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April 14, 2017

Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Judiciary Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 734 (FULLER) – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Jackson:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, opposes SB 734. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 18, 2017.

SB 734's deliberate creation of a database that contains records connecting a registered voter's name and home address to their IP address raises significant privacy concerns. IP addresses can be used to trace an individual's online activity. They can also be used to identify individuals who share a common home, employer, or other relationship and thus use the same IP address. The Legislature recently enacted the California Electronic Communication Privacy Act (SB 178 (2015) (Leno)) to provide additional safeguards for, among other forms of information, IP addresses. This bill would undermine that effort by requiring the government itself to collect a log of records associating IP addresses with individuals. This database could be misused by the government or breached by a computer hacker as so many government records have been.

Moreover, not only can an IP address intrude on personal privacy, there appears to be no clear benefit to the data collection required by SB 734.

Many registrants may use an IP address associated with the internet connection of a friend or relative, their school or employer, a public library, or even an organization dedicated to assisting individuals in registering to vote. Multiple registrants using the same IP address to register, even simultaneously, is thus likely to be a very common occurrence. As a result, an IP address will not reliably provide useful information about fraudulent voter registration, nor would collecting and retaining that information enhance the accuracy and integrity of online voter registration.

For these reasons, we oppose this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position on this bill.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Johnson", written over a faint, illegible typed name.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.
Advocacy Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Jean Fuller, California State Senate
Brett Michelin, Legislative Consultant, Office of Senator Fuller
Honorable Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Timothy Griffiths, Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee