

Resolution Endorsing the California Automatic Student Voter Registration Program's Implementation in the University of California

WHEREAS, the Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) seeks to advance higher education by empowering current and future students to advocate on their own behalf for the accessibility, affordability, and quality of the University of California system; and

WHEREAS, legislative advocacy is critical to this end, in addition to shared governance with the University of California system and direct action; and

WHEREAS, the USAC is a member organization of UCSA, which coordinates a long-standing campaign, UCweVOTE, that aims to register students to vote, provide voter education, and get out the vote on Election Day;¹ and

WHEREAS, in preparation for the 2012 Presidential Election the USAC expended enormous resources registering students to vote; and

WHEREAS, the USAC attends the UCSA's annual Student Lobby Conference in Sacramento each spring where 400 UC students develop lobbying skills, learn more about issues affecting students and CA higher education, and directly engage elected officials on these issues;² and

WHEREAS, voter registration continues to be one of the greatest barriers to public participation in California's democracy; and

WHEREAS, in the 2014 general elections, the 18-24 year old population in California had the lowest turnout for all age groups, making up a meager 3.9% of those who voted;³ and

WHEREAS, voter registration efforts and voter turnout are solely dependent on the year long manual efforts, organizing, and financing of students; and

WHEREAS, young people, like minority and low-income communities, have higher rates of geographic mobility, which consequently affects their ability to maintain their voter registration records up to date;⁴ and

WHEREAS, while voting rights are on the defense in many states with restrictive voting laws, such as cutbacks on early voting periods and the elimination of same-day registration, California continues to lead in modernizing strategies for voter engagement and removing obstacles to the ballot;⁵ and

¹ <http://ucsa.org/category/standing-campaigns/ucwevote/>

² <http://ucsa.org/category/conferences/student-lobby-conference/>

³ http://explore.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ourwork/projects/copy_of_UCDavisCCEPPolicyBrief92014YouthVote.pdf/view

⁴ http://www.projectvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010_Policy_Paper-Enfranchising_American_Youth.pdf

⁵ <http://www.brennancenter.org/new-voting-restrictions-2010-election>

WHEREAS, in October 2015, Governor Brown signed landmark legislation establishing a program that automatically registers to vote any eligible California citizen who interacts with the Department of Motor Vehicles in order to increase voter participation;⁶ and

WHEREAS, the Automatic Student Voter Registration Using University Enrollment⁷ program has the potential to fundamentally change California's political landscape by creating greater access to the legislative process for students and a ready-made platform for youth civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, under such automatic voter registration programs voters retain their right to opt out or cancel their voter registration at any time; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration programs are designed to set forth adequate safeguards and procedures that protect the privacy, security and confidentiality of student information, especially that of vulnerable student populations such as undocumented students and students who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and

WHEREAS, the Automatic Student Voter Registration has the support of Assembly members David Chiu (D-San Francisco) and Rob Bonta (D-Alameda), who are currently drafting legislation to formalize this program proposal as an official state policy,

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the USAC endorses the Proposal to Expand the Political Participation of California's University of California, California State University, and Community College students through Automatic Student Voter Registration Using University Enrollment.

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the USAC urges the UC Office of the President to implement the Automatic Student Voter Registration in time for the November 2016 Presidential Election.

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, USAC will urge Chancellor Gene Block to write and issue a letter of support of Automatic Student Voter Registration measures to the Board of Regents.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, the External Vice President will advocate on behalf of Automatic Student Voter Registration to the association's local legislators, seeking, in particular, co-sponsorship or a letter of support.

⁶<http://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/news-releases-and-advisories/2015-news-releases-and-advisories/governor-brown-signs-california-new-motor-voter-act/>

⁷[file:///Users/iman/Downloads/CA%20Automatic%20Student%20Voter%20Registration%20Proposal%201.18.16%20%20V.1%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/iman/Downloads/CA%20Automatic%20Student%20Voter%20Registration%20Proposal%201.18.16%20%20V.1%20(1).pdf)