



Judicial Council of California

520 Capitol Mall, Suite 600 · Sacramento, California 95814-4717

Telephone 916-323-3121 · Fax 916-323-4347

PATRICIA GUERRERO

*Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council*

MICHELLE CURRAN

Administrative Director

August 18, 2026

Hon. Sabrina Cervantes
Member of Senate, 31st District
1021 O Street, Suite 7330
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Senate Bill 1164 (Cervantes), as amended August 13, 2026—Neutral if amended

Dear Senator Cervantes:

The Judicial Council has adopted a “neutral if amended” position on your Senate Bill 1164, to revise the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) of 2001. The Council acknowledges and appreciates the communication from your office and the meaningful efforts taken to alleviate our concerns thus far on such an impactful piece of legislation. The Council would remain neutral on SB 1164 if the following two components were removed from the bill.

Designating Sacramento County Superior Court as an Automatic Venue for any CVRA Matter.

The Council objects to designating Sacramento County as a de facto venue for actions brought pursuant to SB 1164. This is because the location of the violation alleged may be in a distant part of the state with no nexus to Sacramento and because it insinuates that plaintiffs cannot access justice under the law in a court in any county in our state. The Council is concerned with the creation of a specialty court exclusively for voting rights cases and would remain neutral if SB 1164 was narrowed to simply state that the actions may be brought in a superior court of competent jurisdiction.

Requiring Priority Calendaring over Every Other Civil Matter.

The Council recognizes that certain causes of action brought under SB 1164 are time sensitive. However, courts’ dockets are replete with a steadily growing list of civil actions that also require legislatively mandated priority calendaring but are provided with no additional resources and only have finite hours in the day in which to schedule matters. Some of these priority civil actions include emergency injunctions, gun violence restraining orders, juvenile cases, civil cases in which a party is at risk of dying, as well as wage theft cases, unlawful detainer and foreclosure

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cases, and other important cases on the courts' dockets. The Council understands that voter dilution and voter participation are crucially important but the priority language in SB 1164 exacerbates the problem that our already-overwhelmed courts face, being tasked with managing complicated calendars containing myriad priority cases. The Council would remain neutral if SB 1164 was narrowed to simply state that CVRA actions move expeditiously.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the Judicial Council's concerns and requested amendments. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Heather Resetarits at 916-323-3121 or at heather.resetarits@jud.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Cory T. Jasperson

Director

Judicial Council Governmental Affairs

CTJ/HR/ad

cc: Paco Torres, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Sabrina Cervantes
Matthew Fleming, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
Michelle Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council