

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 11, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 27, 2013

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 10, 2013

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 6, 2013

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 29**

**Introduced by Senator Correa**

**(Coauthor: Senator Steinberg)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Fong and Lowenthal)

December 3, 2012

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An act to amend Sections 3020, 3117, 4103, 15101, and 15372 of the Elections Code, relating to elections.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 29, as amended, Correa. Vote by mail ballots and election result statements.

(1) Existing law makes the vote by mail ballot available to any registered voter, including military or overseas voters. Existing law requires that those vote by mail ballots, including those vote by mail ballots cast by military or overseas voters, be received by the elections officials from whom they were obtained or by the precinct boards before the polls close on election day in order to be counted.

Existing law authorizes certain local, special, or consolidated elections to be conducted wholly by mail, so long as specified conditions are satisfied. Existing law requires ballots cast in these vote by mail elections to be returned to the elections official from whom they were obtained no later than 8 p.m. on election day.

This bill would, notwithstanding the above provisions, provide that any vote by mail ballot, including any vote by mail ballot cast by a

military or overseas voter, is timely cast if it is received by the voter's elections official *via the United States Postal Service or a bona fide private mail delivery company* no later than 3 days after election day, and either the ballot is postmarked on or before election day or is time stamped or date stamped by a bona fide private mail delivery company on or before election day or, if the ballot has no postmark, a postmark with no date, or an illegible postmark, the vote by mail ballot identification envelope *is date stamped by the elections official upon receipt and is signed and dated by the voter* on or before election day.

Because the bill would expand the duties of local elections officials, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) Existing law permits any jurisdiction in which vote by mail ballots are cast to begin processing vote by mail ballot return envelopes 29 days prior to election, and authorizes any jurisdiction having the necessary computer capability to start processing vote by mail ballots 7 business days prior to the election.

This bill would instead authorize any jurisdiction having the necessary computer capability to start processing vote by mail ballots 10 business days prior to the election.

(3) Existing law requires the elections official to prepare a certified statement of the results of the election and submit it to the governing body within 28 days of the election, except for specified elections.

This bill would instead require the elections official to submit the certified statement of the results of the election to the governing body within 30 days of the election.

(4) 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.

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.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: yes.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 3020 of the Elections Code is amended  
2 to read:

1 3020. (a) All vote by mail ballots cast under this division shall  
2 be received by the elections official from whom they were obtained  
3 or by the precinct board no later than the close of the polls on  
4 election day.

5 (b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), any vote by mail ballot  
6 cast under this division shall be timely cast if it is received by the  
7 voter's elections official *via the United States Postal Service or a*  
8 *bona fide private mail delivery company* no later than three days  
9 after election day and either of the following is satisfied:

10 (1) The ballot is postmarked on or before election day or is time  
11 stamped or date stamped by a bona fide private mail delivery  
12 company on or before election day.

13 (2) If the ballot has no postmark, a postmark with no date, or  
14 an illegible postmark, the vote by mail ballot identification  
15 envelope *is date stamped by the elections official upon receipt of*  
16 *the vote by mail ballot from the United States Postal Service or a*  
17 *bona fide private mail delivery company, and is signed and dated*  
18 *pursuant to Section 3011 on or before election day.*

19 SEC. 2. Section 3117 of the Elections Code is amended to read:  
20 3117. A valid ballot cast shall be counted if it is received by  
21 the elections official in accordance with Section 3020.

22 SEC. 3. Section 4103 of the Elections Code is amended to read:  
23 4103. (a) Notwithstanding Section 3020, ballots cast under  
24 this chapter shall be returned to the elections official from whom  
25 they were obtained no later than 8 p.m. on election day.

26 (b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), any vote by mail ballot  
27 cast under this chapter shall be timely cast if it is received by the  
28 voter's elections official *via the United States Postal Service or a*  
29 *bona fide private mail delivery company* no later than three days  
30 after election day and either of the following is satisfied:

31 (1) The ballot is postmarked on or before election day or is time  
32 stamped or date stamped by a bona fide private mail delivery  
33 company on or before election day.

34 (2) If the ballot has no postmark, a postmark with no date, or  
35 an illegible postmark, the vote by mail ballot identification  
36 envelope *is date stamped by the elections official upon receipt of*  
37 *the vote by mail ballot from the United States Postal Service or a*  
38 *bona fide private mail delivery company, and is signed and dated*  
39 *pursuant to Section 3011 on or before election day.*

1 SEC. 4. Section 15101 of the Elections Code is amended to  
2 read:

3 15101. (a) Any jurisdiction in which vote by mail ballots are  
4 cast may begin to process vote by mail ballot return envelopes  
5 beginning 29 days before the election. Processing vote by mail  
6 ballot return envelopes may include verifying the voter’s signature  
7 on the vote by mail ballot return envelope and updating voter  
8 history records.

9 (b) Any jurisdiction having the necessary computer capability  
10 may start to process vote by mail ballots on the 10th business day  
11 prior to the election. Processing vote by mail ballots includes  
12 opening vote by mail ballot return envelopes, removing ballots,  
13 duplicating any damaged ballots, and preparing the ballots to be  
14 machine read, or machine reading them, but under no circumstances  
15 may a vote count be accessed or released until 8 p.m. on the day  
16 of the election. All other jurisdictions shall start to process vote  
17 by mail ballots at 5 p.m. on the day before the election.

18 (c) Results of any vote by mail ballot tabulation or count shall  
19 not be released prior to the close of the polls on the day of the  
20 election.

21 SEC. 5. Section 15372 of the Elections Code is amended to  
22 read:

23 15372. The elections official shall prepare a certified statement  
24 of the results of the election and submit it to the governing body  
25 within 30 days of the election or, in the case of school district,  
26 community college district, county board of education, or special  
27 district elections conducted on the first Tuesday after the first  
28 Monday in November of odd-numbered years, no later than the  
29 last Monday before the last Friday of that month.

30 SEC. 6. Counties may continue to use envelopes and other  
31 official election materials that do not take into account the  
32 provisions of this act until the supply of those envelopes and other  
33 official election materials is exhausted.

34 SEC. 7. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that  
35 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to  
36 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made  
37 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division  
38 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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