



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Goes Back to School to Educate Fresno State Students About Registering and Voting

FRESNO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today went back to school to talk with college students about the importance of voting and being involved in the democratic process. Working to reverse the trend of low-participation among young people, McPherson joined California State University, Fresno students to highlight Voter Education and Participation Month.

"There is no greater right than the right to vote," said Secretary McPherson. "To reverse the trend of low-participation among 18-24 year-old voters, we need to increase our voter education efforts among California students to ensure that they know not just *why* they should be involved in the democratic process but *how* they can make a difference.

"California's students want to participate, but elections and registration deadlines often come and go while they are starting classes or moving into new residences," said Secretary McPherson. "My goal is to educate these students about voter registration deadlines, absentee ballot process and early voting options to increase participation among this important sector of our state."

Secretary McPherson declared April as Voter Education and Participation Month and will be encouraging eligible Californians to register to vote and educating them about the new laws. Citizens can register to vote until the 15-day close of registration, which is May 22nd. Attached is "What's New for the 2006 Federal Elections," information about new laws that will have an impact on this year's elections. For more information, please visit the Secretary of State's website at www.ss.ca.gov.

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WHAT'S NEW FOR THE 2006 ELECTIONS
New federal laws will have an impact on this year's elections.
Learn how they will impact you and Your Vote.

New Identification Requirements:

- To register or re-register to vote after January 1, 2006, you **must** provide a California driver's license or state ID number, if you have one, in the fields provided on the voter registration form. If you don't have either of these, you must provide the last four numbers of your social security number in the field provided.
- The elections official must verify your ID number before putting you on the list of registered voters, so be sure to register well in advance of the election.
- Some people who registered by mail for the first time in California and did not fill in their ID number may have to show ID when they vote at a polling place, or include a photocopy of their ID with their absentee ballot. Contact your local elections officials if you have questions. Find your elections official by calling 1-800-345-VOTE or by visiting: http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm

Voting Equipment Must Be Accessible to Voters with Disabilities:

- New federal law requires that beginning in 2006, each polling place must have at least one voting machine available to voters with disabilities.
- Voters with disabilities should be able to vote privately and independently.

Your County May Have New Voting Equipment:

- Many counties have purchased new voting systems to meet federal and state laws. If you are not familiar with how to cast a ballot on this system, ask the precinct worker to show you how the system works.
- All voting systems in California must pass strict tests and meet all federal and state standards before being approved for use.

You Have the Right to Cast a Ballot:

- If you are not on the list at your polling place, you have the right to cast a "provisional" ballot. The poll worker will give you information about how to find out if your vote was counted, and if it was not, why not.
- A "provisional" ballot is just like a regular ballot, except it goes into an envelope or pending status until the election official can determine your eligibility. The ballot will be counted if the election official can determine your eligibility.
- If you are in the wrong polling place, the poll worker may try to help you by giving you directions to the right polling place, where your name should be on the list and you could vote a regular ballot. If you choose not to go there, you can vote a provisional ballot.