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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

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April 12, 2011

State Assembly Member Toni Atkins
State Capitol, Room 4146
Sacramento, CA 94249-0076

Dear Assembly Member Atkins:

The Elections Legislative Committee of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) has reviewed **AB 346 (as amended April 4, 2011)**, your proposal to require county elections officials to establish at least one polling place on a higher education campus, defined as community colleges, California State Universities or the University of California campuses.

County elections officials understand the desire to ensure that college students have easy access to the ballot. However, establishing polling places on higher education campuses, as defined, may create a host of other problems. Some of the issues identified in the discussion of your bill include:

- ★ Increased voter confusion
- ★ Students are not registered at their college campus address as their voting domicile
- ★ Students may not be eligible to vote in the precinct that they attend college and will have to vote a provisional ballot
- ★ Increased number of provisional ballots
- ★ Longer lines for eligible voters who wait while poll workers provide provisional voting assistance to students

There are additional issues, such as, increased confusion when an election occurs at times when there temporarily are no students residing at the campus or the campus is closed; lack of available parking when campus is crowded; and, increased confusion for students attending classes on campus but who are not residing in that precinct and are not eligible to vote on campus.

Your bill analysis also recognizes the ability to minimize confusion and increase participation through voter outreach and education efforts. We agree. Working with the Administration of the higher education campus to increase efforts on how to register and vote by mail is a better solution. For example, Monterey County Elections Department had a campus polling place at the California State University at Monterey Bay. This location proved to increase voter confusion and the use of provisional voting. Provisional ballots were either partially counted or were rejected as the student was not registered in the precinct or in the County where they attended college. The polling place required additional poll workers and the assistance of field staff to manage the crowds of students. Now, Monterey County works closely with the Dean of Student Affairs to generate campus announcements and send emails to the student body on the procedures and deadlines to register to vote and obtain a vote by mail ballot from their home county or state. On Election Day, the Department stations two election officials at the Student Center with a secure vote by mail ballot drop box and a Roster Index of Voters to accept ballots and direct students to their proper voting location. This partnership began in 2009 and has shown to successfully educate voters reflecting that few students actually claim their temporary college residence as their voting domicile and are voting by mail.

If you or your staff have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Monterey County Elections Department, at (831) 796-1499.

Very truly yours,

Linda Tulett
Correspondence Secretary
California Association of Clerks and Election Officials

- c: Assembly Member Paul Fong, Chair, Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting
Senator Lou Correa, Chair, Senate Committee on Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments
Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
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