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[www.seiucal.org](http://www.seiucal.org)

September 15, 2015

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

RE: Assembly Bill 1461 (Gonzalez): Voter Registration – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Governor Brown:

The California State Council of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) supports Assembly Bill (AB) 1461, which would require the Secretary of State and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to establish the California New Motor Voter Program towards increasing opportunities for voter registration, and would establish a voter education program.

Given that California has nearly seven million individuals who are eligible to vote, but not registered, and with the 2014 being the lowest election participation rate in decades, the level of non-participation in the civic process is simply astounding. This becomes more profound especially when considering electoral, legislative and budgetary interests at all levels of government, and affects that each of these has on every Californian.

Broadening the ability of Californians to engage in the democratic process will yield more representative election results and will help towards ensuring that the voices of more Californians are heard. Moreover, individuals and families will be able to continue the tradition of instilling the values of civic engagement not just at the polling place, but also in the days and weeks leading up to election day.

**AB 1461 represents the ideals of which you advocated for during your speech at the 1992 Democratic National Convention. In part, your remarked:**

*"The future will be determined not on Capitol Hill or the White House alone... when a democracy is in trouble, the remedy is more democracy. That's why every citizen in America should have not only the right, but the real opportunity to vote, and the responsibility of government is to ensure that by registering every American."<sup>1</sup>*

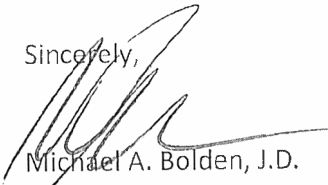
AB 1461 represents a move towards modernizing California's approach to voter registration similar to that which has been done in other states, and moves California towards achieving your significant, and unforgettable remarks at the 1992 Democratic National Convention.

<sup>1</sup> 1992 Democratic National Convention Night 1 (part 1 of 3).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxCsRkzJ71g>. Clip of relevant portion of speech begins at 12:47.

*For these reasons, SEIU respectfully requests your signature to AB 1461.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Bolden', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Michael A. Bolden, J.D.  
Government Relations Advocate

CC: Camille Wagner, Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Office of Governor Brown  
The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Author  
The Honorable Alex Padilla, Secretary of State  
John De Los Angeles, Legislative Aide, Office of Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez



OFFICE OF THE  
MAYOR

KEVIN JOHNSON  
MAYOR

CITY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA

September 22, 2015

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

**RE: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty)– Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Brown,

We respectfully request your signature on AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty), the California New Motor Voter Act. This bill will significantly reduce barriers to casting a ballot by addressing well-documented disparities in voter registration.

In 2012, California ranked 38th in voter registration. California has more than 6.6 million eligible, but unregistered voters who are predominantly Latino, African American and Asian-Pacific Islander. Only 33% of 18-24 year old African Americans are registered to vote. Seventy percent of unregistered voters are Latino and Asian-Pacific Islander. This is particularly alarming given that Latinos and Asian-Pacific Islanders will be the majority of eligible voters by 2020.

This disparity in voter registration leads to a disparity in the allocation of election resources. State and county governments expend resources informing registered voters about voting and elections through sample ballots and voter information guides. Additionally, registered voters often receive outreach from election campaigns or nonpartisan GOTV drives. Registering a citizen to vote not only allows them to exercise their right to vote, but it means public and private resources are mobilized to get them out to vote.

We should make every effort to facilitate the participation of all citizens in our democracy. In recent years, modern technology has transformed voter registration and voting practices. Since 2012, California has offered online voter registration which established electronic data sharing between the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Secretary of State. By July 2016, California is scheduled to launch VoteCal, a new statewide centralized voter registration database that will replace voter registration files currently maintained by each of the state's 58 county elections officials. In addition, this year's budget provided nearly \$2.5 million to establish electronic voter registration at the DMV. We have the technology to register more voters in a more efficient manner.

AB 1461 will use existing technology to make voter registration more convenient, efficient and accessible. We respectfully request your signature on this important measure.

Sincerely,

Kevin Johnson

MAYOR



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**Sacramento Legislative Office**

1100 K Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 441-7888 • Fax (916) 445-1424  
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

September 15, 2015

SACHI A. HAMAI

Interim Chief Executive Officer

ALAN FERNANDES

Chief Legislative Representative

**REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

6012  
Board of Supervisors  
HILDA L. SOLIS  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

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

**RE: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo and McCarty) -- SUPPORT**  
**Relating to Voter Registration: California New Motor Voter Program**

Dear Governor Brown:

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors supports AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, and McCarty).

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 requires each state to offer registration services at its department of motor vehicles. The 2015-16 State Budget provides funding to the Secretary of State and to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to integrate the voter registration system between the two agencies.

AB 1461 would establish the California New Motor Voter Program (NMVP), and would direct the DMV to electronically transmit to the Secretary of State the records of each person who submits a DMV application for a driver's license, State identification card, or a change of address. The Secretary of State would be prohibited from registering DMV applicants to vote who affirmatively decline to register or do not attest to being eligible to vote. A voter registered through the NMVP may also affirmatively decline to register to vote on a later date.

Los Angeles County has the lowest voter turnout of any county in the State. The County's Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk indicates that the current DMV voter registration system is an inefficient, two-decades old paper-based system. The current manual voter registration process has increased the number of provisional ballots that County officials must resolve during each post-election canvas period.

AB 1461 would provide an essential element of a new, Statewide voter registration system that utilizes modern technology to significantly increase opportunities for California residents to participate in the elections process. By simplifying, streamlining and enhancing the voter registration process, it would mitigate a number of challenges to maintaining accurate voter information at the County-level.

We respectfully urge your signature on AB 1461.

Sincerely,



ALAN FERNANDES  
Chief Legislative Representative



STEPHEN KAWAMURA  
Legislative Representative

c: Assembly Member Lorena S. Gonzalez  
Assembly Member Luis A. Alejo  
Assembly Member Kevin McCarty  
Daniel Seeman, Deputy Secretary of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor

September 16, 2015

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

**RE: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty) – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Brown,

A well-functioning democracy depends on the participation of its citizens. That is why CALPIRG supports policies that remove barriers to voting. CALPIRG has supported policies to adopt online voter registration, allow for conditional voter registration on Election Day, expand options to vote by mail, and other reforms. We also staff and run the non-partisan New Voters Project here in California to help reach out to young people to encourage them to register and vote. Our comments in particular are focused on our direct experience doing outreach to young voters, particularly students, who are often voting for the very first time in your lives.

According to a study done by UC Davis' Center for Regional Change, in the 2014 midterm general election, youth were registered to vote at the lowest rate of any age group, at 52 percent, compared to above percent for all other age groups.<sup>1</sup> In other words, nearly half of all eligible youth are not even registered to vote. That means that they do not receive information from their local elections official about the upcoming election, nor do they receive any outreach from the campaigns, creating a cycle of neglect.

This is especially concerning because numerous studies have shown that voting is habit forming, and youth who vote while they are young are more likely to become life-long voters. We are very concerned about the abysmally low turnout in the most recent general election, and what that could mean for participation rates in future years.

We should make every effort to facilitate the participation of all citizens in our democracy. In recent years, modern technology has transformed voter registration and voting practices. Since 2012, California has offered online voter registration which established electronic data sharing between the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Secretary of State. By July 2016, California is scheduled to launch VoteCal, a new statewide centralized voter registration database that will replace voter registration files currently maintained by each of the state's 58 county elections officials. In addition, this year's budget provided nearly \$2.5 million to establish electronic voter registration at the DMV. We have the technology to register more voters in a more efficient manner.

We understand that during negotiations there was a disagreement on how and where voter information should be captured, such as language preference. The bill was sent to your desk requiring the DMV to

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<sup>1</sup> UC Davis Center for Regional Change, "California's New Political Realities: The Impact of the Youth Vote on Our Electoral Landscape," [http://explore.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/copy2\\_of\\_UCDavisCCEPPolicyBrief92014YouthVote.pdf](http://explore.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/copy2_of_UCDavisCCEPPolicyBrief92014YouthVote.pdf)

gather this information at the DMV office. We believe that gathering this information at the DMV is the most efficient way to gather the information, as well as critical to language access.

To have engaged and participatory electorate, we acknowledge that voter registration is only the first step and is not a panacea to low voter turnout. It must be complimented by voter outreach and education in order to create an electorate that is engaged and informed. We view automatic voter registration as beneficial not only because it will remove one barrier that prevents individuals from voting, but also because it will result in county elections officials and civic engagement groups like ours to be able to spend more resources on needed outreach, public education, and engagement, instead of voter registration.

AB 1461 will use existing technology to make voter registration more convenient, efficient and accessible. We respectfully request your signature on this important measure.

Sincerely,



Emily Rusch  
Executive Director  
California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)  
510-844-6803  
[erusch@calpirg.org](mailto:erusch@calpirg.org)

Cc:  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez  
Assemblymember Luis Alejo  
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 21, 2015

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

**RE: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty) – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Brown:

We, the undersigned members of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, respectfully request your approval of AB 1461, the California New Motor Voter Act, which would remove voter registration as a barrier to voting by modernizing the voter registration partnership between the Secretary of State and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Specifically, AB 1461 would automatically register Californians to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license or state identification card, once they attest to the eligibility to vote.

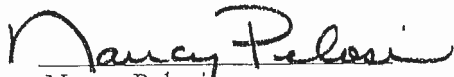
In 1993, Congress enacted the National Voting Rights Act, known as NVRA, or Motor Voter to improve voter registration. The NVRA requires the DMV to provide an opportunity to register to vote when a person gets a license from the DMV or obtains services from other designated public assistance agencies. California has also made other reforms to improve voter participation such as offering online voter registration, and establishing a new statewide centralized voter registration database known as VoteCal, which will be launched in July 2016.

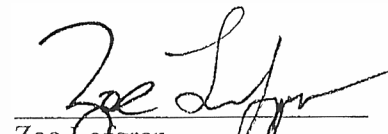
Despite these recent reforms, California still faces significant challenges in voter participation and addressing low voter registration rates. During the November 2014 election, voter turnout hit a record low of 42.2%, which is 38<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states. According to a recent study from the University of California Davis Center for Regional Change, Latino turnout in particular was the lowest in nearly a decade at only 15 percent, despite making up 39 percent of the state's population. Additionally, Latino and Asian Pacific Islander voter registration rates are well below the overall average with only 62.8% of eligible Latinos registered to vote and 50.7% of eligible Asian Pacific Islanders being registered.


Given the recent decline in voter turnout in California, passing the New Motor Voter Act is more important than ever and will build upon previous efforts to improve voter participation. It would also make voter registration more efficient, cost effective, and convenient for California citizens.

We respectfully urge your consideration of AB 1461.

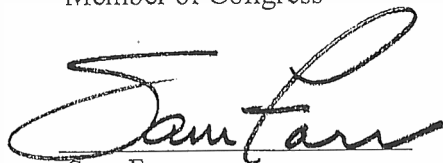
Sincerely,

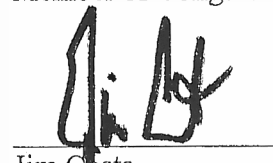
  
Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress


  
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

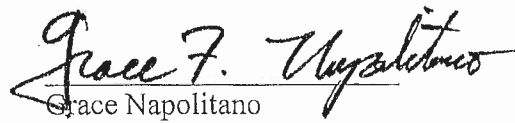
  
Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress


  
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress


  
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress

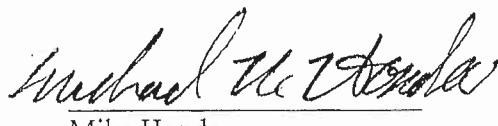
  
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

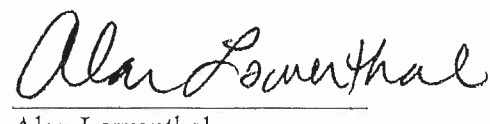
  
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

  
Grace Napolitano  
Member of Congress

  
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

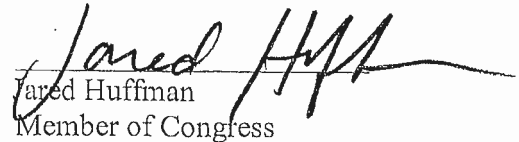
  
Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Honda  
Member of Congress

  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



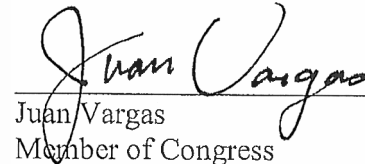
Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



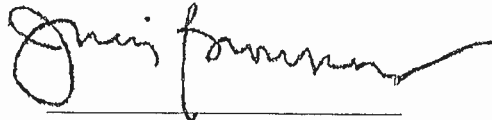
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



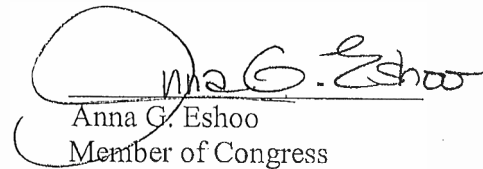
Adam Schiff  
Member of Congress



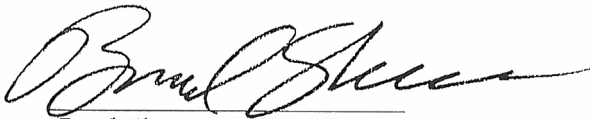
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



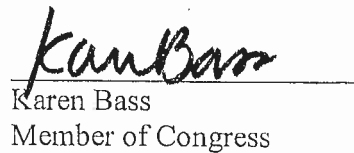
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

cc: Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez, Assemblymember Luis Alejo,  
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty

