



County of Monterey

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

Board Report

File #: RES 19-055, **Version:** 1

Consider adoption of a Resolution supporting the concept of lowering the legal voting age in California to 16 in response to Board Referral 2018.25 issued by Supervisor Alejo and former Supervisor Simon Salinas on October 18, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors consider adoption of a Resolution supporting the concept of lowering the legal voting age in California to 16 in partial response to Board Referral 2018-.25 issued by Supervisor Alejo and former Supervisor Simon Salinas on October 18, 2018.

SUMMARY

On May 7, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved letters of support for Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 4 by Assembly member Mullin and ACA 8 by Assembly member Low. ACA 4 would authorize a U.S. citizen who is 17 years of age, is a resident of the state, and will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the next general election to vote in any intervening primary or special elections that occurs before the next general election. ACA 8 would reduce the minimum voting age to 17.

Additionally, as part of a response to the Board Referral 2018.25, Supervisor Alejo proposes that the Board of Supervisors adopt a Resolution supporting the concept of lowering the legal voting age in California to 16.

DISCUSSION

In 1971, 18-year-olds across the United States won the right to vote through the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Further, the California Constitution, allows citizens who are 18 years of age and a resident of the State to vote. However, there are efforts to lower the voting age throughout the country. A U.S. Congresswoman from New York has introduced a proposed constitutional amendment to lower the voting age in America to 16. This legislation has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee where it is awaiting further action. In Oregon, a bill has passed through the legislature to allow 16-year-olds to vote, which will be on the 2020 ballot for voters to decide. Thirteen other states have introduced bills to lower the voting age to 16 since 2003, none of which have yet passed into law.

In California, there was a prior effort to lower the statewide voting age through a proposed Amendment to the California Constitution (proposed Amendment 10). The proposed amendment failed to achieve the requisite vote in both houses of the Legislature to go to ballot. Berkeley, California, (a charter city), has passed, but not yet implemented an ordinance allowing underage voting solely on limited local contests. The City and County of San Francisco (both are governed by charter) proposed an ordinance to allow underage voting that was ultimately defeated by voters. Three charter cities in Maryland currently allow underage voting exclusively in stand-alone (not consolidated) city elections.

Research shows both legal and administrative challenges exist if the Board pursues underage voting separate and apart from supporting a state legislative change to the California Constitution.

As part of a response to Board Referral 2018.25, Supervisor Alejo proposes that the Board of Supervisors adopt a Resolution supporting the concept of lowering the legal voting age in California to 16. The proposed

resolution is attached as Exhibit A.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The County Administrative Office - Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division prepared this report with the assistance of the Office of County Counsel.

FINANCING

Monterey County's Legislative Program is funded under CAO001-1050-8054 (CAO - Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division). Approval of this recommendation will not result in additional General Fund contributions.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This item supports the Board's vision of accountable and transparent administration of government services.

R Administration: Promote an organization that practices efficient and effective resource management and is recognized for responsiveness, strong customer orientation, accountability and transparency.

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Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant CAO

Attachment: Exhibit A - Resolution supporting the concept of lowering the legal voting age in California to sixteen.

(Attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board.)