

Senate Bill No. 111

CHAPTER 151

An act to amend Section 354.5 of the Elections Code, relating to elections.

[Approved by Governor August 26, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State August 26, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 111, Beall. Elections: voter signature.

Existing law authorizes certain persons to use a signature stamp to affix a signature to various elections documents. Existing law prohibits a voter from using a signature stamp until the signature stamp is used by the voter to sign an affidavit of registration in the presence of a county elections official.

Existing law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Secretary of State to develop a process and infrastructure to allow the electronic copy of a person's signature and other information to be transferred to the Secretary of State for the purpose of allowing a person to register to vote electronically on the Secretary of State's Internet Web site.

This bill would additionally authorize certain registered voters to use a signature stamp if the voter submits an affidavit of registration electronically utilizing a signature stamp that has been approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and transmitted to the Secretary of State.

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

SECTION 1. Section 354.5 of the Elections Code is amended to read:
354.5. (a) "Signature" includes either of the following:

(1) A person's mark if the name of the person affixing the mark is written near the mark by a witness over 18 years of age designated by the person and the designee subscribes his or her own name as a witness thereto. For purposes of this paragraph, a signature stamp may be used as a mark, provided that the authorized user complies with the provisions of this paragraph.

(2) An impression made by the use of a signature stamp pursuant to the requirements specified in subdivision (c).

(b) A mark attested as provided in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), or an impression made by a signature stamp as provided in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a), may serve as a signature for any purpose specified in this code, including a sworn statement.

(c) An authorized user of a signature stamp may use it to affix a signature to a document or writing any time that a signature is required by this code, provided that all of the following conditions, as applicable, are met:

(1) A signature stamp used to obtain a ballot or vote by mail ballot in any local, state, or federal election shall be used only by the authorized user of that signature stamp.

(2) A signature stamp shall be affixed by the authorized user in the presence of the Secretary of State, his or her designee, the local elections official, or his or her designee, to obtain a ballot, in any local, state, or federal election unless the authorized user of the signature stamp votes by vote by mail ballot. If the owner of a signature stamp votes by vote by mail ballot, he or she shall affix the signature stamp on the identification envelope in accordance with Section 3019.

(d) A signature affixed with a signature stamp by an authorized user in accordance with this section shall be treated in the same manner as a signature made in writing.

(e) A registered voter or any person who is eligible to vote, who qualifies as an authorized user pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f), may use a signature stamp only after he or she first submits his or her affidavit of registration or a new affidavit of registration by one of the following means:

(1) Using the signature stamp to sign the affidavit in the presence of a county elections official.

(2) Submitting an affidavit pursuant to Section 2196 that utilizes a signature stamp that has been approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and transmitted to the Secretary of State.

(f) The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

(1) "Authorized user" means either of the following:

(A) A person with a disability who, by reason of that disability, is unable to write and who owns a signature stamp.

(B) A person using the signature stamp on behalf of the owner of the stamp with the owner's express consent and in the presence of the owner.

(2) "Disability" means a medical condition, mental disability, or physical disability, as those terms are defined in subdivisions (i), (j), and (l) of Section 12926 of the Government Code.

(3) "Signature stamp" means a stamp that contains the impression of any of the following:

(A) The actual signature of a person with a disability.

(B) A mark or symbol that is adopted by the person with the disability.

(C) A signature of the name of a person with a disability that is made by another person and is adopted by the person with the disability.