

California Voter Foundation



September 7, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
The State Capitol Building, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 759 - SUPPORT

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Voter Foundation (CVF) strongly supports SB 759 and we urge you to sign this bill into law.

If enacted, SB 759 will require all counties to notify voters whose mail ballot envelope signatures have been challenged and give those voters a chance to “cure” their challenged ballot and provide a valid signature so that their ballot is counted rather than rejected.

CVF has been shining a light on vote-by-mail ballot rejections since 2014, when we published our report, “Improving California’s Vote-by-Mail Process: A Three-County Study” highlighting the difficulties counties face when processing vote-by-mail ballots (our report is online at <http://www.calvoter.org/votebymail>). Ballot rejection due to mismatched signatures was a significant issue identified in our study and is one of the top reasons why vote-by-mail ballots are rejected.

While some counties conduct outreach to voters with challenged signatures, none are required to do so. At least one county registrar who took the initiative in the June Primary to conduct this outreach was challenged by campaign lawyers in court (see <https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/politics-government/election/article213401329.html>). That’s one reason why SB 759 is so important: if enacted, it will **create uniformity in how counties treat voters and ensure that all voters in California have the opportunity to correct problem signatures and not be disenfranchised without notice regardless of where in the state they vote.**

As vote-by-mail expands in California, it’s crucial that we work to ensure this voting process maximizes participation and does not lead to unnecessary disenfranchisement. The absence of this outreach requirement in past elections has resulted in tens of thousands of rejected ballots going uncounted. SB 759 will greatly reduce this needless disenfranchisement of California voters.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander
President