



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**

News Release

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Bill To Secure Voting Rights For Emergency Responders Passes Key Committee Unanimously

(Sacramento) – A bill to allow firefighters, paramedics, and other emergency personnel cast provisional ballots anywhere in the state during a declared emergency advanced in the Assembly yesterday. AB 1440, authored by Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda), passed the Assembly Elections Committee on a bi-partisan unanimous vote of 7 – 0.

"State emergencies usually do not occur with any advance warning. Emergency responders can be sent off to a far corner of the state at a moment's notice, with little if any opportunity to make arrangements to forward their ballots during election season. Their obligations to ensure the safety of California's citizens during an emergency should not deprive them of their right to vote. AB 1440 will address this situation," Assemblymember Swanson stated.

AB 1440 will allow emergency responders sent out of their home county on a state of emergency to cast a provisional ballot, regardless of where they are working in the state. Vote selections will be counted only for those races that the individual would be eligible to vote on according to their registered address.

"When disaster strikes, firefighters and other first responders have to drop everything. This bill ensures emergency personnel don't also have to drop their right to vote when they answer the call to help their fellow Californians," said California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, the state's chief elections officer.

Assemblymember Swanson concluded, "A person's right to vote should not be compromised by a call to duty. This bill will ensure that our emergency responders, who put their lives on the line to protect Californians, will be able to exercise their constitutional right, regardless of where they are called to service."

The bill will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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