

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 29

Introduced by Senator Yee

June 6, 2012

Senate Joint Resolution No. 29—Relative to voting rights.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 29, as amended, Yee. Voting: disenfranchisement.

This measure would proclaim the Legislature's support for the investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with physical disabilities or limited economic means, and the measure would further denounce any law that disenfranchises society's most disadvantaged eligible voters.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, With great enthusiasm and interest, more than five
2 million new voters participated in the 2008 statewide general
3 election; and
4 WHEREAS, Many new voters in 2008 were minorities, which
5 included African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos; and
6 WHEREAS, The voter participation gap between Caucasians
7 and minorities fell in the 2008 election; and
8 WHEREAS, African Americans and Latinos registered to vote
9 at nearly twice the rate of Caucasians in voter registration drives
10 in 2008; and
11 WHEREAS, Sadly, after 2008, more than 30 state legislatures
12 introduced voter suppression laws that may disenfranchise an

1 estimated five million voters from registering to vote or casting a
2 ballot in the 2012 statewide general election; and

3 WHEREAS, Voter suppression is a deliberate political act
4 designed to disenfranchise minorities, young adults, the poor, the
5 disabled, and the elderly; and

6 WHEREAS, Prior to 2006, no state required an individual to
7 show a government-issued *photo* identification to vote; and

8 WHEREAS, The most underserved and least powerful, which
9 include the poor, the homeless, minorities, the disabled, and the
10 elderly, are disproportionately affected by the requirement to show
11 a state-issued identification card, due to a lack of financial means,
12 time, or mobility; and

13 WHEREAS, State laws limiting voter registration drives impede
14 the rights of free speech and freedom of assembly; and

15 WHEREAS, Voter registration drives are the single most
16 effective means of registering minority voters; and

17 WHEREAS, Eliminating same-day registration in some states,
18 or shortening the period of time for in-person early voting in others,
19 deters citizens from participating in democracy; and

20 WHEREAS, Nearly all instances of *alleged* voter fraud are
21 either clerical or typographical errors on the voter roll; and

22 WHEREAS, The act of fraudulently voting is a singularly
23 inefficient and ineffective act, carrying the risk of five years in
24 prison and a \$10,000 fine for each offense; and

25 WHEREAS, Many state legislators now argue voter fraud is
26 rampant, leading 16 states to enact voter suppression laws *in 2011*
27 that require state-issued identification, restrict voter registration
28 drives, or limit early voting by either mail or in person; and

29 WHEREAS, Voter suppression laws are the modern form of
30 voter discrimination; and

31 WHEREAS, An election system with fair access provides the
32 greatest guard to our rights and liberties; now, therefore, be it

33 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
34 *California, jointly*, That the State of California supports the
35 investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether
36 state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the
37 vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with
38 physical disabilities or limited economic means; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the State of California denounces any law that
2 disenfranchises society's most disadvantaged eligible voters; and
3 be it further

4 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
5 this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United
6 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each
7 Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the
8 United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.

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