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PRESS RELEASE



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OP-ED

NEEDED -- A 21ST CENTURY VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR CALIFORNIA

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The world looks to California for 21st century innovation, especially for the application of technology that makes life less costly and more efficient.

Californians are well into the 21st century, working in the cloud, using smart phones and tablet computers, and getting their entertainment on-demand by satellite. But when it comes to voter registration, California seems to be stuck in the 18th century. State law won't allow eligible citizens in our state to register online until at least 2015 -- and maybe much later.

Fortunately, Californians may not need to wait much longer. A bill that would allow for online voter registration as soon as 2012 is making its way through the state Senate. [SB397](#) would allow counties throughout the state to implement online voter registration systems for eligible citizens who already have a valid California driver's license or state identification card. In order to be available to eligible Californians before the next major election cycle, however, SB397 would need to be passed immediately. The bill's fate rests in the hands of the state Senate.

(MORE)

Online voter registration will not only increase the number of Californians who are registered to vote but, if done well, might also increase voter turnout in future elections. At this time, there are approximately 6.4 million eligible Californians who are not registered to vote. Allowing online registration will vastly simplify the registration process for those individuals. Permitting online registration in California will also generate significant cost savings -- a boon to state and local governments struggling with dwindling budgets.

States like Arizona and Washington have successfully adopted proposals similar to SB397. Both states have realized significant cost savings: Washington estimated a savings of \$176,000 in its first year after implementing online voter registration, and Maricopa County, Ariz., reported saving more than \$1 million since implementing online registration five years ago. There is no doubt that California counties will experience similar savings once online registration is put in place for voters.

Finally, online registration will enhance the security of the existing registration process. Only eligible citizens with a driver's license or state identification card would be able to register online. These eligible citizens would provide their information securely online, and then county election officials would verify that information using an independent state-run database matched against the DMV records. Once a DMV record is located for the registrant, the same signature that the eligible citizen provided to the DMV would be used by the election official as the registration signature for the voter registration record.

California needs online registration in time for the 2012 elections. We cannot wait any longer to elevate our 18th century registration system to one that can serve the needs of voters in the 21st century. We urge legislators to put California on the track of innovation and election modernization. Pass SB397.

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