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Secretary of State Padilla and Senator Lara Announce Legislation Moving Up California's Presidential Primary

Prime Time Primary (Senate Bill 568) will ensure California voters' voice is heard in 2020

SACRAMENTO, CA – California Secretary of State Alex Padilla and State Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) are calling for California voters to have an earlier say in the Presidential Primary process.

California typically has a June primary. The late timing dilutes California's impact and influence in the Presidential Primary nomination process.

California voters have a unique stake in shaping the national discourse and the selection of presidential nominees. 19.4 million Californians are registered to vote, far exceeding every other state in the nation.

"A state as populous and diverse as California should not be an afterthought. Moving up the California primary in 2020 makes sense and will give California voters a more significant role. By holding our primary earlier, we will ensure that issues important to Californians are prioritized by presidential candidates from all political parties," said Secretary Padilla.

"California is the largest, most diverse state in the nation with one of the largest economies in the world," said Senator Ricardo Lara. "Yet Californians' voices are silenced when it comes to choosing presidential nominees. California is leading the nation on clean air, criminal justice reform, and expanding healthcare for all, and moving up our presidential primary will ensure our state's voters are heard in the national debate."

"I am pleased to support SB 568 by Senator Lara," said Assembly Speaker pro Tempore, Kevin Mullin. "SB 568 will help make California relevant again in the selection process of our next President. In 2016, the two candidates had nearly sewn up their party's nomination by the time our state's primary election was held in June. As the world's 6th largest economy with the nation's largest population, it's absurd that California had no real say in who the presidential candidates would be."

In 2008, California moved up its Presidential Primary to February resulting in the highest voter turnout since 1980. The goal of Senate Bill 568 is to move California's presidential primary

election to third after Iowa and New Hampshire. Specifically, SB 568 calls for the California presidential primary to be held on the third Tuesday in March and authorizes the Governor to move it even earlier if other states move up their primary elections. SB 568 will be heard in the Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments on Tuesday, April 18, at 1:30 P.M./PT

SB 568 would also move up primary elections in statewide office and legislative races, eliminating potential voter confusion from multiple election dates. An earlier presidential primary in 2020 will help engage new voters from the top of the ticket down to state legislative races.

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