



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE ALEX PADILLA

AP16:125

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2016

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Secretary Padilla Announces Historic Partnership with Largest Four-Year Public University System in the Nation to Register Students to Vote

***Partnership Completes Support from Every Public University and College in the
State***

SACRAMENTO – California Secretary of State Alex Padilla today announced a historic partnership between the Secretary of State's office, The [California State University](#) (CSU) system, and the [California State Student Association](#) (CSSA) via a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This MOU completes support from all three of the state's higher education systems, which underscores the importance of supporting student voter registration and education efforts across California. This partnership with the CSU encourages all 23 campuses and eight off-campus centers that constitute the California State University system to participate in *the California Students Vote Project*.

"Today's announcement secures system wide support for student voter registration efforts on every publicly funded college or university in our state," said Secretary of State Alex Padilla. "To my knowledge, this is the first time the publicly funded higher education systems and a Secretary of State, have signed a commitment to support voter registration efforts at this scale. I look forward to working with each of the systems, advocacy organizations, and student organizations to register, engage and empower the more than 2.7 million students in our higher education system."

The MOU encourages campuses to implement best practices as outlined by *The California Student Vote Project** which include: asking students during optimal time periods or via their student portals to register to vote, sending all-campus emails and notifications about the importance of voting before voter registration deadlines and elections, and implementing said practices for on-the-ground education and voter registration efforts on campus housing and other high-traffic areas on campus.

To view the signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the California State University and the California State Student Association, visit:

<http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdfs/castudentvote/mou-csu.pdf>

“Today’s Voter Registration and Engagement Memorandum of Understanding promote a democracy that is more inclusive of people’s voices, increasing the civic engagement and literacy of CSU students,” said CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White.

"We are excited to be taking this positive step with the CSU Chancellor's Office and Secretary of State's office to promote student engagement in the democratic process. This MOU demonstrates our collective commitment to increasing civic engagement and elevating the voices of CSU students across the 23 campuses. We understand that only by working together will we have a chance at addressing the systemic problem of low voter engagement among college students, so we thank Chancellor White and Secretary Padilla for partnering with CSSA on these important voter registration initiatives," said David Lopez, CSSA President and student at CSU East Bay.

This CSU MOU is unique in that the non-partisan, membership-based advocacy organization governed by a student Board of Directors, the California State Student Association (CSSA), not only took a central role in advocating for this MOU, but were also incorporated in the MOU.

As outlined in the MOU, the CSSA will provide volunteer support, additional communications, field outreach, voter education, and an online voter registration platform and link(s) that can be used by any CSU stakeholder to promote voter registration efforts.

As outlined in the MOU, The Secretary of State’s office created a webpage which hosts resources for campuses, faculty and students for frequently asked questions related to voting, sample posters, sample social media posts for voter registration efforts, key deadlines and dates, and a guide to facilitate voter registration drives.

“I commend Secretary Padilla’s drive to bring the democratic process to Californians, pro-actively expanding access for citizens to participate in governance,” said Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom. “Young voters stand to inherit today’s decisions and we have agency to ensure those voices have every opportunity to be represented.”

"The Cal State University system educates hundreds of thousands of young people from diverse communities, the people who will be this state's civic leadership for decades into the future. This agreement will help bring many of those young people into California's democracy for the very first time. We applaud the CSU's administration and its students for their commitment to voter registration and civic engagement." Jonathan Stein, voting rights program manager, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus.

“California is paving the way for students, drivers, and new Californians to register to vote,” said Kathay Feng, Executive Director of California Common Cause. “Today's partnership between Secretary of State Padilla and President White clears a path for eligible CSU students to become voters.”

“Voting is habit-forming, and students who vote when they are young are more likely to be life-long voters. Thank you Chancellor Tim White, Secretary of State Alex Padilla, and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom for recognizing that the university should be encouraging students to be engaged participants in our democracy,” said Emily Rusch Executive Director CALPIRG.

**The California Students Vote Project* is a public-private effort led by the California Secretary of State’s office in partnership with the California Lieutenant Governor’s office, and three nonprofit

organizations; CalPIRG, California Common Cause, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus. These groups recognize that a healthy democracy must include the voices of California’s next generation. *The California Students Vote Project* is advocating for the implementation of student voter registration best practices at all of California’s public colleges and universities.

In the 2014 General Election, only 52% of eligible youth were registered to vote, which was more than 20 points below any other age group, and only 8% of eligible youth aged 18-24 voted. A report released by the Secretary of State’s office in 2014 stated that only 8,454 of the 2.8 million students at California’s public colleges and universities registered to vote through an online opportunity provided by their campus, which is a mere 0.3 percent of the student body.

The California Students Vote Project proposes has the potential to dramatically increase voter engagement in upcoming elections.

To visit the *California Students Vote Project* page, click here:

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/castudentsvote>

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