Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1461 (Gonzalez, Alejo, McCarty) – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

We, the undersigned members of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, respectfully request your approval of AB 1461, the California New Motor Voter Act, which would remove voter registration as a barrier to voting by modernizing the voter registration partnership between the Secretary of State and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Specifically, AB 1461 would automatically register Californians to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license or state identification card, once they attest to the eligibility to vote.

In 1993, Congress enacted the National Voting Rights Act, known as NVRA, or Motor Voter to improve voter registration. The NVRA requires the DMV to provide an opportunity to register to vote when a person gets a license from the DMV or obtains services from other designated public assistance agencies. California has also made other reforms to improve voter participation such as offering online voter registration, and establishing a new statewide centralized voter registration database known as VoteCal, which will be launched in July 2016.

Despite these recent reforms, California still faces significant challenges in voter participation and addressing low voter registration rates. During the November 2014 election, voter turnout hit a record low of 42.2%, which is 38th out of 50 states. According to a recent study from the University of California Davis Center for Regional Change, Latino turnout in particular was the lowest in nearly a decade at only 15 percent, despite making up 39 percent of the state's population. Additionally, Latino and Asian Pacific Islander voter registration rates are well below the overall average with only 62.8% of eligible Latinos registered to vote and 50.7% of eligible Asian Pacific Islanders being registered.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Given the recent decline in voter turnout in California, passing the New Motor Voter Act is more important than ever and will build upon previous efforts to improve voter participation. It would also make voter registration more efficient, cost effective, and convenient for California citizens.

We respectfully urge your consideration of AB 1461.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

Mike Honda
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

cc: Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez, Assemblymember Luis Alejo, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty

Additional Signers:

Doris Matsui

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress