



CITY COUNCILMEMBER  
**RIGEL ROBINSON**  
 DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR  
 July 16, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson, Mayor Jesse Arreguin, and  
 Councilmember Cheryl Davila

Subject: Making Berkeley City Hall a Voting Center

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to seek approval from the County Registrar of Voters and Secretary of State to make City Hall a voting center in time for the March 2020 statewide Primary under the California Voter's Choice Act, in order to offer more voter services to Berkeley residents, including same day voter registration.

BACKGROUND

Passed in 2016, the California Voter's Choice Act gives counties the ability to conduct elections under a new model with greater flexibility and convenience for voters. This new model centers on automatically mailing every voter a ballot, extending early in-person voting, and giving every voter the opportunity to vote at any vote center in their county. Instead of the old restrictions of neighborhood polling places, counties would have voting centers that offer all voting services at the same location. Voters would be able to register to vote on the spot, vote early in person, drop off their ballots, pick up replacement ballots, or use language assistance at this center.

While only certain counties were authorized to implement this model for 2018, beginning in January 1, 2020 all counties (except for the County of Los Angeles under certain conditions) will be authorized to implement this new election system. With its large population of university students, the City of Berkeley presents an exceptional opportunity for this new voter-centric model to let people pick what works best for them.

The City of Berkeley City Clerk Department has in the past provided early voting services at City Hall. Berkeley can modernize its voting process by making Berkeley City Hall its first voting center. As a voting center, Berkeley residents would be able to vote at City Hall regardless of where they live in the city. Another key benefit to the voting center would be in allowing residents to register to vote or change their registration on the day of the election from Berkeley. In order to do so currently, residents must go to the County Registrar of Voter's Office in Oakland, a significant barrier to many voters, especially students.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Potential staff time in running the City Hall voting center.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact.

CONTACT PERSON

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David Lin, Intern

Attachments:

1: The California Voter's Choice Act (<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/sb450-chaptered-legislation.pdf>)