



April 9, 2024

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks  
State Capitol  
1021 O Street, Suite 8140  
Sacramento, CA 95818

RE: AB 3211 – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The California Voter Foundation (CVF) is pleased to support your bill, AB 3211, the Provenance Authenticity and Watermarking Standards (PAWS) Act.

If enacted, the PAWS Act will require generative AI companies to embed digital provenance data within the digital media they create, so we know which images, video, and audio were digitally created, when they were created, and what tools were used in their creation. It will also require that AI-generated fakes be labeled as AI fakes on social media platforms. This verification tool and disclosure requirement will benefit the public in many sectors, especially in the arena of democratic elections.

CVF works to ensure that California voters are able to make informed, confident choices when deciding how to vote. The use of generative AI to create deceptive images, video, audio and messaging threatens to undermine voters' ability to vote with confidence.

2024 marks the first-ever generative AI election year for California and democracies all over the world. So-called "deepfakes" have already spread disinformation in elections across the globe including in Bangladesh, Slovakia, Pakistan, Argentina and here in the U.S. The potential for bad actors, be they foreign or domestic, to mislead, confuse and manipulate voters through deceptive audio, video or images leads to the very real possibility that voters will be left simply trusting nothing and forego voting altogether.

California lawmakers have a long history and strong track record of ensuring voters can make informed choices through enhanced campaign finance disclosure laws, truth in committee naming laws, and requiring counties to list supporters for and against ballot measures directly on California ballots. AB 3211 continues California lawmakers' longstanding efforts to empower California voters to make informed, confident choices by enabling the public to verify the authenticity of media information.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander, President & Founder  
California Voter Foundation