

TO: MEMBERS OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE

FROM: ASSEMBLYMAN PAUL COOK

SUBJECT: AB 1662 CO-AUTHOR REQUEST

DATE: July 28, 2008

I invite you to co-author an important measure to help insure that the votes of citizens overseas, including those in the Armed Forces, are duly counted.

Voters living overseas face several obstacles in exercising their right to vote. These include slow communications and mail delivery as well as unfamiliar and confusing procedures for applying for absentee ballots, receiving their ballots, and returning them. There is also a threat to voter privacy and election integrity posed by some of the proposals to use fax and email to facilitate these burdens. Active military personnel in combat roles are in the most difficult situation of all, since they are very mobile and in locations where traditional postal mail is understandably erratic.

This bill protects the rights of overseas absentee voters to participate in runoff elections held when no candidate gets a majority in the first round of voting. It provides that, when an election includes an office for which there could be a runoff election within 90 days, overseas absentee voters would receive both a normal ballot for the first round, and an optional ranked ballot. Only the normal ballot would be counted in the first round. The ranked ballot would be counted in the runoff, if one is needed. It would allow the voter to rank the first-round candidates in order of preference, and would count for the higher ranked of the two candidates who advance to the runoff.

Californians for Electoral Reform (CfER) is sponsoring the bill. The following organizations are also listed in support: National Guard Association of California, California State Commanders Veterans Council, Overseas Voting Foundation, California Democratic Party Veterans Caucus, Veterans United for Truth.

If you wish to co-author this measure please sign and return this form to Assemblyman Paul Cook, State Capitol, Room 5126 or fax this signed form to 916-319-2165.

If you have any questions, please contact Matt Gallagher in my office at 319-2065.

Print Name

Signature