



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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August 9, 2017

Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 668 (GONZALEZ FLETCHER) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lara:

Disability Rights California, a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 668. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 21, 2017.

Most California counties have voting systems that were last upgraded prior to 2006 with funds from the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and are based on technology of the 1990's. They rely on zip drives, dot matrix printers, and Windows 2000 or 2003. The federal standards intended these systems to only last 10 years. Voting systems in almost every county are at or near their end-of-life.

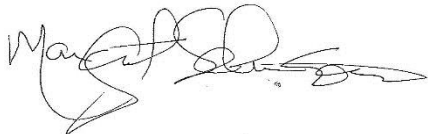
This has been well noted by the federal Commission on Election Administration as an impending crisis, and in 2015, New York University's Brennan Center for Justice also issued a report that raised concerns including the failure of equipment to work as intended, the difficulty of finding replacement parts for machines that are no longer manufactured, and antiquated software making it impossible to find compatible replacement hardware.

The Legislative Analyst's Office has found instances where failed parts were almost irreplaceable or no longer supported by the manufacturer, and computer operating systems were so out of date that they no longer supported with free security upgrades. People with disabilities rely on accessible voting systems so they can vote privately and independently just like other voters and as intended by the HAVA.

The bill would place a bond act on the June 2018 ballot and, if approved, appropriate \$450 million for counties to purchase new voting equipment. This bill would require a county to match state funds at a ratio of one county dollar for every three state dollars if the county is conducting elections pursuant to the California Voter's Choice Act (CVCA), which will help cover the additional costs of switching to this method. If a county is not conducting elections pursuant to the CVCA, then the county must match at a ratio of one county dollar for every two state dollars. AB 668 would allow counties to use the funds to purchase new voting systems, electronic poll books, ballot on demand systems, vote by mail drop boxes, and accessible vote by mail systems.

For these reasons, we urge your support of this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Johnson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.
Advocacy Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, California State Assembly
Laurel Brodzinsky, Legislative Assistant, Office of Assembly Member
Gonzalez Fletcher
Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Robert Ingenito, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee