



# NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

BM06:121

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, September 19, 2006

Contact: Secretary of State  
Nghia Nguyen-Demovic  
916-653-6575

Department of Education  
Hilary McLean  
916-319-0818

## **Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, State Schools Chief Jack O'Connell Announce Creation of the "Student Voting Project" To Increase Civic Engagement in Our Schools**

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell and partners in education announced today that they have established the "Student Voting Project," a bipartisan effort to increase student knowledge about democratic principles and processes in order to address a growing concern about declining student engagement in civic and governmental affairs.

"Today's youth are the future of our democracy," said Secretary Bruce McPherson. "The 'Student Voting Project' was established to encourage young people to participate and have confidence in government and the elections process."

"Our nation's founders recognized that our government would survive only with educated and committed citizens," O'Connell said. "Nothing is more fundamental to the success of government by the people and for the people, than citizens who are informed and engaged. Our founding fathers advocated for public schools for that very reason. Today it is every bit as important that all young people learn about the Constitution that governs our country and that they understand its importance in keeping our country free and strong."

The Student Voting Project is planning two programs to encourage civic education and involvement for this fall. The first project highlighting Constitution Day took place today at John F. Kennedy High School in Sacramento. A new federal requirement enacted in 2005 designates September 17<sup>th</sup> of each year "Constitution Day." Schools are required to "hold an educational program on the United States Constitution" on that day and since September 17<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday this year, the Student Voting Project encouraged schools to hold their educational activities on Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. In conjunction with the Campaign for the Civic Mission for Schools and the Constitutional Rights Foundation, resources were provided to California schools to assist them in planning their activities or lessons.

Second, the Student Voting Project is conducting a "Student Mock Election" on October 24<sup>th</sup> to help young people become familiar with the elections process. Students will have the opportunity to make their choices known for U.S. Senate, Governor, and state propositions. The Student Mock Election is aimed at promoting voter education efforts among California

-more-

students to ensure that they know how they should be involved in the democratic process to make a difference. To date almost 300 schools in California have signed up for this program. The results of the mock election will be available online at [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov).

Partners involved in the Student Voting Project who participated in the event today included the *Campaign for the Civic Mission for Schools – Constitutional Rights Foundation, California State School Boards Association, California Parent-Teachers Association, California League of Women Voters, California Association of Student Councils, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association and Center for Civic Education.*

The Student Voting Project was formed based on the belief that activities like “Constitution Day” and the “Student Mock Election” can make a difference and add meaning to the principle of the “consent of the governed” as it applies to our students.

For information about the “Student Voting Project” including organizations involved in the contact the Secretary of State’s Office at 916-657-2166.