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County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #25176

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Steve Reyes
Chief Counsel

RE: Language Requirements: Elections Code section 14201 Language
Minority Determinations

The Secretary of State, by January 1 of each year in which the Governor is elected, must determine the precincts where 3% or more of the voting-age residents are members of a “single language minority” and lack sufficient skills in English to vote without assistance. (Elections Code § 14201(f).)

For each specified precinct in their county, elections officials are required to:

- Translate a facsimile ballot and related instructions in the designated language(s).
- Post the translation(s) in a conspicuous location in the appropriate polling place.

If a county is already required to provide translations in a particular language under the Voting Rights Act (VRA), they are not required to also post a facsimile ballot and instructions at the polling place in that language.

Additionally, Elections Code section 12303(c) requires county elections officials to make a good faith effort to recruit bilingual poll workers for any precinct in which 3% or more of the voting-age residents are members of a single language minority. This poll worker recruitment applies even in cases where the entire county is covered for a particular language under the federal VRA.

Elections Code section 14201(b)(2) also includes additional posting requirements for precincts that meet a 20% single language minority threshold. While that information is contained in the county-specific data that we are providing to you, for your convenience,

our office will analyze that data and provide it to each county in a separate memorandum.

For precincts where the single language minority group exceeds 20%:

- Two additional facsimile ballots must be made available to voters to take into the voting booth to use as a reference in casting their ballots privately.

These determinations are based upon information and data provided to the Secretary of State from the California Statewide Database (SWDB) at U.C. Berkeley. The SWDB relied upon a special tabulation provided by the Census Data Review Board to determine which precincts met the 3% threshold for single language minorities.

As part of this 3% threshold analysis, the Secretary of State has followed the previous practice of interpreting “single language minority,” as used in Section 14201, to encompass the language minority groups expressly identified in in Section 203(e) of the VRA: American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives, or those of Spanish heritage.

Supporting Documentation

Ballot Translations and Posting Requirements Summary by County: The formula-based and discretionary 14201 language requirements for all 58 counties are listed on the attached chart. Because the obligations set forth in Section 14201 are impacted by whether a county is covered by Section 203, for reference purposes we have also included current Section 203 coverage by county. These requirements will remain in place through December 31, 2029, until a new determination is required to be made, which will be no later than January 1, 2030.

Methodology: A summary of the methodology used to make the language determinations is attached.

Specific County Precinct Data: Individual precinct data listing information for both 14201 and non-14201 languages will be provided to each county via email.

Additional Notes

Consistent with current practices by many counties for Section 14201 compliance and following guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Justice for implementation of federal language assistance requirements (28 C.F.R. Part 55), we will be providing Specific County Precinct Data that identifies both covered and non-covered languages to permit counties to determine which language is appropriate to provide additional written translations and/or bilingual assistance.

The precinct level data may also provide your county with helpful information in conducting outreach and/or deploying various resources to assist voters in exercising their right to vote.

Partnership

Our office is committed to working in partnership with counties to assist with implementation efforts. Further, we are committed to working with the Governor and Legislature and county Boards of Supervisors to provide resources to counties for implementation. We will also engage the statewide Language Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide additional assistance.

We also recommend counties partner with their local Language Accessibility Advisory Committee and community groups for additional assistance in determining specific needs and resources at the precinct level.

If a county has identified a need for language assistance beyond the requirements of Section 14201, the county may work with their local Language Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify appropriate outreach methods.

Please feel free to contact Victoria Estrada with any questions by phone at (916) 695-1444 or by email at translations@sos.ca.gov.

Attachments:

Attachment A: County Language Chart

Attachment B: Methodology for Section 14201 Data Analysis & Determinations

Ballot Translations and Posting Requirements Summary by County Based on 2024 General Election Precincts Effective: January 1, 2026			
Key BLUE highlighted language(s) under column 2026 14201 are new requirements. Non-highlighted languages under column 2026 14201 are reinstated languages as of January 1, 2026 , for elections conducted on June 2, 2026 , and thereafter. ** Language(s) designated under the Secretary of State's discretionary authority Elections Code 14201(b)(1).			
County	2021 Section 203 Covered Languages	2026 14201 Covered Languages	Number of Precincts Meeting 14201 Coverage (3%)
Alameda	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Bengali	1
	Hispanic	Burmese	2
	Filipino	Chinese	671
	Vietnamese	lu Mien	3
		Japanese	6
		Khmer	5
		Korean	34
		Malay	6
		Mongolian	2
		Punjabi	51
		Spanish	847
		Tagalog	174
		Urdu	10
		Vietnamese	163
Alpine		Spanish	5
Amador		Spanish	20
Butte		Chinese	2
		Hmong	47
		lu Mien	7
		Korean	1
		Spanish	204
Calaveras		Spanish	18
Colusa	Hispanic	Spanish	53
Contra Costa	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Chinese	40
	Hispanic	Hindi	19
		Japanese	3
		Korean	6
		Lao	1
		Nepali	2
		Spanish	388
		Tagalog	30
		Urdu	4
		Vietnamese	15
Del Norte		Spanish	16
		Thai	1

El Dorado		Indonesian	6
		Korean	2
		Spanish	39
		Tagalog	1
		Telugu	1
Fresno	Hispanic	Arabic**	37
		Chinese	7
		Hmong	169
		Khmer	22
		Korean	14
		Lao	25
		Punjabi	239
		Spanish	1576
		Tagalog	11
		Urdu	5
		Vietnamese	8
Glenn	Hispanic	Spanish	87
Humboldt		Hmong	19
		Spanish	47
		Vietnamese	4
Imperial	Hispanic	Korean	4
		Spanish	208
Inyo		Spanish	15
Kern	Hispanic	Bengali	6
		Chinese	12
		Khmer	4
		Korean	12
		Punjabi	54
		Spanish	1072
		Tagalog	33
		Vietnamese	25
Kings	Hispanic	Chinese (Mandarin)	3
		Spanish	479
		Tagalog	9
Lake		Spanish	70
Lassen		Spanish	40
Los Angeles	Cambodian	Armenian**	2008
	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Bengali	45
	Korean	Burmese	133
	Hispanic	Chinese	3536
	Filipino	Farsi**	1079
	Vietnamese	Hmong	1
		Indonesian	62
		Japanese	531
		Khmer	361
		Korean	2981
		Lao	20
		Mongolian	44
		Nepali	25

		Punjabi	107
		Spanish	21737
		Tagalog	1802
		Thai	158
		Urdu	32
		Vietnamese	1548
Madera	Hispanic	Chinese	6
		Punjabi	8
		Spanish	204
Marin		Chinese	26
		Spanish	242
		Vietnamese	13
Mariposa		Spanish	4
Mendocino		Spanish	232
		Vietnamese	5
Merced	Hispanic	Hmong	21
		Punjabi	36
		Spanish	563
		Thai	9
Modoc		Khmer	8
		Spanish	19
Mono		Spanish	7
Monterey	Hispanic	Korean	3
		Spanish	353
		Tagalog	21
Napa	Hispanic	Hindi	6
		Spanish	176
		Tagalog	21
Nevada		Khmer	1
		Spanish	57
Orange	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Chinese	118
	Korean	Farsi**	50
	Hispanic	Hmong	1
	Vietnamese	Indonesian	1
		Japanese	5
		Khmer	7
		Korean	270
		Nepali	2
		Punjabi	5
		Spanish	923
		Tagalog	19
		Vietnamese	345
Placer		Punjabi	6
		Spanish	118
		Tagalog	2
Plumas		Spanish	22

Riverside	Hispanic	Chinese	70
		Hmong	1
		Japanese	1
		Korean	13
		Punjabi	12
		Spanish	2640
		Tagalog	69
		Thai	1
		Urdu	20
		Vietnamese	85
Sacramento	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Chinese	119
	Hispanic	Hmong	99
	Vietnamese	Indonesian	2
		lu Mien	14
		Japanese	2
		Korean	11
		Lao	21
		Pashto	10
		Punjabi	78
		Russian**	178
		Spanish	721
		Tagalog	60
		Ukrainian**	75
		Vietnamese	192
San Benito	Hispanic	Spanish	135
San Bernardino	Hispanic	Chinese	105
		Hindi	12
		Indonesian	8
		Khmer	2
		Korean	25
		Lao	3
		Malay	5
		Nepali	1
		Spanish	1304
		Tagalog	24
		Thai	3
		Vietnamese	29
San Diego	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Arabic**	250
	Hispanic	Chinese	235
	Filipino	Hindi	8
	Vietnamese	Hmong	5
		Indonesian	19
		Japanese	13
		Khmer	30
		Korean	99
		Lao	49
		Spanish	3321
		Tagalog	352
		Thai	16
		Vietnamese	331
San Francisco	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Bengali	1
	Hispanic	Burmese	2
		Chinese	259

		Hindi	1
		Hmong	1
		Japanese	3
		Korean	8
		Mongolian	1
		Spanish	190
		Tagalog	45
		Thai	2
		Urdu	2
		Vietnamese	25
San Joaquin	Hispanic	Burmese	1
		Chinese	13
		Hmong	22
		lu Mien	1
		Khmer	87
		Korean	3
		Lao	5
		Pashto	20
		Punjabi	213
		Spanish	1237
		Tagalog	171
		Thai	5
		Vietnamese	69
San Luis Obispo		Chinese (Mandarin)	2
		Gujarati	1
		Khmer	1
		Spanish	259
		Tagalog	1
San Mateo	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Burmese	12
	Filipino	Chinese	226
	Hispanic	Hindi	2
		Indonesian	3
		Japanese	8
		Korean	3
		Spanish	462
		Tagalog	174
		Thai	5
		Vietnamese	7
Santa Barbara	Hispanic	Chinese	12
		Korean	5
		Spanish	411
		Tagalog	6
		Vietnamese	3
Santa Clara	Chinese (includes Taiwanese)	Chinese	850
	Hispanic	Farsi**	53
	Filipino	Hindi	37
	Vietnamese	Indonesian	5
		Japanese	18
		Khmer	15
		Korean	95
		Mongolian	8
		Spanish	1535
		Tagalog	212
		Vietnamese	868

Santa Cruz		Japanese	10
		Spanish	246
		Thai	4
Shasta		Chinese	13
		Punjabi	10
		Spanish	39
Sierra		None	
Siskiyou		Lao	1
		Spanish	34
Solano		Chinese	4
		Spanish	346
		Tagalog	125
		Vietnamese	8
Sonoma	Hispanic	Chinese	2
		Korean	5
		Nepali	4
		Spanish	655
		Tagalog	5
		Vietnamese	21
Stanislaus	Hispanic	Chinese	4
		Khmer	9
		Korean	16
		Punjabi	49
		Spanish	995
		Tagalog	3
Sutter		Hmong	10
		Punjabi	126
		Spanish	135
		Vietnamese	1
Tehama		Spanish	77
Trinity		Spanish	12
Tulare	Hispanic	Chinese	14
		Filipino	21
		Hmong	8
		lu Mien	6
		Khmer	1
		Korean	1
		Lao	3
		Spanish	1569
		Vietnamese	4
Tuolumne		Spanish	13
Ventura	Hispanic	Chinese	7
		Korean	9
		Pashto	6
		Punjabi	9
		Spanish	753

		Tagalog	20
		Vietnamese	6
Yolo		Chinese	35
		lu Mien	2
		Japanese	3
		Nepali	4
		Russian**	21
		Spanish	239
		Thai	1
Yuba		Hmong	42
		Spanish	69

Methodology for Section 14201 Data Analysis & Determinations¹

This document outlines the methodology used to identify precincts covered by the language assistance requirements under California Elections Code section 14201(b).

California Elections Code Section 14201(b)

Elections Code section 14201(b) outlines state language access requirements for determining which precincts must provide facsimile ballots in non-English languages.

Under Section 14201(b), the Secretary of State must identify (1) the number of residents of voting age in each county and precinct who are (2) members of a single language minority, that (3) lack sufficient skills in English to vote without assistance. If that number equals 3 percent or more of the voting age residents of a particular county or precinct, “the Secretary of State shall find a need to provide at least two facsimile copies with the ballot measures and ballot instructions printed in Spanish or other applicable language in the affected polling places.” (Cal. Elec. Code §14201(b)(1).)²

If the Secretary of State determines that the number of voting-age residents in a precinct who are members of a single language minority and who lack sufficient skills in English to vote without assistance exceeds 20 percent of the voting-age residents in that precinct, the county elections official shall provide at least four facsimile copies of the ballot in the language of that language minority. (Cal. Elec. Code §14201(b)(2)).

Data Availability

The Secretary of State contracted with the California Statewide Database (SWDB) to evaluate whether publicly available decennial census data or data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) datasets were sufficient to meet the requirements of Section 14201.

¹ Assembly Bill 918 (AB 918), which amended Elections Code sections 14201 and 12303, was signed into law by Governor Brown and came into effect on January 1, 2018. With respect to Section 14201, AB 918 includes additional posting requirements for precincts that meet a 20% single language minority threshold. While that information is contained in the county-specific data that we are providing to you, for your convenience, our office will analyze that data and provide it to each county in a separate memorandum.

² Note that Section 14201(b) also provides an alternative method for triggering the facsimile ballot posting requirement by permitting interested citizens or organizations to provide the Secretary of State with information which provides the Secretary of State sufficient reason to believe a need for the furnishing of facsimile ballots in affected polling places exists.

Attachment B

The evaluation concluded that publicly available data from both the U.S. Census Bureau and the ACS had significant limitations that failed to adequately capture the criteria set forth under Section 14201. As such, to complete the assessment under Section 14201(b), SWDB requested a special tabulation³ from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The U.S. Census Disclosure Review Board and the Census Bureau's Chief Scientist authorized the Secretary of State's special tabulation request with the following restrictions:

1. Data are included in the special tabulation only if they satisfy the 10,000-person rule as determined by the latest ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) classification. In short, the U.S. Census Bureau, due to confidentiality requirements, only tabulated and reported languages that had 10,000 or more weighted counts⁴ nationally. If nationally a language had less than 10,000 (weighted) respondents, then the entire language was not released to the Secretary of State as part of this special tabulation.
2. To prevent the identification of individual survey respondents due to small numbers in the sample, the U.S. Census Bureau injects noise into special tabulation counts using the Discrete Gaussian Mechanism methodology. This methodology preserves privacy and accuracy without requiring suppressions of languages that would otherwise be necessary.
3. Each tract/language combination required a minimum of 30 weighted limited English proficient adults. For confidentiality reasons, estimates with fewer than 30 weighted counts within a given tract were suppressed.

The U.S. Census Bureau programmed this special tabulation starting with rule 1, followed by 2 and then 3. The final special tabulation data set was provided to the SWDB and Secretary of State on the census tract level – a geography smaller in size than a county, but typically, larger in size than a precinct.

³ Special tabulations are data sets that the Census compiles, by request, for projects for which the general, publicly available tabulations are not sufficient. Special tabulations are user-defined data requests that are assessed on a case-by-case basis by U.S. Census Bureau staff and the Census Disclosure Review Board to ensure that confidentiality and privacy requirements are maintained.

⁴ The weight for a responding unit in a survey data set is an estimate of the number of units in the target population that the responding unit represents. In general, since population units may be sampled with different selection probabilities and since response rates and coverage rates may vary across subpopulations, different responding units represent different numbers of units in the population. The use of weights in survey analysis compensates for this differential representation, thus producing estimates that relate to the target population.

For more information on how the American Community Survey applies weights, please visit:

https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2010/acs/Chapter_11_RevisedDec2010.pdf.

Once this data set was received, SWDB aggregated the tract level data to each county's 2024 General Election precincts to create a statewide file. This was accomplished by performing a proportional allocation of the total voting age population data and non-English language data from the tract level to the census block level, using the proportion of voting age population in the census block and tract in the 2020 P.L. 94-171 table P4.

This estimated non-English language data by census block was then aggregated up to the registration precinct using SWDB conversion files of census blocks to registration precincts. Non-English language data for census blocks that were split between registration precincts were allocated proportionally. Some census blocks with allocated non-English language data were not present in the census block registration precinct conversion file, and for these census blocks, the conversion was made using a geographic conversion of census blocks to potentially multiple registration precincts. This conversion was based on geographic representation, where the previous conversion was based on direct assignment of registration precincts to census blocks. As this overlay could not reliably determine what percentage of the census block was contained in which registration precinct, for those cases the full census block was assigned to each registration precinct in its geographic representation. The percentage of non-English language data assigned by this second type of conversion was typically less than one percent of the non-English language data.

Additionally, tract data were aggregated to the county level for county level results. The precinct level data are derived from allocating the tract level estimates to the precincts and then rounding the estimates to the nearest whole number. Voting age population counts are also allocated to precincts and rounded to the nearest whole number. For this reason, the totals derived from summing the tracts may vary from the totals derived from summing the precinct level estimates.

Single Language Minority

To further refine the special tabulation data to identify which particular languages are covered under Section 14201, the Secretary of State needed to identify which languages were connected to a "single language minority."

The Secretary of State has followed the previous practice of interpreting "single language minority," as used under Section 14201(b), to encompass language minority groups expressly identified in Section 203(e) of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Under Section 203(e) of the VRA, the term "language minorities" or "language minority group" means persons who are American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives, or of Spanish heritage. (52 U.S.C. 10503(e)). The regulations implementing Section 203 of the VRA supplement the statutory definitional language by providing assistance in identifying language minority groups and such groups that have more than one language (28 C.F.R. Part 55).

Discretionary Determinations

Additionally, Section 14201(a) and Section 14201(b) provides the Secretary of State with the discretion to determine if facsimile ballots shall be printed in other languages and posted if a need is found. The determinations provided to counties identify which languages require the posting of facsimile ballots, based on the Secretary's Section 14201(a) and 14201(b) discretionary authority.