



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**
News Release

For Immediate Release:

July 8, 2009

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Assemblymember Swanson's Bill To Allow Emergency Responders To Cast Provisional Ballots Clears Senate Committee With Unanimous, Bi-Partisan Support

(Sacramento) – A bill to allow firefighters, paramedics, and other emergency responders to cast provisional ballots anywhere in California during a declared state of emergency cleared the Senate Committee on Elections and Reapportionment yesterday. AB 1440, authored by Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda), passed the Senate Elections Committee on a bi-partisan unanimous vote of 5-0.

"A person's right to vote should not be compromised by the call to duty. This bill will ensure that our emergency responders will be able to exercise their constitutional right, regardless of where they are called to service," Assemblymember Swanson stated.

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

In their letter of support for AB 1440, California Professional Firefighters representatives Christy Bouma and Brian Hatch stated, "Because fires don't observe the niceties of banker's hours, firefighters' work schedules have evolved to reflect continuous service. Ultimately, their unusual working hours make it possible, indeed likely, that many firefighters will be on duty during the entire period the polls are open on Election Day, especially considering that November – the month in which elections are held – is still part of the fire season in many areas of the state."

Assemblymember Swanson concluded, "Our state's emergency responders put their lives on the line for the benefit of our citizens. AB 1440 will allow them their fundamental right to participate in the election of state and local officials, even while they are away fighting fires, rescuing people from the aftermath of earthquakes, or attending to other natural disasters."

The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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