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RUNNER DROPS LAWSUIT AGAINST JERRY BROWN

Attorney General amends title and summary for ballot initiative

SACRAMENTO – Sen. George Runner (R- Antelope Valley) today announced the most recent title and summary written for his voter ID ballot initiative by Attorney General Jerry Brown is a step in the right direction.

Specifically, Runner submitted the Vote SAFE now initiative, which would require voters to produce photo identification at the polls, earlier this year to the attorney general Brown's office. While the California Constitution requires the attorney general to write fair and balanced title and summaries what Brown wrote for the Runner initiative was politically tilted and factually incorrect. As a result, Runner sued Brown this past fall.

"Brown's latest attempt at the title and summary for the Vote SAFE initiative is materially more accurate than the prior version," Runner said. "It's not perfect, but we believe we can move forward with the language in all but one respect."

Runner plans to re-submit the initiative this week to the attorney general in an effort to bring clarity to one of the initiative's provisions, which would allow the county registrar of voters 15 additional days to count absentee ballots of military personnel stationed outside California.

"It's important that California voters have a clear understanding of this important provision," Runner said. "I am sure there isn't a voter who doesn't want to make sure every soldier's vote is counted."

Runner said the new filing means the initiative will be ready for signature gathering in February, which means fewer days to qualify for the November 2010 ballot.

"There is a risk that we will be a little too late for the gubernatorial election," Runner said. "But qualifying for the 2012 election may not be a bad alternative when you consider how crowded the ballot might be in November 2010 with initiatives – as it is there are more than 40 initiatives on the streets now for signatures."

Runner added: "While voter reform is long overdue and I am eager to see a voter ID bill passed sooner rather than later, I know from experience that if we are to accomplish our goals, we must make certain we take the time to get it done right."