



July 5, 2017

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The Honorable Henry Stern
Chair, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
State Capitol Building, Room 2203
Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 668 (Gonzalez Fletcher). Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018.
Support – As amended July 3, 2017
Hearing Date – July 12, 2017: Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee**

Dear Senator Stern:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am pleased to write in support of Assembly Bill 668, the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018, which would seek voter approval to appropriate \$450 million to replace aging voting systems in all of California's 58 counties. Many county voting systems are nearing the end of their useful shelf-life and an investment now in those systems is necessary to ensure equipment is fully functioning for the next decade of voting.

Elections administration is a basic and important duty assigned to counties on behalf of the state for candidate, contests, and policy decisions at all levels of government, from the smallest school district to the national stage. While counties can recover direct costs for conducting elections from local agencies, this does not contribute to their overall voting system needs. The last major investment in voting systems was in 2002, following the Help America Vote Act that appropriated \$252 million to California for the replacement of county voting systems. During the same period, California voters passed Proposition 41, the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2002, which provided \$200 million in state funds. Most California counties used their funding to purchase new voting equipment prior to the 2006 election cycle. However, most systems were based on technology of the 1990's and still today rely on rapidly aging equipment and out-of-date technology.

Earlier this year, a report by the Legislative Analyst's Office examined voting administration and offered that the state has a clear interest in secure, timely, and uniform elections. They noted that while the state reaps regular benefits from county elections administration, it only sporadically provides funding to counties for election activities. We have every confidence that counties will continue to faithfully and expertly administer elections on behalf of the state to the best of their ability. However, we strongly believe a one-time investment now is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for all who are involved, including elections officials, state and local agencies, and the voters of California.

For these reasons, CSAC is pleased to support AB 668. If you have any questions regarding our position please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 650-8133.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Dorothy Johnson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Assembly Member
The Honorable David Chiu, Assembly Member
The Honorable Kansen Chu, Assembly Member
The Honorable Robert Hertzberg, Senator
Honorable Members, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
Darren Chesin, Chief Consultant, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Cory Botts, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus