

Gaines wants to change special elections rules

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, has introduced a bill to help cut the cost of special elections in small California counties.

Senate Bill 109 would give counties with populations of less than 400,000 the option to only have vote-by-mail special election.

“My bill will help cut the costs counties incur to conduct special elections by eliminating the mandate to open polling places and hire staff for these elections,” Gaines said in a press release.

The average cost of an election in El Dorado County is roughly \$300,000.

“Should Senate Bill 109 become law, I estimate a savings of about \$50,000 – and that is on the conservative side,” El Dorado County Registrar of Voters Bill Schultz said in the same release. “It comes down to not just saving money, but also avoiding the issues our smaller foothill communities face during elections held in the winter months. Delivery of equipment, transportation issues – all those are negated with the ability to vote by mail.”

Gaines was part of special election this month when he successfully ran for the Senate. Twelve counties had to pay for the election. This spring four counties will pay for a special election to replace Gaines in the Assembly.