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# **DOJ and Senate to decide when conservatees can vote**

**By America Hernandez**

The Department of Justice has opened a formal investigation into the state judiciary's policies regarding alleged voting rights violations of people with developmental disabilities, according to a letter issued Monday to the Judicial Council.

The announcement comes nearly a year after a class-based complaint against the Los Angeles County Superior Court was filed with the department, calling for an inquiry into the practice of having mentally disabled citizens who are placed in conservatorships prove they can fill out affidavit of voter registration forms on their own before being allowed to vote.

Thomas F. Coleman, legal director of the Disability and Abuse Project, wrote in the July 2014 complaint that the practice amounted to an illegal literacy test. AB 1131, sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union and passed last year, removed judges' authority to disqualify conservatees from voting after failing that test.

The state Senate will vote Monday on a similar bill, SB 589, which would allow conservatees to retain the right to vote as long as they can express their desire to vote.