



# Student Voting Guide for California

## Voter Registration and Election Dates

- Applications must be postmarked by 15 days before Election Day.  
**General Election Registration Deadline: October 24, 2016**  
**General Election: November 8, 2016**
- Students with a valid California driver's license or state ID card may register to vote online at [registertovote.ca.gov/](http://registertovote.ca.gov/).
- Voter registration forms, polling place locations, and more information can be found at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections)

Note: Though already passed into law, automated voter registration and same day voter registration will not be available until early 2017.

## Register at School or Permanent Address?

Students have a choice about where to register to vote.

School address:

- Students attending college in California may register at their school address. You must plan to return after temporary absences, like summer break, but do not have to plan to reside at that address permanently.

Permanent address:

- Students may choose to register or remain registered at a permanent address in California or outside the state. In this case, students may need to vote by absentee ballot.

**You may only be registered and vote in one location.**

For other states' registration information visit:  
[www.campusvoteproject.org/studentguides](http://www.campusvoteproject.org/studentguides)

## What Type of ID Do I Need to Register?

California's voter registration form asks for your California driver's license or ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security Number. Make sure you have it when completing your registration form.

## What Type of ID Do I Need to Vote?

You do not need any ID to vote early or on Election Day in California. The only exception is for first-time voters who registered by mail or during a voter registration drive and failed to provide a California driver's license number, state ID number, or the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number.

## Where Do I Vote?

Make a plan. Look up your polling location and hours at:

[www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place/](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place/)

[www.campusvoteproject.org](http://www.campusvoteproject.org)

A Project of the Fair Elections Legal Network

FAIR ELECTIONS  
LEGAL NETWORK

## How Can I Vote?

### By Mail

- Any registered voter may vote by mail in California. Students who wish to vote by mail must first submit an application in order to receive a mail-in ballot. Applications for a mail-in ballot sent by mail must be received by the county elections official no later than seven days before the election; otherwise you will need to apply in person at your county elections office to receive a vote-by-mail ballot for that election.
- Completed vote-by-mail ballots must be returned in person or by mail before the close of polls on Election Day.

### Early In Person

- All registered voters may vote early in person without an excuse. Early voting begins 29 days before an election. Some counties allow voters to vote early in person at select locations. Check with your [County Clerk's office](#) for specific locations and times.

### On Election Day

- The polls are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

*The Higher Education Act requires most colleges and universities to make a good faith effort to distribute voter registration forms to every student. Make sure yours does.*

**According to the U.S. Supreme Court, students have the right to register and vote in their college towns if they meet the same requirements as everyone else. Misinformation, such as claims that registering to vote at school may jeopardize eligibility for financial aid or insurance, are sometimes used to discourage students from voting locally.**

## Common Questions

### Will voting in California affect my federal financial aid?

Where you register to vote will not affect federal financial aid such as Pell Grants and Perkins or Stafford loans or your dependency status regarding FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

### Will I lose my scholarship if I register to vote in California?

Generally, no. If you receive scholarship money from a state, county, town, or a private entity (i.e., an entity other than the federal government) you should confirm that residency in a particular place is not a requirement of the scholarship and/or that voter registration in California will not affect your eligibility.

### Will registering to vote in California affect my driver's license or car registration?

Registering to vote in California does not necessarily change your driver's license and motor vehicle registration. However, as a full-time student in California, you may have to make these changes regardless of whether you register to vote in California. For more information, you may wish to contact the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

### Will registering to vote in California prevent my parents from claiming me as a dependent on their taxes?

No. Students are often told that registering to vote in a different state from their parents will make them lose their dependency status. This is not true. Where you register to vote will have no effect on your parent's tax status.

### Does being an in-state or out-of-state student for tuition purposes affect my right to vote?

No. You may choose to vote in your college community or back home regardless of your tuition status.

*This Guide was prepared by FELN staff who are not licensed to practice law in California and FELN intends that the information contained herein is used only as a general guide. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed California legal professional.*

Last updated March 28, 2016