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September 1, 2022

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, 9th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

**REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE: SB 1131 (Newman) Extending "Safe At Home"
to California's Public Workforce**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The City of Vista is writing to express its/our support of SB 1131, which will help protect elections workers, along with other public employees, including code enforcement officers, and contracted public employees if they are at risk of being threatened, harassed, or otherwise in danger due to their occupation.

Additionally, SB 1131 would authorize Code Enforcement Officers to apply for the Safe at Home (SAH) program administered by the California Secretary of State's office. SAH provides a substitute mailing address for enrollees to receive first class, certified, and registered mail. The address is accepted by California state, county, and city government agencies in lieu of a residential or other mailing address whereby a home address can be tracked down. SAH keeps residential addresses confidential and out of the hands of someone who might obtain them with the intent to harm an officer or their families.

Code enforcement officers risk their health and safety and at times, even their lives protecting our communities. Their work is critical to improving the health, safety, and quality of life for millions of Californians. While work exposure is a known risk, no officer should be forced to worry about the risks of their employment following them to a personal residence where children and loved ones are often present.

In recent years, the dedicated and diligent public servants charged with administering California's elections, disseminating public health orders, and enforcing government codes have been subjected to threats, intimidation, and sometimes physical violence at polling places, in their offices, and even at their homes. Because of this growing wave of violence and harassment we are starting to see a departure of public service from these workers that are the backbone of our state. As an example, since November 2020, more than 15 percent of California's election officials have left their jobs, due in no small part to the marked increase in aggressive and abusive percent of California's election officials have left their jobs, due in no small part to the marked increase in aggressive and abusive behavior targeted at them.¹



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SB 1131 will provide protection and peace of mind to election workers in California by extending to them the option of enrolling in one of two existing address protection programs. Eligibility for the Secretary of State's "Safe at Home" Program would be extended to individuals who are employed by or contract with the Secretary of State or a local election office who performs election-related work and interacts with the public or are observed by the public doing election-related work, thus, allowing election workers the opportunity to have mail redirected to a substitute mailing address. Alternatively, election workers may choose to be enrolled in the address confidentiality program which enables state and local agencies to respond to requests for public records without disclosing the address of election workers.

To offset the growing wave of harassment and violence directed at these critical public servants, providing them the option of keeping their home addresses confidential has, unfortunately, become necessary and prudent.

For all of these reasons, the City of Vista supports SB 1131.

Sincerely,

Judy Ritter
Mayor

cc: Leg.Unit@gov.ca.gov; Christine.Aurre@gov.ca.gov
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¹ California Voter Foundation, "Documenting and Addressing Harassment of Election Officials", June 8, 2021, <https://www.calvoter.org/harassment>, citing Los Angeles Times' April 21, 2021 article by John Myers, "Essential Politics: California's election official exodus", <https://www.latimes.com/politics/newsletter/2021-04-12/california-elections-officials-exodus-essential-politics>