

May 4, 2021



**\*\*\* ASSEMBLY FLOOR ALERT \*\*\***

**AB 428 (Mayes) – Local government: board of supervisors**

As amended March 18, 2021

**SUPPORT**

Assembly Third Reading File

---

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Urban Counties of California (UCC) support Assembly Bill 428, by Assembly Member Mayes, a measure that seeks to ensure that California county boards of supervisors that are subject to a term limit are eligible for a minimum of two terms and clarifies that boards of supervisors are responsible for prescribing compensation for all county officers, including the board themselves. Our organizations strongly support this change in statute to ensure an appropriate commitment to the office of county supervisor, a level of expertise and accountability to the office, and a continuity of government that Californians can be confident of.

San Bernardino County voters recently approved Measure K, a charter amendment that imposes a single, four-year term limit on future members of the Board of Supervisors and dramatically limits the amount of compensation for supervisors of \$5,000 per month. Counties across the state are concerned about the potential for similar measures coming to a future local ballot.

Term limits serve an important purpose in communities that choose to adopt them, ensuring new voices have an opportunity to be heard, though they also come at a cost of experience. However, limiting supervisors to a single term seems to assume that the decisions of county government are either simple, or already familiar to newly elected representatives, or made at such a high level as to not need detailed understanding. For better or for worse, this assumption misunderstands the nature of modern county government in California.

California counties are responsible not only for local services such as public health, probation, road maintenance and repair, emergency response, land use, jails, workforce development, and child protective services, but also for state and federal entitlement programs like IHSS, Medi-Cal, and EPSDT, not to mention their role in many communities as the largest employer in the area. Counties are important partners with the state and federal governments, as well as a variety of local actors—governmental, non-profit, and business.

Ensuring a minimum of two four-year terms allows for elected county supervisors to gain experience in managing a complex set of service obligations and financial responsibilities in order to most effectively implement these county, state, and federal policies. A single term simply does not allow for development of expertise, nor does it allow for the kind of accountability a reelection provides. We are deeply concerned about what a single-term limit will mean for county policy-making. We know from other experiments with short term limits that the policy often shifts more power from elected representatives to staff and outside advocates, who have the time to build expertise in the issues at hand. While these positions have important roles to play in governance decisions, we believe that authority should be kept with those elected by the people.

County supervisors across the state take their elected responsibilities seriously, but also acknowledge the time required to develop expertise and understanding of the myriad duties of the role. As organizations who represent those elected officials, we seek to ensure the very best in this important local elected office. To that end, we support AB 428 and are prepared to offer our assistance in securing its passage. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance.