OFFICERS 2006-2008

STEVE WEIR PRESIDENT Contra Costa County 524 Main Street Martinez, CA 94553 (925) 646-2955 sweir@cr.cccounty.us

REBECCA MARTINEZ VICE PRESIDENT Madera County

GAIL PELLERIN TREASURER Santa Cruz County

CATHY DARLING SECRETARY Shasta County

BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTED:

JANICE ATKINSON Sonoma County DARLENE BLOÓM Orange County CANDACE GRÚBBS **Butte County** JOSEPH HOLLAND Santa Barbara County **NEAL KELLEY** Orange County **DEAN LOGAN** Los Angeles County JOHN MCKIBBEN Los Angeles County KATHIE MORAN Colusa County DOLORES PROVENCIO Imperial County ELMA ROSAS Santa Clara County KAY VINSON* City Clerk, Murrieta * non-voting member

ELECTED:
JULIE BUSTAMANTE
Northern Area
Lassen County
BARBARA DUNMORE
Southern Area
Riverside County
CANDY LOPEZ
Bay Area
Contra Costa County
LEE LUNDRIGAN
Central Area

Stanislaus County JIM MCCAULEY Mother Lode Area Placer County

ADVISORY COUNCIL CONNY MCCORMACK Los Angeles County MARSHA WHARFF Mendocino County

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

CLERK OF THE BOARD:

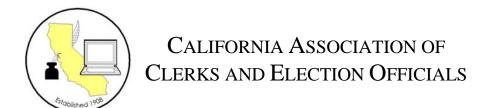
SACHI A. HAMAI Los Angeles County

COUNTY CLERK:

KATHIE MORAN Colusa County VICKI PETERSEN Sonoma County

ELECTIONS:

JILL LAVINE Sacramento County DEBORAH SEILER Solano County



April 11, 2007

Assembly Member Mullin Assembly Member Leno State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Members Mullin and Leno:

The Elections Legislative Committee of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials met on April 6, 2007, and reviewed **AB 1294** (as introduced, February 23, 2007), your proposed legislation allowing ranked choice voting methods for use by local jurisdictions.

Ranked choice voting (also known as instant run-off voting) utilizes a vote tabulating procedure whereby, if a candidate (in a single office contest) does not receive a majority of the votes cast, the ballots cast for the candidate with the least number of votes are redistributed to the second choice candidates. This process continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes cast. Most local jurisdictions do not have run-off elections, and officeholders are elected by a plurality. Therefore, while the outcome of an election may be different under this form of voting, the jurisdiction would be paying for a very expensive method of voting, and there would be no offsetting cost reductions.

This process becomes even more complex when extended to include multi-office contests. Because voters may vote for one or more candidates, receiving a majority of votes cast is not possible for multiple candidates. The voting system must then transform into "choice voting" (also known as single transferable vote). This system uses a formula to arrive at a minimum threshold of votes required for election. Candidates reaching that threshold are considered elected, and the votes cast for second choice candidates are distributed to other candidates by a "transfer value" based on the number of votes the first choice candidate received in excess of the minimum threshold.

Though the Committee to take no position on the bill at this time, the following concerns were raised:

- There are currently no voting systems certified for use in the State of California that can
 accommodate alternative forms of voting. Though one voting system was conditionally
 certified for use in an alternative voting method election, most voting systems cannot
 accommodate such methods of voting. The one system that was certified only tabulated
 single office contests.
- County election officials are obligated to administer elections for school and special
 districts, and administer many elections on behalf of cities. Many of these elections are
 consolidated with statewide elections. Allowing local jurisdictions the option of conducting
 elections by ranked choice would obligate counties financially and force the acquisition of
 new voting equipment (that does not exist at this writing).
- Alternative voting methods add another layer of complexity to the administration of
 elections and, due to the highly complex computer programs required to tabulate such
 votes, force counties to be totally reliant on vendors for the tabulation of votes cast. It
 would not be possible for independent verification of the election results, including the 1%
 manual tally that is performed as part of the canvass of votes.

- These forms of voting are confusing to voters, particularly in consolidated elections, where most contests would be tabulated using the regular voting method and others by ranked choice, and possibly others by choice voting.
- None of the calculations needed to determine the majority or the threshold can be made until all absentee and
 provisional votes are counted, further delaying election results, and jeopardizing the counties' ability to meet
 statutory canvass deadlines.

Should you or your staff have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at (707) 565-1876.

Very truly yours,

Janice Atkinson, Correspondence Secretary California Association of Clerks and Election Officials

c: Senator Ron Calderon, Chair, Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Assembly Member Curren Price, Chair, Committee on Elections and Redistricting Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee

Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee

Amendments Committee