



San Mateo County Ballot Measure Analysis Form

Date Submitted: September 5, 2025
Submitted Department: County Executive's Office
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Reviewed and Approved by County Attorney
☒ Yes ☐ No

Reviewed and Approved by County Executive
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

State Ballot Proposition 50 The Use of Legislative Congressional Redistricting Map Amendment

Chaptered: August 21, 2025

- ☐ Citizen initiative state statute
☒ Legislatively referred constitutional amendment
☐ Bond issue

Recommended Position

- ☐ Support
☐ Oppose
☐ Neutral
☒ Other – Board President David Canepa and Supervisor Lisa Gauthier are requesting the Board's support for this measure.

Summary

Proposition 50 would authorize temporary changes to California's congressional district maps and affirm California's commitment to fair, nonpartisan redistricting nationwide.

Background

On August 14, 2025, Governor Newsom announced a framework in response to President Trump's partisan redistricting effort in Texas, which includes the redrawing of congressional district lines to gain five additional Republican seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

To counteract this attempt, Governor Newsom called a special statewide election for November 4, 2025, that will ask voters to approve temporary changes to California's congressional maps to protect democracy.

On August 21, 2025 – following Texas's steadfast progression on its redistricting plan – the California Legislature passed, and Governor Newsom signed into law the "Election Rigging Response Act," a legislative package aimed at nullifying Texas's actions. The package includes three measures that would effectuate the special election and redistricting efforts in California:

- **ACA 8 (Rivas and McGuire):** If approved by the voters on November 4, 2025, requires the state to temporarily adopt new congressional district maps, as reflected in AB 604, for every congressional election (2026, 2028, and 2030) until map drawing authority is returned to the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission and new congressional boundary lines are drawn in 2031, following the 2030 Census. This measure makes the

congressional districts in AB 604 operative only if Texas, Florida, or another state adopts a new congressional district map that takes effect after August 1, 2025, and before January 1, 2031, and a federal court order does not require such redistricting.

- **AB 604 (Aguiar-Curry):** Establishes the proposed and temporary congressional district maps that will take effect if the people vote to pass Proposition 50 (ACA 8) on November 4. *These maps are publicly available.*
- **SB 280 (Cervantes and Pellerin):** Requires the California Secretary of State to prepare a calendar of key election dates, deadlines, and requirements to conduct the statewide special election for Proposition 50 on November 4, 2025, and appropriates funding to counties for election administration. The statute also includes a prohibition on using the word "incumbent" as a ballot designation for Congressional candidates in 2026.

Collectively, this recently enacted legislation seeks to give Democrats a potential advantage in claiming five Republican-leaning seats in several California districts and neutralize President Trump's efforts.

Ballot Measure

Proposition 50 (ACA 8) would authorize temporary changes to congressional district maps in response to Texas's partisan redistricting. Specifically, this ballot measure would:

1. Temporarily require new congressional district maps, as passed by the Legislature in August 2025, to be

used in California's congressional elections from 2026 through 2030.

2. Retain California's independent Citizens Redistricting Commission and directs the Commission to resume enacting congressional district maps in 2031 after the 2030 census and every ten years thereafter.
3. Establish state policy supporting the use of fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting commissions nationwide.

Under current law, an independent commission, known as the California Citizens Redistricting Commission, is responsible for drawing congressional maps every ten years using nonpartisan, transparent standards. The current 52 congressional district maps were drawn by the Commission following the 2020 Census. Proposition 50, however, would change this by temporarily replacing the current congressional district maps with the new legislatively drawn maps, as outlined in AB 604.

Departments Impacted

- **Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and Elections:** The Elections Division had initially planned to begin preparations for the June 2026 Statewide Primary Election this fall. However, due to the November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election, the Division had to redirect resources to conduct a second countywide election within the same calendar year. This is particularly challenging because elections are typically planned at least six months in advance. In contrast, this election was called only 75 days prior, with initial planning beginning about 90 days before Election Day.

All staff are now fully engaged in election-related activities, including securing Vote Center locations, preparing the official ballot, establishing drop box locations, proofing the sample ballot and voter information guides, and hiring additional staff. At the same time, staff must continue planning efforts for the June 2026 Statewide Primary Election.

The budget will be significantly affected, primarily due to the need to hire several hundred extra-help staff and cover costs such as printing and mailing ballots, producing and distributing sample ballots and voter guides, and delivering equipment and supplies to Vote Centers.

The Department also partners with the Sheriff's Office in every election to ensure there is adequate security and to address any potential concerns at the Vote Centers.

Fiscal Impact

The County Elections Office has estimated that the cost of the November 2025 election on Proposition 50 will be \$4,170,529 in San Mateo County. The legislation authorizing the vote on Proposition 50 provides that the State will cover the full cost of the election for counties. The County will need to work with the State to ensure that the full cost of the election is claimed and recovered. Should the final election costs come in under the initially estimated costs, the authorizing legislation allows counties to use excess funds received to offset state costs for the next statewide election conducted by the county.

Support

A number of elected officials, former officials, unions, and organizations are in support of Proposition 50. Proponents of the ballot measure, including SEIU California, explain that Texas redistricting is not just an attack on Texans; it is an "attack on all Americans who believe in fair elections and equal representation. If states like Texas redraw their maps with the explicit goal of rigging national outcomes, then the rest of the country cannot simply stand by and do nothing—especially not California. We live in a national democracy. Every congressional district affects the laws we all live under, the courts we are governed by, and the rights we are guaranteed...California must be prepared to act—not in retaliation, but in defense. Allowing California to redraw congressional lines may become necessary to protect the broader democratic equilibrium. This is not about replicating bad behavior—it is about responding to a broken system with the seriousness it demands."

Supporters:

- Eleni Kounalakis, California Lieutenant Governor
- Jose Medina, Riverside County Supervisor, District 1
- Paloma Aguirre, San Diego County Supervisor, District 1
- Terra Lawson-Remer, San Diego County Supervisor, District 3
- AAPI Equity Alliance
- AFSCME California
- Alliance for a Better Community
- Altadena Chamber of Commerce
- Arab Resource & Organizing Center Action
- Asian American Drug Abuse Program
- Battleground California
- Black Women Organizing for Political Action
- Borderlands for Equity
- CA Church IMPACT

- CAUSE Action Fund
- California Donor Table
- California Faculty Association
- California Federation of Labor Unions, AFL-CIO
- California Federation of Teachers
- California NAACP State Conference
- California Nurses Association
- California Professional Firefighters
- California Teachers Association
- Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
- CHC Bold PAC
- Child Care Providers United
- Climate Action Campaign
- Compass Family Services
- Costa Mesa Democrats
- Courage California
- Democratic Party of California
- Democracy Strategy Partners
- Democratic Party of Orange County
- Democratic Party of San Fernando Valley
- El Concilio California
- Former Governor Gray Davis
- Former Vice President Kamala D. Harris
- Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder
- Former President Barack Obama
- HB Huddle
- House Majority PAC
- Imperial Valley Equity and Justice
- Indivisible California: StateStrong
- Indivisible El Dorado
- Indivisible Stanislaus
- Inland Empire United
- Little Manila Rising
- Los Angeles County Young Democrats
- Outdoor Outreach
- Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
- Reproductive Freedom for All California
- San Francisco Democratic Party
- Search to Involve Philipino Americans
- SEIU California
- South Asian Network
- Starting Over Strong
- Teamsters California
- TruEvolution
- UDW/AFSCME Local 3930

- United Food and Commercial Workers Western States Council
- United Way Santa Cruz County
- The Unity Council
- Voices for Progress
- WDN Action
- Women's March Foundation
- 314 Action Fund
- Thousands of individuals

Opposition

While opponents' concerns center on the financial burden of the special election, the short timeframe for public comment on the legislative package, and that California's congressional delegation already has very few Republican members, other groups, such as the League of Women Voters of California, have expressed opposition towards all attempts to redraw congressional lines on a partisan basis.

Other groups, such as the California Business Roundtable and CalTax, argue that "California should lead the nation by continuing to defend voter-enacted reforms that created a fair, transparent, citizen-led redistricting." They go on to say that "[f]or more than a decade, California's independent redistricting system has been the national gold standard. Created by voters through Proposition 11 in 2008, expanded through Proposition 20 in 2010, and protected against repeal through the defeat of Proposition 27 that same year, our model has been tested at the ballot box multiple times—and each time, voters have chosen non-partisan citizen-led fairness over partisan and self-interested politics...Any changes to voter-enacted constitutional provisions must undergo rigorous analysis, transparent vetting, and a genuine public-participation process."

California Republicans have also taken legal action. They recently sued the State in an effort to remove Proposition 50 from the ballot, claiming that it violates a state rule requiring all ballot questions to adhere to a single subject. They also alleged that Democrats violated procedures when pushing out the new maps under a constrained timeframe. This is their second legal attempt; the California Supreme Court denied their first legal challenge, which they hoped would block the Legislature's consideration of the "Election Rigging Response Act" legislative package altogether. President Trump has also threatened to sue the state of California on this matter.

Opponents:

- Kevin W. Crye, Shasta County Supervisor, District 1
- Alliance San Diego
- California Business Roundtable

- California Common Cause
- California Consumer Advocates for Affordability and Safety
- California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- California Manufacturers and Technology Association
- CalTax
- Charles Munger, Chairman of Spirit Democracy
- Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
- Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce
- Govern for California
- Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Independent Voter Education
- Independent Voter Project
- NFIB
- Protect the Voters FIRST Act
- Reform California
- Republican Party of California
- Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce
- The Two Hundred for Homeownership
- United Latinos Action
- Unity Party of California
- U.S. Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy
- Thousands of individuals

Status

8/21/25—Qualified for November 4, 2025, special election ballot.