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**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF  
CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS**

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August 28, 2009

Assembly Member Mike Davis  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0048

Dear Assembly Member Davis:

The Elections Legislative Committee of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials reviewed AB 1121 your proposal regarding Ranked Choice Voting.

While Ranked Choice Voting has been advertised as a cost savings – it only results in savings if, in fact, the election requires a run-off to determine the winner – a situation that is impossible to determine in advance of the election itself. Run-off elections are not guaranteed, but Ranked Choice Voting costs will be incurred regardless.

And at that, the savings are not as clear cut as one might believe. Jurisdictions would have to purchase new voting equipment – or at least new upgrades to software - a costly endeavor. Currently, as you are certainly aware, there is only one voting system conditionally certified to tally Ranked Choice Voting elections. While proponents of Ranked Choice talk of additional systems on the horizon, there is no way to predict when additional voting systems may be federally and state certified for use in California. Voter education would be costly, and there are additional costs for the election, including an additional ballot card (or page) and additional postage for vote by mail ballots. Because the bill is written as an option, there is no mandate, and therefore, no reimbursement for costs.

Furthermore, Ranked Choice Voting is very difficult to audit. Performing the one percent manual tally to a Ranked Choice Voting election will add complexity, confusion and additional costs. A voter requested manual recount would also be very complex for a Ranked Choice election – and although voter requested recounts must be paid by the requestor (unless the outcome is changed) the process would be grueling.

For these reasons, CACEO has voted to **Oppose** AB 1121. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Office (707) 565-1876.

Very truly yours,

Janice Atkinson  
Correspondence Secretary  
California Association of Clerks  
and Election Officials

- c: Assembly Member Paul Fong, Chair, Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting
- Senator Loni Hancock, Chair, Senate Committee on Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments
- Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
- Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
- Barry Brokaw, Sacramento Advocates