



**ALEX PADILLA** | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street | Sacramento, CA 95814 | **Tel** 916.653.7244 | **Fax** 916.653.4620 | [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

December 30, 2016

Mr. Daniel Alvarez  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol, Room 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3196  
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

Dear Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Wilson:

Attached is my office's report on student voter registration efforts carried out over the past calendar year, which is required by California Elections Code section 2146(d). If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact me at (916) 653-7244.

Sincerely,

ALEX PADILLA  
California Secretary of State

Attachment

cc: Ms. Diane Boyer-Vine  
Legislative Counsel

**December 30, 2016 Secretary of State  
Annual Report to the Legislature on Student Voter Registration**

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California Elections Code section 2146(d) requires the Secretary of State to submit an annual report to the Legislature on student voter registration efforts the office has undertaken pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 (Chapter 819, Statutes of 2003). It is the Legislature's intent that every eligible high school and college student receive a meaningful opportunity to apply to register to vote and that every school does all in its power to ensure students are provided the opportunity to apply to register to vote.

**BACKGROUND**

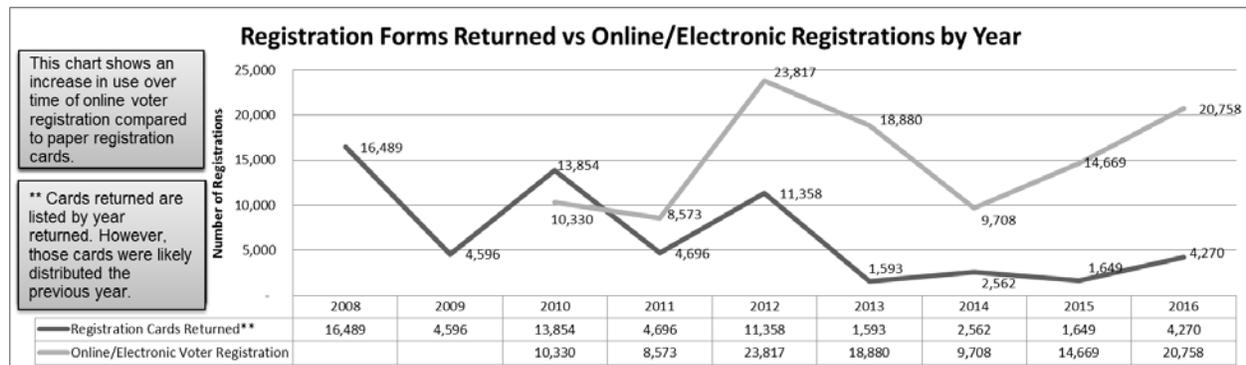
Section 2146 requires every California Community College (CCC) and California State University (CSU) campus that operates an automated class registration system to, in coordination with the Secretary of State, permit students during the class registration process to apply to register to vote online. Under the law, the University of California (UC) is additionally encouraged to provide the same opportunity to register to vote online during the class registration process. In 2012, the Secretary of State's office launched California's online voter registration application at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov), which allows schools to provide an opportunity to submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically in compliance with this section.

Section 2146 also requires the Secretary of State to provide every high school, CCC, CSU, and UC campus with paper voter registration applications. Pursuant to Section 2146 under the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003, the Secretary of State was required to send to schools printed voter registration applications based solely on the number of voting age students enrolled. This approach was neither efficient nor effective. In 2008 alone, the Secretary of State's office printed and mailed over 2.5 million student voter registration applications to high school and college campuses which only yielded 16,489, or 0.66%, completed registration applications.

With the passage of Senate Bill 854 (Chapter 481, Statutes of 2007), the requirement to provide printed registration applications for each student was reduced for campuses that had adopted a system of prefilling registration forms with student information. In 2014, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 1446 (Chapter 593, Statutes of 2014), and now registration applications are only sent in numbers specifically requested by the campuses, encouraging students to register via the online system.

The online voter registration system has yielded far more effective results at a far more reasonable cost than the previous paper-only implementation. Efforts in 2012 resulted in 23,817 online registrations by students. Combined with the 11,358 paper registrations from the same period, the Student Voter Registration efforts produced over double the number of registrations at a fraction of the cost when compared to 2008.

Chart 1 – Student Voter Registration Efforts by Year



In addition, with the implementation of California’s online voter registration application, more and more people are choosing to register to vote online. With this in mind, the Secretary of State actively encourages high schools to provide a link on their school website, and within parent/student newsletters or other materials, to the Secretary of State’s online voter registration application at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov). The linked website is virtually identical to the site created for the CCC, CSU, and UC campuses under Section 2146, minus the ability to track registrations by campus, providing high school students and staff with the ability to complete voter registration applications online.

### 2016 RESULTS

Each year, the Secretary of State contacts each high school, CCC campus, CSU campus, and UC campus in California to assess their voter registration needs. In 2016, of the 260 responses from high schools, 168 requested paper voter registration applications. Of the 58 responses at the college level, 9 community college campuses requested paper voter registration applications. A total of 42,934 registration forms were distributed, and 4,270 were returned (these returned forms were likely distributed in the previous year). In the same period, 20,758 students registered to vote using the electronic system through class registration.

The cost of mailing the student voter registration applications to high schools and college campuses in 2016 was \$1,293.20. The cost for return postage of the voter registration applications was \$1,985.55.

In 2016, we also saw an increase of youth voters registering to vote online (outside of school registration). In the first three months of 2016 alone, 562,238 people registered or updated their voter registration on the Secretary of State’s website, with over 204,785 (34%) of those being registrations from youth, ages 17-25. Over the entire year, the Secretary of State received 1,390,847 online registrations from 17- to 25-year-olds. In addition, over 100,000 youth ages 17-25 registered while applying for or renewing their driver license at DMV field offices.

The Secretary of State’s office also receives many requests for voter registration applications outside of the Student Voter Registration Project. Throughout 2016, 20 requests were submitted from high schools, colleges and universities and over 40,000 voter registration applications were provided, with 1,695 being returned and processed as new or updated registrations.

Overall, in 2016, California saw a steady increase in online registrations while paper applications continue to trickle in. Future efforts for this project should be focused on increasing accessibility to online voter registration and making the process automated during class registration, further reducing our reliance on paper registration forms and improving tracking abilities. The Secretary of State has partnered with secondary education campuses, and will continue to work colleges and high schools to better serve their student population while improving processes with evolving technology.

Attachment A reflects voter registration data for 2016 required by the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 and compares that data from similar reports provided for 2015 and 2014.

**2016 STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION**

**Figure 1:** The number of students who have completed a voter registration application online under the program CCC, CSU, and UC campuses adopted to comply with Elections Code (EC) section 2146 in 2016 compared to the number of registration applications completed in 2015 and 2014.

	<b>Completed Online Voter Registration Applications Under EC 2146 – 2016</b>	<b>Completed Online Voter Registration Applications Under EC 2146 – 2015</b>	<b>Completed Online Voter Registration Applications Under EC 2146 – 2014</b>
California Community College	9,238	6,375	4,010
California State University	6,348	4,974	3,041
University of California	2,735	1,655	1,227
No school identified <sup>1</sup>	2,437	1,150	1,430
<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>20,758</b>	<b>14,154</b>	<b>9,708</b>

**Figure 2:** The number of student voter registration paper applications mailed to high schools, CCC, CSU, and UC campuses, and the number of paper student voter registration applications that were returned to the Secretary of State in 2016 compared to the number of paper registration applications completed in 2015 and 2014.

	<b>Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2016</b>	<b>Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2015</b>	<b>Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2014</b>
High School Campuses <sup>2</sup>	36,034	31,832	16,148
CCC Campuses	6,900	23,425	10,350
CSU Campuses	0	0	250
UC Campuses	0	100	0
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed	42,934	55,357	26,748
<b>Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Returned to the Secretary of State<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>4,270</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>2,562</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students are not required to enter school identifying information as part of the voter registration application process.

<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 162 high schools reported that they offered the Secretary of State's online voter registration application to students and staff by placing the link [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov) on the school's website.

<sup>3</sup> The student voter registration application distribution process is completed during the fall of each year. Therefore, the number of applications returned each year is most likely a result of the previous year's mailing.