



**LEGISLATION &
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March 17, 2025

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Elections and Constitutional Amendments
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 2100
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Informational
Hearing – Ensuring Every Vote Counts: California's Signature Curing
Process**

Dear Senator Cervantes:

Disability Rights California (DRC) is a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on California's signature verification and curing process. We strongly support the current signature verification statute and regulations and advocate for an extended canvass period to ensure all voters, particularly those with disabilities, have sufficient time to cure missing or mismatched signatures. The more public education provided about the process and the time voters have to cure their ballots, the better the chances that voters with disabilities can successfully participate in the democratic process.

Voters with disabilities face significant barriers meeting signature verification requirements. Many voters with disabilities struggle to produce a consistent signature due to injuries, age-related changes, or conditions that affect dexterity. Additionally, requiring voters to navigate a complex cure process—especially one dependent on mailed notifications—can further disenfranchise those with disabilities who may need more

accessible and flexible options.

The recommendations in this letter are informed by DRC's statewide hotline for voters with disabilities, which operates during every major election. A significant portion of our calls involve voters who are confused about the signature verification requirement or are unable to sign the envelope. Many voters are unaware that they can update their signature or cure a mismatched or missing signature, and some face difficulties in completing the cure process due to accessibility barriers.

Despite the issues outlined above, DRC strongly supports California's existing signature comparison regulations, which require elections officials to apply a presumption that a voter's signature is valid and consider whether a person may have a disability. One suggested improvement for the regulations is to make signature verification training a requirement for staff. Currently, the regulations describe requirements for training topics but the regulations and Election Code do not actually require a training. The training could be required annually or before major elections. To improve consistency across counties, we recommend that the Secretary of State develop a universal signature comparison training program. This would ensure that counties follow the current regulations and apply signature verification standards uniformly, reducing arbitrary rejections that disproportionately impact voters with disabilities.

Additionally, DRC and other voting advocacy organizations have recommended for years that California adopt a standardized vote-by-mail envelope design across all counties. A universal envelope design would allow the state to implement a coordinated public outreach campaign on how to properly sign, complete and return a vote-by-mail ballot. This would help mitigate voter confusion, particularly for voters with disabilities, low literacy levels, or those who are new to the vote-by-mail process.

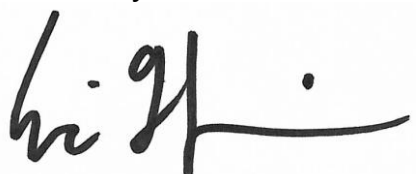
As discussions continue regarding the signature curing process, we encourage the Committee to prioritize policies that protect voters with disabilities and ensure that every eligible voter's ballot is counted. We appreciate the leadership on this issue and look forward to working together to ensure accessible elections for all California voters.

Disability Rights California Comments to Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Information Hearing on Ensuring Every Vote Counts: California's Signature Curing Process

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Please contact me if us have any questions about our comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Harris
Associate Executive Director of External Affairs
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Scott Matsumoto, Principal Consultant, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Cory Botts, Republican Caucus