



DEBRA BOWEN | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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December 31, 2009

Mr. Gregory Schmidt
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

Dear Mr. Schmidt 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra Bowen".

Debra Bowen
Secretary of State

Attachment

cc: Ms. Diane Boyer-Vine, President
Legislative Counsel

January 1, 2010
Secretary of State
Annual Report to the Legislature on Student Voter Registration

California Elections Code 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 Article 3.5 of the Code, the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003. The Act states that it is the intent of the Legislature that every high school and college student receive a voter registration form with their diploma and that every school do all in its power to ensure students are provided the opportunity to register to vote.

SB 854, Chapter 481, Statutes of 2007, amended Elections Code section 2146 to require each 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 receive a voter registration form that is preprinted with personal information relevant to voter registration. This requirement is to be implemented by January 1, 2010. Any CCC or CSU campus that does not have an automated class registration system in place by January 1, 2008, is required to establish a system to permit students to receive a preprinted voter registration form during the class registration process within two years of implementing an automated class registration system. The University of California (UC) is encouraged to comply with Elections Code section 2146.

Prior to the enactment of SB 854, the Secretary of State's office and the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) entered into a voluntary partnership in 2003 to permit students to request a voter registration form during the automated class registration process. Students could have a personalized voter registration form that had certain information preprinted on it mailed to their home address, where the student had to manually fill in additional required information (e.g., California driver license number, California identification card number, or the last four digits of their social security number, answer questions about their citizenship and age, etc.), sign it and mail it back to the Secretary of State.

Since 2003, 30 other CCC's have partnered with the CCSF to use its automated class registration process. Over the life of the program, the Secretary of State's office has provided 240,704 voter registration forms to CCC students who requested a form through the CCSF automated class registration system. In 2008, the estimated cost to print over 51,700 personalized voter registration forms, send them to prospective voters, and pay for the voters to return the forms was \$85,000, or \$1.64 per form. For 2009, the estimated cost to print and distribute 38,200 forms was \$47,200 or \$1.23 per form.

The Secretary of State met with representatives of CCC, CSU, and UC campuses in late 2008 and throughout 2009 to discuss cost-effective ways the three systems could comply with SB 854. The three systems did not have any proposals to comply with SB 854 nor did they want to implement the CCSF program. The Secretary of State, which likely would have incurred annual costs of over \$330,000 if the systems chose to implement the CCSF program, proposed one way for the three systems to comply with the law. The proposal created an enhanced version of the online national voter registration form that students could fill out online, print at home or on campus, and mail directly to their local elections official. The appropriate county elections official's address is automatically added to the form based on the voting address provided by the

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applicant, so the form can be mailed directly to the voter's county of residence. Every CCC, CSU and UC campus, no matter what type of class registration system the school has in place, can link to this dedicated website. The system has been in place since October 2009 and as of December 15, 2009, 780 students have visited the site and filled out the voter registration form.

The Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 also requires the Secretary of State to provide every high school, CCC, CSU and UC campus with voter registration forms. As stated in this office's January 1, 2009, annual report to the Legislature, this program has not been cost effective. In 2008, the Secretary of State's office printed and mailed over 2.5 million student voter registration forms to high school and college campuses and only 16,489, or 0.66%, were completed by student wishing to register to vote and returned to the Secretary of State. The average cost of a returned student voter registration form was \$12.68.

Given the high cost of the program, the budget cutbacks the Secretary of State's office was required to absorb, and feedback from many schools that they did not need additional voter registration forms, the Secretary of State's office proactively contacted all 2,034 public and private high schools, and all 145 CCC, CSU and UC campuses to ask how many, if any, voter registration forms the campus would like to receive.

Of the 299 responses from high schools, only 215 requested voter registration forms and of the 37 responses from colleges, only eleven CCC, five CSU, and two UC campuses requested voter registration forms. The cost to mail the student voter registration forms to high schools, CSU and CCC campuses in 2009 was \$1,216.82. The cost for the return postage of the voter registration forms was \$2,160.12.

All public and private high schools contacted were encouraged to provide a link on their school website to the Secretary of State's "Register to Vote" website. This site is virtually identical to the site created for the CCC, CSU, and UC campuses under SB 854. It provides students and staff with the ability to fill out a voter registration form online, print it out from their computer, sign it, and mail it directly to their local registrar of voters at any time of day or night.

Attachment A reflects voter registration data for 2009 pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003.

Figure 1 shows the number of student voter registration forms mailed to high schools, CCC, CSU and UC campuses and the number of student voter registration forms provided to campuses that were returned to the Secretary of State in 2009.

Figure 2 shows the number of voter registration forms provided to students through the CCSF automated pilot program that was discontinued in October 2009.

Figure 3 shows the number of students who have accessed a voter registration form under the program the CCC, CSU, and UC campuses adopted to comply with SB 854 beginning in October 2009.

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 Annual Report to the Legislature – Attachment A

Figure 1

	Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Requested in 2009
High School Campuses	29,032
Community College Campuses	10,975
CSU Campuses	10,200
UC Campuses	5,500
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed	55,707
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Returned to the Secretary of State	4,596¹

Figure 2

Total Number of Voter Registration Forms Provided to Students through the now Discontinued CCSF Pilot Program in 2009²	38,207
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Figure 3

Total Number of Students who have Accessed a Voter Registration Form Under the Program the CCC, CSU, and UC Campuses Adopted to Comply with SB 854 beginning in October 2009	780
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¹ The 2009 Student Voter Registration Form distribution process was completed during the Fall of 2009 and all schools requesting new forms received them in December of 2009. Therefore, the number of forms returned in 2009 were from the previous year's mailing. The number of student voter registration forms returned from the 2009 mailing will not be known until 2010.

² Automated voter registration is not statutorily required until January 1, 2010; however a pilot program that provided this option to students at certain community colleges was established in 2003 and was discontinued in October 2009 when the SB 854 program was put into place.