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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

GAIL L. PELLERIN, PRESIDENT

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September 14, 2010

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

By Facsimilie Transmission: 916-558-3160

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials, Elections Legislative Committee has reviewed **SB 970**, Senator Corbett's proposal establishing a pilot program to establish vote by mail drop-off locations on three college campuses for five days prior to a general election. While we share the Senator's goal of increasing turnout amongst college students, and appreciate the recent amendments to the bill, we would like to share with you, as we did with the Senator, our concerns in regard to the proposal, and why it is apt to lead to confusion, frustration and disenfranchisement as opposed to its intended goal.

- A significant number of students who attend college are registered to vote at their out-of-county home, and consider their college address to be a temporary situation. These students should be voting a vote by mail ballot from their home county, in order for their votes to count. The appearance of a vote by mail drop off location will give these students the mis-impression that they may return their out-of county vote by mail ballots at the campus drop-off location, effectively disenfranchising them. Despite the fact the bill requires the Secretary of state to provide implementation instructions addressing that the drop-off locations be utilized solely by voters in the county, the students will be misled and disenfranchised by the on-campus sites.
- Keeping voted ballots and sign-in sheets secure over a five day period would present numerous issues, and at best would be costly, at worst could jeopardize the outcome of the election. This proposal requires the ballots to be retrieved nightly by the elections official, however some college campuses are a significant distance from the elections official's office, and this is the heaviest workload period for elections staff.
- Of all locations in counties, college campuses are notorious for having the worst parking situations. There is a charge for parking, and even at that there is often no parking available. Voters would be better served by vote by mail drop-off locations in centralized, convenient locations with ample parking, such as the program initiated in Sonoma County at Veteran's Memorial Buildings the weekend prior to the election.

In short, the proposal would be costly, onerous and could lead to the disenfranchisement of the very voters it purports to assist. If you or your staff have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at the Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Office at 707-565-1876.

Very truly yours,

Janice Atkinson
Correspondence Secretary
California Association of Clerks
and Election Officials

C: Senator Ellen M. Corbett, Author
Deborah Seiler, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
Jill Lavine, Co-Chair, CACEO Elections Legislative Committee
Barry Brokaw, Sacramento Advocates