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AB-2592 Secretary of State: census outreach and education. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Bill No. 2592

CHAPTER 652

An act to amend Section 10 of, and to add Section 9088.5 to, the Elections Code, and to add Section 12172.6 to the Government Code, relating to the Secretary of State.

[Approved by Governor September 21, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State September 21, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2592, Berman. Secretary of State: census outreach and education.

Existing law provides that the Secretary of State is the chief elections officer of the state, and requires the Secretary of State to make reasonable efforts to promote voter registration to eligible voters. Existing law requires the Secretary of State to prepare the state voter information guide.

This bill would require the Secretary of State, beginning in the year before the federal decennial census and continuing through the completion of enumeration activities for that census, to incorporate messages into public election materials produced by the Secretary of State that promote awareness of, and encourage participation in, the census, as specified. The bill would require the Secretary of State to include this information in the state voter information guide for any statewide election that is held less than one year before the census and on the Secretary of State's Internet Web site.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (1) Section 2 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution requires an enumeration of the population of the United States every 10 years, which is known as the federal decennial census.
- (2) The federal decennial census is important because census figures affect congressional representation, state redistricting, federal formula grant allocations, state funding to local governments, local programs, and planning activities for the next 10 years.
- (3) A complete and accurate count of all California residents in the 2020 federal decennial census is vital to ensure fair political representation and distribution of funding in California.
- (4) Historically, it has been more difficult to reach and enumerate certain groups as part of the federal decennial census, including lower income individuals, homeless persons, children, and immigrants.

(5) California is home to 10 of the nation's 50 hardest-to-count counties, including Los Angeles County, the single hardest-to-count county in the nation.

(b) It is the intent of the legislature, in enacting this chapter, to use existing governmental outreach and education efforts to facilitate a complete count of California residents for each federal decennial census.

SEC. 2. Section 10 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

10. (a) The Secretary of State is the chief elections officer of the state, and has the powers and duties specified in this code and Section 12172.5 of the Government Code.

(b) (1) The Secretary of State shall make reasonable efforts to do all of the following:

(A) Promote voter registration to eligible voters.

(B) Encourage eligible voters to vote.

(C) Promote preregistration to eligible citizens.

(D) Promote civic learning and engagement to prepare students and new citizens to register to vote and to vote.

(2) In undertaking these efforts, the Secretary of State shall prioritize communities that have been historically underrepresented in voter registration or voting.

(c) Beginning in the year before the federal decennial census and continuing through the completion of the enumeration activities for that census, the Secretary of State shall incorporate messages into public election materials produced by the Secretary of State that promote awareness of, and encourage participation in, the census. In undertaking this effort, the Secretary of State shall prioritize messages that are designed to overcome significant challenges to a complete and accurate enumeration of the state, including messages targeted at overcoming barriers to participation by historically hard-to-count communities based on response rate data from the United States Census Bureau.

SEC. 3. Section 9088.5 is added to the Elections Code, to read:

9088.5. For any statewide election that is held less than one year before the federal decennial census, the state voter information guide shall contain information that promotes awareness of, and participation in, the federal decennial census.

SEC. 4. Section 12172.6 is added to the Government Code, to read:

12172.6. Beginning in the year before the federal decennial census and continuing through the completion of the enumeration activities for that census, the Secretary of State shall include on the secretary's Internet Web site information designed to educate the public regarding, and encourage participation in, the federal decennial census.