



June 2, 2014

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Restoring Election Mandates Funding to the 2014-15 State Budget

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the California Voter Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the voting process to better serve voters, I'm writing to request that you restore funding to the state budget to pay for state mandated election programs.

Funding for these programs has already been restored in the Senate's version of the budget bill, with an additional \$100 million added to pay for past and current state mandated election programs. We urge you to support this development and restore funding for election mandates for the following reasons:

- 1) **Election law needs to be uniform in California.** Unlike other mandates that have been suspended, election programs cannot be provided as "optional services" by counties. For the sake of uniformity and equal protection, all voters in the state must have equal access to voting and election services. The Legislative Analyst's Office agrees and supports restoring election mandates for this reason. As the LAO wrote in its 2013 analysis: "We believe that the administration's proposal to suspend the mandates represents the worst option as it carries with it the largest risk for inconsistencies in California elections."
- 2) **The biggest mandate of the nine suspended election mandates is for vote-by-mail programs, accounting for 75 percent of the election mandates funding.** Currently nearly half of California voters are signed up as permanent vote-by-mail voters. Failure to fund this popular program and other state-mandated election programs that lawmakers themselves created through changes in state law is a disservice to all voters.
- 3) **Failure to fund state mandated election programs could lead to election challenges.** Imagine what might happen in statewide or legislative contests if counties within the same political district have different vote-by-mail practices. Contests would go undecided for days and weeks, litigation and court battles would ensue, and results would be called into question.

4) In this time of healthy revenues, now is the time to make good on the state's election commitments. As you yourself stated when you introduced the May Revise budget:

"There are a lot of ideas around Sacramento, throughout the Assembly and Senate halls and around the state to do things. We have to recognize we've done a lot already and haven't paid for all that we've already done."

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions I can be reached at 916-441-2494 or at kimalex@calvoter.org.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander
President