

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1294 without my signature.

This bill would allow cities and counties, subject to voter approval, to conduct a local election using a ranked voting system. This represents a drastic change to the way we vote. Although there are some proponents for ranked voting, which allows for so-called “instant runoff” elections, I am concerned that we don’t yet know enough about how voters will react to such a dramatic change in the way they vote. For instance, charter cities and counties already have the right to hold ranked voting elections, yet only one city has done so thus far, and that was on a trial basis only.

Further, the machines necessary to implement ranked voting are not widely available nor have any been certified by the Secretary of State. As the Secretary of State recently decertified the vast majority of electronic voting machines used for traditional elections, it is premature to even contemplate moving to ranked voting tomorrow until we have resolved any issues with the machines needed for how we vote today.

Sincerely,