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**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS**

Rebecca Martinez, President
Madera County Clerk-Recorder
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September 22, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials Elections Legislative Committee respectfully requests your signature on **AB 1271** (Krekorian). This proposal removes the requirement that a voter be ill or disabled in order to authorize his or her spouse, parent, child, grandchild, sibling or person living in the household to return the voter's vote by mail ballot.

AB 1271 allows any vote by mail voter to authorize a representative to receive and/or return his or her vote by mail ballot. The proposal eliminates confusing and unnecessary barriers to participation in the election process, and adds no cost to either the State or counties. Important protections, including written authorization of the representative by the voter; prohibition against campaigns and committees acting as authorized representatives (except in limited circumstances); and verification of the voter's signature upon receipt of the voted ballot; are maintained to guard against fraud.

Current law provides two different processes, depending on when the voter applies for a vote by mail ballot. Voters who apply during the regular application period face limits as to who can be authorized to pick up or return a ballot on behalf of the voter, and can only do so if ill or disabled, while voters whose need for a vote by mail ballot arises in the week prior to the election, may authorize anyone to perform these services. The limitations set on those who apply timely serve only to confuse and frustrate voters who are attempting, in good faith, to participate in the election process. The requirements are seen by voters as examples of needless bureaucracy. Election officials often hear from voters who would like to authorize a neighbor or good friend to return the ballot. It is unfair to those who live alone, with no family nearby, and disenfranchises many who miss the opportunity to return the ballot by mail and are unable to return the ballot personally. Current law is also confusing for poll workers who are tasked with implementing and explaining the different provisions to voters. Enacting AB 1271 will help to streamline the process of returning ballots to the polls.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at the Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Office at 707-565-1876.

Very truly yours,

Janice Atkinson
Correspondence Secretary
California Association of Clerks
and Election Officials

c: Assembly Member Paul Krekorian, Author
Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
Barry Brokaw, Sacramento Advocates