

SB 450: CA Voter's Choice Act

This bill allows counties to establish all vote by mail elections and to set up Voting Centers instead of traditional precincts. Secretary of State Alex Padilla advocates these to save money on our elections!

- I. Vote by mail ballots (VBM) may be returned by mail, at the poll site/voting center or at a secure drop-off location.
 - (a) SB 450 allows any person to return any number of ballots to these locations and goes along with AB 1921 "Ballot Harvesting" which we need to ask Governor Brown to veto.
 - (b) It allows VBM ballots to be returned to their correct county within 8 days after the election.
 - (c) The bill requires county election officials and the Secretary of State to establish procedures for the chain of custody, integrity and security of the ballots.
- II. After Jan. 2018 counties may establish all vote by mail elections with secure exterior drop-off locations for every 15,000 voters.
 - (a) The drop-off centers must be near public transportation,
 - (b) be open 28 days before an election,
 - (c) be open 12 hours during business days.
- III. After Jan. 2018 counties may establish Voting Centers that allow voters to:
 - (a) drop off VBM ballots, or cast a vote
 - (b) register to vote or update their registration
 - (c) receive a replacement ballot,
 - (d) cast an accessible ballot,
 - (e) and have at least 3 voting machines that are accessible.
- IV. Voting Centers are for 10,000 voters.
 - (a) 90% of them must be open four days before the election,
 - (b) 10% may be open for less than 4 days before the election
 - (c) If a jurisdiction has less than 20,000 voters there must be 2 voting centers and be open for 3 days before the election.
 - (d) If there are 50,000 voters the centers must be open for 10 days before the election.
 - (e) They must comply with ADA requirements.
- V. The voting Centers will have electronic registration databases for all voters and must not be connected to the voting system.
- VI. Voting Centers will be staffed with paid election officials, will have language assistance and be ADA compliant
 - (a) The sample ballot will have all information about: VBM ballots, updating registration, replacing ballots and provisional voting.
 - (b) Or if a county issues all VBM ballots, voters can cast them at the voting centers.
 - (c) The centers must be located near public transportation and free parking in areas with:
 - Low VBM usage
 - Language minorities
 - Voters with disabilities
 - Low population of drivers
 - Low income
 - low registration rates
 - Geographically isolated communities
 - (d) Their locations must consider traffic patterns and the distance and travel time by car or public transportation--not more than ½ hour.
 - (e) There may be need for mobile voting centers.
- VII. With a 14 day notice, a public meeting must be set up the by officials to present a draft plan for these voting centers.

VIII. Officials must provide considerable public education about these new voting procedures 120 days before the election. Many public service announcements are required and personal contact must be with every voter via the sample ballots and VBM delivery.

IX. OFFICIALS MUST ENSURE SECURITY OF VOTING AT ALL VOTING CENTERS.

X. The Secretary of State must review the educational plans and post them on the website. The voting centers also must be evaluated 2 years after the first election when they are in place and 4 years thereafter. The Secretary must analyze the long and short term cost savings.

XI. For 14 selected counties with other election specifications, there must be a voting center for every 30,000 voters open 10 days before the election. For jurisdictions with fewer 60,000 voters there must be a ballot drop-off center for every 15,000 voters or less, they must be open for 28 days during business hours.

XII. On Election Day, procedures are the same as they have been all over the state. After the ballot reconciliation at the voting center, election officials must divide the ballots into precincts to report the results.

XIII. Six months after the election, counties must analyze and report the efficacy of the voting centers' voting procedures.

Los Angeles County

I. On January 2020 LA County may conduct voting center elections. Every permanent VBM voter receives a ballot.

II. Voting centers must be set up for every 15,000 voters. For every City with at least 1000 voters, there must be a voting center.

III. For every 7,500 voters voting centers must be open 3 days before Election Day during business hours. The centers must be located within a reasonable travel time for voters.

IV. Four years after the first voting center election, LA County can have an all VBM election.

V. AB 1921 is also in SB 450 unless the Governor vetoes it.