The Honorable Alex Padilla  
State Capitol, Room 4038  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1365- Support

The League of United Latin American Citizens support **SB 1365: California Voters Rights Act.**

SB 1138 will strengthen the California Voting Rights Act by making it illegal for election districts to be drawn in a manner that inhibits or dilutes the ability of a minority from influencing an election.

The California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA), addresses the harm of vote dilution caused by racial polarization in at-large voting systems throughout California.

Some election systems prevent certain communities from being fairly represented in local governing bodies, such as one’s city council, board of supervisors, school board, utility district, and other elected boards. This constitutes unlawful vote dilution. Unlawful vote dilution is particularly a risk where racially polarized voting (RPV) exists. RPV can be found where voting patterns are divided along racial lines such that a protected community does not have a sufficient opportunity to elect a candidate of choice. The CVRA provides opportunities for local governments to resolve this continuing problem as it persists in at-large election systems that often harm historically disenfranchised African American, Latino, and Native American communities.

The CVRA has been successful at challenging racial polarization in at-large elections. Since 2003, more than 118 school districts and community college districts in California have either sought waivers from the California Department of Education, or have converted voluntarily from at-large to district-based election.

SB 1365 will expand upon the success of the CVRA by addressing the problem of RPV and vote dilution in district-based elections. The League of United Latin American Citizens supports SB 1365. If you have any questions, please contact my California Regional Office Staff, Ulises A. Gonzalez, Senior Community Development Manager at UGonzalez@LULAC.org or (916) 551-1130.

Respectfully,

Brent Wilkes
LULAC National Executive Director

League of United Latin American Citizens

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

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