



# Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ..... LEE STETSON  
District 2 ..... DOUG BALMAIN  
District 3 ..... JANET BIBBY  
District 4 ..... GARRY R. PARKER  
District 5 ..... BOB PICKARD



RICHARD H. INMAN  
County Administrative Officer

MARGIE WILLIAMS  
Clerk of the Board

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June 3, 2003

Assembly Member John Longville  
State Capitol  
PO Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0062

Dear Assembly Member Longville:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors has reviewed **AB 1531**, your proposal to bifurcate the presidential and direct primary elections and to move the direct primary election to June of even-numbered years. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors is in **Opposition** to **AB 1531**.

The cost of conducting an additional primary election is projected to be \$60 million dollars statewide. This financial obligation would be imposed on taxpayers at a time when State and local governments are already facing serious budget shortfalls.

While it is understood that some other states hold separate presidential and direct primary elections, those states do not have to administer California's complex and labor intensive election laws, including the preparation and distribution of Sample Ballots and Voter Information Pamphlets, consolidation of local elections, numerous state and local ballot measures, a 15 day close of registration, and permanent absentee voting. Further, primary elections, whether presidential or direct, require separate ballots to be prepared for each political party that has qualified to participate.

California's election officials have openly expressed concern regarding the increasing complexity of administering elections, and their ability to meet those demands. A September primary election would conflict with numerous existing statutory deadlines for the November general election. Mandating two separate primary elections with overlapping time frames increases the complexity of election administration and jeopardizes the conduct of both.

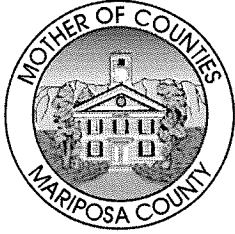
Thank you for considering our concerns regarding the implications of AB 1531.

Sincerely,

Bob Pickard  
Chairman  
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

cc: Assemblyman Poochigian  
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)  
California Association of Clerks & Election Officials (CACEO)  
Wagerman & Associates





**Marjorie J. Wass**  
**Treasurer – Tax Collector and**  
**County Clerk**

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Treasurer (209) 966-2830 - Tax Collector (209) 966-2621 - County Clerk / Registrar of Voters (209) 966-2007 - Fax (209) 966-6496

## MEMO

Date: May 2, 2003

To: Board of Supervisors  
CAO  
County Counsel

From: Marjorie J. Wass

Re: Opposition to AB 1531

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Current state law requires that the statewide primary election be held on the first Tuesday in March in each even-numbered year. State law also requires that in Presidential election years, the statewide primary be consolidated with the Presidential primary on the first Tuesday in March.

AB 1531 would require that the statewide primary be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June of each even-numbered year. The measure additionally requires that the Presidential primary election be held on the first Tuesday in March but continues to provide for the statewide primary in June, thus requiring election officials to conduct two primaries in Presidential election years.

In an attempt to have greater influence in deciding Presidential elections, California moved its June Presidential primary to March and then consolidated the statewide primary with the Presidential primary. According to critics, the March statewide primary is responsible for increased voter apathy and low voter turnout. Proponents of disconnecting the statewide primary from the Presidential primary and holding it later in the year believe that this action would:

- Promote greater competition in the primaries by providing potential candidates more time to decide if they want to run for office.
- Lower the cost to run for office because the campaign cycle could be shortened.
- Allow elected officials to focus on state issues rather than lengthy reelections.
- Keep campaign volunteers involved throughout election cycle.
- Increase accountability for statements made by candidates during the primaries.

County election officials, however, are concerned about the increased cost burdens created by the additional primary election during Presidential election years and are very concerned about the administrative burdens this bill creates by requiring two primaries within 90 days of one another.

Many election officials believe that the solution to problems raised by Assemblyman Longville would be for California to return to a consolidated June primary or to consolidate the statewide and Presidential primaries any time between April and June. Critics argue that the March primary has been relatively ineffective in increasing California's influence over Presidential elections since most other states also moved up their primaries.

This measure is estimated to increase the County's election cost by approximately \$68,000 in Presidential election years. It is noteworthy that this bill creates a \$50 million reimbursable state mandate at a time when the State is deferring payment of all mandates. This deferral requires Mariposa County to front over \$15,000 in outstanding and unpaid claims to cover the costs of State mandates.

The County is estimating our claim to be \$193,100 for 2003/2004 and then would drive our total unpaid claim to \$208,100 by the end of FY 2003/2004.

ORGANIZATION POSITIONS:

This measure is opposed by both the California Association of Counties (CSAC) and California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) organizations.

May 2, 2003

Assembly Member John Longville  
State Capitol  
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Sacramento, CA 94249-0062

**Draft**

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Sincerely,

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Bob Pickard  
Chairman  
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors