



Board Agenda Item 29

DATE: June 6, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Brandi L. Orth, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters

SUBJECT: Support Letter for The Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize Chairman to execute support letter for the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018 (AB 668) which, if approved by the Legislature, would be placed on the June 2018 general election ballot and would authorize the State of California to issue and sell bonds in the amount of \$450 million to establish a fund to be used to assist counties to purchase or lease new voting systems that are certified or conditionally approved by the Secretary of State.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If AB 668 is not chaptered and approved by the voters and no additional action is taken by the Legislature, the County may have to pay the costs of replacing the present County voting systems which are rapidly approaching obsolescence.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. In September 2016 Governor Brown signed into law the California Voter's Choice Act (CVCA) providing Counties the option of implementing a plan to move from traditional precinct-site voting to an election system using a combination of vote-by-mail (VBM) balloting and a mandated number of "voting assistance centers" (the number of centers are based on a formula identified in the bill, open for ten days prior to, up to including Election Day). Under AB 668 if a county implements the CVCA "voting assistance centers" plan, the county would be required to match state funds disbursed from the AB 668-created fund at a ratio of one county dollar for every three state dollars. Counties not conducting elections pursuant to CVCA may still apply for funds from the AB 668-created fund, but must match at a ratio of one county dollar for every two state dollars.

DISCUSSION:

Assembly Bill 668 (AB 668) authored by Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher seeks to appropriate \$450 million dollars to replace aging voting systems in all of California's 58 counties. AB 668 would keep California's elections running smoothly and securely by helping counties modernize their voting systems. The bill would place a bond act on the June 2018 ballot and, if approved, appropriate \$450 million for counties to purchase new voting systems. This bill would require a county that implements the "voting assistance centers" plan pursuant to the California Voter's Choice Act (CVCA) to match

state funds at a ratio of one county dollar for every three state dollars which will help cover the additional costs of switching to this method. If a county is not conducting elections pursuant to the CVCA, then a county may still apply for funds from the AB 668 created fund to modernize its voting system, but must match at a ratio of one county dollar for every two state dollars. A county may use fund money to purchase or lease new voting systems, electronic poll books, ballot on demand systems, vote by mail drop boxes, and accessible vote by mail systems.

Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2000 in response to the problems of Florida's 2000 Presidential Election, which were widely blamed on obsolete voting systems. During the same time, California voters passed Proposition 41, the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2002, which provided \$200 million in state funds. These funds were provided to counties as a reimbursement on a 3:1 matching basis to upgrade voting systems.

Fresno County utilized partial funding to purchase accessible touchscreen electronic voting equipment by 2008. However, the balance of the optical scan paper-based voting equipment is based on the technology of the 1990's. Replacement parts are difficult to obtain, and the federal standards intended for these systems to only last ten years. Therefore, additional funding is necessary to replace the County's current voting system.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Support Letter
On file with Clerk - Assembly Bill 668

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander