



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 21-368, **Version:** 1

Approve recommendations from the Legislative Committee to support AB 361 (Rivas) Brown Act: Remote Meetings During Emergencies; and AB 1400 (Kalra) California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act (CalCare).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve recommendations from the Legislative Committee to support AB 361 (Rivas) Brown Act: Remote Meetings During Emergencies; and AB 1400 (Kalra) California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act (CalCare).

SUMMARY:

At the April 13, 2021 meeting of the Legislative Committee it was recommended that the Board adopt support positions on AB 361 (Rivas) Brown Act: Remote Meetings During Emergencies; and AB 1400 (Kalra) California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act (CalCare). The County's Legislative Program is supportive of the concepts of these two bills - 1) support for policy changes to continue participation and access to virtual public meeting governed by the Brown Act; and 2) support for policy changes providing health care for all.

The Legislative Committee also recommended a support position on AB 703 (Rubio); however, the author has decided to hold the bill as a two-year bill, and therefore the bill will not be moving in the legislative process this year. If the bill is revisited in the fall, staff will report back to the Committee for direction.

DISCUSSION:

AB 361 (Rivas) Brown Act: Remote Meetings During Emergencies

In 1953, the Legislature enacted the Ralph M. Brown Act, known simply as the "Brown Act" which guaranteed the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies. To meet this objective, the Brown Act drew up requirements regarding public notices of meetings, the posting of agendas, and physical access to those meetings. Since then, many modifications have been enacted. However, the Act has not been changed to allow local agencies to utilize technology to its fullest extent and the pandemic has raised issues for consideration both for the public and elected officials.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, local agency boards struggled to conduct their meetings in compliance with the Brown Act's public accessibility requirements while still abiding by stay-at-home orders. As a result, Governor Newsom signed Executive Orders N-25-20, N-29-20, and N-35-20 to grant local agencies the flexibility to meet remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor's executive orders allowed public agencies to meet remotely and did not require physical public access to those meeting locations. Unfortunately, those Executive Orders only apply to the current health pandemic and do not contemplate future health, fire, flood, or other unforeseen emergencies.

AB 361 will provide additional flexibility for local agencies looking to meet remotely in order to continue

providing the public with essential services during a proclaimed state of emergency or local emergency. In doing so, local agency boards will not have to rely on an Executive Order from the Governor.

AB 1400 (Kalra) California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act (CalCare)

Today’s U.S. health care system is a complex, fragmented multi-payer system that still leaves wide gaps of coverage and poses significant issues of affordability. Despite health care spending in the U.S. far exceeding other high-income, industrialized countries that offer a publicly financed single payer system, we consistently report worse health outcomes and disparities among vulnerable populations.

An estimated 2.7 million Californians remain uninsured and millions more with coverage often delay or are unable to access necessary medications or health care services due to cost. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, that number has grown as many workers have lost their employer-based coverage or were unable to afford the high cost of health care due to economic constraints.

AB 1400 sets in motion a single-payer health care coverage system in California, called CalCare, for all residents, regardless of citizenship status. By streamlining payments and lowering per-capita health care spending, CalCare guarantees quality health care and long-term care without creating barriers to care or out-of-pocket costs. By passing the California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act, the state can position itself to seek consolidated federal waivers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These waivers would make it easier for California to consolidate health care dollars, provide flexibility, expand benefits, and eliminate cost-sharing.

California Legislative Information

Bill text and analysis for California legislative proposals can be found at <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVMENT:

The County Administrative Office - Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division (CAO-IGLA) prepared this report with assistance from the County’s state legislative advocate, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP.

FINANCING:

Monterey County’s Legislative Program is funded in County Administrative Office-Department 1050, Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division-Unit 8054. Approval of this recommendation will not result in additional general fund contributions.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant CAO

Date: April 27, 2021

Attachments

- AB 339 (Rivas) Support Letter
- AB 339 (Rivas) Fact Sheet
- AB 1400 (Kalra) Support Letter
- AB 1400 (Kalra) Fact Sheet