
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2455
Author: Chiu
Version: May 3, 2016
Urgency: No
Consultant: Lynn Lorber
Hearing Date: June 15, 2016
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Electronic voter registration: public postsecondary educational institutions

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Elections and Constitutional Amendments. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) to implement a process and the infrastructure to allow a person who enrolls at the institution online to submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes a person who is qualified to register to vote and who has a valid California driver's license or state identification card to submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically on the Internet Web site of the Secretary of State. (Elections Code § 2196)
- 2) Requires a person who registers to vote online to assent affirmatively to the use of his or her signature from his or her driver's license or state identification card for voter registration purposes. Requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to obtain an electronic copy of the signature of a person who registers to vote online directly from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). (Elections Code § 2260, et seq.)
- 3) Requires, pursuant to the Student Voter Registration Act, every campus of the CCCs and CSU that operates an automated class registration system to permit students, through the automated registration process, to apply to register to vote online by submitting an affidavit of voter registration electronically on the SOS's Web site. Existing law requests campuses of the University of California to comply with this process. (Elections Code § 2146, et seq.)
- 4) Requires, pursuant to the California New Motor Voter Program, the DMV to transfer records to the SOS of each person who submits an application for a driver's license or state identification card, or provides the DMV with a change of address, and who attests that he or she meets all voter eligibility requirements. Provides that the records of a person that are transmitted from the DMV to the

Secretary of State (SOS) pursuant to this provision shall constitute a completed affidavit of voter registration for that person unless:

- a) The person affirmatively declines to register to vote at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- b) The person does not attest that he or she meets all voter eligibility requirements while at the DMV.
- c) The SOS determines that the person is not eligible to register to vote. (Elections Code § 2260)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC), and request the University of California (UC), by July 1, 2018, to implement a process and the infrastructure to allow a person who enrolls online at the institution to submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically on the Secretary of State's (SOS) Web site in accordance with existing law.
- 2) States legislative intent to take preliminary measure towards the establishment of an automatic voter registration system for California citizens enrolled at state public college and university campuses.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "In 2014, 18-24 year-olds had the lowest turnout of all age groups: only 285,000 of 3.5 million eligible young adult voters turned out to vote. For young people in particular, the process of registering to vote can be a deterrent and can present obstacles that affect their ability to register and vote at greater levels. Young people have higher rates of geographic mobility, which affects how frequently they must update their voter registration information. When young voters move or their information changes (like when they go to college), their registration records may not be updated, effectively keeping them off of the voter rolls."
- 2) **Another venue.** Existing law every campus of the CCC and CSU that operates an automated class registration system to permit students, through the automated registration process, to apply to register to vote online by submitting an affidavit of voter registration electronically on the SOS's Web site. Campuses achieve this by providing a link to the SOS Web site on the college's online course registration, whereby students submit an affidavit of voter registration electronically to the SOS. This bill essentially requires campuses to provide this link when students enroll at the campus online.
- 3) **Annual report.** Existing law requires the SOS to submit an annual report to the Legislature on its student voter registration efforts. The report is to include estimates as to how many voter registration forms were sent to high schools,

campuses of the California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC); how many voter registration forms were submitted; and how many electronic affidavits of voter registration were submitted by students. According to the 2015 report, 14,669 students at CCC, CSU and UC campuses completed a voter registration application online through the course registration process.

[<http://admin.cdn.sos.ca.gov/reports/2015/student-voter-registration.pdf>]

- 4) **Motor Voter.** This bill states that it is the intent of the Legislature to take preliminary measures towards the establishment of an automatic voter registration system for California citizens enrolled at state public college and university campuses. According to the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee analysis, “if the desire is to eventually move toward a voter registration process at colleges and universities that is similar to the [California New Motor Voter (CNMVP)] process, there are a number of obstacles that will need to be overcome before such a process is feasible. Unlike the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the CSU and CCC systems do not typically have digitized signatures on file for their customers (students). Furthermore, the type of interface that the DMVs computers have with the state's voter registration system does not exist with the CSU and CCC systems. In light of these facts, any future attempt to implement a CNMVP-like the process at the CSU and CCC, systems will face obstacles that did not exist for implementing the program with the DMV. Furthermore, such a program at the CSU and CCC system will reach a substantially smaller portion of the eligible voter population than the CNMVP will reach through the DMV.”
- 5) **Technical amendment to be taken in Elections Committee.** The provisions of this bill are located in the Chapter of the Elections Code related to online voter registration (Section 2196, et seq.). Staff recommends an amendment to relocate the provisions of this bill to the Chapter of the Elections Code related to the Student Voter Registration Act (Section 2146, et seq.). This bill has been double-referred to the Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee; due to timing, this amendment should be adopted in the Elections Committee.
- 6) **Fiscal impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee’s analysis, this bill would impose minor absorbable costs to CSU and the CCC to provide, through online course registration, a link to the SOS’s online voter registration Web site.

SUPPORT

California Common Cause
California Secretary of State Alex Padilla
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
University of California

OPPOSITION

Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

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