



## CALIFORNIA'S NEW MOTOR VOTER LAW: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. I heard that California passed a New Motor Voter law. What does it do?

The goal of the New Motor Voter law is to create an easy, automated way to register to vote when you get a driver's license or state ID card at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If you have already given your name, address, birthdate, and other relevant information to the DMV, the hope is that you will be able to register to vote by simply confirming you are eligible and being given the opportunity to provide additional voter registration information such as your party preference, a preference to receive election materials in another language, or whether you want to get your ballot in the mail.

In addition, the New Motor Voter law requires the Secretary of State (SoS) and the DMV to develop technology to transmit data on unregistered voters from the DMV to the SoS that can be used for **outreach and education purposes only**.

### 2. Is California's New Motor Voter law the same as Oregon's Automatic Registration law?

No. California's law is distinct from Oregon's in four important ways:

1. CA requires a person to attest that they are eligible to vote at the DMV before they can be registered.
2. CA will offer the attestation and any other voter registration questions in 10 languages.
3. CA will give a person the chance to decline voter registration at the DMV.
4. CA's law offers some protection against any state law penalties should someone inadvertently register to vote or mistakenly vote as a result of their DMV transaction. (Note: These state law protections may mitigate the potential federal immigration consequences for persons who inadvertently register to vote, but may not offer full protection.)

### 3. Does the New Motor Voter law change who is eligible to vote?

No. The New Motor Voter law does not change who can register to vote, only how you register to vote at the DMV. To register to vote you must be a U.S. citizen, a California resident, 18 years of age or older by the next election, and not currently imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony.

### 4. When will we see these New Motor Voter changes?

The Governor's Office, the SoS, and the DMV hope to have a fully automated voter registration system in place at the DMV before the 2016 elections. In fact, \$2.35 million in the state budget was allocated exclusively for improvements to voter registration at DMV. This system was already under discussion due to a notice of voter registration violations provided to the SoS and the DMV by a group of civic organizations and individuals deprived of voter registration by DMV, and negotiations led by ACLU, Demos, Project Vote, and Morrison Foerster (on behalf of Common Cause, the League of Women Voters of California, ACCE Institute, National Council of La Raza, and three individuals).

The transfer of data for those who decline voter registration at the DMV is subject to additional funding, completion of California's statewide voter registration database, and details to be worked out between the DMV and the SoS. Thus, implementation of this part of the law is not anticipated until sometime prior to the 2018 elections.

## 5. What is next for implementation of the New Motor Voter law?

The details of how an automated voter registration system will look at the DMV are still being negotiated. However, the hope is that a variety of stakeholders will be invited into the process as it moves forward to ensure that best practices are put into place to ensure a modernized, accessible, and seamless voter registration system that will increase the number of registered voters in California.

For information on recommended best practices for automated voter registration please see “[Electronic Voter Registration: Modernizing our Democratic Process](#),” released by the NALEO Educational Fund.

To get updates on public hearings on the New Motor Voter law and other important innovations in California’s voter registration laws, please visit one of the following websites:



[www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)



[www.advancingjustice-la.org](http://www.advancingjustice-la.org)



[www.acluca.org](http://www.acluca.org)



[www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)



[www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org)



[www.naleo.org](http://www.naleo.org)

And remember, you can always register to vote or update your voter registration at:

[registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov)

