

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 27, 2025

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker of the Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1116 (Berman), Digital voter signatures – OPPOSE

Dear Speaker Rivas,

On behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to respectfully express our opposition to AB 1116 (Berman), which would expand the eligibility criteria for online voter registration in California.

While Kern County is committed to broad and equitable access to the ballot, we believe such access must be carefully balanced with safeguards that ensure voter eligibility and maintain public confidence in the electoral system. AB 1116, by allowing individuals to register to vote online without a California driver's license or state identification card and instead relying solely on the last four digits of a Social Security Number, presents concerns regarding the verification and authenticity of voter identity.

As outlined in our support for federal legislation H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, we believe that documentary proof of U.S. citizenship and verifiable identity are essential components of a secure voter registration system and should be the cornerstone in voter identification in both federal and state elections. While we recognize that AB 1116 includes measures such as signature uploads and partial Social Security Number verification, these do not provide the same level of identity authentication as government-issued identification.

We are also concerned about the administrative burden and added costs this bill may place on county elections offices. The new processes for signature uploads and additional verification protocols could increase operational complexity and present a potential vulnerability without adequate safeguards to prevent ineligible registration. Likewise, the Secretary of State expects one-time costs of approximately \$1 million dollars to the State General Fund to modify the voter registration system and database that would enable digital signature uploads and necessary security upgrades. Since there is currently no option on the Secretary of State's website for the public to upload an item, the agency anticipates ongoing costs of an unknown amount for software and staff workload to validate signatures and screen for malicious files.

Kern County remains fully committed to inclusive civic participation and ensuring every eligible citizen has the opportunity to vote. However, we respectfully oppose AB 1116 because it weakens essential verification standards and may undermine the very integrity of our voter registration system that builds voter trust.

Thank you for considering our position on this matter. We urge the Legislature to pursue voter access policies that also preserve the security, accuracy, and credibility of our elections and respectfully request that the Assembly hold **AB 1116 on the Floor and prevent the bill from advancing to the Senate.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Couch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Couch, Vice Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, CA State Assembly
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange