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California Secretary of State

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December 31, 2025

Ms. Erika Contreras
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 307
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ms. Sue Parker
Chief Clerk of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 319
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). The report will also be sent to the Legislature pursuant to Education Code section 66851(b). This report demonstrates the progress, trends, and successes of our student voter registration efforts. Please contact Shannon Vellone, Voter Engagement Services Manager, Elections Division, at svellone@sos.ca.gov or by calling (916) 203-5790 with any questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.
California Secretary of State

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

ON STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION



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Introduction

Pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 (Chapter 819, Statutes of 2003), and California Elections Code section 2146(d), the California Secretary of State (SOS) submits a report to the California Legislature on student voter registration annually. The intent of this legislation is to ensure that every eligible high school and college student receives a meaningful opportunity to apply to pre-register, or register, to vote. This report presents metrics on high school and college voter registration and details of the outreach efforts the SOS has implemented to ensure all students are engaged and have the opportunity to register to vote.

Background

The Student Voter Registration Act of 2003 was passed to address the need for high school and college students to be provided with more opportunities to become civically engaged. This legislation ensured that every eligible high school and college student was provided with a voter registration application along with their diploma, giving them a meaningful opportunity to register.

From 2004 through 2007, the SOS was required to distribute paper voter registration applications to every high school, California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC) campus in accordance with each school's total enrollment. This practice was costly and wasteful, with the majority of the applications unused.

Elections Code section 2146 was amended by Senate Bill 854 (Chapter 481, Statutes 2007) in 2008, reducing the number of registration applications the SOS was required to send by modifying the distribution to students of voting age only. In addition, it also gave the students who attended a CCC or CSU campus that operated on an automated class registration system the opportunity to utilize a pre-filled voter registration application during their class registration process. The pre-filled applications further decreased the number of forms the SOS had to print and provide for students. In that year alone, the SOS printed and mailed more than 2.5 million voter registration applications to high school and college students, yet less than one percent of these application forms were completed and returned.

In 2014, Assembly Bill 1446 (Chapter 593, Statutes of 2014) amended the Student Voter Registration Act. This amendment requires every high school, CCC, and CSU campus to designate a contact person and to provide that person's contact information to the SOS. The contact person helps facilitate the distribution of voter registration applications to students on campus. Additionally, the amended language permits the SOS to provide paper voter registration applications by request only, in lieu of automatically providing large quantities of paper applications based on the number of students enrolled, and encourages students to register to vote online.

Online Voter Registration

In 2009, the SOS launched an online voter registration application for students attending a CCC or CSU which was available to complete, print, sign, and mail to their respective county elections office to process.

The SOS introduced California's Online Voter Registration system (COVR) in 2012. COVR allows applicants to submit a completed and signed voter registration form electronically if their signature is on file with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). After COVR was introduced, the SOS was able to assign unique links to each college campus to track student online registration. These unique links are encouraged to be added as a hyperlink to college websites, which direct students to the COVR application at RegisterToVote.ca.gov, offering access to voter registration.

Pre-Registration

Pre-registration for 16- and 17- year-olds went into effect with the certification of the SOS' statewide voter registration database (VoteCal) in September 2016, after Assembly Bill 113 (Chapter 619, Statutes of 2014) was implemented. Pre-registration through COVR became available in March 2017, providing students with convenient online access to register to vote. Pre-registrants are now automatically converted to registered voters on their 18th birthday.

National Voter Registration Act

In 1993, the National Voter Registration Act, also referred to as the "NVRA" and the "Motor Voter Act," was enacted by Congress. The goal of the NVRA is to make it simpler for all Americans to register to vote, especially those in underserved and disabled communities. In 2018, all CCC, CSU, and UC campus offices for students with disabilities were designated as Voter Registration Agencies (VRAs) under the NVRA by the SOS. As designated VRAs, these offices are required to give students the opportunity to register to vote at the time of application for services, renewal of services, or change of address.

Voter Education and Outreach Efforts

The California Secretary of State's office promotes voter engagement among high school and college students through various outreach initiatives across the state. Through our partnership with the California Department of Education, we encourage eligible high school students to pre-register or register to vote, especially during High School Voter Education Weeks. Our website provides resources for high school administrators, staff, and students to help support civic engagement efforts on campus and beyond. This year, the Voter Education and Outreach Teams collaborated with elected officials, local school districts, and several community-based organizations to amplify awareness about civic engagement.

The California Secretary of State Students Vote Project (SVP) works with California colleges and universities to assist with civic engagement and voter registration efforts as required by the Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act (Education Code sections 66850-66852; Elections Code section 2148.5). The team engaged and participated in several events throughout the year. This year, the Voter Education and Outreach Teams participated in nearly 125 events across the state, evenly distributed throughout the Northern and Southern regions of California. This collective work has contributed to encouraging high school and college students in their development of lifelong participation in the democratic process.

Student Voter Registration

Every year, the SOS mails out an informational letter to each high school, CCC, CSU, and UC throughout the state. Under Elections Code section 2148(a), high school, community college, and California State University campuses were notified of their responsibility to provide their voter registration contact person to the SOS to facilitate the distribution of voter registration applications. Per Elections Code section 2148(b), letters sent to campuses within the UC system were encouraged to comply with this subdivision. Every letter also included a hyperlink to a Microsoft form that schools could use to provide their voter registration coordinator's information and order paper registration applications. Additionally, respondents could navigate to the Microsoft form by visiting the web address to the SOS Student Voter Registration page or by contacting the Voter Education and Outreach Team through their email listed in the letter. Schools were asked to submit a response that included:

- Contact information for the campus voter registration coordinator
- The school website address where a hyperlink to the online voter registration application is posted
- The option to order paper voter registration applications, if desired

The SOS collected the responses from each school and processed the paper voter registration application orders. Within the letters, the SOS also provided schools with QR codes that directed students to the COVR portal. These codes could be added to their own school websites to provide an additional convenient method for students to register to vote.

College Specific Outreach Efforts

California Students Vote Project

Established in 2016, the [California Secretary of State \(SOS\) Students Vote Project \(SVP\)](#) is a statewide nonpartisan program that amplifies college student voices and promotes civic engagement efforts to build a more inclusive democracy. Through the creation of the SVP, California was the first state in the nation to form partnerships across the state's higher education systems to empower students to participate in the democratic process. The program objectives include increasing college student voter education, voter registration, and outreach. The SVP achieves these objectives by hosting civic engagement events, creating educational resources, and partnering with campuses and outreach organizations.

In 2025, the SVP developed new programming and resources aimed at increasing civic engagement among students at California colleges and universities. Key highlights include a video tutorial on How to Navigate the College Student Voter Registration Link, an updated Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric, and the [2025 Statewide Special Election College Student Voter Resource Guide](#). All current and previous publications can be viewed by visiting the [California Students Vote Project Resources Page](#).

Throughout 2025, Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., California Secretary of State, continued her strong commitment to engaging California's colleges and universities by participating in

a wide range of campus events across the four higher education systems. Secretary Weber's outreach included keynote remarks, panel discussions, leadership lectures, and student-centered dialogues at campuses such as Chico State, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, UC Berkeley, UC San Francisco, Cal State LA, Cal State Dominguez Hills, and San Diego State University. Throughout these visits, Secretary Weber highlighted themes central to her public service-civic engagement, representation, governance, education, and the power of student leadership. In turn, this further strengthened partnerships with campus administrators, faculty, and student organizations. Her presence at cultural celebrations, leadership conferences, academic panels, and Ballot Bowl-related events reinforced the administration's commitment to empowering young voters and elevating civic participation statewide.

SVP continues to empower students to take an active role in democracy. The program's ongoing commitment to accessibility, transparency, and collaboration positions SVP for continued growth leading up to the 2026 election cycle. In 2026, the program will again host the biennial California University and College Ballot Bowl, a statewide initiative that promotes student voter participation through friendly competition.

High School Specific Outreach Efforts

High School Voter Education Weeks

Pursuant to California Education Code section 49040(a), the last two full weeks of April and September have been designated as "High School Voter Education Weeks." This year, Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., California Secretary of State, and Tony Thurmond, California Superintendent of Public Instruction, issued two joint letters to school administrators and staff encouraging staff civic engagement. This semi-annual letter is used to encourage eligible high school students to pre-register and register to vote and become student poll workers. During these weeks, schools are asked to host various voter registration and outreach events to intrigue students' interest in civic engagement. A statewide memorandum was also sent to county elections officials to encourage collaboration with local school districts to support this joint initiative.

In 2025, Secretary Weber and her Voter Education and Outreach Team visited several high schools across the state, engaging with nearly 4,800 high school students in voter education workshops and community events, and pre-registering or registering over 1,000 students to vote.

Student Mock Election

The SOS partners with the California Department of Education's Superintendent of Public Instruction to promote the California Student Mock Election in even-numbered years ahead of each statewide general election. The next Student Mock Election will take place on October 6, 2026. By participating in this event, high school and middle school students are given the opportunity to review election materials and cast a "mock" ballot for statewide candidates and ballot measures. The SOS will continue to conduct this outreach initiative, as it provides a one-of-a-kind educational experience to encourage civic engagement for students in California. To promote this event, the SOS

will contact the state Legislature, county elections officials, and civic organizations to encourage them to promote school participation in the Student Mock Election,

2025 Results

Trackable Student Registrations

Trackable student voter registrations include: 1) paper voter registration cards the SOS has provided to schools for which unique affidavit numbers are directly associated with student registrations and 2) online voter registration links containing unique links that have been assigned to colleges.

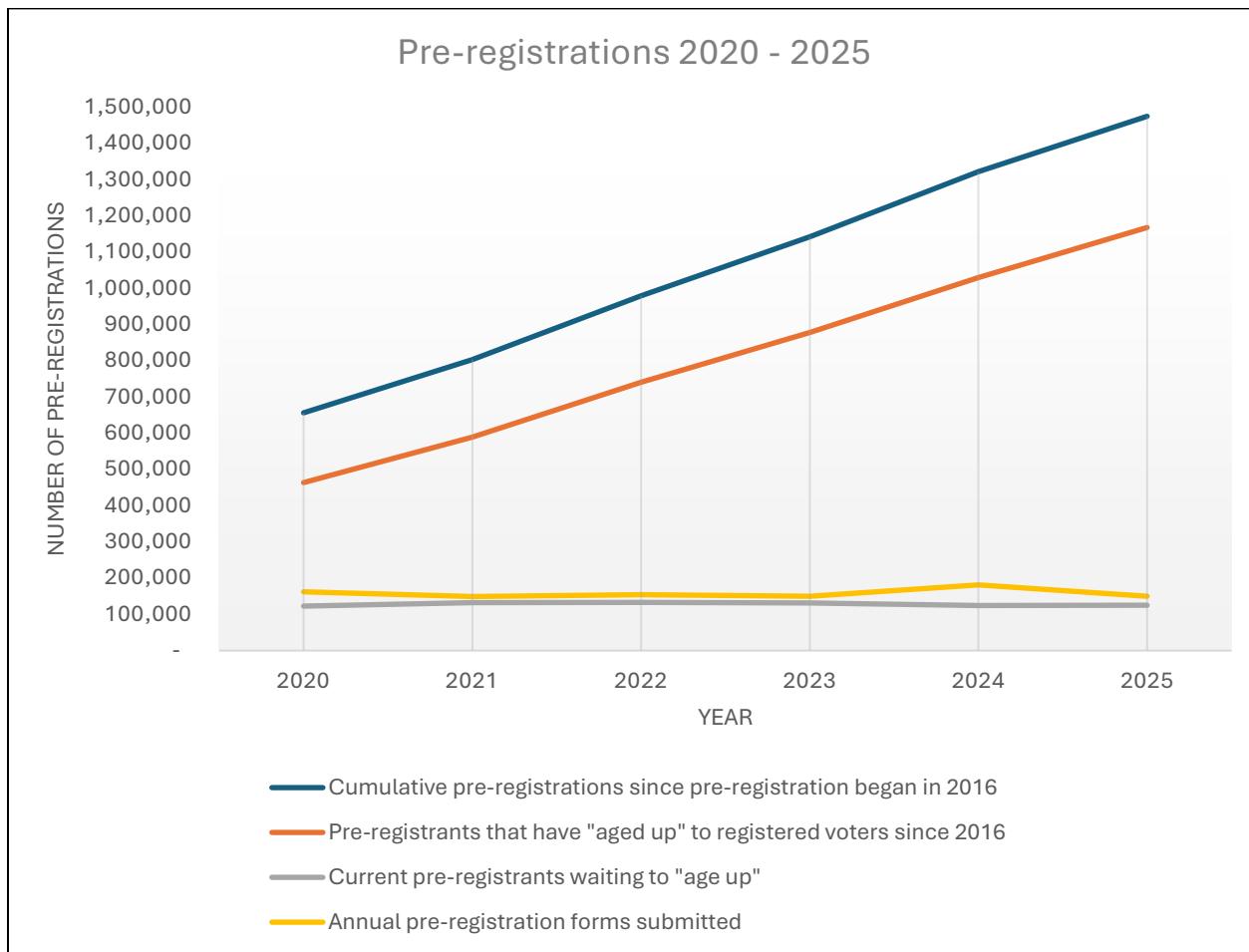
This report includes trackable student voter registrations only; it does not include registrations or pre-registrations submitted through external registration systems or tools outside of COVR, such as Turbo Vote, Democracy Works, or Rock the Vote.

Registrations through external systems and tools are not trackable because the organizations do not direct the applicants to specific URLs that have been assigned to colleges. Similarly, registrations submitted by NVRA agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and other social services agencies are not included in this report, nor are registrations submitted using the same-day voter registration process, also known as conditional voter registration.

Student Pre-Registration

Since pre-registration began in 2016, a total of 1,474,240 students between the ages of 16 and 17 have pre-registered to vote. Of those pre-registrants, 1,167,405 have turned 18 and become registered voters. The table and graph below show cumulative pre-registration statistics since inception (2016) by year from 2020 through 2025. These figures illustrate pre-registration metrics that include both paper and online registrations, as we are unable to report them separately.

Pre-registration applications submitted in 2025 decreased by 17% from the previous year. This is as expected, since 2024 was a presidential election year with increased voter engagement due to the publicity and excitement surrounding these elections. The number of pre-registration applications submitted in odd numbered years is expected to be lower than even numbered years. This trend is also consistent when statewide special elections are conducted, as in both 2021 and 2025, when a variance of less than 1% can be seen.



Category	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cumulative pre-registrations since inception	656,077	802,731	979,081	1,141,476	1,321,810	1,474,240
Pre-registrants that have "aged up" to registered voters since 2016	463,536	588,847	740,329	877,917	1,029,492	1,167,405
Current pre-registrants waiting to "age up"	122,751	132,350	132,928	131,394	124,104	125,612
Annual pre-registration forms submitted	162,344	149,147	153,990	150,120	181,266	150,076

Online Voter Registration Applications

The total number of online student voter registrations in 2025 was 2,342. This was a significant decrease from 2024, which is typical for the year after a highly publicized presidential election. The 2025 results are consistent with those of 2021 which also followed a presidential election. The highest number of online student voter registrations in recent years occurred during the 2020 presidential cycle, with a total of 172,877. This figure was especially high due to the combined factors of the presidential election and the COVID pandemic. Since students were exclusively remote learning at that time, there were minimal opportunities for on-campus events to encourage student voter registration and in-person civic engagement.

The fluctuation in the quantity of online student voter registrations continues to be higher in statewide election years and lower in the odd numbered years thereafter. This may be attributed in part to the Ballot Bowl competition conducted by SVP, which is held during even numbered years only, when there are statewide elections. SVP provides colleges and universities that are competing in the Ballot Bowl with a unique link to online voter registration that allows students to select their campus from a drop-down menu, and those registrations are trackable. Student registrations using the general COVR website cannot be tracked. Since the student specific link is not as widely distributed in non-election years, it follows that there are fewer trackable online registrations as a result.

As the years pass, metrics for online student voter registration have been less inflated as students return to conventional on-campus life. The trend of lower online student voter registrations in odd numbered years remains consistent. The 2025 Statewide Special Election was conducted within a very short time frame, and in working with our county partners, we were notified that many students chose to utilize same day/conditional voter registration instead of online registration. Those registrations are not trackable. Students are also becoming more motivated to participate in elections via a variety of social media platforms, which have become more plentiful during each cycle. It is highly unlikely that these external applications, platforms, and websites are directing students to the SOS online registration link that captures student registrations. Additionally, students may have registered using the general COVR website and are therefore not included in this report, as has been the case consistently for years past.

Completed Online Voter Registration Forms						
System	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
California Community College	46,718	715	7,547	548	33,138	687
California State University	31,813	2,072	7,653	1,791	26,491	1,124
University of California	14,067	395	4,738	384	13,929	391
Independent CA College/University	14,288	696	3,626	277	13,754	36
No school identified	65,991	679	12,910	511	52,555	104
Total Number of Students	172,877	4,557	36,474	3,511	139,867	2,342

*In 2025, a flaw was discovered in the code query for past years' online student voter registration values that, when compared to those past values, creates the appearance of deflated 2025 values.

Paper Voter Registration Applications

In 2025, the SOS contacted 3,986 high schools and 154 colleges and universities through the Student Voter Registration (SVR) project. Of the schools contacted, 271 responded to the SOS through the Microsoft form survey.

The SVR statistics table below lists school response rates from 2020 through 2025. For several years, the percentage of schools responding to our mailings was higher in non-election years than in election years. This trend changed in 2024 when the response rate increased to a level more consistent with a typical non-election year. This is due in part to the SOS providing both an online form for school responses and a QR code for online registration for the first time. In 2025, the SOS implemented a Microsoft form survey in its letters along with the QR codes for online voter registration. The response rate in 2025 was lower than expected based on the trend established in previous years. We believe this may be due to postal mail becoming a less effective form of communication with the letters not reaching the intended recipients in the digital age.

Of the 271 schools that responded to the 2025 mailing, 65% requested paper voter registration applications, which is comparable to the requests received in 2024. It should be noted that the letters sent out for this year's SVR project were received well before the November 4, 2025, Statewide Special Election was called in late August, with a majority of the paper voter registration card orders already fulfilled.

Since letters are becoming a less effective form of communication, we are considering the utilization of alternative methods to reach out to schools, including emails to campus coordinators. We also will be reaching out to the Department of Education to develop additional options for more effective contact methods.

SVR Statistics	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Letters Sent	2,332	2,388	5,012	4,596	4,032	4,140
Schools Responding	188	329	390	642	513	270
Response Rate	8%	14%	8%	14%	13%	7%
Responding Schools that Requested Applications	138	258	330	450	328	176
Application Request %	73%	78%	85%	70%	64%	65%

The following table illustrates the number of paper voter registration applications distributed to schools and the number of completed applications returned by students each year. In 2025, the SOS distributed 42,294 paper voter registration forms to schools. While 2025 had the lowest amount of paper voter registration applications requested since 2020, the percentage of paper voter registration forms returned was 9%. This has remained consistent with the previous year.

Number of Paper Student Voter Registration Forms Distributed & Returned						
System	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
High Schools	36,222	69,296	50,887	96,814	56,848	34,419
Community Colleges	1,810	35,035	30,680	38,080	21,243	5,975
CSU campuses	11,700	8,345	4,280	5,224	18,120	700
UC campuses	550	1,160	1,700	0	1,000	500
Independent CA College/University	7,600	950	4,157	9,045	2,700	700
Total Distributed	57,882	114,786	91,704	149,163	99,911	42,294
% Change		98%	-20%	63%	-33%	-58%
Total Returned - YTD*	2,879	4,121	4,742	7,747	9,801	3,921
% Returned	5%	4%	5%	5%	10%	9%

* In 2025 a flaw in the code query was discovered that inflated the number of VRCs returned in prior years. Corrections to these values have been made with the 2025 report.

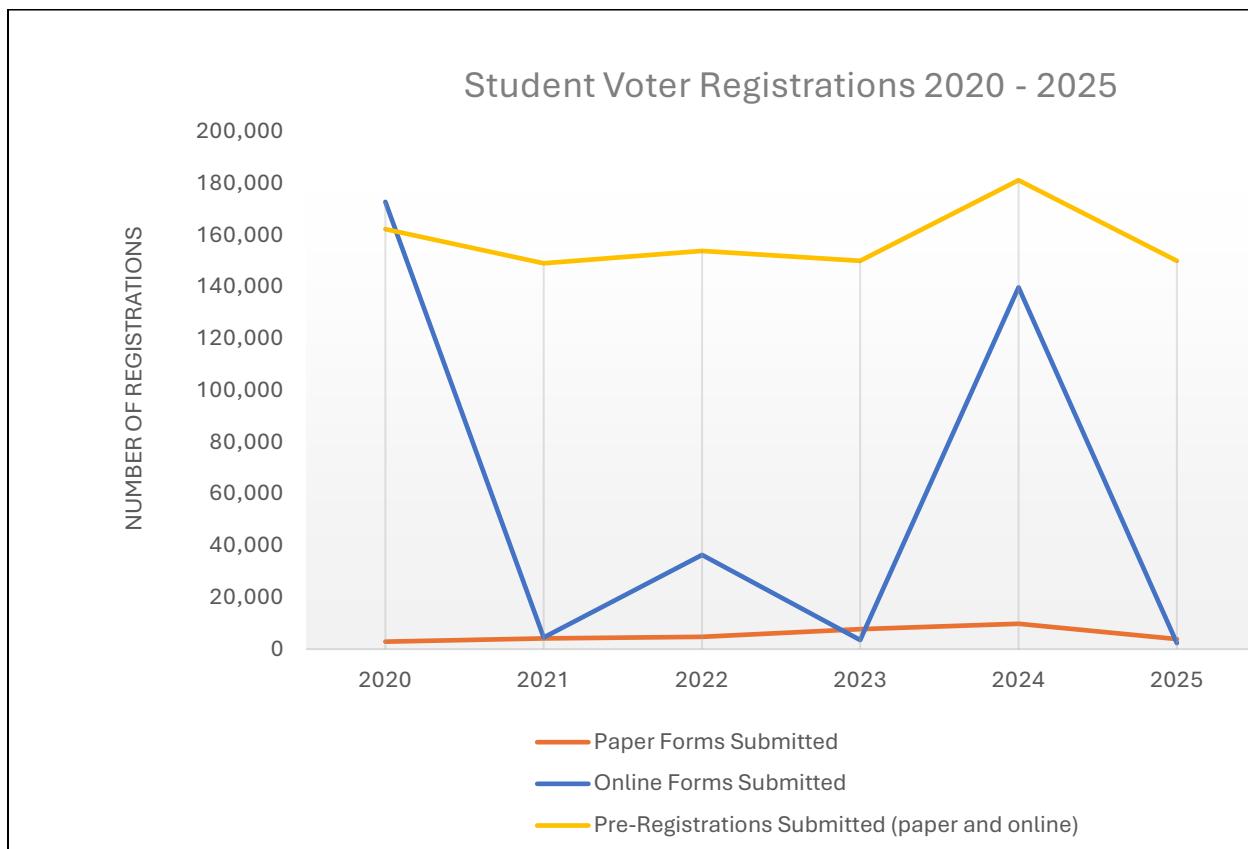
Combined Student Registration Results

Historically, there have been sharp increases in student voter registrations in statewide election years, followed by a significant drop-off in non-election years. This trend is especially evident for presidential election years. The SOS received a total of 156,339 trackable student voter registrations during 2025. As shown in the table below, the 2025 results align with the results from both 2021 and 2023, as expected. Although a statewide special election was held in 2021 and 2025, the trackable student voter registrations for both years were still comparable to odd numbered years without a statewide special election.

This year, we received less than half the number of student voter registrations that were reported in 2024, following the historical trend. Though less pronounced, the same pattern is manifested after the 2022 gubernatorial election, with 15% fewer trackable student registrations reported in 2023.

Student Voter Registrations	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Paper Forms Submitted	2,879	4,121	4,742	7,747	9,801	3,921
Online Forms Submitted	172,877	4,557	36,474	3,511	139,867	2,342
Pre-Registrations Submitted (paper and online)	162,344	149,147	153,990	150,120	181,266	150,076
Total Student Registrations	338,100	157,825	195,206	161,378	330,934	156,339
Change from prior year		-53%	24%	-17%	105%	-53%

As depicted in the following graph, the number of student voter pre-registration applications has remained fairly constant over the past six years, with the exception of a notable increase during last year's presidential election. A similar pattern can be observed with paper voter registration applications. Online voter registration demonstrates a strong correlation between student voter registration rates and election years, specifically during presidential elections. While student voter registrations follow this trend, students ages 16 and 17 continue to pre-register at a steady rate.



Summary

In 2025, the SOS promoted voter engagement and education among high school and college students across the state. We have demonstrated our ongoing commitment to reaching students in a variety of ways - through attending events at colleges and high schools, by providing workshops about civic engagement, and in supporting key initiatives such as High School Voter Education Weeks. In supporting each of these efforts, as well as many others, we have worked to promote education and outreach throughout the year. We will continue to seek out new and innovative ways to work with our partners within educational institutions, governmental organizations, and beyond to support student participation in democracy.

Overall, the number of student voter registrations in 2025 is consistent with the results found in 2021, the previous odd numbered year following a presidential election, and during which college students were not taking part in competitions to register to vote using the SOS online links via programs such as the Ballot Bowl.

Pre-registration, which represents both paper and online voter registrations, is the most easily tracked in our voter registration system, and accounts for 96% of the trackable registrations in 2025. Paper and online voter registration applications together represented the remaining 4% of trackable student registration data in 2025. Students may also be directed to register to vote through external systems that do not require them to identify themselves as students, therefore trackable online registrations remain elusive. The SOS is looking into ways to better understand and track student registrations, such as providing them with more information about registering in advance.

of election day. As we move into a statewide election year, we anticipate upward trends in registration, supported by the Student Mock Election, Ballot Bowl, and other SOS outreach initiatives.