



NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

Universal voter registration: A way to empower and engage all Californians

A report from the *New America Foundation*
(www.newamerica.net, 916-448-3721)

Introduction

California's strength flows from a willingness to innovate and improve upon the American experiment in democracy. Recent elections underscore the importance of revamping the way we register citizens to vote, with the twin goals of registering all eligible voters and decreasing opportunities for voter fraud. Voter rolls should be complete *and* clean.

The Problem. Currently, there are two widespread failures. First, our voter rolls are not complete enough, with nearly a third of eligible voters -- about 60 million Americans -- not registered to vote. In California 6.7 million (30 percent) eligible adults are unregistered to vote, a lower percentage than in 2001.¹ Young people are even more negatively impacted than other demographics. In 2004, only 54.4% of Californians 18-24 years old who are eligible to vote were registered and only 44.9% of these eligible voters actually voted (each of these figures is approximately 10 percentage points below the national averages). In 2002, 39.2% of eligible voters from this group were registered and only 18.8% of eligible voters turned out to vote.²

Second, our voter rolls are not clean enough, which leads to administrative confusion and uncertainty about voter fraud. Under current laws and practices, we naturally see major voter registration drives during election years. The result is a surge of registrations right before an election, leading to long lines at polling places, voters not receiving information about where to vote, and turmoil over provisional and absentee ballots. It all-too-easily leads to potential partisan fraud, such as a Republican-linked voter registration firm in Nevada and Oregon that in 2004 threw out forms collected from voters registering as Democrats; and accusations of Democratic urban machines registering dead people to vote in cities and other party strongholds.³ Other charges have included people voting in two states and places like Alaska having more registered voters than adults. California elections also have not been immune to charges of voter fraud.⁴

The lack of confidence over the "cleanness" of our voter rolls undermines the integrity of our elections. Having so many unregistered citizens hurts voter turnout and causes great problems in election administration. It's time to establish CLEAN and COMPLETE voter rolls to not only enhance every American's ability to vote but also to preserve the integrity of elections and keep close elections in the hands of voters rather than judges.

Current law and practices. State and federal laws establishes three conditions for voting registration: an individual must be a citizen of the United States; a resident of a particular state of

the District of Colombia; and at least 18 years of age before the next election. Eligible voters register by signing a legal affidavit swearing that she or he is a citizen and has reached the required age. Finally, since passage of the federal Help America Vote Act in 2002, first-time voters in federal elections must show proof of residency (photo ID, current utility bill, bank statement or government document) either at the time of registration or when they show up at the polls for the first time. Registration forms are available at government web sites and offices. In addition, many voters are provided registration forms by political parties or advocacy groups. This all-voluntary basis for voter registration has proven to be ineffective at producing complete or clean voter rolls.

The Solution: Universal voter registration. Pointing fingers and name-calling won't fix the problem. The way forward is to set a goal of 100 percent voter registration -- universal voter registration -- by establishing registration as a mutual responsibility of citizens and their government that is conducted through an automatic registration process. It's the best way to bring together conservatives concerned about fraud in elections and liberals concerned about low voter registration. We need a coherent system that ensures all of us can vote, but none of us can vote more than once.

The United States, including California, is one of the few democracies where the government does not take responsibility for registering its voters. The international norm is an orderly process of government-mandated automatic voter registration of every citizen who reaches voting age. In fact, Iraq has a higher share of its adult citizens registered to vote than the United States because the Iraqi government and the American authorities sponsored automatic voter registration of Iraqi citizens. When the government takes a proactive ongoing role, registration occurs on a steady rolling basis instead of in spurts tied to any specific election. Each voter receives a unique identifier that ensures she or he does not vote more than once.

Not only does such an orderly process provide nearly 100 percent voter registration, but it leads to much cleaner voter rolls and less voter fraud. With comprehensive databases and full registration, there is no longer a question about who is or is not registered. Everyone who is a citizen and has reached the age requirement is registered to vote.

Plans and Implementation for Universal Voter Registration

Research for this report surveyed best practices in the United States, Great Britain, and other nations to understand the best way to implement universal voter registration. It also draws from various experts and organizations active in this area such as FairVote (www.FairVote.org) and the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law (www.BrennanCenter.org).

In order to enact universal voter registration and comply with these requirements, logistically one needs to determine whether registration is going to be: the responsibility of government officials or private individuals; tasked by the federal government or within the states; and depending on the first two determinations, whether it's done automatically (such as automatically adding anybody with unique identifiers—social security numbers, driver's licenses, etc.—to the rolls) or by greatly expanding opportunities for voters to self-register. Automatic plans could include an opt-out provision for those who object to registration for political, religious, or other reasons.

Below are some examples of universal registration ideas—the mechanics followed by an explanation of their potential and political viability. They are split between automatic and non-

automatic plans—plans that seek to register every eligible voter with the government playing an active role, compared to plans that seek to arrive as close to that goal as possible, with the government playing a reduced facilitator role. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach.

AUTOMATIC PLANS:

These plans are the most effective at making the voter rolls complete as well as clean, and are used throughout the democratic world to ensure the highest rates of voter registration. Broadly speaking, an automatic plan employs unique identifiers such as social security numbers, driver's licenses, or voter ID cards to automatically add to the voting rolls all eligible voters.

The New York plan: using driver's license and tax databases. In New York State a plan was recently introduced in the state senate to make voter registration automatic for anybody with a New York State driver's license or tax record.⁵ The Department of Motor Vehicles and The Department of Taxation and Finance would be required to send the State Board of Elections the names and addresses of every person who would be 18 by the next election and who is known to be a U.S. citizen. The State Board of Elections would be required to register automatically those people to vote. The bill "requires the department of motor vehicles and the department of taxation and finance to transmit the names and addresses of persons who are U.S. citizens and residents of this state..."

With an automatic plan like New York's proposal, a question arises about how government authorities can ensure that only citizens are added to the voter rolls. The current self-registration method runs on the honor system -- each registrant signs an affidavit under penalty of perjury that she or he is a citizen. But generally speaking, no government official checks to ensure the veracity of each affidavit.

An automatic registration plan like that proposed by New York would not even have the benefit of each individual's affidavit. However, recently New York and other states have begun requiring that applicants for a driver's license must show a Social Security card.⁶ And under new rules for gaining a Social Security card, applicants now must show proof of U.S. citizenship or immigration status.⁷ Thus, all new drivers in New York who received their driver's license with a Social Security card issued in 2006 or later could be added automatically to the voter rolls, since citizenship easily could be included in the database. Over time, as more new drivers are automatically added to the voter rolls, New York would approach universal voter registration.

California law now requires every applicant for a driver's license to show proof of citizenship status, verification of birth date and a Social Security number, all the information needed to register an individual to vote.⁸ The California Franchise Tax Board also requires a Social Security number for U.S. citizens or an individual tax identification number (ITIN) issued by the IRS for noncitizens to file a California state income tax form. Thus these two databases could be used by California to enact a version of the New York plan and immediately add to the voter rolls any new recipients of a driver's license or who have paid taxes. Over time, as more new drivers and taxpayers are automatically added to the voter rolls, California would approach universal voter registration.

Moreover, a New York-type plan used in California has the potential to fix various current problems with voter registration. Currently the voter registration process in California is completed in reverse from the New York plan, which has caused problems. New regulations effective January 1, 2006 required that everyone who registers to vote must provide a California

driver's license number, or a California identification number issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, or provide the last four numbers of their Social Security number. This information then is checked against existing state records. The Los Angeles Times reported a situation in the spring of 2006 where over 52,000 voter applications were rejected electronically -- and erroneously -- because the information on their registration forms did not match information in the state database using either their driver's license or the last four digits of their Social Security number.⁹ A New York-type plan, if implemented in California, would eliminate these kinds of complications and discrepancies between the databases. It would allow automatic updating of the statewide voter registration list by adding to the voter rolls those residents with new driver's licenses who are U.S. citizens and above the required age for registration.

The downside of this plan is that it would miss eligible voters who don't pay taxes AND who don't own cars. But this would be a small number of people compared to the millions of Californians who would be added to the voter rolls by this method. Also any person who moves without updating their driver's license information (i.e. a person who moves from southern California to northern California) could temporarily become unregistered until the next time they pay taxes. Also, this kind of automatic plan could include an opt-out provision for those who object to registration for political, religious, or other reasons.

The Real ID Act and a national ID card. Another method that, over time, would permit automatic voter registration could eventually result from the passage of federal legislation known as the Real ID Act which became law in May 2005 and will take effect in May 2008. The Real ID Act, related to Patriot Act compliance, prohibits federal agencies from accepting state-issued driver's licenses or identification cards unless such documents are determined to meet minimum security requirements, including evidence that the person is lawfully present in the United States, including citizenship status. States that don't comply will put their residents in a position of having their driver's licenses rejected as identification by federal employees, whether at the airport, collecting Social Security payments, or taking advantage of any government service at any local branch of the federal government. So the expectation is that the Real ID security requirements, including proof of citizenship indicated on driver's licenses, will become standard very quickly.

This legislation has been controversial among civil libertarians and others concerned about inadequate enforcement mechanisms, but from the standpoint of universal voter registration it creates unprecedented opportunities. The Real ID Act effectively creates a national ID card, and also will create a national database that essentially merges Department of Motor Vehicle databases from all 50 states. Such a national database easily could be used to automatically register tens of millions of eligible voters across the United States who are currently unregistered and who have driver's licenses. The particulars of implementation of the Real ID Act will be sorted out during the coming months, but it is likely that the ID program will be phased in such that existing driver's licenses will remain valid as long as the state overall is in compliance with the overall regulations of the Real ID Act.

Use Social Security numbers. Another automatic registration plan involving a centralized database is to register everybody via the Social Security administration. This method would be more comprehensive than either the Real ID Act plan or the New York plan using motor vehicle and taxation/finance records because, while not everybody has a motor vehicles record or a tax record, every citizen has a Social Security number.

Under one proposal using Social Security numbers, every citizen of voting age with a Social Security record would have their name, address, and citizenship status added to a national file broken down by county. County governments would not have to laboriously maintain complete voter files. Instead, they would download the voter file (name, address, and citizenship status) drawn from Social Security records for their county right before each election, merge in political party codes for those states with restricted primaries, and print out sign-in sheets for each precinct.

While using Social Security numbers would provide the most complete voter rolls of all, it also would require cooperation and coordination with the Social Security Administration and other federal bureaucracies and possibly even the passage of federal legislation. Thus this might be best thought of as a long term goal.

The Carter-Baker plan. The high profile Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, issued a report on September 19, 2005 with 87 recommendations for improving the electoral process in the United States.¹⁰ One of their most important recommendations was for universal voter registration. The Carter-Baker commission recommended instituting top-down, state-organized voter registration whereby the state election office has clear authority to register voters and maintain the registration list. It also recommended that a national unique identifier be created for each voter based on Social Security numbers and maintained in a national database so that each voter only has to be registered one time in their lifetime, and could move from state to state without having to re-register. Not only would this create universal voter registration it also would eliminate duplicate registrations and make it nearly impossible for voters to vote in two different locations (such as two different states) in the same election. This is a highly ambitious plan that would result in very comprehensive universal voter registration, but would require significant federal involvement in order to move forward anytime soon. While this method would best produce voter registration lists that are the most clean and complete, it is not viewed as politically viable due to cost as well as civil libertarian concerns over privacy.

Biometric verification. As an addendum to these sorts of automatic plans, California law professor Richard Hasen has proposed that the federal government take on the task of voter registration, much like it does in conducting the census. It would issue voter registration cards with biometric information such as fingerprints at the polling places, as is done today in Mexico. Because the cards would contain biometric information, voters could show up without identification at the polls and still have their votes counted. Such a plan raises civil libertarian privacy concerns, but Professor Hasen argues that in an era where the government already has so much information about us, the additional privacy downside of the voter registration cards are small compared to the potential gain in voter confidence and voter registration.¹¹ Still, the privacy concerns cannot be dismissed, and such a proposal would require more careful study.

Overall Analysis of Automatic Plans: All of the proposals for automatic voter registration would do much toward registering tens of millions of eligible voters and achieving the goal of universal voter registration. While each has its benefits and drawbacks related to efficiency, cost, privacy concerns, political viability and more, in the short term the biggest drawback is that all of these plans except a New York-type plan require significant federal involvement. The New York plan using databases from the Department of Motor Vehicles and state income taxes is unique in showing a way that could be enacted today by each individual state, such as California, and would amount to a giant step forward toward the worthy goal of universal voter registration. Any

of these automatic plans could include an opt-out provision for those who object to registration for political, religious, or other reasons.

NON-AUTOMATIC PLANS:

Non-automatic plans, while less effective at making voter rolls complete or guarding against voter fraud, would still move the United States or any individual state much closer toward universal voter registration. They may also be more politically viable because they tend to be not so sweeping or expensive, and incorporate smaller steps based on ones that have proven effective. However, the impact of these plans would be much less effective in moving toward universal voter registration.

Canada's multiple methods. In Canada, the government has combined several methods for registering voters. One is called "enumeration"—like a pre-election census using door-to-door canvassing—which is used to target eligible voters and get them registered. But this procedure has proven to be labor intensive and costly, so Canada scrapped this policy in 1997 and replaced it with a national voter's list culled from income tax returns, which offers filers the choice to be added but is not automatic. However, Canada still retains partial enumeration, which targets students, mobile home residents, and low-turnout communities by sending door-to-door canvassers into certain neighborhoods. The voter registry also is updated automatically from different sources, including vehicle registrations, the Canada Revenue Agency and provincial voters' lists. In addition, every region in Canada is given a phone number for voters to call to check if they're registered.¹²

Australia's mandatory registration and voting. In Australia, voter registration is not automatically completed by the government, instead the government has made voter registration mandatory for all citizens 18 years of age or above. An individual has 8 weeks after turning 18 to register. Similarly, if a change of address causes an individual to move to another electorate they are legally obliged to notify the Electoral Commission within 8 weeks. It is a legal offense to fail to register (as well as vote), punishable by a fine. Mandatory registration (as well as voting) has not engendered great support in the United States or California. It runs contrary to civil libertarian instincts shared by many Americans and Californians from all sides of the political spectrum. Plus, there are so many Americans and Californians currently unregistered that it would require a massive government effort to alert these people to the new law and after an initial transition period, to crack down on scofflaws. This method probably would not be politically viable without a change in attitude by many Americans and Californians.

Great Britain. In Great Britain, a commission set out in 2000 to increase the number of registered voters and tested a variety of methods in different communities. They settled on a dual system of rolling individual voter registration (much as we do in the U.S.) combined with household registration. For the latter, a form is mailed to each household for completion and returned by one person in that household, traditionally known as the 'head of household' or 'the occupier'. The form asks for the details of all household residents eligible to vote, or those aged 16 or 17 who will be eligible to vote on their eighteenth birthday. This method has resulted in nearly universal voter registration (it is estimated that about 91 percent of eligible voters and 84 percent of 18-24 year olds are registered in Britain, compared to 70 percent of eligible Californians and 40 to 54 percent of 18-24 year olds who are registered).¹³ However, it was not clear from the research what method is used by Britain to check and ensure that people don't add ineligible voters to the rolls, either inadvertently or purposefully. Britain seems to rely on an honor system (as we do here in the U.S. currently), though more rigorous safeguards could be

used such as the Canadian method of cross-checking via vehicle registrations or the appropriate tax revenue agency. Also, since the British government has the authority to investigate voter fraud it creates a strong disincentive against people fraudulently listing ineligible voters on their address form.

Election Day Registration. In the United States, Election Day (or Same Day) Registration, has been adopted by six states, Minnesota, Maine, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Wyoming, and Idaho. With EDR, an eligible voter can register right up to and on Election Day. The six states using this kind of "one-step voting" on average have higher voter turnout than the rest of the nation, but it's not clear that EDR is the decisive factor, since these states also tend to be lower-population states with relatively homogenous populations that exhibit more "social capital," which has been correlated with higher voter turnout. EDR has many positives, but it still leaves the act of registering up to the individual, rather than making it automatic or a government function. And it requires more poll workers on Election Day to assist with registration, which could strain resources since finding poll workers in the middle of a busy workday has been increasingly difficult. EDR also has encountered opposition from election administrators who fear chaos on Election Day, as well as from conservatives who imagine busloads of voters fraudulently voting again and again in different precincts. However, none of these nightmare scenarios has occurred in the six states that use EDR. Despite these objections, Election Day Registration is a good first step toward universal voter registration.

Pre-registration of high school students to vote. America's and California's diverse population is especially apparent in high schools today. Because students in effect are a "captive audience," high schools are an ideal place for engaging young people and incorporating them into our representative democracy. If young people are not hooked into democratic institutions and practices while they're in high school, it becomes more difficult to do so after they leave high school. And if they are not on the voter rolls then it is nearly impossible for candidates or political organizations to contact or engage them directly. Their lack of participation results in a "disengagement cycle" that becomes increasingly difficult to break. High school in many cases is the final opportunity to engage young people about participating in our democracy. Having common sense practices for engaging young people in high school is crucial. One of the most effective efforts is to lower the age for voter registration to sixteen.

A state or individual county could lower the age for voter registration to 16 and have high schools automatically preregister all their students to vote. Students who have reached their 16th birthday would fill out their voter registration card just as any eligible voter does and this data would be entered into the voter database, but coded with the student's birth date. As each pre-registrant turns 18, the database would automatically activate that voter registration. Once activated, those voters would receive ballot pamphlets and polling location information prior to the first election in which they are eligible. The package of information also could include a notice that their registration has been activated along with a set of Frequently Asked Questions about the voting process, the date of the next election, and their responsibilities to re-register when changing addresses

Implementation. Within each high school, implementation could be facilitated in several ways. Preregistration could be left as optional, or it could be required as a condition of graduation or before they are permitted to enter their senior year. Several means of registration could be employed, including registering students in their high school civics class, or as part of a student assembly or "Civics Day" in which students are visited by local political leaders. Students also could register to vote on the Internet, a practice that already is available in California and other

states.¹⁴ States could emulate Wisconsin's law which establishes in each high school a "registration deputy" who is a teacher or staff person volunteering to oversee the voter registration process. The Wisconsin law says that "the school board and the municipal clerk shall agree upon the appointment of at least one qualified elector at each high school as a special school registration deputy." The school registration deputies' task is to facilitate student registration, including the education of students about citizenship and minimum age requirements necessary to preregister. The school registration deputy also would forward properly completed registration forms to the election administration official overseeing registration, who then adds all those registrants to the county voter registration list.¹⁵

In addition, each student in their junior or senior year could be enrolled in a "voter's ed" curriculum for high schoolers, just as many have "driver's ed" now. This would provide a means to introduce more young people to the importance of civic engagement via the "voter's ed" curriculum. Over time, as all 16 to 18-year-olds are preregistered to vote, the United States would move closer to 100 percent voter registration. The teenage population is more ethnically diverse than the overall state population, so targeting young voters is an opportunity to increase participation among under represented minority groups. Such a policy would register far more young people in an orderly way and generate more understanding of the value of our representative democracy.

The goal of automatically preregistering all high school students to vote could be implemented in stages. For instance, Hawaii passed a law lowering the age for voter registration to 16 years of age, and when the registrant turns 18 that automatically becomes a live registration. But there is no requirement that students register, it is optional. As a follow-up to that law, now another bill has been introduced into the Hawaii Legislature to study the feasibility of mandatory preregistration of high school students. Legislators in Rhode Island have introduced legislation to implement a Hawaii-type system lowering the voter registration age to 16.¹⁶ In addition, the above-described "voters ed" could be implemented as part of a later stage.

The cost of lowering the voter registration age to 16 would be minimal. Current voter registration methods are not affected, only the legal age for voter registration would be changed. County and state databases will require minimal change to accommodate this practice. In fact, several states already have changed registration rules to encourage civic participation by youth. In Hawaii, eligible 16-year-olds are allowed the option (though not mandated) to pre-register so that their voter status is automatically activated at age 18.¹⁷ In the states of Connecticut, Iowa, Florida, Maine, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Texas, pre-registration is open to 17 year olds. Federal legislation was introduced in 2004, the Gateway to Democracy Act, to allow teenagers to preregister, with an emphasis on those applying for their driver's licenses (in most states, at 16 years of age).¹⁸ California already has a "birthday card" program where voter registration cards are mailed to approximately 30,000 18-year-olds each month on their 18th birthday who have previously "registered" and been entered into the voter database. According to the California Secretary of State's office, it would be a relatively straightforward matter to convert that program to one of actual preregistration.

These changes could be mandated for the entire state, or counties (which usually oversee voter registration) could be permitted the option of implementing preregistration of high school students, enacting preregistration on a county by county basis. Counties also could be empowered to decide whether to make preregistration voluntary or mandatory, and whether to work with school boards to enact "voter ed" curriculum. All of these options would allow counties the flexibility to try out pilot projects, and help assess the feasibility for the entire state.

Updating the database when voters move. When most people move, they file a 'change of address' form with their local post office. The post office should be directed to forward that change of address information to the managers of the statewide or county voter database. This would ensure that most voters will not be disenfranchised, even temporarily, when they move.

Overall Analysis of Non-Automatic Plans: Pre-registration of high school students offers the greatest gain for the least amount of effort and financial commitment. Counties could be permitted the option of trying this, allowing pilot projects to gauge their effectiveness and ease of implementation. Counties could be empowered to lower the voting registration age to 16 and to decide whether preregistration will be made voluntary or mandatory. Counties also could be empowered to work with school boards to implement "voter ed" curriculum and appoint a special school registration deputy in each high school to facilitate this process. Preregistration of high school students, when combined with a voter's ed curriculum and high school-based registration deputies, has great potential to engage millions of young voters in California.

Canada's method of enumeration also holds promise, especially if targeted at low-voting communities so as to keep the program costs manageable. Canada's practice of providing a phone number for voters to call to check if they're registered also is a good practice, but that should be expanded to include web sites where any voter can check to see if she or he is registered to vote and to change their address if they need to. Britain's practice of mailing a form to each household asking for details of all household residents eligible to vote, as well as Election Day Registration, hold promise if concerns can be addressed.

Combining many of these methods would increase the effectiveness of all of them.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing partisan about achieving clean election rolls, free of fraud. Nor is there anything partisan about wanting complete voter rolls so that all those eligible are registered to vote. Universal voter registration is good public policy because it establishes both clean and complete voter rolls that preserve the integrity of our elections and brings more eligible voters into the democratic process.

Most methods for automatic registration via centralized databases at the national level will require logistical support that may be difficult to arrange, such as cooperation from federal officials and bureaucracies. However, the New York plan holds great promise. Under a California version of that plan, which can be enacted without reliance on the federal government, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the California Franchise Tax Board would be required to send the Secretary of State's office the names and addresses of every person who would be 18 by the next election, and the Secretary of State would automatically register those people to vote and notify these new voters about their registration. This would add millions of eligible Californians to the voter rolls.

Preregistration of high school students to vote also holds great promise for adding millions of eligible young Californians to the voter rolls, and it could be implemented by passing a state law mandating that counties automatically preregister their high school students, or by merely giving the option to counties in California to preregister. A step in that direction would be simply to lower the age for voter registration to 16 years old. This could be done in conjunction with the

appointment of “registration deputies” for each high school, as well as enacting "voter ed" curriculum for the high schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. State political leaders should establish a task force to study the implementation of a New York-type plan for automatically registering eligible voters listed in the databases for the Department of Motor Vehicles and the California Franchise Tax Board. Part of this study should figure out how the federal Real ID Act eventually will aid in this process.
2. State political leaders should pass legislation allowing counties the option of automatically preregistering high school students to vote at the county level by lowering the age for voter registration to 16 years old. Counties also should be given the option of working with school boards to appoint “special school registration deputies” for each high school, as well as enacting "voter ed" curriculum.
3. State leaders should study the possibility of a Canada-style partial enumeration, targeting low-turnout communities by sending door-to-door canvassers who are tasked with registering voters living in selected neighborhoods. County governments also could implement this partial enumeration plan at the county level.
4. State leaders should study the possibility of the post office forwarding ‘change of address’ information to the managers of the statewide or county voter database. This would ensure that most voters will not be disenfranchised, even temporarily, when they move.
5. State leaders should ensure that every county has a web site and a phone number for voters to call to check if they're registered. The web site and phone number should allow registered voters to change their address where they are registered if necessary.

Each of these proposed steps can be implemented in the short term, without waiting for federal authorities or for new database technology for implementation. Every state’s political leaders should strive to take the lead in these important areas, establishing a clear goal of having cleaner and more complete voter rolls by the next presidential election in 2008.

¹ Voter registration information from the web site of the Secretary of State of California, http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/ror/154_2006/hist_reg_stats.pdf

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau

³ David Paul Kuhn, “Voter Fraud Charges Out West,” CBS News.com, October 14, 2004, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/10/14/politics/main649380.shtml

⁴ Two most high-profile cases in California were one in 1997 when defeated Republican incumbent Robert Dornan charged that illegal votes caused his loss to Democratic challenger Loretta Sanchez; and another in 2002 when losing Republican candidate Dean Gardner charged that illegal votes caused his loss to Democrat Nicole Parra in a race won by 266 votes.

⁵ NY State Senate Bill A03480. The text of the bill is posted on the web site of FairVote at http://fairvote.org/media/youthreg/NY_BILL.pdf.

⁶ For New York’s requirements for obtaining a driver’s license, see <http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/idlicense.htm>.

⁷ For new rules to obtain a Social Security card and number, see <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10120.html>

⁸ For California's requirements for obtaining a driver's license, see http://www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/dl_info.htm#2500

⁹ *LA Times* "New ID System May Block Voters" Date March 29, 2006

¹⁰ See the web site of the Carter-Baker commission at <http://www.american.edu/ia/cfer/>

¹¹ Richard Hasen, *Roll Call*, "Election Reform Isn't a High Priority Now, But It Should Be," May 17, 2005; Testimony before Carter-Baker commission, April 18, 2005; www.electionlawblog.com

¹² The Canadian information was received from Daniel Calingaert, Associate Director, Center for Democracy and Election Management. Also see Susan Munroe, "Registering to Vote in the 2006 Federal Election in Canada," <http://canadaonline.about.com/od/federalelections/a/register tovot e.htm>.

¹³ The Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom, "Understanding Electoral Registration: The extent and nature of non-registration in Britain," Research Report, September 2005, pg.9-13, http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/Undreg-FINAL_18366-13545_E_N_S_W_.pdf

¹⁴ Any person may register to vote online in California at http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.htm.

¹⁵ To read the Wisconsin law, see 2003 WISCONSIN ACT 265, SECTION 41. 6.28 (2) (b) at the web site of FairVote http://fairvote.org/media/youthreg/WI_LAW.pdf

¹⁶ For an excellent clearinghouse of information on preregistration laws see the "100% Registration Project" of FairVote at <http://fairvote.org/?page=1543>. The Rhode Island bill would create pre-registration of high school students to vote since it would "authorize persons sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) years of age who preregister to vote to automatically be registered upon reaching age eighteen (18)." Here is the short and simple text of the Rhode Island bill from http://fairvote.org/media/rtv/legislation/RI_LC03037.doc:

SECTION 1. Chapter 17-9.1 of the General Laws entitled "Registration of Voters" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

17-9.1-33. Age. - (a) Every person who has reached the age of eighteen (18) years or who is seventeen (17) years of age and will be eighteen (18) years of age by the date of the next election, and is otherwise qualified to register may do so for that election.

(b) A person who is otherwise qualified to register and is at least sixteen (16) years of age but will not be eighteen (18) years of age by the date of the next election may preregister upon satisfactory proof of age and shall be automatically registered upon reaching age eighteen (18).

¹⁷ Here is the text of the Hawaii law:

* §11-12 Age; place of registering.* (a) Every person who has reached the age of eighteen years or who is seventeen years of age and will be eighteen years of age by the date of the next election, and is otherwise qualified to register may do so for that election. The person shall then be listed upon the appropriate county general register and precinct list. No person shall register or vote in any other precinct than that in which the person resides except as provided in section 11-21. (b) A person who is otherwise qualified to register and is at least sixteen years of age but will not be eighteen years of age by the date of the next election may preregister upon satisfactory proof of age and shall be automatically registered upon reaching age eighteen.

¹⁸ See H.R.4972, Gateway to Democracy Act of 2004, at http://fairvote.org/media/youthreg/FEDL_BILL.pdf