



# NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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## **Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Launches October Voter Education and Participation Month**

*Statewide Effort to Promote Voter Registration and Increase Voter Turnout*

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson announced an unprecedented statewide effort aimed at increasing voter participation by reminding Californians that they can make a difference in their communities by voting this November. Secretary McPherson has partnered with the education community, non-profit groups, media organizations, ethnic groups, disability advocacy organizations and women's groups to kick-off October, which is Voter Education and Participation Month.

"As the state's Chief Elections Officer, I have made it my priority to ensure that all Californians have access to the electoral process," said Secretary Bruce McPherson. "By reminding Californians about the importance of registering and voting and how it impacts their daily lives, I hope to motivate them to participate this fall and beyond."

Below is a partial list of activities and outreach efforts for Voter Education and Participation Month:

- A statewide outreach effort to form partnerships with colleges and universities to motivate young people to become more engaged in the democratic process;
- An extraordinary coordinated effort with a diverse group of ethnic organizations across the state to increase voter registration and participation among their constituencies;
- A partnership with a diverse group of ethnic media organizations to encourage eligible Californians to register and vote;
- A collaboration with county elections officials statewide and members of the disability community to ensure that voters with disabilities have the best resources available, allowing them to vote privately and independently;
- Partnerships with businesses such as the California Grocers Association and the California Bankers Association to make registering to vote more convenient and accessible for all eligible voters;
- Secretary McPherson will be hosting a voter registration drive in front of the Secretary of State's Office every Tuesday during the month of October and each day during the last week leading up to the close of registration on October 23, 2006;
- Secretary McPherson has sent an important message to all of California's more than 200,000 state employees, through their payroll stubs, encouraging them to register and vote;

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- A partnership with healthcare clinics across the state to increase opportunities for voter registration;
- The introduction of a new, user-friendly overseas military voting ballot to make voting for our service men and women overseas as easy as possible;
- A partnership with the League of Women Voters to provide easy to read, user-friendly information for California's voters about the upcoming election through the Easy Voter Guide; and
- A partnership with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell to form the "Student Voting Project" – a program to target grade school and high school students statewide to encourage them to become more civically aware.

According to a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) report, California's electorate increasingly does not reflect the state's population and voter registration has grown at a slower rate than the State's population. According to the Secretary of State's most recent report of registration, only 69 percent of eligible voters are registered to vote.

Given the results of the report, Secretary McPherson has joined with a diverse group of community and media organizations to ensure that all of California's eligible voters have the tools they need to participate on Election Day.

Earlier this month, Secretary McPherson joined with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, La Opinion and Univision to launch a massive voter registration project by inserting 250,000 voter registration cards in the Spanish-language newspaper to make it easier and more convenient for their readers to register to vote. Secretary McPherson also announced a similar effort with five Vietnamese publications to insert 38,000 voter registration cards.

Eligible voters can register to vote in the November 7, 2006 General Election until Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Voter registration cards are available at local elections offices, libraries, and DMV and post offices throughout the state. For more information, visit the Secretary of State's website at [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov) or call 1-800-345-VOTE.

"I want to do all I can to ensure that all eligible voters register to vote and participate on Election Day. With November 7<sup>th</sup> rapidly approaching, it is my hope that these partnerships and extensive voter outreach efforts highlighting Voter Education and Participation Month will encourage more Californians to take part in the democratic process," Secretary McPherson concluded.