California’s New Political Realities: The Impact of the Youth Vote on Our Electoral Landscape

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New Policy Brief

California’s New Political Realities: The Impact of the Youth Vote on Our Electoral Landscape

Available at:
regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/ccep
Talk Summary

Highlights of new research on the CA youth vote:

1. How did the November 2014 youth vote differ from that of the rest of the electorate?
2. How will youth voting impact the state’s electoral landscape in the future?
3. What can be done to improve youth voter turnout in California and elsewhere?
Study Methodology

Voter Data
• California Secretary of State Voter Registration Files

Population Data
• California Department of Finance
How did the November 2014 youth vote differ from that of the rest of the electorate?
What do you think the youth eligible voter turnout was in the November 2014 general election?
8.2\%
Eligible Voter Turnout by Age Cohort
2014 General Election

Percentage of Citizens Who Voted

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+ Total

Data Source: California Secretary of State, 2014
3.5 million eligible youth in California

285,000 youth actually voted
Youth Underrepresented Among Voters

14.5% of eligible voter population

3.9% of all voters
Voter Registration Rates
Low Youth Registration

- 52% of eligible youth registered to vote
- Youth registration remained steady from 2010
- Number of youth voters decreased 50 percent
Voter Registration Rates by Age Cohort
2014 General Election

Percentage of Citizens Who Registered to Vote

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Total

Data Source: California Secretary of State, 2014
Voter Registration by Party
Youth Driving State’s Decline in Major Party Registration

Registration by Party

- 43% - Democratic
- 28% - Republican
- 23% - NPP

Youth Party Registration

- 36.7% - Democratic
- 19.6% - Republican
- 35.6% - NPP
- NPP % is up for youth from 29% just two years ago
How will youth voting impact the state's electoral landscape in the future?
Population shifts bring challenges to the strength of CA’s youth vote

- Age 18-24 proportion of the state’s CVAP is projected to decline steadily over the next 18 years
- CA’s eligible voter population will be steadily aging
2014-2040 Projected Citizen Voting-Age Population by Age
California

Percentage of Total Citizen Voting Age Population

Data Source: California Department of Finance Population Projections
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Projecting California’s Youth Vote

- Assuming youth eligible turnout rates constant through this period:

- The 2012 eligible turnout rate for youth – 30.2%
Projected Share of the Vote by Age Cohorts: 2012-2014
California General Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age 18-24</th>
<th>Age 64-75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2032</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: California Secretary of State, 2014

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California Youth Vote: Declining Eligible Voters Will Bring Challenges

- Challenge to youth voice
- Policy impacts
- Youth will need to turn out at higher rates
What can be done to improve youth voter turnout in California and elsewhere
What Can be Done About Low Turnout for youth?

- Electoral System
- Outreach
- Civics Education – High Schools
- New Approaches
Why Does Youth Voting Matter?

- Youth voices matter
- 3.5 million eligible youth in California – 14.5% of eligible pop
- Youth play important role in democratic process
- Youth voting benefits more than just youth
- Increasing youth turnout is critical to boosting CA’s future turnout
Thank you

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