



April 25, 2023

Members Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Senator Steven M. Glazer, Chair

SCA 2

OPPOSE

Members of the Committee,

Election Integrity Project® *California*, Inc. (EIPCa) **Opposes SCA 2** as written and amended as of the date of this letter.

A mere three years ago, the legislature proposed Proposition 20 to the people of California, asking them to approve the eligibility of 17-year-olds to vote in the Primary Election provided they would be 18 by the date of the General Election.

Proposition 20 was **soundly defeated** by the people of California, **56% to 44%**. It is therefore **an offense** to the people the legislature is sworn to represent to now propose SCA 2. **The people have spoken resoundingly on this topic. It should not be revisited.**

The people of California rejected the lowering of the voting age for several immutable reasons:

1. Anyone who has been 17 and is now ten or more years older knows by personal experience that 17-year-olds do NOT have the maturity or life experience to cast a reasonable, well-researched and considered vote.
2. 17-year-olds are not legally adults, for good reason.

Both the federal and California governments have set the age of 18 to be the age of legal responsibility. In California, an individual even one day less than age 18 may not enter into a legal contract, or even use a tanning salon. **Seventeen-year-olds are not even allowed to participate in a school field trip** without a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian.

California law puts extra rules and restrictions on driver's licenses of 16- and 17-year-olds because of concerns about **maturity and judgment**. The license restrictions disappear on the 18th birthday.

California law reflects the widespread understanding of **scientific evidence** that age-related brain development is connected to the ability to reason, analyze and comprehend cause-and-effect. The agreed-upon age of reason, both statewide and nationally, is 18 (though scientific research would set the age closer to 25 or 26).

3. 17-year-olds are captive audiences in school.

Voters need to hear all sides of an issue to make an informed choice. Most 17-year-olds are still in high school, dependent on teachers for grades and important recommendation letters vital to their future. They are **a captive audience to public employee union members** five days a week, with a strong incentive to do whatever teachers recommend.

If 17-year-olds are allowed to vote, perhaps even filling out their mail-in ballot right in the classroom under the influence of their instructors, these children are much more likely to do the bidding of their adult supervisors rather than think for themselves.

4. High school students have little to no real-world experience to inform their voting choices.

Virtually all 17-year-olds are still in high school and fully dependent on the adults in their lives for their very existence and future. Most 18-year-olds are at least partially in the workforce developing responsibility for themselves and their lives, and surrounded by a more balanced dialogue regarding societal issues.

High school is a preparation for successful adulthood. It is the time to develop in our youth a sense of civic responsibility and an understanding of America's unique and successful experiment in self-governance. It is the time for pre-adults to learn the value of community service and begin to envision themselves as life-long contributing members of society. It is the time to help them evolve from the self-centeredness of youth to the other-centeredness of mature adulthood. **That evolution is not complete until they truly experience the "real world".**

5. Political participation is open to all. Voting is different.

Our youth show magnificent potential to manage the future. **But let's not blur the line between potential and readiness.** Voting is an adult responsibility. 18 is the age of majority. Allowing minors to vote is wrong and could be disastrous.

EIPCa strongly urges a NO vote on SCA 2.

Sincerely,

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