



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE ALEX PADILLA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Secretary of State Padilla Announces Legislation to Modernize California Elections

SACRAMENTO – Today Secretary of State Alex Padilla announced landmark legislation aimed at modernizing California elections to provide greater flexibility and convenience for voters.

SB 450, jointly authored by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica) and Senator Bob Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys), will allow California counties to implement a new elections model that includes mailing every voter a ballot, expanding early voting, and enabling voters to cast a ballot at any vote center within their county.

“California ranked 43rd in voter turnout nationally for the 2014 General Election. This problem cannot be ignored,” Secretary Padilla said. “Civic participation is the foundation of our democracy.”

“SB 450 would provide citizens more option for when, where and how they vote. Providing more options will help more citizens vote, despite our often busy lives,” Padilla said.

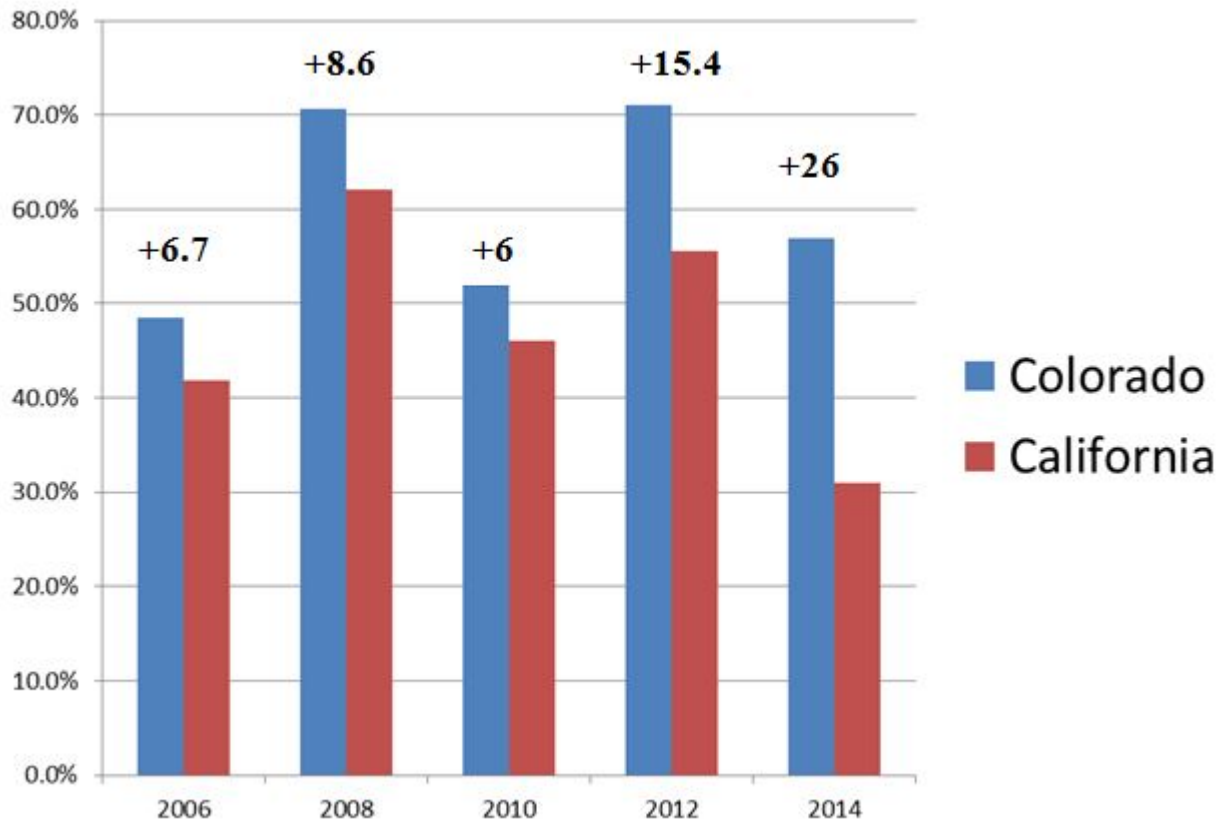
Under the new election model that would be created by SB 450, voters would have the freedom to cast a ballot at any vote center in their county instead of being tied to a single polling location. Voters could mail in their ballot or drop it off at a vote center or a secure 24 hour ballot drop off box. SB 450 would require vote centers to be open a minimum of eight hours per day for 10 days before Election Day.

“We must fight to improve voter turnout in California,” Senator Ben Allen said. “SB 450 creates a commonsense approach to making elections more voter friendly. Early voting, vote centers, and the expansion of secure ballot drop off boxes will provide greater flexibility for busy voters. Similar reforms in other states, most notably Colorado, are significantly increasing voter turnout while simultaneously reducing the cost of elections.”

“In elections in California, government fundamentally thinks only about itself,” Senator Bob Hertzberg said Wednesday. “This measure flips the situation on its head so that the convenience of voting is the top priority in our elections. As counties adopt this measure, government will have opportunity to think differently, to think about the voter.”

Since implementing the vote center model, Colorado has been a national leader in voter turnout. For the November 2014 general election, voter turnout of eligible citizens in Colorado was 56.9%, compared to only 30.9% in California. From 2006 – 2010 voter turnout in Colorado was an average of 7 percentage points higher than in California. Since implementation of the vote center model began, voter turnout in Colorado has been an average of 20.7 percentage points higher than in California.

Voter Turnout by % of Citizen Voting Age Population



*California vs. Colorado Voter Turnout**

Year	California	Colorado	Difference
2006	41.8%	48.5%	CO +6.7
2008	62.1%	70.7%	CO +8.6
2010	46.1%	52.1%	CO +6.0
2012	55.6%	71.0%	CO +15.4
2014	30.90%	56.90%	CO +26

Last month, Secretary Padilla and key staff traveled to observe municipal elections in Denver, Colorado to get a firsthand look at their successful vote center model. Padilla reported his findings at a recent a joint hearing of the State Senate and Assembly Elections Committees.

"Removing barriers to voting will empower more California citizens to participate in our democracy," Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez said. "Voting is a fundamental right, and government should make it easier for Californians to have their voices heard by casting a ballot."

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**Data for 2006-2012 is via The [US Election Assistance Commission's Election Administration and Voting Surveys](#). Data for 2014 is via the [California Secretary of State and Colorado Secretary of State](#).*