



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

September 30, 2015

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty)—Request Signature and Signing Statement

Dear Governor Brown:

The League of Women Voters of California respectfully requests your signature on AB 1461, the California New Motor Voter Program sponsored by Secretary of State Alex Padilla. In addition, we urge you to issue a signing statement that requires that electronic voter registration at the DMV be in place in time for the 2016 elections.

The LWVC has worked for full implementation of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) in state agencies including Covered California and, currently, at the Department of Motor Vehicles. We were encouraged that, during the course of NVRA negotiations with your office, the Secretary of State's office, the DMV, and the Department of Transportation, funding for the DMV to implement online voter registration during driver's license transactions was included in this year's budget. That momentum to implement an automated system must not be lost!

Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed, and we believe the state should take a stronger role in encouraging the facilitation of registration and voting. We applaud the intent of AB 1461 to provide California citizens additional opportunities to participate in democracy through exercise of that right.

For many Californians, registering to vote is a significant barrier to participation in our democracy. The League of Women Voters stands firmly behind efforts to make registration easy and accessible to all eligible citizens. California ranks 38th among the states in voter registration, a dismal record that must be improved. AB 1461 could potentially bring the 6.6 million eligible, but unregistered, voters in our state—who are predominantly Latino, African American and Asian-Pacific Islanders—into the electoral process.

We had concerns about earlier versions of the bill that could have had serious consequences for noncitizens, including lawful permanent residents, if they failed to respond to an opt-out registration card and became automatically registered to vote. We are pleased that the current version of the bill incorporates a different process and removes those concerns.

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Bringing as many eligible Californians into our election process as possible has great rewards for our democracy. We urge you to sign this historic bill and issue an accompanying statement to ensure the DMV will implement efficient, streamlined voter registration **before** the June 2016 primary.

Sincerely,



Helen L. Hutchison
President

cc: Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez
Assembly Member Luis Alejo
Assembly Member Kevin McCarty
Secretary of State Alex Padilla