



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

June 2, 2017

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Assembly Elections & Redistricting Committee
State Capitol, Room 6011
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 568 (Lara) – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Berman:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I write to respectfully inform you of our opposition to Senate Bill 568, authored by Senator Ricardo Lara, which would permanently place the Presidential Primary Election on either the third Tuesday in March, or a date, as determined by the Governor, which is earlier than the third Tuesday in March.

RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties. In all but a handful of jurisdictions, counties conduct elections, including those involving candidates and ballot measures for cities. This function occurs through the county elections clerk, many of whom are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

SB 568 proposes that the presidential election date also serve as the Direct Primary for the House of Representatives, members of the Legislature, and County Supervisors, as well as for the consideration of statewide ballot measures that were placed on the ballot by the Legislature (initiative measures are deemed for the General Election ballot). With the enactment of SB 568, RCRC member counties believe the result will permanently create two different calendars for the election of county supervisor. One set of county supervisorial candidates would face a primary in March, while the other set faces a June primary election. This translates to an extremely long campaign season (almost a full year between filing and election certification) for those supervisors campaigning for seats where the election is held in March. Furthermore, for those incumbents facing a March date and who have experienced defeat (not receiving 50 percent plus one), they would have nearly a year in office where they would serve as a lame-duck.

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Most importantly, last year, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 450 (Allen and Hertzberg), which authorizes counties to conduct any and all elections as an all-mail ballot election. Specifically, SB 450 permitted at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors the following RCRC-member counties after January 1, 2018 to conduct any election as an all-mailed ballot election: Calaveras, Inyo, Madera, Napa, Nevada, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Sutter and Tuolumne. In 2020, all other counties could utilize this option, with the exception of Los Angeles County. To be eligible to utilize this all-mail voting option, counties must meet prescribed conditions. With the enactment of SB 450, counties are undergoing dramatic changes in the way elections are administered. RCRC believes it would be prudent to witness the effect of these changes before altering the calendar of when elections are slated.

For the reasons stated, RCRC respectfully requests your 'No' vote on SB 568, when it is heard before your Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Paul" on the first line and "A. Smith" on the second line.

PAUL A. SMITH
Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: The Honorable Ricardo Lara, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Assembly Elections & Redistricting Committee
Consultant, Assembly Elections & Redistricting Committee