



CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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April 10, 2015

HIGH SCHOOL VOTER EDUCATION WEEKS (APRIL 13-24, 2015)

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and High School Principals:

"The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country." – Franklin D. Roosevelt

We encourage you to participate in High School Voter Education Weeks from April 13-24, 2015. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, it is important to remember those whose sacrifices made it possible and our role to honor them. It is never too early to motivate your students to get involved.

In 2014, Assembly Bill 1817 was signed by Governor Jerry Brown designating the last two full weeks in April and September as High School Voter Education Weeks. This legislation provides an opportunity for high schools to partner with county elections officials to promote civic education and participation, and foster an environment that encourages voting.

With your school's participation, students will have the opportunity to engage their peers, teachers, and family members, reminding them that each of us has a role and a responsibility to strengthen our democracy by voting.

Getting started is easy!

First, visit the Secretary of State's Web site to locate your local county elections office at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/new-voters/county-elections-offices/>. These experts in the voting process will provide you with the information and materials you will need-- whether it is how to become a registered voter, how to utilize online voter registration at <http://www.RegisterToVote.ca.gov>, or how to become a student poll worker on Election Day.

Second, select one or more students to be your school's voter outreach coordinators. These students can plan and coordinate election-related activities on your campus and work with county elections officials to register eligible voters and bring this opportunity to your campus.

Third, celebrate High School Voter Education Weeks on your campus. Students can organize voter registration drives, debates, mock elections, and other election-related activities. Teachers can encourage newly eligible voters in their classrooms to register and vote.

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(Students who are 17 years old and will be 18 by the next election are eligible to register.)
These activities are important to have on a regular basis.

Lastly, keep the conversation going. Democracy thrives when we discuss the issues in our communities, our state, and our nation. Continue to work with your state and local elections officials to participate in events like the MyVote California Student Mock Election Program <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/student-mock-election/> and encourage students to discover democracy first-hand by becoming a poll worker on Election Day.

We hope you will join us in recognizing the importance of civic engagement, not only during High School Voter Education Weeks, but throughout the school year. Let's do our part in encouraging our young voters to register and turn out at the polls to ensure their voices are heard.

If you have any questions about this important civic engagement project, please feel free to contact Steve Carda, Voter Outreach and Publications Coordinator, Secretary of State, by phone at 916-657-2305 or e-mail at steven.carda@sos.ca.gov or contact Rebecca Barrett, Principal Advisor to State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at 916-319-0203 or by e-mail at rbarrett@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State



Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction