelope, and the ballot in its envelope shall be deposited in the ballot box. All provisional ballots voted shall remain sealed in their envelopes for return to the elections official in accordance with the elections official's instructions. The provisional ballot envelopes specified in this subdivision shall be a color different than the color of, but printed substantially similar to, the envelopes used for absentee ballots, and shall be completed in the same manner as absentee envelopes.

(c) (1) During the official canvass, the elections official shall examine the records with respect to all provisional ballots cast. Using the procedures that apply to the comparison of signatures on absentee ballots, the elections official shall compare the signature on each provisional ballot envelope with the signature on the voter's affidavit of registration. If the signatures do not compare, the ballot shall be rejected. A variation of the signature caused by the substitution of initials for the first or middle name, or both, shall not invalidate the ballot.

(2) Provisional ballots shall not be included in any semiofficial or official canvass, except upon: (A) the elections official's establishing prior to the completion of the official canvass, from the records in his or her office, the claimant's right to vote; or (B) the order of a superior court in the county of the voter's residence. A voter may seek the court order specified in this paragraph regarding his or her own ballot at any time prior to completion of the official canvass. Any judicial action or appeal shall have priority over all other civil matters.

(3) A precinct board member shall notify the voter of the contents of this subdivision at the time of receiving the provisional ballot of the voter.

(4) The provisional ballot of a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote shall not be rejected because the voter did not cast his or her ballot in the precinct to which he or she was assigned by the elections official.

(A) If the ballot cast by the voter contains the same candidates and measures on which the voter would have been entitled to vote in his or her assigned precinct, the elections official shall count the votes for the entire ballot.

(B) If the ballot cast by the voter contains candidates or measures on which the voter would not have been entitled to vote in his or assigned precinct, the elections official shall count only the votes for the



candidates and measures on which the voter was entitled to vote in his or her assigned precinct.

(d) The Secretary of State may adopt appropriate regulations for purposes of ensuring the uniform application of this section.

(e) This section shall apply to any absent voter described by Section 3015 who is unable to surrender his or her unvoted absent voter's ballot.

(f) Any existing supply of envelopes marked "special challenged ballot" may be used until the supply is exhausted.

SEC. 2. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

