

## Simpler English Wording on Ballots Can Allow Simpler & More Accurate Translations

The **California Ballot Design Advisory Committee's** Report had many recommendations for simpler wording and big enough fonts. <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/bdac/report.pdf>.

[AB1219](#) would carry out many of those recommendations. It passed the Assembly 75-0 on 5/4/23, and is being [amended](#) in the Senate.

The LAAC can discuss if it has any opinions on the topic, and if so, vote to submit those opinions to the Secretary.

**Election Code 13202(c) proposed by [AB1219](#) seems the only change proposed for languages (except a nonsubstantive change in 13209 to remove an obsolete term, ballot reference pages).**

(a) All ballots of the same sort prepared by any county elections official, clerk or secretary of a legislative body, or other person having charge of preparing ballots for the same polling place, shall be precisely the same size, arrangement, quality and tint of paper, and kind of type, and shall be printed with ink of the same tint, so that without the numbers on the stubs it is impossible to distinguish any one of the ballots from the other ballots of the same sort.

(b) The names of all candidates printed upon the ballot shall be in type of the same size and character. If there is not sufficient space for a candidate name, the size may be adjusted as close as possible to the size and character of all the other candidate names printed upon the ballot.

(c) For multilingual ballots, if there is not sufficient space to print candidate names in at least **10-point bold type**, as required by Section 13211, the size of candidate names shall be uniformly adjusted to a size that is no less than **8-point type**.

**Proposed 13211.** The names of the candidates shall be printed on the ballot, without indentation, in at least **10-point bold type**

**Current 13211.** The names of the candidates shall be printed on the ballot, without indentation, in capital, **boldface type not smaller than 8-point.**

Current 13202 is not related to languages

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**Election Code 13204 proposed by [AB1219](#) says, “...the following text is recommended:**

“Instructions for voting

To vote for a candidate, completely fill in the [voting target] next to the candidate’s name or the word “Yes” or “No.”

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the name in the blank space provided and fill in the [voting target].

If you make a mistake, [instructions for making a correction] [or ask for a new ballot].

Make sure your vote counts.

Use a [blue or black ballpoint pen].

Do not select more candidates than the number to be elected. You may vote in as many or as few contests as you want.

A mistake in one contest does not affect the rest of the ballot.”

**Current 13204: “...there shall be printed in 10-point capital type all of the following directions that are applicable to the ballot:**

To vote for a candidate whose name appears on the ballot, mark the voting target next to the candidate’s name. Where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, place a mark next to the names of all candidates for the office for whom you desire to vote, not to exceed, however, the number of candidates to be elected.

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the person’s name in the blank space provided for that purpose after the names of the other candidates for the same office.

To vote on any measure, mark the voting target next to the word “Yes” or next to the word “No.”

Marking the ballot outside of the designated space to vote for a candidate or measure may compromise the secrecy of the ballot.

If you wrongly mark, tear, or deface this ballot, return it to the precinct board member and obtain another.

On vote by mail ballots mark with pen or pencil.”

**Election Code 13205 proposed by [AB1219](#) says:**

**Primary:** “To vote for a candidate for the party’s nomination for President fill in the [voting target] next to their name.”

**General:** “To vote for President and Vice President, fill in the [voting target] next to their names. This is a vote for electors pledged to those candidates.”

**Current 13205:**

**Primary:** “To vote for the group of candidates preferring a person whose name appears on the ballot, mark the voting target next to the name of the person preferred. To vote for a group of candidates not expressing a preference for a particular candidate, mark the voting target next to the name of the chairman of the group.”

**General:** “To vote for all of the electors of a party, mark the voting target next to the names of the presidential and vice presidential candidates of that party. A mark of the voting target next to the name of a party and its presidential and vice presidential candidate, is a vote for all of the electors of that party, but for no other candidates.”

**Above are examples. [AB1219](#) makes similar simplifications in 13206-13210**