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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

RYAN RONCO, PRESIDENT

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April 21, 2023

The Honorable Senator Lena A. Gonzalez (D-Long Beach)
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation
1021 O Street, Room 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 846 (Limón and Menjivar) Voter registration: California New Motor Voter Program – CONCERN

Dear Senator Gonzalez:

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) Elections Legislative Committee would like to express some concerns with Senate Bill 846 (Limón and Menjivar), a proposal to register all citizens who submit a driver's license application. Our concerns include:

1. Could exacerbate existing administrative challenges with New Motor Voter Program

The mail address system currently used by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) does not always place a new voter in the correct county. Some counties receive voters from a neighboring county on a weekly basis. This creates significant manual work for the counties incorrectly receiving voters to correct the error by pushing the voter record to the correct county. This also occurs when a person registers a vehicle in a county different than their county of residence.

By removing the ability for a person to opt out of registering to vote when conducting business with the DMV, counties expect the number of manual corrections needed will increase. Before more people are registered to vote by the DMV, the existing administrative errors should be fixed.

2. Would place an unfunded State mandate on counties

SB 846 creates additional work and costs for counties without appropriating State funds to the counties to implement the new mandated services.

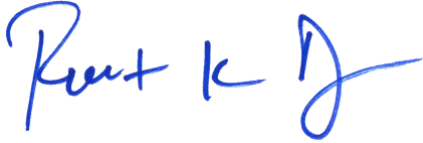
By removing the registration opt out process at the DMV, the bill would shift the burden of notifying newly-registered voters of their right to cancel their registration to county elections officials. The bill requires the notice be mailed by the county and contain questions that are currently asked when the person opts to register to vote at the DMV, including political party preference and language preference. If the newly-registered voters do not respond to these questions when the notice is mailed, many of the voters will likely request assistance to make these changes during elections, including at their polling place or vote center. This will increase the amount of time it takes to serve a voter and impact other voters waiting in line to vote. Finally, the amount of information the bill requires be included on the notice will likely not be able to fit on a postcard, requiring a larger or multiple-sheet, more costly notice than the existing, recently redesigned Universal Voter Notification Card provided to counties by the Secretary of State.

Additionally, it is unclear how existing confidential voters will be protected from being re-registered and their residential address being shared with parties who access registration information for permissible uses under the law.

CACEO appreciates desire of Limón and Menjivar to register more citizens to vote. But before the committee votes on the bill, we wanted the committee to be aware that there are existing administrative challenges with current New Motor Voter Program system and SB 846 would place an unfunded State mandate on counties.

If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at bob.page@ocvote.gov or (714) 567-7620, or my co-chairs James Kus, at jkus@fresnocountyca.gov or (559) 600-1730 or Tricia Webber, at tricia.webber@santacruzcounty.us or (831) 454-2409.

Respectfully,



Bob Page
Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
California Association of Clerks and Election Officials

cc: Senators Limón and Menjivar (Authors)
Rob Grossglauser, Pinnacle Advocacy LLC
James Kus and Tricia Webber, Co-Chairs, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee