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May 29, 2026

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 26145

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Jana M. Lean  
Chief of Elections Division

RE: Elections: Senate Bill 73 Urgency Legislation

On May 27, 2026, the Governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 73 (Ch. 10, Stats. of 2026) as urgency legislation. It is effective for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election.

This bill adds Election Code sections 15006, 15007, and 15553:

- Section 15006 requires the Attorney General (AG) to provide guidance and information to:

county election officials regarding how election officials, precinct boards, election workers, and election volunteers should respond to requests by an agent of a law enforcement agency to access areas where ballots are cast, handled, processed, counted, tabulated, tallied, audited, or recounted.

It also requires the AG to publish and provide guidance to:

managers of election sites regarding how to respond to requests by an agent of a law enforcement agency to access areas where ballots are cast, handled, processed, counted, tabulated, tallied, audited, or recounted.

It defines "law enforcement agency" as all the following: 1) any law enforcement agency, department, or other entity of the state or any political subdivision thereof, that employs any peace officer (see, Penal Code commencing with Section 830), 2) any law enforcement agency of another state, and 3) any federal law enforcement agency.

- Section 15007 prohibits a peace officer from interfering in any manner with the administration of any election in this state and in the discharge of duties by the

Secretary of State (SOS), a county elections official, an election worker, or a volunteer performing required elections-related tasks prescribed by the Elections Code or any other provision of state law, except as necessary to respond to urgent threats to public health and safety.

The AG, the SOS, and a county elections official (with respect to violations that occur within the elections official's county) may bring a civil action to enforce the provisions of this section.

This section shall not prevent a qualified elector from exercising their right to vote in an election in this state and shall not be construed to authorize an action that would be prohibited by federal law or to limit any federal authority that is validly exercised pursuant to federal law.

- Section 15553 prohibits any individual from permitting an agent of a law enforcement agency to access, disrupt, modify, or take possession of rosters, combined rosters, or voter lists unless authorized by a court order or to investigate a specific violation of voter fraud or double voting (see, Section 18560). This does not prohibit an individual, in accordance with a written agreement between the elections official conducting the election and a law enforcement agency, from permitting agents of a law enforcement agency to provide logistical, transportation, or security support during the voting period, on Election Day, or during the canvass of the vote.

It also contains the same definition of "law enforcement agency" as found in Section 15006.

SB 73 amends Elections Code sections 15104, 15551, 18544, 18545, 18564.5, 18568, and 19230:

- Section 15104 is amended to add subdivision (f):

An observer shall not be permitted to challenge a signature on a vote-by-mail ballot return envelope or on completed signature cure statements (see, Section 3019(a), (d), (e)) on the basis that they believe the signature does not compare with the signatures appearing in the voter's registration record.
- Section 15551 has non-substantive changes (grammar and adding subdivisions).
- Section 18544's most substantive change is the addition of paragraph (5) to subdivision (b), which adds to the list of individuals not subject to the penalty set forth in subdivision (a):

- A person who is stationed in the immediate vicinity of, or posted at, a polling place with the written authorization of the appropriate city or county elections official, provided that neither the SOS nor the AG objected to that authorization, in writing, after it was granted.
- A person who is stationed or posted at a polling place with written authorization, which is subsequently objected to by the SOS or AG, shall not be subject to criminal penalties pursuant to this section unless the person remained stationed or posted at the polling place after gaining knowledge of the objection.
- Section 18545's most substantive change is the addition of paragraphs (2) and (3) to subdivision (b), which adds to the list of individuals not subject to the penalty set forth in subdivision (a):
  - A person who hires or arranges for another person to be stationed in the immediate vicinity of, or posted at, a polling place or a county elections office pursuant to a court order.
  - A person who hires or arranges for another person to be stationed in the immediate vicinity of, or posted at, a polling place or a county elections office with the written authorization of the appropriate elections official, provided that neither the SOS nor the AG objected to that authorization, in writing, after it was granted.
  - A person who hires or arranges for another person to be stationed or posted at a polling place or county elections office with written authorization, which is subsequently objected to by the SOS or AG, shall not be subject to criminal penalties pursuant to this section, unless they have knowledge of the objection, and after gaining such knowledge, permits the person they hired or arranged for to remain stationed or posted at the polling place or elections office.
- Section 18564.5 adds to the list of prohibited activities:

Takes a package containing the voted ballots or its contents from the custody of the elections official in violation of Section 15551(d). (§ 18564.5 (a)(7).)
- Section 18568 adds to the list of prohibited activities:

Knowingly takes a package containing voted ballots or its contents from the custody of the elections official in violation of Section 15551(d). (§ 18568(i).)
- Section 19230 adds subdivisions (b) and (c):

- “An individual shall not allow an agent of a law enforcement agency to access, disrupt, modify, or take possession of certified voting technology or a portion thereof unless authorized by a court order. This subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit an individual, in accordance with a written agreement between the elections official conducting the election and a law enforcement agency pursuant to Section 18544 or Section 18545, to permit agents of that agency to provide logistical, transportation, or security support during the voting period, on election day, or during the canvass of the vote. For purposes of this subdivision, “certified voting technology” has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 17600.”
- It contains the same definition of “law enforcement agency” as found in Section 15006.

### **Further Information**

The text of SB 73 can be found at:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202520260SB73](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB73)

If you have any questions, please contact Rachelle Delucchi at [rdelucch@sos.ca.gov](mailto:rdelucch@sos.ca.gov) or Robbie Anderson at [aanderso@sos.ca.gov](mailto:aanderso@sos.ca.gov).

Thank you.