



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

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September 30, 2015

Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: AB 1461 (Gonzalez) – California New Motor Voter Program – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) strongly supports AB 1461 (Gonzalez), a bill to increase opportunities for voter registration by establishing the California New Motor Voter Program. The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment provides legal, organizing, and technical assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color fighting environmental hazards in California's Central Valley and beyond.

Voting is a fundamental right, yet citizens now must opt-in to exercise that right. In 2012, California ranked 38th in voter registration. California has more than 6.6 million eligible, but unregistered citizens who are predominantly Latino, African American and Asian-Pacific Islander. Many of these eligible, unregistered citizens reside in the Central Valley, where low voter registration has led to the election of candidates who fail to represent the interests of the low-income residents and residents of color who make up a large portion of the population in the region. Disparities in voter registration also leads to a disparity in the allocation of election resources and a disparity in the elected representation of people of color at the local, regional, state and federal levels. California should make every effort to facilitate the participation of all citizens in our democracy. Therefore, the burden of voter registration should be placed on the people who do not want to participate in our democracy.

In recent years, modern technology has transformed voter registration and voting practices. California now has online voter registration, is beginning to deploy new a statewide voter registration database, and there is a new technology upgrade at the DMV specifically for voter registration. We now have the technology in place to make voter registration more efficient and more inclusive. We should use it to increase the representativeness of our government.

We respectfully ask for your signature on AB 1461.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Brostrom,
Senior Attorney

PROVIDING LEGAL & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

RALPH SANTIAGO ABASCAL (1934-1997) DIRECTOR 1990-1997

LUKE W. COLE (1962-2009) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 1997-2009