



**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, 2019

Ms. Erika Contreras  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol, Room 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ms. Sue Parker  
Acting Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3196  
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA EMAIL DELIVERY

Dear Ms. Contreras and Ms. Parker:

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

**2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE  
STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION  
BY THE CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE**

California Elections Code section 2146(d) requires the Secretary of State to submit an annual report to the California Legislature on student voter registration efforts undertaken by the Secretary of State pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 (Chapter 819, Statutes of 2003). It is the intent of the Legislature that every eligible high school and college student receive a meaningful opportunity to pre-register/register to vote and that every California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), University of California (UC) and private university campus give students the opportunity and the means to register to vote.

**BACKGROUND**

Between the years 2004 and 2015, under the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003, the Secretary of State was required to send out to schools printed voter registration applications based solely on the number of voting age students enrolled. This approach proved to be ineffective. 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. Of the over 2.5 million student voter registration applications mailed, only 16,489 (0.66 percent) were completed and returned to the Secretary of State.

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

In 2012, the Secretary of State launched California's online voter registration application at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov), which allows schools to provide students with the opportunity to register to vote online. This is in compliance with California Elections Code section 2146, which requires every CCC, CSU, UC and private university campus that operates an automated class registration system to coordinate these efforts with the Secretary of State. Section 2146 also requires the Secretary of State to provide every high school, CCC, CSU, UC and private university campus with paper voter registration applications.

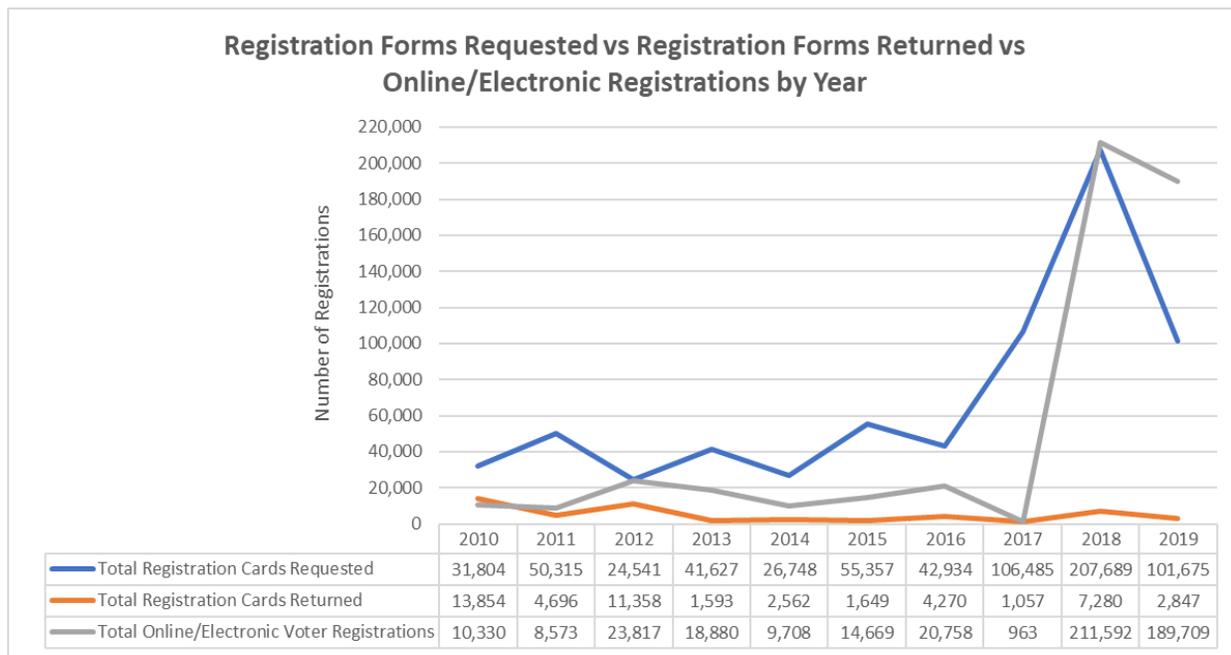
Upon certification of the Secretary of State's statewide voter registration database (VoteCal) in September 2016, Assembly Bill 113 (Chapter 619, Statutes of 2014) became effective, allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote. Pre-registrants are automatically converted to registered voters on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Then, in March 2017, pre-registration was made available through California's online voter registration application, further expanding access to pre-registration.

VoteCal is the statewide voter registration database. It is the official system of record for voter pre-registration/registration in California. It tracks voter registrations in conjunction with all California counties' election management systems. Prior to the Secretary of State's launching the online voter registration, the Secretary of State's website provided printable registration applications that required applicants to print, sign, and submit the voter registration via mail. Then, an electronic record of the application was automatically transmitted to county elections officials.

## 2019 RESULTS

As of December 2019, there were 165,113 pre-registered voters in the state. This is a significant increase from the previous non-election year of 2017, in which we had 109,795 pre-registered voters and a slight decrease from election year 2018 in which we had 207,689 pre-registered voters. The number of pre-registrations completed and submitted since VoteCal became the system of record in 2016 is 488,839. Of these, 287,283 pre-registered students have "aged-up" and are now registered voters. Overall, efforts by the Secretary of State to expand pre-registration opportunities for 16 and 17-year-olds continue to be successful.

Chart 1 – Student Voter Registration Efforts by Year



Every year, the Secretary of State contacts each high school, CCC, CSU, UC, and private university in California to help assess their voter registration needs and to partner with these institutions for outreach events and voter registration efforts. In 2019, the Secretary of State contacted 2,067 high schools and 268 CCC, CSU, UC and private university campuses. Of the 383 high schools that responded to the Secretary's outreach efforts, 330 of these high schools requested voter pre-registration/registration applications.

In 2019, high schools in California requested and received from the Secretary of State a total of 73,045 voter pre-registration/registration applications, while colleges and universities requested and received 28,630 voter pre-registration/registration applications. The combined number of voter pre-registration/registration applications requested and mailed was 101,675. This represents a 7.3 percent decrease from the 109,795 requested in 2017 and a 48.9 percent decrease from the 207,689 requested in election year 2018.

The number of trackable voter registration applications for students amounted to 187,709. This figure includes student voter registration applications that are trackable by the Secretary of State, which include: voter registration cards provided to schools and online registrations through voter registration links provided to schools and made accessible via college class registration databases. Students may also register to vote online using other tools such as TurboVote. TurboVote is made available by Democracy Works, a non-partisan, non-profit organization.

## **STUDENT PRE-REGISTRATION/REGISTRATION TRENDS**

16 and 17-year-old student pre-registrations continue to increase and we expect a significant spike during election year 2020, much the same as the spike in student pre-registrations we experienced in the 2018 election year. Also, there is a trend of increased online student pre-registration/registration and the Secretary of State is actively encouraging high schools to include a link on their school website to the Secretary of State's online voter registration application at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](https://RegisterToVote.ca.gov) and to include the link in parent/student newsletters and other school materials. The website is virtually identical to the site created for the CCC, CSU, UC and private university campuses under Section 2146. Overall trends are positive in terms of student engagement and online registration.

## **VOTER OUTREACH EFFORTS**

The Secretary of State's voter outreach efforts in high schools and colleges focuses on encouraging students to pre-register or register to vote and to educate students on the importance of actively participating in all local, statewide and federal elections. The Secretary of State partners with high schools, colleges and universities across the state to facilitate voter registration training, offer voter registration applications, provide Voter Information Guides and to respond to any voter registration questions these institutions might have. In addition, the Secretary of State continues to encourage students to become poll workers.

In statewide election years, the Secretary of State conducts a number of outreach efforts in partnership with the California Department of Education's Superintendent of Public Instruction to promote and coordinate a "Student Mock Election" across the state. The Student Mock Election includes ballots, Student Voter Information Guides, and other materials that ensure a successful Student Mock Elections experience for students in participating schools. Additionally, "High School Voter Education Weeks," occur during the last two weeks of April and September of each year. These include voter registration and education efforts.

Another student voter registration project administered by the Secretary of State is the "California Students Vote" project. This is a project that includes a partnership with the California Lieutenant Governor and non-profit organizations. The goal is to increase civic engagement and voter participation among California college students. The Secretary of State also conducts the "College Ballot Bowl," which encourages campuses to engage their student in the democratic process by participating in a friendly competition for the highest number of student body registered to vote.

The Secretary of State anticipates that the number of student pre-registrations/registrations will continue to increase steadily. Students are more engaged in the voting process and actively participating at events within their campuses. The Secretary of State will continue to work with high schools, colleges and universities to improve voter registration services to the student population and to improve registration processes through evolving technology.

### **NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT (NVRA)**

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the "NVRA" and the "Motor Voter Act") to enhance voting opportunities for every American and to make it easier for all Americans to register to vote. In 2018, the Secretary of State designated all CCC, CSU and UC campus offices for students with disabilities as National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) agencies, requiring all 114 CCC, 23 CSU and 10 UC campuses to assist with voter registration efforts. In 2019, the Secretary of State actively conducted regional trainings, provided materials and made available links to campuses to register students online.

Attachment A

**ATTACHMENT A:**

<b>Number of Student Voter Registration Applications Requested</b>					
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
High School Campuses	73,045	159,914	86,775	36,034	31,832
CCC Campuses	24,465	24,650	12,070	6,900	23,425
CSU Campuses	1,705	8,300	400	0	0
UC Campuses	1,500	9,100	8,300	0	100
Private College Campuses	960	5,725	2,250	-	-
<b>Total Number of Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed</b>	<b>101,675</b>	<b>207,689</b>	<b>109,795</b>	<b>42,934</b>	<b>55,357</b>

Table 1: The number of student voter registration paper applications requested and mailed to high schools, CCC, CSU, UC and private college campuses by the California Secretary of State in 2019.

<b>Completed Online Voter Registration Applications</b>					
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
California Community College	876	1,736	779	9,238	6,375
California State University	1,133	5,862	18	6,348	4,974
University of California	199	879	259	2,735	1,655
No school identified	94	167	60	2,437	1,150
Pre-registration	165,113	202,948	51,087	-	-
<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>167,415</b>	<b>211,592</b>	<b>52,203</b>	<b>20,758</b>	<b>14,154</b>

**Table 2:** The number of students who have completed a voter registration application online at California campuses in compliance with California Elections Code section 2146 in 2019. Table 2 shows data by year from 2015 to 2019.