



California State Treasurer Fiona Ma, CPA

# News Release

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Contact: [Mark DeSio](#)  
(916) 651-6088

## Governor Signs Bill Establishing Statewide Translation Standards for Ballots

**Sacramento** – State Treasurer Fiona Ma today thanked Governor Gavin Newsom for signing legislation that will change how a candidate’s name is translated and listed on local ballot. Until now, California law requires the translation of ballots and ballot materials into languages other than English but there has been no statewide translation standards for candidates born with a character-based given birth name.

“Thank you Governor Gavin Newsom for signing AB 57 authored by Assemblyman Evan Low,” said Treasurer Ma. “It was frustrating that when I ran for State Treasurer, I was not able to use my given birth name, a name that appears on our extensive “Ma” multi-generational family tree, as well as the name that appeared 14 times on local ballots since my tenure in public service began almost 20 years ago.”

Assembly Bill 57 (AB 57) by Assemblymember Low, D-Silicon Valley, will now require that if a jurisdiction provides a translation of the candidates’ alphabet-based names into a character-based language, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean; phonetic transliterations of the alphabet-based names of candidates be provided, unless a candidate can prove that their birth name is different or that they have been known by a different name in the relevant community for at least two years. By establishing standards for names translated into character-based languages, **AB 57** will ensure that the ballot reflects the true identity of candidates.

The bill will also require that if a candidate’s name is to appear on the ballot in more than one jurisdiction in an election, then all of those jurisdictions must use the same phonetic transliteration or character-based translation of the name.

"In California we are proud to celebrate our diversity, in stark contrast to our national political climate. In doing so, it is important to decrease barriers to the ballot for minority communities," said Assemblymember Low, D-Silicon Valley. "This legislation will lift up our Asian and Pacific Islander community and increase access to the most fundamental piece of our democracy." Currently there are 9 counties that are legally required by the Section 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act to have Chinese ballots: Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara.

*Fiona Ma is California's 34th State Treasurer. She was elected on November 6, 2018 with more votes (7,825,587) than any other candidate for treasurer in the state's history. She is the first woman of color and the first woman Certified Public Accountant (CPA) elected to the position. The State Treasurer's Office was created in the California Constitution in 1849. It provides financing for schools, roads, housing, recycling and waste management, hospitals, public facilities, and other crucial infrastructure projects that better the lives of residents. California is the world's fifth-largest economy and Treasurer Ma is the state's primary banker. Her office processes more than \$2 trillion in payments within a typical year. She provides transparency and oversight for the government's investment portfolio and accounts, as well as for the state's surplus funds. Treasurer Ma oversees an investment portfolio of more than \$96.9 billion, approximately \$20 billion of which are local government funds. She serves as agent for sale of all State bonds, and is trustee on over \$95.3 billion of outstanding debt.*

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