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December 30, 2011

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

DB:elg:pc:op

Attachment

cc: Ms. Diane Boyer-Vine
Legislative Counsel

December 30, 2011
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 Article 3.5 of the Code, the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003. The Act states it is the Legislature's intent 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 with the opportunity to register to vote.

SB 854 (Ridley-Thomas), Chapter 481, Statutes of 2007, amended Elections Code section 2146 to require every California Community College (CCC) and California State University (CSU) 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 by January 1, 2010. Under the law, the University of California (UC) is encouraged to comply with the section.

In response to this legislation, and working with the CCC, CSU, and UC systems, the Secretary of State created an enhanced version of the online national voter registration form that students can fill out online, print at home or on campus, sign and mail directly to their county elections official. The appropriate county elections official's address is automatically added to the form based on the voting address provided by the applicant. Every CCC, CSU, and UC campus, regardless of the type of class registration system the school has in place, is able to link to this dedicated website. The system was launched in October 2009 and in 2010, the first full year of implementation, 10,330 students visited the site and filled out a voter registration form. In 2011, 8,573 students utilized the site to fill out a 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, the previous implementation of this program, where voter registration forms were automatically mailed to each high school and college campus based solely on the number of 17- and 18-year-old students enrolled, was not 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 students 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 cost of the program, the budget reductions 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 in 2009 began proactively contacting all public and private high schools, and all CCC, CSU, and UC campuses to ask how many, if any, voter registration forms the campuses would like to receive.

In 2011, of the 243 responses from high schools, 179 schools requested voter registration forms and of the 30 responses from colleges and universities, 10 CCC campuses, 2 UC campuses, and 1 CSU campus requested voter registration forms. The cost of mailing the student voter registration forms to high schools and college campuses in 2011 was approximately \$1,100.00. The cost for return postage of the voter registration forms was \$2,066.24.

In addition, all 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 elections official.

Attachment A reflects voter registration data for 2011 pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 and compares that data from similar reports provided for 2009 and 2010.

Readers will note the rise in registrations from 2009 to 2010 and the drop in registrations from 2010 to 2011. Historically, voter registration numbers fluctuate based on the number of, and interest in, the elections held in a given year. In 2010, there were two statewide elections and all of the statewide constitutional offices were on the ballot. In 2011, there were no statewide elections. It is anticipated there will be a marked increase in voter registration activity in 2012 given that it is a presidential election year and there will be two statewide elections.

2011 STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION

Figure 1: The number of students who have completed a voter registration form under the program CCC, CSU, and UC campuses adopted to comply with SB 854 in 2011 compared to the number of registration forms completed in 2009 and 2010.

	Completed Voter Registration Forms Under SB 854 Program – 2011	Completed Voter Registration Forms Under SB 854 Program – 2010	Completed Voter Registration Forms Under SB 854 Program – 2009
California Community College	2,972	4,138	
California State University	2,511	3,313	
University of California	1,749	2,879	
No school identified ¹	1,341		
Total Number of Students	8,573	10,330	780²

Figure 2: The number of student voter registration forms mailed to high schools, CCC, CSU, and UC campuses and the number of student voter registration forms that were returned to the Secretary of State in 2011 compared to the number of registration forms completed in 2009 and 2010.

	Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Requested – 2011	Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Requested – 2010	Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Requested – 2009
High School Campuses	28,415	21,304	29,032
Community College Campuses	5,400	10,500	10,975
CSU Campuses	5,500	0	10,200
UC Campuses	11,000	0	5,500
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed	21,900	31,804	55,707
Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Returned to the Secretary of State³	4,696	13,854	4,596

¹ Students are not required to enter school identifying information as part of the voter registration process.

² The program was implemented in October 2009. The Secretary of State's office began tracking registrations by college system in 2010.

³ The student voter registration form distribution process is completed during the fall of each year. Therefore, the number of forms returned each year is most likely a result of the previous year's mailing.