

January 17, 2020

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 207 (Hurtado) Expand Voter Access to Presidential Primary - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Gonzalez,

NextGen California respectfully requests your support of SB 207 (Hurtado), which will simplify the process for voters to update certain information — for example, address or party preference — in the two weeks prior to and including Election Day.

The 2016 presidential primary brought to light several issues faced by voters trying to navigate California's electoral process, specifically, the obstacles faced by voters registered as No Party Preference (NPP). For those wishing to vote for Republican candidates or another political party that opted to be a closed primary, voters had to re-register. For those wishing to vote for a Democratic candidate or another political party opting to allow NPP participation, voters needed to request the applicable ballot. For vote-by-mail voters, this meant sending back a postcard well in advance of the election requesting the appropriate ballot or having to go to their polling place on Election Day to exchange their nonpartisan mail ballot for a partisan ballot.

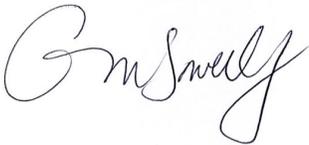
This past year, SB 72 (Umberg) was signed into law, requiring all polling locations to offer same-day registration. The passage of SB 72 will expedite the registration process for those who are not yet registered to vote or need to make changes to their registration; however, it also increases the potential for polling locations and election officials to be inundated by same day registration.

This election year, local election officials are also anticipating high numbers of voters needing to update their personal information or their party registration. Voters wishing to make these simple changes will now also have to deal with the long lines of people seeking same day registration. Overall, these new election activities will slow down voting for other voters and significantly increase the duties of election officials.

SB 207 will help resolve issues by streamlining the process for voters wishing to update their address or political party preference. Specifically, rather than having to complete an entirely new voter registration form, voters will be able to fill out a simpler written affidavit of the changes, including required personal information. This change will help decrease wait times for voters at the polls, reduce the number of provisional ballots expected to be issued, and reduce the review time to ensure that updates to voter information are accurate.

NextGen California strongly supports inclusivity in and removing obstacles to voter participation. For the above reasons, we respectfully request your “aye” vote on SB 207.

Sincerely,



Arnold Sowell Jr.

Executive Director, NextGen California