



**LEGISLATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

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September 10, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 523 – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 523 and requests your signature.**

Existing law requires an election official, upon receipt of a vote by mail ballot, to compare the signature on the identification envelope with either the signature appearing on the voter's affidavit of registration or the signature appearing on a form issued by an elections official that contains the voter's signature that is part of the voter's registration record. If the elections official determines that the signatures do not compare, the ballot shall not be counted.

SB 523 eliminates the prohibition on counting the ballot and instead requires the elections official to allow the voter an opportunity to verify his or her signature before certification of the election.

Signatures written at different times are imperfect and can be written differently. This is especially true for people with disabilities. Individuals with certain disabilities might have more trouble writing their same signature on two different occasions due to pain or discomfort. Signing one's name can be more challenging for a person with a disability.

Individuals with vision impairments might have difficulty or need assistance when signing documents and that could cause the signature to appear different. Finally, the signatures could have also been written on different surfaces that cause a person to have a different looking signature.

This bill would help to ensure that people with disabilities can have their vote counted and their voices heard by allowing them to verify their signature before election certification.

For these reasons, DRC supports SB 523. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Harris". The signature is stylized with a large "E" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Harris
Legislative Advocate 2
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Mike McGuire, California State Senate
Chris Nielsen, Legislative Director, Office of Senator McGuire
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary for Policy
Emily Patterson, Legislative Assistant