

**Introduced by Senator Yee**

June 6, 2012

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 29—Relative to voting rights.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 29, as introduced, Yee. Voting: disenfranchisement.

This measure would proclaim the Legislature’s support for the investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with physical disabilities or limited economic means, and the measure would further denounce any law that disenfranchises society’s most disadvantaged eligible voters.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, With great enthusiasm and interest, more than five
- 2 million new voters participated in the 2008 statewide general
- 3 election; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Many new voters in 2008 were minorities, which
- 5 included African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos; and
- 6 WHEREAS, The voter participation gap between Caucasians
- 7 and minorities fell in the 2008 election; and
- 8 WHEREAS, African Americans and Latinos registered to vote
- 9 at nearly twice the rate of Caucasians in voter registration drives
- 10 in 2008; and
- 11 WHEREAS, Sadly, after 2008, more than 30 state legislatures
- 12 introduced voter suppression laws that may disenfranchise an
- 13 estimated five million voters from registering to vote or casting a
- 14 ballot in the 2012 statewide general election; and

1 WHEREAS, Voter suppression is a deliberate political act  
2 designed to disenfranchise minorities, young adults, the poor, the  
3 disabled, and the elderly; and

4 WHEREAS, Prior to 2006, no state required an individual to  
5 show a government-issued identification to vote; and

6 WHEREAS, The most underserved and least powerful, which  
7 include the poor, the homeless, minorities, the disabled, and the  
8 elderly, are disproportionately affected by the requirement to show  
9 a state-issued identification card, due to a lack of financial means,  
10 time, or mobility; and

11 WHEREAS, State laws limiting voter registration drives impede  
12 the rights of free speech and freedom of assembly; and

13 WHEREAS, Voter registration drives are the single most  
14 effective means of registering minority voters; and

15 WHEREAS, Eliminating same-day registration in some states,  
16 or shortening the period of time for in-person early voting in others,  
17 deters citizens from participating in democracy; and

18 WHEREAS, Nearly all instances of voter fraud are either clerical  
19 or typographical errors on the voter roll; and

20 WHEREAS, The act of fraudulently voting is a singularly  
21 inefficient and ineffective act, carrying the risk of five years in  
22 prison and a \$10,000 fine for each offense; and

23 WHEREAS, Many state legislators now argue voter fraud is  
24 rampant, leading 16 states to enact voter suppression laws that  
25 require state-issued identification, restrict voter registration drives,  
26 or limit early voting by either mail or in person; and

27 WHEREAS, Voter suppression laws are the modern form of  
28 voter discrimination; and

29 WHEREAS, An election system with fair access provides the  
30 greatest guard to our rights and liberties; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
32 *California, jointly,* That the State of California supports the  
33 investigation by the federal Department of Justice into whether  
34 state legislatures are discriminating against and suppressing the  
35 vote of minorities, senior citizens, young adults, or those with  
36 physical disabilities or limited economic means; and be it further

37 *Resolved,* That the State of California denounces any law that  
38 disenfranchises society's most disadvantaged eligible voters; and  
39 be it further

1     *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
2 this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United  
3 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each  
4 Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the  
5 United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.

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