



AB 2050: THE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION CENTER

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BACKGROUND

The Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) is a nonpartisan nonprofit governed by its member states who agree to share data, such as voter registration and vehicle licensee data, in order to keep their voter rolls accurate and to reach out to eligible unregistered citizens to encourage their participation. ERIC enhances states' abilities to keep voter registrations up to date by including data from the USPS National Change of Address database and the Social Security Administration's records of deceased voters.

ERIC has extensive security around how the data is used; all personally-identifiable data is anonymized through an encryption process known as one-way hashing. A cryptographic hash is not meant to be decrypted, so ERIC does not receive information in clear text and is unable to restore the encrypted data to its original values.

ERIC is designed to work within the framework of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, ensuring that states cannot remove voters from the rolls simply because ERIC reports that they have moved. Before removing a voter, states must contact those voters, seek to confirm their move information, and leave those voters on the rolls for at least two federal election cycles, as is consistent with federal law. ERIC is never connected to any state's voter registration system and member states retain complete control over their voter rolls.

CURRENT LAW

The increased accessibility of California's voter registration system has been a great success. In November of 2022, 81.63% of eligible Californians were registered to vote. This is an increase from 78% in 2018 and 2016 and 72% in 2014. Automatic voter registration and online voter registration have played a big part in increasing voter registration.

AB 860 (Berman, Chapter 4, Statutes of 2020) required that every voter in California be mailed a ballot for the 2020 general election. AB 37 (Berman, Chapter 312, Statutes of 2021) extended these requirements and required county elections to mail a ballot to every registered voter for every election.

PROBLEM

California's highly-mobile population makes it harder to maintain accurate voter rolls when compared with more

static populations in other states. By the California Secretary of State's calculations, there are almost 5 million eligible Californians who are not registered to vote. In any election, but especially one where every voter is mailed a ballot, accurate voter rolls are the backbone of democracy. Out-of-date registrations are concerning in California because if a voter's ballot is delivered to an old address, they might encounter more problems voting. While California has taken important steps to improve voter access, the state's unregistered eligible voters outnumber the entire populations of 26 states.

Additionally, if the voter registers to vote in a new county or state but does not cancel their previous registration, their old county will expend more resources than they need to. For example, if a California voter moves to Pennsylvania but does not cancel their voter registration in California, their county will still print and mail them a ballot resulting in unneeded county costs.

SOLUTION

In order to close the registration gap and improve the accuracy of voter rolls, AB 2050 authorizes the Secretary of State to join ERIC on behalf of California.

AB 2050 prohibits the sending of any data related to citizenship, including AB 60 licenses and identification cards. Additionally, prior to sending data to ERIC, the Secretary of State must receive certification from the California Department of Technology that all proper cybersecurity protections are in place. The Secretary of State also must consult with the California Privacy Protection Agency on the development of any regulations related to ERIC.

By ensuring fewer ballots are undeliverable or delivered to former voters who moved within or out of California, this bill will reduce the overall cost of conducting elections.

SUPPORT

California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO), *Sponsor*
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