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10/14/2026

Initiative Coordinator

Office of the Attorney General

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RECEIVED

Oct 19, 2026

INITIATIVE COORDINATOR
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Re: Request for Circulating Title and Summary Using Amended Language – Proposed Statutory Initiative No. 26-0006: “Approval Voting for Primary Elections Act” (amended title: “Approval Voting Act”)

Dear Initiative Coordinator:

Pursuant to Elections Code section 9002(b), I respectfully request that the Attorney General prepare a circulating title and summary using the amended language of the above-referenced proposed initiative measure, as set forth in the amendments described below and reflected in the enclosed amended text. The amendments described below are to the amended text submitted with my letter dated September 30, 2026.

The amendments to the proposed measure are as follows:

1. The title of the measure is amended from “Approval Voting for Primary Elections Act” to “Approval Voting Act.”
2. Section 1 (Statement of Findings and Declaration of Purpose) is amended as follows.
Subdivision A is amended to read: “The people of California hereby find and declare that a purpose of this act is to authorize voters, at a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, to vote for as many candidates as they approve of.”
Subdivisions B, C, D, F, and G are revised to describe the voting method’s application to primary, special, and recall elections rather than only to primary elections. Subdivision E is revised to summarize approval voting’s use to choose officeholders in Fargo, North Dakota; St. Louis, Missouri; and Utah.
3. A new Section 2 is added, amending Elections Code section 10703 to provide that a vacancy in the office of Representative in Congress, State Senator, or Member of the Assembly is filled at a single special election, rather than at a special primary election and special general election.
4. A new Section 3 is added, amending Elections Code section 10704 to delete the provisions scheduling a special primary election and conform the nomination deadlines to

the special election, delete former subdivision (b), and replace the sample ballot's reference to Section 9083.5 and its statement regarding a majority vote at the special primary election with an explanation of the special election procedure, including that the candidate receiving the most votes will be elected to fill the vacancy.

5. A new Section 4 is added, amending Elections Code section 10705 to provide that the candidate receiving the most votes at the special election shall be declared elected, and to delete subdivision (b).
6. A new Section 5 is added, amending Elections Code section 10706 to delete the provisions placing the two highest vote-getters on a special general election ballot and to provide that a tie for the most votes shall be resolved by a special runoff election among the tied candidates pursuant to Section 15651.
7. A new Section 6 is added, amending Elections Code section 13204 to revise the voter instruction "Do not select more candidates than the number to be elected" to read "Do not select more candidates than the number specified for that contest," so that the instruction is consistent with contests in which voters may select more candidates than the number to be elected or nominated. All subsequent sections are renumbered accordingly.
8. Throughout Sections 7 through 15 (formerly Sections 2 through 10), each reference to a direct primary election for a voter-nominated office is replaced with a reference to a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office. These sections amend Elections Code sections 13210, 14285, 15154, and 15342, and contain the act's effective date, regulatory conformance, voter education, legislative amendment, and conflicting ballot measure provisions.
9. Section 10 (formerly Section 5), amending Elections Code section 15342, is further amended as follows: subdivision (g)(1)(A) is restored to the text of existing law, and subdivision (g)(1)(C) is amended by replacing "sufficient in order to be elected" with "sufficient in order to be elected or nominated."
10. Section 11 (Effective Date) (formerly Section 7) now precedes Section 12 (Regulatory Conformance) and is amended to provide that the act applies to primary elections, special elections, and recall elections for voter-nominated offices held on or after June 1, 2030.
11. Section 12 (Regulatory Conformance) (formerly Section 6) is further amended as follows. In subdivision (a), "the first direct primary election at which this act takes effect" is replaced with "the first election at which this act applies," and the final sentence is deleted: "The Secretary of State shall further approve configurations of voting systems capable of tabulating ballots cast pursuant to this act without requiring full recertification of previously certified voting systems." With this deletion, approval of voting systems used to implement the act will proceed under existing law governing voting system certification. In subdivision (b), the final sentence is amended to read: "County elections officials and the Secretary of State shall implement this act in programming and certifying voting systems for a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, notwithstanding any conflicting regulatory definition."

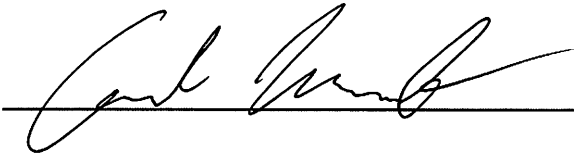
12. Section 13 (Voter Education) (formerly Section 8) is further amended by replacing “the first direct primary election at which this act takes effect” with “the first election at which this act applies.”
13. Section 14 (Amendment by Legislature) (formerly Section 9), subdivision (b)(4), is further amended by replacing “approval voting” with “the voting method established by this act.”
14. Section 15 (Conflicting Ballot Measures) (formerly Section 10) is further amended by replacing “from a direct primary to a general election” with “from a primary election to a general election,” “the vote-counting method” with “the voting method,” and “to the direct primary election it governs” with “to the elections it governs.”
15. Section 16 (Severability) (formerly Section 11) is renumbered without change.
16. A new Section 17 (Construction) is added, providing that the act shall be liberally construed to effectuate its purpose of authorizing voters at a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office to vote for as many candidates as they approve of.

The complete text of the amended proposed initiative measure is enclosed.

My public contact information is set forth in the letterhead above. I am available to respond to any questions the Attorney General's Office may have regarding this submission.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Mahlendorf', is written over a horizontal line.

Amanda Mahlendorf
Proponent

Enclosures (1)

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS

The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

(Here set forth the unique numeric identifier provided by the Attorney General and circulating title and summary prepared by the Attorney General. Both the Attorney General's unique numeric identifier and the circulating title and summary must also be printed across the top of each page of the petition whereon signatures are to appear.)

TO THE HONORABLE SECRETARY OF STATE OF CALIFORNIA

We, the undersigned, registered, qualified voters of California, residents of _____ County, hereby propose amendments to the Elections Code, relating to voting, and petition the Secretary of State to submit the same to the voters of California for their adoption or rejection at the next succeeding general election or at any special statewide election held prior to that general election or as otherwise provided by law. The proposed statutory amendments read as follows:

APPROVAL VOTING ACT

SECTION 1. Statement of Findings and Declaration of Purpose

A. The people of California hereby find and declare that a purpose of this act is to authorize voters, at a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, to vote for as many candidates as they approve of.

B. Elections should be straightforward and produce candidates who best represent the people, chosen by the broadest possible agreement among voters. Today, elections fall short of that standard. Voters are forced to pick a single choice instead of everyone they want, which divides them rather than revealing who they agree on. The precise problem is that our current voting method hides how much overlapping support voters actually share.

C. When voters are forced to choose only one candidate, even while they like others, the candidates who advance and take office are not always the ones who best represent the electorate. This happens because choose-one voting cannot distinguish between a candidate who voters do not support and one whose support was simply divided among others. To avoid splitting the vote, many voters abandon candidates they prefer for the one they believe is most "electable," creating election results that reflect who voters feared losing to rather than who they actually wanted.

D. An election should accurately measure public support for each candidate. Approval voting does that, similar to how groups decide among multiple options every day. Rather than being forced to choose only one candidate, voters approve as many as they want, and the candidates with the most approvals win. Voters can vote based on their values instead of settling

on a single “electable” candidate, since support across candidates is added up rather than divided. The overlapping approvals reveal where voters agree, ensuring the system rewards candidates who have earned the broadest support rather than those who merely benefitted from a divided field. Furthermore, because each candidate gets an unrestricted chance to earn approval from every voter, regardless of who else is running, candidates are incentivized to compete for as many voters as possible. The result is elected officials with stronger mandates and greater incentives to represent more than just their base once in office.

E. Approval voting has already been used to choose officeholders across the country, from city leaders in Fargo, North Dakota and St. Louis, Missouri, to a state senator in Utah. Each time, the process was the same: mark every candidate you support, and the most-approved candidates win. The results in St. Louis, Missouri demonstrate how measuring overlapping approvals captures broad agreement that choose-one voting cannot. St. Louis voters adopted their approval primary system with 68% support. Under the city’s former choose-one primary, the leading mayoral candidate advanced to the general election with just 32% of the vote, while voters were divided across three other candidates. In the city’s first approval voting primary in 2021, the leading mayoral candidate advanced with much broader support, 57% approval. With an incumbent facing three challengers in 2025, voters were again able to come together around a candidate, rather than dividing across alternatives, who advanced with a decisive 68% approval, compared to the incumbent’s 33%. A post-election survey found 67% of St. Louis voters appreciated being able to express their preferences without worrying about electability, and 81% appreciated approval voting’s simplicity.

F. This is not a radical departure. Every candidate for state and congressional office still appears on one familiar ballot, and every registered voter, regardless of party affiliation, may vote for any of those candidates. This act changes nothing about who can run, who can vote, or how general elections work. It changes how support is measured, in a way voters will find intuitive, so that the candidates with the most support win.

G. Revealing and respecting broad agreement is the unfinished business of California’s open election reform. It’s time to give voters the freedom to approve every candidate they want. Approval voting is the simple, tested way to upgrade California elections and unlock the ability to elect more representative officeholders.

SEC. 2. Section 10703 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

10703. (a) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a special election to fill a vacancy in the office of Representative in Congress, State Senator, or Member of the Assembly shall be conducted on a Tuesday at least 126 days, but not more than 140 days, following the issuance of an election proclamation by the Governor pursuant to Section 1773 of the Government Code.

(2) A special election to fill a vacancy in an office listed in paragraph (1) may be conducted within 200 days following the proclamation in order to consolidate the election ~~or the primary election~~ with an election occurring wholly or partially within the same territory in which the vacancy exists.

(b) Except as provided in Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 10730), a special election ~~or a primary election~~ shall not be conducted on the day after a state holiday.

SEC. 3. Section 10704 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

10704. (a) ~~Except as provided in subdivision (b), a special primary election shall be held in the district in which the vacancy occurred on the 9th Tuesday or, if the 9th Tuesday is the day of or the day following a state holiday, the 10th Tuesday preceding the day of the special general election at which the vacancy is to be filled.~~ Candidates at the ~~primary~~ election shall be nominated in the manner set forth in Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 8000) of Part 1 of Division 8, except that nomination papers shall not be circulated more than 73 days before the ~~primary~~ election, shall be left with the county elections official for examination not less than 53 days before the ~~primary~~ election, and shall be filed with the Secretary of State not less than 53 days before the ~~primary~~ election.

~~(b) A special primary election shall be held in the district in which the vacancy occurred on the 10th Tuesday preceding the day of the special general election at which the vacancy is to be filled if both of the following conditions apply:~~

~~(1) The 10th Tuesday preceding the day of the special general election is an established election date pursuant to Section 1000.~~

~~(2) A statewide or local election occurring wholly or partially within the same territory in which the vacancy exists is scheduled for the 10th Tuesday preceding the day of the special general election.~~

~~(e)(b)~~ The sample ballot for a special election shall contain a written explanation of the election procedure for a voter-nominated office as specified in subdivision (b) of Section 9083.5. ~~Immediately after the explanation shall be printed the following: "If one candidate receives more than 50% of the votes cast at the special primary election, the candidate will be elected to fill the vacancy and no special general election will be held."~~ office. The explanation shall read substantially similar to the following:

SPECIAL ELECTION FOR VOTER-NOMINATED OFFICES

Under the California Constitution, political parties are not entitled to formally nominate candidates for voter-nominated offices. A candidate for nomination or election to a voter-nominated office shall have his or her party preference, or lack of party preference, reflected on the ballot, but the party preference designation is selected solely by the candidate and is shown for the information of the voters only. It does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the candidate by the party designated, or affiliation between the party and candidate. The parties may list the candidates for voter-nominated offices who have received the official endorsement of the party in the county voter information guide.

All voters may vote for any candidate for a voter-nominated office, provided they meet the other qualifications required to vote for that office. The candidate receiving the most votes at this election will be elected to fill the vacancy.

~~(d)~~ (c) On the ballot for a special election, immediately before or above the first contest for a voter-nominated office, the following words shall be printed:

“Voter-Nominated Offices

All voters may vote in these contests.

Candidates display a party preference (or None) for the information of voters. This is not a party endorsement or approval.”

SEC. 4. Section 10705 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

10705. (a) All candidates shall be listed on one ballot and, ~~except as provided in subdivision (b), if any candidate receives a majority of all votes cast, he or she~~ the candidate receiving the most votes shall be declared elected, ~~and no special general election shall be held.~~

~~(b) If only one candidate qualifies to have his or her name printed on the special general election ballot, that candidate shall be declared elected, and no special general election shall be held.~~

SEC. 5. Section 10706 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

10706. ~~If no candidate receives a majority of votes cast, the names of the candidates who receive the highest or second highest number of votes cast at the special primary election shall be placed on the special general election ballot. In the case of a tie vote, subdivision (b) of Section 8142 shall apply. for the most votes, a special runoff election shall be held among the tied candidates pursuant to Section 15651.~~

SEC. 6. Section 13204 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

13204. (a) The instructions to voters shall be printed below the ballot identification and above the contests to be voted on, or in the first column of the ballot as long as no contest is placed below the instructions in that column. The instructions shall be in at least 10-point type and in an area clearly separated from the ballot contests.

(b) (1) The instructions shall be written in plain language to communicate the following information:

(A) How to vote for a candidate or in a contest with “Yes” and “No” options.

(B) How to write in a candidate.

(C) What to do if a mistake is made.

(2) The instructions may also include warnings and checks to help voters mark their ballot correctly and avoid errors. Instructions for specific types of contests are required only if a contest of that type appears on the ballot.

(c) (1) For purposes of the instructions described in this section, the following text is recommended:

“Instructions for voting

To vote for a candidate, completely fill in the [voting target] next to the candidate’s name or the word “Yes” or “No.”

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the name in the blank space provided and fill in the [voting target].

If you make a mistake, [instructions for making a correction] [or ask for a new ballot].

Make sure your vote counts.

Use a [blue or black ballpoint pen].

Do not select more candidates than the number ~~to be elected~~ specified for that contest.

You may vote in as many or as few contests as you want.

A mistake in one contest does not affect the rest of the ballot.”

(2) The recommended instructions in paragraph (1) may be modified to apply to the voting system and ballot format in each county, and the administration of elections in that county.

(d) The instructions may be accompanied by illustrations, customized to the ballot design in each county, that show the correct way of marking a selection on the ballot, writing in a candidate name, or correcting a mistake.

SEC. 7. Section 13210 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

13210. (a) In the case of candidates for delegate to national convention, there shall be printed in at least 10-point bold type, the words, “President of the United States” and “Vote for one group only.”

(b) In the case of candidates for President and Vice President, the words “Vote for One Party” shall appear just below the heading “President and Vice President” and shall be printed so as to appear above the voting targets for that office. The heading “President and Vice President” shall be printed in at least 10-point bold type.

(c) In that section of the ballot designated for judicial offices, next to the heading “judicial” shall appear the instruction: “Vote yes or no for each office.”

(d) In the case of candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court and court of appeal, within the rectangle provided for each candidate, and immediately above each candidate’s name, there shall appear the following: “For (designation of judicial office).” There shall be as many of these headings as there are candidates for these judicial offices. No heading shall apply to more than one judicial office. Underneath each heading shall appear the words “Shall (title and name of Justice) be elected to the office for the term provided by law?”

(e) In the case of all other candidates, each group of candidates to be voted on shall be preceded by the designation of the office for which they are running, ~~and the words “vote for one” or “vote for no more than two,” or more, according to the number to be nominated or elected, and the applicable voting instruction specified in paragraph (1) or (2).~~ The designation of the office and the words “vote for” shall be printed in at least 9-point bold type. The designation of the office and the directions for voting shall be separated from the candidates by a light line. There shall be no line between the headings for federal or legislative offices and the designation of the office and the directions for voting.

(1) At a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, the voting instruction shall read “vote for one or more” for that office.

(2) Otherwise, the voting instruction shall read “vote for one” or “vote for no more than two,” or more, according to the number to be nominated or elected.

SEC. 8. Section 14285 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

14285. (a) To vote in a contest where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, a voter shall mark the voting targets next to the names of the candidates of the voter's choice, up to the number of candidates to be elected.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, a voter may mark the voting targets next to the names of as many candidates of the voter's choice for that office.

SEC. 9. Section 15154 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

15154. (a) Any ballot that is not marked as provided by law shall be rejected. The rejected ballots shall be placed in the package marked for voted ballots or in a separate container as directed by the elections official. All rejected ballots shall have written on the ballot the cause for rejection and be signed by a majority of processing board members who are assigned by the elections official to process ballots.

(b) The following ballot conditions shall not render a ballot invalid:

(1) Soiled or defaced.

(2) Two or more impressions of the voting stamp or mark in one voting square.

(3) Contains personal information, as defined in Section 14287.

(c) (1) If a voter indicates, either by a combination of both marking and writing in, a choice of more names than there are candidates to be elected or nominated for any office, or if for any reason the choice of the voter is impossible to determine, the vote for that office shall not be counted, but the remainder of the ballot, if properly marked, shall be counted.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, a vote shall be counted regardless of whether a voter indicates a choice of more names than there are candidates to be elected to or nominated for the office.

(3) Indicating a choice of more than one candidate pursuant to paragraph (2) does not constitute voting more than once for purposes of Section 18560 or any other law.

(d) This section applies to all ballots counted pursuant to this chapter and Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 15300).

SEC. 10. Section 15342 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

15342. Any name written upon a ballot for a qualified write-in candidate, including a reasonable facsimile of the spelling of a name, shall be counted for the office, if it is written in the blank space provided and voted as specified below:

(a) For voting systems in which write-in spaces appear directly below the list of candidates for that office and provide a voting space, no write-in vote shall be counted unless the

voting space next to the write-in space is marked or slotted as directed in the voting instructions, except as provided in subdivision ~~(f)~~ (g).

(b) For voting systems in which write-in spaces appear separately from the list of candidates for that office and do not provide a voting space, the name of the write-in candidate, if otherwise qualified, shall be counted if it is written in the manner described in the voting instructions.

(c) The use of pressure-sensitive stickers, glued stamps, or any other device not provided for in the voting procedures for the voting systems approved by the Secretary of State to indicate the name of the write-in candidate are not valid, and a name indicated by these methods shall not be counted.

(d) Neither a vote cast for a candidate whose name appears on the ballot nor a vote cast for a write-in candidate shall be counted if the voter has indicated, by a combination of marking and writing, a choice of more names than there are candidates to be nominated or elected to the office.

(e) Notwithstanding subdivision (d), in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, a vote cast for a candidate whose name appears on the ballot, a vote cast for a write-in candidate, or a vote cast by a combination of marking and writing in, shall be counted regardless of whether the voter has indicated a choice of more names than there are candidates to be nominated or elected to the office.

~~(e)~~ (f) All valid write-in votes shall be tabulated and certified to the elections official on forms provided for this purpose, and the write-in votes shall be added to the results of the count of the ballots at the counting place and be included in the official returns for the precinct.

~~(f)~~ (g) (1) In an election that uses a voting system described in subdivision (a), after tallying all eligible votes but prior to completion of the official canvass and the issuance of the certified statement of the results pursuant to this chapter, the elections official, upon the request of a qualified write-in candidate for an office being voted on in that election for an examination of undervotes that is received within five days of completion of the semiofficial canvass, may hand tally the remaining undervotes if any of the following is applicable:

(A) In the case of a primary election or a special election, the sum of the total number of votes cast for the write-in candidate and the total number of undervotes cast for the office but not examined pursuant to a hand tally is equal to or greater than the total number of votes cast for the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes for that office.

(B) In the case of a general election or a special runoff election, the sum of the total number of votes cast for the write-in candidate and the total number of undervotes cast for the office but not examined pursuant to a hand tally is equal to or greater than the total number of votes cast for the candidate receiving the highest number of votes for that office.

(C) In the case of an office for which a voter may vote for more than one candidate, the sum of the total number of votes cast for the write-in candidate and the total number of undervotes cast for the office but not examined pursuant to a hand tally is equal to or greater than the total number of votes cast for the candidate receiving the least number of votes that would be sufficient in order to be elected or nominated.

(2) The elections official may stop a hand tally conducted pursuant to this subdivision when the official determines that the applicable condition in any of subparagraphs (A) to (C), inclusive, of paragraph (1) is no longer applicable, or when all of the undervotes for the office have been examined.

(3) In conducting a hand tally pursuant to this subdivision, the elections official shall count a vote for the office if the intent of the voter can be determined, regardless of whether the voter has complied with the voting instructions. The elections official shall include the results of a hand tally conducted pursuant to this subdivision in the official canvass of the election.

(4) For purposes of this subdivision, "undervote" means:

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), a ballot on which a voter failed to cast any vote for a specific office or failed to cast the maximum number of votes permitted, as detected by an electronic, mechanical, or other vote-tabulating device.

(B) In a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, a ballot on which a voter failed to cast any vote for that office, as detected by an electronic, mechanical, or other vote-tabulating device.

(5) Notwithstanding Section 15624, a qualified write-in candidate is not responsible for the costs of a hand tally requested pursuant to this subdivision.

~~(g)~~ (h) This section does not prohibit a request for a recount.

SEC. 11. Effective Date.

This act shall take effect on the fifth day after the Secretary of State certifies the results of the election at which it is approved by the voters. The provisions of this act shall apply to primary elections, special elections, and recall elections for voter-nominated offices held on or after June 1, 2030.

SEC. 12. Regulatory Conformance.

(a) The Secretary of State shall, in a timely manner, adopt, amend, or repeal regulations as necessary to conform the California Code of Regulations, including but not limited to Sections 20100 and 20282 of Title 2, to the changes made by this act, and shall take all actions necessary to ensure this act is fully implemented at the first election at which this act applies. For purposes of those regulations, the marking of more than one candidate in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office shall not constitute an overvote.

(b) Pending conformance of regulations pursuant to subdivision (a), and in all other respects, this act supersedes any regulation of the Secretary of State that defines "overvote" or prescribes vote counting standards in a manner inconsistent with the rights established by this act. County elections officials and the Secretary of State shall implement this act in programming and certifying voting systems for a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, notwithstanding any conflicting regulatory definition.

SEC. 13. Voter Education.

The Secretary of State shall develop educational materials regarding the voting changes made by this act and shall provide those materials to county elections officials for distribution to voters prior to the first election at which this act applies.

SEC. 14. Amendment by Legislature.

(a) The Legislature may amend this act by a statute passed in each house by a vote of two-thirds of the membership, provided that any such amendment furthers the purposes of this act as set forth in Section 1.

(b) An amendment furthers the purposes of this act if it does one or more of the following:

(1) Facilitates or improves the administration of the voting method established by this act, whereby voters may vote for as many candidates as they choose in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office.

(2) Makes conforming changes to other provisions of law necessitated by this act.

(3) Provides additional voter education or outreach regarding the voting changes made by this act.

(4) Expands the application of the voting method established by this act to additional contest types.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), no amendment shall:

(1) Eliminate, restrict, or condition the right of a voter to vote for as many candidates as the voter chooses in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office, including by imposing any maximum number of candidates a voter may select that is less than the total number of candidates appearing on the ballot for that office.

(2) Restore the application of overvote rejection rules to ballots cast for voter-nominated offices in a primary election, special election, or recall election.

(3) Otherwise diminish the rights established by this act for voters in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office.

(4) Alter the voting threshold established by this section for legislative amendments to this act.

SEC. 15. Conflicting Ballot Measures.

It is the intent of the People in enacting this measure that its provisions governing the method of voting and counting votes in a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office operate independently of, and are severable from, any other measure appearing on the same ballot that alters the number of candidates who advance from a primary election to a general election. The method by which voters mark their ballots and the method by which votes are counted pursuant to this act do not conflict with provisions governing the number of candidates who advance to the general election, and shall be construed as complementary rather than conflicting. Should such a measure also be approved by the voters,

the voting method established by this act shall continue to apply to the elections it governs, and this act shall be construed to give effect to both measures to the maximum extent possible.

SEC. 16. Severability.

(a) The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

(b) The People of the State of California hereby declare that they would have adopted this act and each provision thereof irrespective of whether any other provision is subsequently held invalid.

SEC. 17. Construction.

This act shall be liberally construed to effectuate its purpose of authorizing voters at a primary election, special election, or recall election for a voter-nominated office to vote for as many candidates as they approve of.