

TOM UMBERG

SENATOR, 34TH SENATE DISTRICT

SB 970: Move Gubernatorial Primary to June



Updated (March 6, 2020)

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 970 would move the primary election for gubernatorial election years from March to June while leaving the primary for presidential years untouched.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING LAW

Currently, the elections code requires the primary election to occur on March, regardless of which primary election or year it is. SB 568 from the 2017-18 session moved the primary from June to March for all primary elections.

SB 568 was passed to give California a bigger say in the presidential primary process. Because California voted in June, there was a presumptive nominee in both parties by the time California closed its polls on June 7, 2016.

NEED FOR THE BILL

California has traditionally had its primary in June with the only exceptions occurring because of a desire to have a greater say for the presidential primary.

A March primary will result in an extended election cycle as it will be eight months from March to November. With the primary lengthened, the costs in running a campaign will rise limited the individuals who can run in an election to those who can self-fund a campaign, or the candidate will spend more time fundraising.

Additionally, 2022 is a once-in-a-decade election as it will occur after redistricting at multiple levels of the government. Local officials will need to receive public input before finalizing district maps that will remain in place for ten years. If the process is not thorough, the results could negatively impact Californians.

Lastly, various offices are decided in the primary election such as district attorney, county supervisor, and school board members. If the election were to stay in March, some of those offices will have different maps from 2010 and voter outreach in the district will be needed to inform those voters about the candidates.

SOLUTION

Senate Bill 970 will address the fallbacks of SB 568 by differentiating gubernatorial election years from presidential election years. This will ensure that California protects its position during the presidential primary years, but addresses issues for years that do not feature a presidential primary.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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