



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 10/3/2023

File #: 23-1293

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Clerk/Recorder

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Resolution Authorizing the County Clerk, Recorder and Registrar of Voters to Not List Supporters and Opponents of Local Measures on County Ballots for All Future Elections

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt Resolution No. _____ (Attachment 1);

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund, Budget Unit 1100 140

DISCUSSION:

Assembly Bill (AB) 1416 was passed by the State Legislature in 2022 with an effective date of Jan. 1, 2023. AB 1416 adds a requirement that the supporters and opponents of statewide measures be listed on the ballot label or that a similar description be provided on the ballot. The bill gives counties the option of printing the list of supporters and opponents of local measures on the ballot. The list could include associations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals taken from the signers or the text of the arguments in favor or against the measure printed in the voter information guide. The list of supporters and opponents are each limited to a maximum of 125 characters.

Opting into the additional printing will result in cost increases for ballot production and printing, will result in additional ballot space for each local measure printed on the ballot, and will increase the possibility for electioneering and promotion of candidates who may be on the ballot and are also signers of the measure. The requirement would also put the Elections Office in the position of accepting or denying abbreviations of supporters/opponents that may not be clear due to the maximum character limit, and in turn may result in challenges to perceived unfair determinations.

Elections Code section 9170 does allow a mechanism to opt out of printing supporters and opponents of local measures as set forth in subsection (d). The subsection states as follows:

At least 30 days before the deadline for submitting arguments for or against county measures, a county board of supervisors may elect not to list supporters and opponents for county, city, district and school measures on the county ballot and future county ballots.

The proposed action would allow the Elections Office to not list supporters and opponents of local measures in all future county ballots in accordance with section 9170.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If the resolution is not adopted, there is an anticipated increase in printing costs and potentially mailing costs to all Humboldt County registered voters due to the increased length and size of ballots resulting from the additional text.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Framework.

Core Roles: Enforce laws and regulations to protect residents

New Initiatives: Invite civic engagement and awareness of available services

Strategic Plan: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to approve the resolution. This alternative is not recommended as this will increase ballot production costs, increase ballot length, raise concerns of potential electioneering, and pose challenges for the Elections Office in abbreviating names within character limits, potentially leading to disputes over perceived fairness.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution No. _____

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A