

# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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### Secretary of State Bowen Delivers Online Voter Registration

*Application at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov)*

**SACRAMENTO** – Registering to vote is easier than ever thanks to the latest phase of an online voter registration application developed by the California Secretary of State in coordination with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), California’s 58 county elections officials, and their election management system vendors.

“Though most states still cannot offer online voter registration, I am thrilled to say the largest state in the nation is ready to roll. Today the Internet replaces the mailbox for thousands of Californians wanting to register to vote,” said Secretary of State Debra Bowen, California’s chief elections officer. “Online or on paper, California’s laws and procedures for processing voter registration applications are identical. Security is a critical part of elections, and I want to emphasize this online application is not ‘automatic registration.’ The information provided in an online application still must be verified by a county elections official before an applicant can be added to the voter rolls.”

The voter registration application is at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov). Paper applications are available at many government offices, DMV offices, post offices, public libraries, and more. The last day to register to vote for the November 6 General Election is October 22.

Earlier this year, Secretary Bowen secured \$1.8 million in federal funding for this phase of the voter registration application project, which included Help America Vote Act dollars and a grant from the Federal Voting Assistance Program. County elections offices will benefit in cost savings thanks to the reduced staff time devoted to data entry.

In 2009, Secretary Bowen launched an online fillable application that could be printed, taking the project as far as she could without the significant funding and coordination required between many other government agencies to make online submittal possible. Since then, the online offering has enabled more than 550,000 Californians to fill out the voter registration application and then print, sign and mail it. The data is provided electronically to county elections officials, who maintain voter records. Beginning today, people can electronically send the entire voter registration application via a secure infrastructure developed by Secretary of State and DMV staff.

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To register to vote, a Californian must complete a brief voter registration application on paper or online. When a person registers online, the system will search the DMV database for the applicant's California driver license or identification card number, date of birth, and last four digits of the applicant's social security number. If the information is found and the applicant authorizes elections officials' use of the DMV signature, an electronic image of the DMV signature will be added to that voter registration application. If there is no signature on file with DMV, all of the applicant's information will still be transmitted to the county elections office; the applicant will just need to click "print," then sign the paper application and mail it. (California law requires that the applicant sign the voter registration application, which is considered a legal affidavit.) As always, the county elections official will contact the applicant when the voter registration application is approved or when more information is needed to confirm eligibility.

County elections offices maintain voter records and can confirm the status of a person's voter registration. An all-county portal is at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/registration-status](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/registration-status).

Residents of California are eligible to vote if they are United States citizens; at least 18 years old by Election Day; not in prison or county jail (serving a state prison sentence or a term of more than one year in jail for a defined "low-level" felony) or on parole, post-release community supervision or post-sentencing probation for a felony conviction; and not judged by a court to be mentally incompetent. A person must re-register to vote after moving, changing names or changing political party preference.

For more information on registering to vote, visit [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_faq.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_faq.htm). Keep up with the latest California election news and trivia by following [@CASOSvote](https://twitter.com/CASOSvote) on Twitter. To subscribe to state election news via email, RSS feed or Twitter, go to [www.sos.ca.gov/multimedia](http://www.sos.ca.gov/multimedia).

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*Disclaimer: This effort is partially funded through by a grant from the Federal Voting Assistance Program. The content of this information does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the federal government, and no official federal government endorsement should be inferred.*