AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER   **SEPTEMBER 25, 2018**

<u>VOTER REGISTRATION ERRORS AND THE MOTOR VOTER PROGRAM</u>

The State of California recently disclosed the existence of 23,000 instances of voter registration errors that occurred between mid-April and early August as a result of the new "motor voter" program managed by California's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Created by the Motor Voter Act of 2015 and implemented in April 2018, this program automatically registers any eligible voters who apply for a driver's license or identification card—unless the individual specifically declines to participate - and transmits this data to the county where that person lives.

The state has now confirmed that at least twenty percent of the exposed errors represent instances in which individuals specifically attempted to "opt out" of registering to vote, and many others involved unwanted changes to individual voters' preferences, such as political party affiliation or vote by mail status.

The "motor voter" program has experienced other implementation issues as well, with 77,000 voter records being misreported in May 2018 by the DMV to elections officials. In some cases, more than one form was generated for a single individual, which could result in more than one ballot being issued for a single person.

-M O R E-

<u>MOTION</u>

SOLIS   _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS_____

HAHN   _____

BARGER   _____

KUEHL   _____

Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and accurate voter registration data is critical to ensuring that our citizens are able to fully exercise their right to vote. As part of the modernization effort, Los Angeles County will be rolling out newly designed vote by mail ballots, and errors regarding absentee status may confuse voters who are already processing a significant change in the voting process. In addition, political party preference in some cases can impact which specific races in which someone is able to vote, and errors can inadvertently prevent eligible voters from being able to fully exercise their right to vote.

Coupled with the issues experienced here in Los Angeles County during the primary election on June 5, 2018, the revelation of these voter registration errors is likely to further erode public confidence in the legitimacy of our electoral process, as well as trust in the agencies responsible for managing voter data and administering our elections.

To the extent that the public no longer believes that our elections are fair and valid, we are likely to see a decline in voter engagement, further damaging the core values upon which our country was founded.

Although voter registration is ultimately controlled at the state level, there are likely quality control procedures that can be implemented locally to proactively identify and help correct voter registration errors such as these. With critical elections only weeks away and a significant amount of documented errors with the system, it is imperative that we ensure the accuracy of voter records here in Los Angeles County, and it is irresponsible to allow the "motor voter" program to continue operating unchecked.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors direct the Registrar to work with relevant stakeholders, including the Secretary of State and the DMV, and report back to the Board in two weeks on the cause of the voter registration errors, what actions have been taken to correct and prevent such errors in the future, and how many individuals were affected in Los Angeles County. In addition, the report back should include recommendations on what steps the County can take to notify and assist local voters who were impacted in order to ensure the accuracy of our rolls, how the County can work with the state to help correct the errors and address the root cause of the problem, procedures that can be implemented at the County level to proactively identify and correct such errors in the future, and expanded outreach measures that can begin to restore public trust in our electoral process.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors send a five-signature letter to the Governor and the Secretary of State in support of the state's audit of the California DMV and ask that the audit be conducted in an expeditious and transparent manner in order to ensure integrity of voter data collected as part of the "motor voter" program.

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KB: amj