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Paid Postage

- State Election Code does not require paid postage for VBM, even where shifting to primarily VBM (SB 450), or for some all mail special elections
- Requirement to pay postage to vote could discourage low-income voters who lose their local polling site
- Paid postage was rejected as amendment to SB 450
- No significant research on effect of pre-paid postage

VBM Signature Non-Match

- VBM ballots are rejected if a signature on file at an elections office does not match the signature on the VBM envelope
- State Election Code does not give voters an opportunity to “cure” a non-match like it does for voters missing a signature (though some counties do allow voters to cure)
- Signature non-match could happen for many reasons, for example signatures can change over time, or voters may use different signatures in different circumstances
- State Election Code does not require counties to notify a voter whose ballot was rejected for a signature non-match (notification bill, AB 2089, vetoed last year)

2016 General Election

In the 29 counties* where data was available, Latino and Asian voters, foreign born voters, and younger voters were far more likely to have their votes disqualified for non-matching signatures.

All VBM Votes	Non-Match Total	Non-Match % All Voters	Non-Match Non-Latino and Asian Voters	Non-Match Latino Voters	Non-Match Asian Voters	Non-Match US Born	Non-Match Foreign Born	45 Years of Age and Up	18 to 44 Years of Age
3,382,005	18,114	0.54%	0.45%	0.88%	0.61%	0.50%	0.70%	0.36%	0.91%

* Data represents counties with 34% of state's voters. Largest counties not included (L.A., Orange, S.D).

Source: Political Data Inc

Other Concerns

- Disparities in use of VBM:
 - 59% of non-Latinos voted by mail in 2016 General
 - 42% of Latinos voted by mail in 2016 General (Source: PDI)
- Non-SB 450 counties do not have to provide remote accessible VBM
- Voters receiving translated voter information guides after they have received VBM ballot
- Some counties had much higher rejection rates of VBM

Recommendations

- Require paid postage for VBM
 - AB 216 (Gonzalez Fletcher)
- Require counties to notify voters whose VBM ballots were rejected
- Give voters an opportunity to cure non-matching signature
- Make it easier to cure missing signatures
 - AB 840 (Quirk) would allow for emailing unsigned ballot statement
- Counties should do extensive outreach and education to communities with lower VBM use rates before using all VBM elections