



# NEWS RELEASE

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## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE ALEX PADILLA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Governor Brown Signs California New Motor Voter Act**

*Secretary of State Alex Padilla: "The New Motor Voter Act will make our democracy stronger"*

**SACRAMENTO** – Governor Jerry Brown has signed landmark legislation that will register to vote every eligible California citizen who goes to a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office to get a driver's license or renew one, potentially adding millions to California's voter rolls.

The California New Motor Voter Act, AB 1461, was sponsored by Secretary of State Alex Padilla and jointly authored by Assemblymembers Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), Luis Alejo (D-Salinas), and Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento).

"In a free society, the right to vote is fundamental. I ran for Secretary of State to expand access to the polls. Government should not impede a citizen's right to vote. The New Motor Voter Act will make our democracy stronger by removing a key barrier to voting for millions of California citizens. I applaud Governor Brown for his leadership and bold action to increase voter participation in our state," said Padilla.

"Citizens should not be required to opt-in to their fundamental right to vote," Padilla added. "We do not have to opt-in to other rights, such as free speech or due process. The right to vote should be no different," Padilla added.

"The New Motor Voter Act will make voter registration a seamless process and result in the largest sustained voter registration drive in our nation's history. As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal Voting Rights Act, Governor Brown has affirmed California's commitment to strengthening voting rights. It is not lost on me that many states are restricting voting rights with the clear goal of preventing citizens from voting. I am proud that California is again demonstrating leadership and providing a shining example of how our nation can and should expand access to the polls," Padilla added.

Registration has been a barrier to voting for millions of Californians. Approximately 6.6 million California citizens are eligible but not registered to vote. Under this new law, California citizens who are identified as eligible voters when visiting the DMV to apply for, renew, or change their address on a driver's license would be registered to vote by the Secretary of State's office. Voters would retain their right to opt out or cancel their voter registration at any time, as well as change their party affiliation. The proposed law would continue to protect those covered by existing confidentiality policies, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

California becomes the second state in the nation to adopt an automatic voter registration system. Oregon adopted a similar measure earlier this year.

[The results from a statewide survey, released by the Public Policy Institute of California \(PPIC\)](#) in June, found that 69% of California adults favor registering all eligible citizens to vote when they go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Millions of Americans have been prevented from participating in elections because they are not registered to vote.

[A recent study using Google search data](#) estimated that 3 million to 4 million Americans wanted to participate in the 2012 general election, but unfortunately could not vote because it was too late to register.

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