



JIM DESMOND
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: April 22, 2025

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ENSURING SAFE AND SECURE ELECTIONS THROUGH SUPPORTING THE USE OF VOTER ID IN CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

In the United States, identification (ID) is required for many essential activities in daily life, such as driving, traveling, purchasing alcohol, getting a job, opening a bank account, renting or buying a home, receiving government benefits, among others. Yet, despite the need for ID in so many aspects, one aspect where it's not required is voting. While an ID is needed to register to vote, you do not need an ID to cast a ballot. This is a vulnerability in our election system. This leaves elections vulnerable to impersonation and fraud. For so many important aspects of life, people must prove their identity—but not when it comes to casting a ballot.

81% of Americans support a requirement to show government-issued photo ID to vote according to Pew Research. Dozens of countries, including most of Europe, require ID to vote. 38 states in America have some variation of voter ID laws. Yet, California does not. Senate Bill 1174 was a mistake, and California should take steps to rectify it. San Diego County should advocate to overturn SB 1174 and adopt voter ID practices.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include in the Board's Legislative Program support of legislation that will require voters to show identification before voting in elections.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendation. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

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THE USE OF VOTER ID IN CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. They provide the outlet for citizens to have a voice to choose their leaders, influence policy, and have a say in the direction of their country, state, or local government. Elections uphold democracy, a core tenet of American ideals, ensuring people can participate in our government and society. Elections hold our leaders accountable and encourage our leaders to be the best they can. Elections provide a way for us to select representatives who act on behalf of the people, working to address their needs and concerns.

Countless democracies have stumbled or collapsed in their efforts due to corruption, instability, fraud, and/or insurrection. Elections are an essential part of maintaining a healthy democracy. Ensuring elections are safe and secure, and free from fraud of any kind, help protect our democracy. The Governor signed Senate Bill 1174 last year, prohibiting local governments from enacting or enforcing voter identification (ID) requirements. Unless required by state or federal law, a local government, such as the County of San Diego, cannot require a voter to show ID in the voting process. This leaves our election system open to vulnerabilities such as voter fraud. The passage of SB 1174 strips away local control of elections and the ability for local governments to verify someone's identity before voting. To guarantee that only registered voters and individuals who are verified to match their ID are participating in our elections, California should reverse course and adopt voter identification practices to prevent fraud and increase election confidence and integrity. There are numerous benefits for requiring voters to provide ID. Providing ID can help prevent impersonation. Asking for ID can help election officials connect a person to the voter rolls to confirm proper registration. Often in states with mail-in voting, double voting can take place in which a person may accidentally, or nefariously, vote twice. It then resides on election officials to catch the second ballot and disqualify it. Voter ID laws can also help prevent noncitizens from voting by confirming identity. Although election fraud is rare, it is important to address any potential vulnerabilities to ensure that our elections remain safe and secure, protecting the integrity of our democracy. Requiring voter ID will help reduce the likelihood of fraud, deter potential wrongdoers, and strengthen public confidence in both the election process and our democracy.

IDs in California can be obtained through the Department of Motor Vehicles online or in-person. To apply for an ID, one only needs basic information such as their Social Security number, name, and date of birth. It takes an average of 9 minutes to complete the application. There is a fee associated with applying or renewing an ID. It currently costs \$45 for a normal driver's license and \$39 for an ID. There is no fee for people older than 62 or homeless individuals. Others, depending on their financial circumstances, may qualify for reduced fees, and only have to pay \$11 to apply or renew their ID.

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THE USE OF VOTER ID IN CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS**

There are many forms of voter ID laws currently in the United States. 18 states require a photo ID. Other states require ID, but not photo ID. In some states, a copy of your ID is sufficient for mail-in voting. There are many ways show ID to vote without making voting harder. States that have introduced voter ID laws have not seen decreases in voter turnout, in fact, from 2012 to 2016, many states saw increases in voter turnout. States have handled concerns about disenfranchisement by making it easier to register to vote and obtain ID's. For example, states with strict ID laws often offer free IDs or make it easier for individuals to request absentee ballots or vote early, which can reduce potential barriers for those who have yet to obtain an ID.

In the United States, an ID is required for many essential activities in daily life, such as driving, traveling, purchasing alcohol, getting a job, opening a bank account, renting or buying a home, receiving government benefits, among others. Yet, despite the need for ID in so many aspects, one aspect where it's not required is voting. While an ID is needed to register to vote, you do not need an ID to cast a ballot. This is a vulnerability in our election system. This leaves elections vulnerable to impersonation and fraud. For so many important aspects of life, people must prove their identity—but not when it comes to casting a ballot.

81% of Americans support a requirement to show government-issued photo ID to vote according to Pew Research. Dozens of countries, including most of Europe, require ID to vote. 38 states in America have some variation of voter ID laws. Yet, California does not. Senate Bill 1174 was a mistake, and California, should take steps to rectify it. San Diego County should be a leader, and advocate to overturn SB 1174, and instead adopt voter ID practices. At a time of low trust in government institutions and elections, we should take a step to protect our democracy and require ID to vote in our elections here in California.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Safety and Transparency and Accountability Initiatives of the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by ensuring a safe and secure voting environment for all citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Desmond", written in a cursive style.

JIM DESMOND
Supervisor, Fifth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A