

MOTION BY MAYOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
AND SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

**REVISED ELECTION CONSOLIDATION POLICY**

The Board of Supervisors adopted its current policy regarding election consolidation on November 24, 1981. The policy states that municipal elections shall not be consolidated with either the Primary or General elections of the even-numbered year, and that municipalities be authorized, upon request, to consolidate city elections with school district elections held in November of each odd-numbered year.

The rationale for this policy was based on the significant impact that these consolidations would have on the County’s capability of conducting countywide elections due to the finite ballot capacity of the County’s voting system. Additionally the policy has helped eliminate the risk of presenting a congested ballot layout that could lead to error when voters interpret and mark their ballots.

The Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) currently being conducted by our Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) will eventually lead to the development of a new voting system for the County. The new system is expected to address both the ballot capacity issues and voting equipment limitations mentioned above, but it is not expected to be fully implemented until at least 2020.

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**MOTION**

SOLIS	_____
RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
KUEHL	_____
KNABE	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____

While the current policy has served the County well in assuring that ballot capacity has not been exceeded, the current environment of ongoing and new California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) lawsuits as well as the desire of numerous jurisdictions to increase voter turnout has led to the need to re-evaluate this policy. This is especially true over the next several years until final adoption and implementation of the County's new voting system takes place.

Over the last several years, multiple lawsuits have been filed against local jurisdictions in Los Angeles Superior Court alleging that these jurisdictions are in violation of the CVRA due to their use of at-large voting systems. In an effort to avoid protracted litigation, many of these jurisdictions and their respective plaintiffs have negotiated settlement agreements which require, in part, that the jurisdictions consider changing their election dates.

On March 24, 2015, while considering a request for consolidation from the City of Santa Clarita, the Board directed the RR/CC to report back with a revised policy regarding election consolidation to address these ongoing issues. In response to this request and an increasing number of election date change and consolidation inquiries and/or requests from jurisdictions throughout the County, the RR/CC initiated a geopolitical and technological analysis of potential consolidation scenarios for statewide General Election cycles.

In its report dated May 26, 2015, the RR/CC's analysis takes into account historical numbers of participating jurisdictions, statewide offices and ballot measures, local offices and ballot measures, geographically overlapping jurisdictions, registered

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voters, candidates, and the number of official pages for each version of the ballot. The data collected has made it possible to delineate the County by geography and/or community for purposes of projecting ballot capacity and recommending approval or denial of election date changes and consolidation requests from municipalities, districts, agencies, authorities, and other jurisdiction types.

Based on this analysis, the Board should revise its current policy regarding election consolidation and direct the RR/CC to provide an enhanced evaluation for this Board to consider when it receives requests for election date change to and/or consolidation with statewide elections. Under the new policy, these requests should assess, on a case-by-case basis, criteria which may include, but is not limited to a jurisdiction's unique circumstances (e.g. CVRA judgments/settlements, consolidation of or with adjacent districts/ jurisdictions, projection of increased voter participation, etc.) as well as current and future potential impacts and risks to the ballot and voting system capacity in affected areas. Additionally, all approvals must be contingent upon each consolidated election or its election materials continuing to be compatible with the County's ballot style, voting method, or voting system/equipment as identified in the Elections Code.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors revise the County's current election consolidation policy, as reflected in Exhibit A, and adopt Board Policy No. 3.170: Consolidation of Elections.

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# *Los Angeles County* **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY MANUAL**

**Exhibit A**

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
<b>3.170</b>	<b>Consolidation of Elections</b>	<b>09/01/15</b>

## **PURPOSE**

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Establishes a policy regarding election consolidation to direct the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to provide an enhanced evaluation for the Board of Supervisors to consider when it receives requests for consolidation with statewide elections, which may include requests for election date changes.

## **REFERENCE**

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November 12, 1981 – Board Order 105

May 26, 2015 – RR/CC Report: Proposed Revision to Board's Current Policy Regarding Election Consolidation with Statewide Primary or General Election Cycles

September 1, 2015 – Board Order #

## **POLICY**

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If the Board of Supervisors receives a request from a jurisdiction to consolidate its election with the Statewide Primary or General Election Cycles or to change its election date to coincide with the Statewide Primary or General Election Cycles, then the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk will take the following actions:

1. Conduct a data-driven assessment of requests for consolidation with statewide elections on a case-by-case basis. The criteria for the analysis shall include information which will allow the Board of Supervisors to approve or deny the request consistent with the Elections Code. The information may include, but is not limited to, a jurisdiction's unique circumstances (e.g. CVRA/California Voting Rights Act judgments/settlements, consolidation of or with adjacent districts/jurisdictions, projection of increased voter participation, etc.) as well as current and future potential impacts and risks to the ballot and voting system capacity in affected areas;
2. Based on this assessment, make a recommendation that may include approval of such requests when the ballot style, voting equipment, or computer capacity can handle the additional elections or materials, and on the condition that the consolidated election is able to be conducted in a uniform manner consistent with State law and relevant County election procedures and practices.

After considering the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's recommendation and supporting documents, the Board of Supervisors shall approve the request for election consolidation or for an election date change to facilitate consolidation, consistent with the California Elections Code, unless it finds that the ballot style, voting equipment, or computer capacity is such that additional elections or materials cannot be handled.

#### **RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT**

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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

#### **DATE ISSUED/SUNSET DATE**

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**Issue Date: September 1, 2015**

**Sunset Date: September 1, 2020**