



Increasing Student Participation in Elections

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THE NEW VOTERS PROJECT

- ✗ In 1983, the PIRGs launched the National Student Campaign for Voter Registration, the nation's first major youth mobilization effort since 18 years olds received the franchise in 1972. This initial effort helped register nearly one million students to vote throughout the 1980s.
- ✗ Here in CA, in 2012 we partnered with 35 community college, Cal State, UC, and private college campuses to educate the campus community about opportunities to register to vote.
- ✗ Over 27,000 students from more than 200 campuses used our californiastudentvote.org tool to access online voter registration.
- ✗ Our student volunteers also helped to register an additional 14,000 students to vote using traditional paper registrations.
- ✗ 68 percent of students who used our tool to register to vote online actually turned out to the polls.

WHY TARGET YOUNG PEOPLE

- ✗ Young people have a lot at stake in policy decisions.
- ✗ Often the first time they can vote! Getting them voting from age 18 helps to encourage a lifelong habit of civic engagement from young people.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2012:

- ✗ Younger voters took advantage of OVR
 - + Young voters between the ages of 18-24 comprised 30 percent of all online registrants in the state.
 - + The total number of youth registrants in the fall of 2012 increased nearly 14 percent over 2008.
 - + But turnout doesn't appear to be higher:

2012 General Turnout	% of Voting Eligible Pop	% of Registered
Total	55.5%	72.4%
18-24 year olds	31.7%	50.8%

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

- ✗ They don't register to vote in time.
- ✗ They aren't registered locally, and haven't taken the necessary steps to cast a valid ballot in another county.
- ✗ They are registered locally, but polling locations aren't known or aren't convenient; there aren't enough visual cues that it is Election Day on campus.

EXAMPLE: SACRAMENTO STATE

- ✗ According to polling precinct officer Meg Panlaqui, over 600 individuals turned out to vote on Election Day in November 2012; some successfully cast ballots, some dropped off absentee ballots.
- ✗ 370 individuals – more than half of all of the ballots cast – voted provisionally.
- ✗ Of the provisional ballots cast, 42% did not count (250 total).
- ✗ So many individuals voted absentee at the on-campus location that the drop-off ballot box overflowed.
- ✗ A large number of students registered to other precincts approached polling officers, asking to vote provisionally on-campus.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

- ✗ Same day voter registration.
- ✗ Campus-wide, institutionalized outreach of voter registration options.
- ✗ Allowing VBM ballots to be mailed ON election day (SB 29).
- ✗ Polling locations on every campus with on campus housing.
- ✗ “Vote centers” in a central, visible location on campus
- ✗ Early voting options IF it’s well-publicized on campus
- ✗ Eventually:
 - + Automatic voter registration
 - + “Anywhere” voting – allowing ballots to be cast in any county in the state