

# ATTACHMENT

For Item

#21

Tuesday,  
October 19, 2021

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION RECEIVED BY THE  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

DISTRIBUTED 10/14/2021

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0080  
(916) 319-2080  
FAX (916) 319-2180

DISTRICT OFFICE  
1350 FRONT STREET, SUITE 6022  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101  
(619) 338-8090  
FAX (619) 338-8099

## Assembly California Legislature

**LORENA GONZALEZ**  
ASSEMBLYWOMAN, EIGHTIETH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
CHAIR: APPROPRIATIONS  
CHAIR: CALIFORNIA LATINO  
LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

October 13, 2021

Board of Supervisors, San Diego County  
County Administration Building  
1600 Pacific Highway, Fourth Floor, Room 402  
San Diego, California 92101

**RE: Support for Adoption of the Voter's Choice Act in San Diego County**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

I write to convey my support for the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), and urge you to adopt the VCA for San Diego County elections going forward to further reduce barriers to voting and democratic participation.

In the November 2020 general election and 2021 gubernatorial recall election, health and safety concerns for the spread of the novel coronavirus at in-person voting locations spurred the Legislature to urgently pass AB 860 (Berman) and SB 29 (Umberg). These bills required county elections officials to mail a ballot to every active registered voter for the general election and recall election, respectively. Previously, voters had to specifically opt to receive a mail ballot, or reside in a VCA or other all-mail ballot county, to receive a ballot in the mail.

Data from both of these elections indicates the success of this practice, with robust voter turnout and voters resoundingly choosing to vote on the ballot that was mailed to them. According to the Secretary of State's office, over 17.5 million Californians voted in the November 2020 general election, comprising the highest turnout out of eligible voters in a statewide race since the presidential general election in November 1952. Of those 17.5 million, 86.5% chose to vote on the ballot that was mailed to them. Continuing to mail ballots to every active registered voter is an important step forward in making elections as accessible as possible.

This year, the Legislature passed AB 37 (Berman), which I proudly joint-authored, to ensure every active registered voter will be mailed a ballot for future elections beginning January 1, 2022. Voters can return these ballots through the mail with the postage already prepaid, at official ballot drop boxes, at vote centers and polling places, or by having a designated trusted friend return the ballot.

However, while both voters in non-VCA counties and counties which have adopted the VCA will now receive ballots in the mail, the VCA provides additional services for voters which significantly improve the voter experience and reduce election administration costs. Vote centers under the VCA provide

added functionality to a traditional polling place by allowing voters to vote at any location in their county on a nonprovisional ballot, update their voter registration – including party preference – before casting a ballot, vote at accessible voting machines for individuals with disabilities or language assistance needs, drop off completed mail ballots, and vote early in-person to help accommodate voters' schedules. While vote centers provide a greater array of services to voters, and a number of them are required to open beginning 10 days prior to Election Day, they can also provide a cost-savings to counties over traditional polling places. Counties which have adopted the VCA have reported hundreds of thousands of dollars of savings due to a reduced need to hire and train staff, and acquire voting equipment. Additionally, the VCA requires counties to conduct education and outreach to help educate voters about their voting options and receive community input for vote center siting.

Voters continue to cite schedule-related barriers as one of the biggest obstacles to voter participation, but mail ballots and early in-person voting options can significantly reduce this obstacle as we have seen with recent robust voter turnout. Fifteen counties have already chosen to conduct elections pursuant to the California Voters Choice Act, including Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne. It is time for San Diego County to join them and adopt the Voter's Choice Act.

Please contact my office at (916) 319-2080 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorena', with a stylized, flowing script.

LORENA GONZALEZ  
Assemblywoman, 80th District