

Permits 17-year-olds to Vote in Primary and Special Elections If They Will Turn 18 By the Next General Election.

THE QUESTION: Should 17-year-olds who will be 18 by a general election be allowed to vote in the primary and special elections in that election cycle?

THE SITUATION

In even-numbered years, California holds two statewide elections—the primary and the general election. In the primary election, voters determine which candidates will compete in the general election. In the general election, voters determine which candidates will win elective office. Statewide ballot measures may also be considered at both of these elections. In addition, there are special elections to fill vacancies, and local government elections to elect local office holders and consider local ballot measures.

In California, in order to vote, an individual must be at least 18 years old at the time of an election. A person may pre-register to vote at 16 years of age, and then they are automatically a registered voter when they turn 18 years old.

THE PROPOSAL

Prop 18 would allow certain 17-year-old citizens to vote. If a person is 17 years old and will be 18 years old by the next general election, they will be able to vote in the primary election and any special elections which occur prior to the next general election. Any registered voter may run for elective office, so such 17-year-olds could run for elective office if they meet all other existing eligibility requirements for such elective office.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Prop 18 would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for counties across California every two-year election cycle to pay for the extra voting materials and time the election officials will need to be working. The State would have to provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in support for this idea, including updating voter registration systems. This is less than 1% of the state's general funding budget.

SUPPORTERS SAY

- ★ Prop 18 will allow 17-18 year-olds to participate in a full election cycle.
- ★ It will boost the number of youth who actually vote.
- ★ 17 and 18 year-olds are heavily affected by policies so they should be able to vote on those policies.
- ★ When 17-year-olds can't vote in the primary it discourages them from voting in the general when they are 18 because they didn't pick the candidates that are on the ballot.
- ★ Encourages young people to be involved in the lifelong journey of voting -- one of the most essential factors in democracy.

OPPONENTS SAY

- ★ Allowing 17-year-olds to vote in primaries on tax issues and debt issuance is not right because they have not paid taxes--they will be biased by who influences them.
- ★ 17-year-olds are too young to vote and need more life experience before they are ready.
- ★ 17-year-olds' brains are not fully developed in the logic and reasoning portion so they would just be making bad decisions.
- ★ Schools would persuade 17-year-olds to vote one side or the other by putting up posters or having teachers advocate for certain policies.
- ★ Only 18 other states allow 17-year-olds to vote.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Supporters: At press time there is no organized campaign committee.

Opponents: At press time there is no organized campaign committee.

Who can vote?

You may register to vote in California if:

- ★ You are a U.S. citizen and California resident.
- ★ You will be at least 18 years old on election day.
- ★ You are not in prison or on parole for a felony.
- ★ You have not been judged mentally incompetent.

When must you re-register to vote?

You need to fill out a new voter registration form if:

- ★ You change your residence address or mailing address.
- ★ You change your name.
- ★ You want to change your political party affiliation.

If you registered and your name does not appear on the voter list at your voting location, you have a right to cast a provisional ballot at any polling place in your county.