



July 12, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Brown, Governor  
State of California  
The State Capitol Building, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 216 - SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Voter Foundation (CVF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to improve the voting process to better serve voters, strongly urges you to sign Assembly Bill 216/Gonzalez Fletcher, which will require election officials to provide California voters with pre-paid mail ballot return envelopes.

Here are five reasons why California should enact AB 216:

**1) Removes a major voting obstacle.**

Why provide pre-paid postage on mail ballot return envelopes? Simply put, it encourages people to vote. Some perceive the absence of pre-paid postage as a kind of poll tax. Providing pre-paid postage, on the other hand, says, "We respect your right to vote, we really want you to vote, and we want to ensure there is no obstacle in the way of your timely return of your voted ballot."

**2) Eliminates a major point of voter confusion.**

The cost of returning a ballot varies widely from county to county and from election to election, ranging from one first-class stamp in Los Angeles to 71 cents in Sacramento to \$1.21 in Alameda County in June's Primary. With pre-paid postage, voters don't have to know the correct postage amount, taking the guesswork out of the process. Removing this obstacle will also help voters get their ballots cast more quickly because they won't have to purchase and affix the proper postage before mailing in their ballots.

**3) Encourages young people to vote.**

The USPS is a mystery to many young people. As more counties move to expand voting by mail, we are at serious risk of leaving California's millennials, and their voting power, behind by expecting them to utilize a process with which they are unfamiliar. Providing postage-paid

envelopes removes a potentially significant voting barrier, especially for California's younger voters.<sup>1</sup>

**4) Ensures equal treatment of all California voters.**

Currently, all voters in nine counties are provided with pre-paid postage return envelopes (Alpine, Marin, Nevada, Plumas, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sierra). Enacting AB 216 ensures all counties have the resources to provide an equal level of service to their voters no matter where in California they live.

**5) The cost will go down as ballot drop-off locations are more widely implemented.**

Many voters prefer to return their mail ballots in person. As more counties implement the Voters Choice Act and expand the use of ballot drop-off locations, pre-paid postage costs will be reduced over time.

We urge you to will follow the example set by Washington State, whose Governor and Secretary of State recently teamed up to find the resources needed to ensure all their voters are provided with pre-paid envelopes, recognizing the importance of removing barriers to voting and treating voters equally across their state.<sup>2</sup>

Please sign AB 216 to provide improved and equal voting services for all California voters.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander  
President & Founder

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<sup>1</sup> A 2011 USPS study found age played a significant role in the use of its services. Homes with a head of the household under age 34 sent 0.7 pieces of mail a week, compared with two pieces for those above 55, as reported by Reuters online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-postal-youth-idUSBRE91J1BA20130220> .

<sup>2</sup> See this news release from Washington Governor Jay Inslee: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-wyman-announce-funding-2018-statewide-ballot-return-postage> .