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December 29, 2017

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 29, 2017
Secretary of State
Annual Report to the Legislature on Student Voter Registration

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, 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. Prior to 2015, under the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003, the Secretary of State was required to send 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.

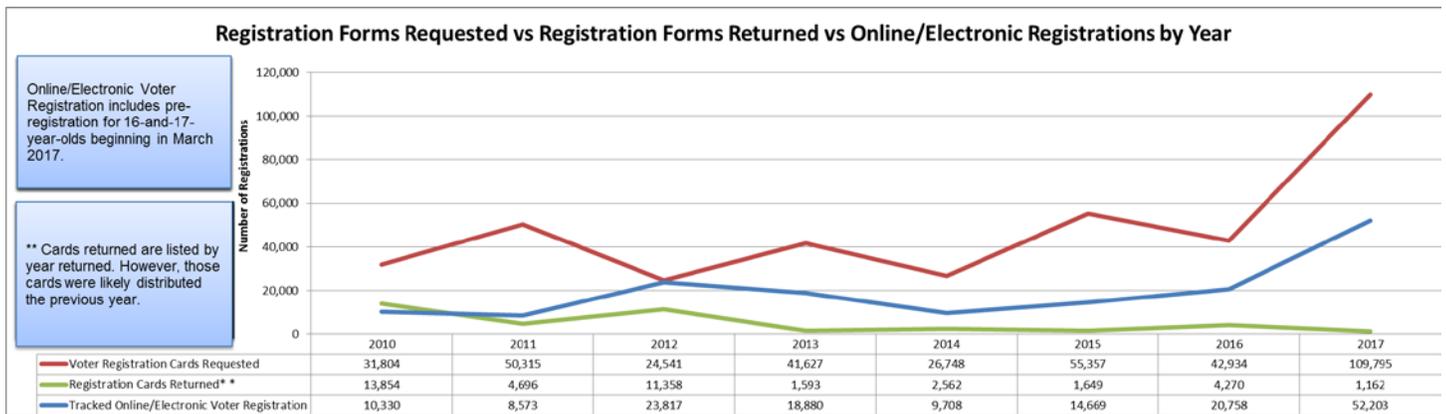
With the passage of Senate Bill 854 (Chapter 481, Statutes of 2007), the requirement to provide printed registration applications for each student was reduced for campuses that had adopted a system of prefilling registration forms with student information. In 2014, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill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

Overall, the online voter registration system has yielded results at a far more reasonable cost than the previous paper-only implementation. Efforts in 2012 resulted in 23,817 online registrations by students. In the same year, 24,541 registration applications were mailed to schools; far less than were originally mailed in 2008 prior to Assembly Bill 1446.

Upon certification of the Secretary of State's statewide voter registration database (VoteCal) in September 2016, Assembly Bill 113 (Chapter 619, Statutes of 2014) became effective, allowing

16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote¹. Pre-registrants are automatically converted to registered voters on their 18th birthday. Beginning in March of 2017 pre-registration was made available through California’s online voter registration application, further expanding access to pre-registration.

Chart 1 – Student Voter Registration Efforts by Year



Since the implementation of California’s online voter registration application, more students are choosing to pre-register/register to vote online². Even though requests for voter registration cards peaked in 2017, completed voter registrations yielded a low 1.05%. With the increasing trend of students going online, the Secretary of State is actively encouraging high schools to provide a link to the Secretary of State’s online voter registration application at RegisterToVote.ca.gov on their school website and within parent/student newsletters or other materials. The linked website is virtually identical to the site created for the CCC, CSU, and UC campuses under Section 2146, with the exception of the ability to track registrations by high school campus.

2017 RESULTS

Each year the Secretary of State contacts each high school, CCC, CSU, UC, and private university in California to assess their voter registration needs. In 2017, of the 494 responses from high schools, 355 requested a total of 86,775 paper voter registration applications. Of the 90 responses at the college level, 37 requested a total of 23,020 paper voter registration applications. Combined, a total of 109,795 applications were mailed to high schools and colleges in California.

The cost of mailing the student voter registration applications to high schools and college campuses in 2017 was \$2,480.52 and the cost for return postage for completed voter registration applications was \$596.19, for a total of \$3,076.71.

¹ This statewide voter registration database is the official system of record for voter registration in California. It is equipped with the ability to track voter registration in conjunction with all California counties’ election management systems.

² Prior to the Secretary of State launching fully online voter registration in September of 2012, the Secretary of State’s website provided printable registration applications which required applicants to print, sign, and submit via mail. An electronic record of the application was automatically transmitted to the county elections official.

In 2017, the number of trackable voter registrations for students amounted to 53,365³. These registrations include: 1,162 completed paper applications submitted by students from registration cards provided to schools, 1,116 registrations through the voter registration link provided on college class registration databases, and 51,087 pre-registrations through the Secretary of State website.

In addition to the registration opportunities provided through schools and online, in 2017 the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) saw 88,403 18-to-24-year-olds register to vote and 6,415 16-to-17-year-olds pre-register to vote while applying for or renewing their driver license or state identification card.

In addition to the Student Voter Registration project, the Secretary of State also hosts the California Students Vote project, aimed at encouraging students to not only register, but participate in California's democracy by voting, serving as poll workers, holding registration drives, and even holding mock elections at schools to demonstrate the power of voting. The Secretary of State has partnered with high schools and colleges by offering voter registration cards if schools need them in addition to promoting civic education through the California Students Vote project and events like High School Voter Education Weeks.

Overall in 2017, California saw a successful first full year of pre-registration for students. While there were significant increases in the number of registration applications requested by high schools, possibly due to the availability of pre-registration and outreach, the number of applications returned is relatively low in comparison to the number of completed online pre-registrations. Future efforts for this project should be focused on online pre-registration through high schools using the voter registration link rather than paper forms. In addition, increasing accessibility to online voter registration across college campuses by making the process automated during class registration would further reduce our reliance on paper registration forms and improve our tracking abilities. The Secretary of State will continue to work with colleges and high schools to better serve their student population while improving registration processes with evolving technology.

Attachment A reflects voter registration data for 2017 required by the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003, pre-registration, and compares that data from similar reports provided for 2016 and 2015.

³ The total number reflects registrations of students that are tracked by VoteCal based on registration applications mailed to schools by the Secretary of State, completed online registrations through school systems, and general online pre-registration through the Secretary of State's website.

2017 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 that adopted to comply with Elections Code (EC) section 2146 and pre-registration in 2017 compared to the number of registration applications completed in 2016 and 2015.

	Completed Online Voter Registration Applications 2017	Completed Online Voter Registration Applications 2016	Completed Online Voter Registration Applications 2015
California Community College	779	9,238	6,375
California State University	18	6,348	4,974
University of California	259	2,735	1,655
No school identified ⁴	60	2,437	1,150
Pre-registration ⁵	51,087	-	-
Total Number of Students	52,203	20,758	14,154

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 2017.

	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2017	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2016	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested – 2015
High School Campuses ⁶	86,775	36,034	31,832
CCC Campuses	12,070	6,900	23,425
CSU Campuses	400	0	0
UC Campuses	8,300	0	100
Private College Campuses	2,250	-	-
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed	109,795	42,934	55,357

⁴ Students are not required to enter school identifying information as part of the voter registration application process.

⁵ Pre-registration was not available online until March of 2017.

⁶ Additionally, 339 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 on the school's website.

Figure 3: The number of student voter registration paper applications returned by students, to the Secretary of State in 2017 compared to the number of paper registration applications completed in 2016 and 2015.

	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Returned – 2017	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Returned– 2016	Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Returned – 2015
Paper Applications Returned to the Secretary of State	1,162	4,270	1,392