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## Online voter registration and get out the vote rallies roll across the Southland

By Steve Scauzillo, SGVN  
[twitter.com/stevscaz](http://twitter.com/stevscaz)  
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Taboo ( Jaime Luis Gomez ) from the group Black Eyed Peas and a former Rosemead High School student poses for a photograph with Maribel Delgado of Huntington Park during a Rock the Vote! Engage and Empower event at California State University at Los Angeles on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2012 in Los Angeles. (SGVN/Staff photo by Keith Birmingham)

### Gallery: [Rock The Vote At Cal State Los Angeles](#)

While other states are imposing stricter rules on voting, new laws in California have made registering to vote here easier, leaders from state government and the entertainment industry boasted on Tuesday.

Their message was part of National Voter Registration Day, which featured included dozens of local get out the vote events from Los Angeles to San Bernardino.

Among the most significant changes: voters can now register to vote online, thanks to legislation approved in 2010.

The law - which went into effect last week - is the biggest change to impact voter registration in the state since the advent of multilingual application forms, said Hal Dash, chairman of Cerrell Associates, a political consulting firm in Los Angeles.



A Rock the Vote ! Engage and Empower event at California State University at Los Angeles on Tuesday, in Los Angeles. (SGVN/Staff photo by Keith Durlinger)



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Since Sept. 19, about 25,000 people have registered to vote online through the state website, according to state officials. Of those, about 61 percent are under 35 years of age, said Secretary of State Debra Bowen.

"On the first day it was available, 10,000 people registered to vote," Bowen said Tuesday at a Rock the Vote! event at Cal State Los Angeles.

So far, younger people have dominated the use of new online registration tools, she said. And the tools are needed - the

largest group of unregistered voters in the state are 30 and under, she said.

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"You can throw away your paper forms, get out your iPads and your Blackberries and register to vote," she urged those gathered at the CSULA Student Union plaza.

Another law, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown Monday, allows voters to register on election day. But that doesn't go into effect until 2014. For now, the last day to register to vote before the Nov. 6 presidential election is midnight, Oct. 22.

The county will continue to see more registered voters as a result of these new laws, Dash said.

"Anything that will help people to vote, and help them register to vote ... is better for democracy," Dash said.

In California, about 17.5 million people are registered to vote. About 6.5 million people who are eligible are not registered, Bowen said. Half of those eligible, unregistered voters are in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder County Clerk Dean Logan said.

"Here in L.A. County, no one will get in the way of having your voice heard and your vote counted," Logan said.

Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Los Angeles, urging the crowd at CSULA to register to vote, said California is encouraging people to exercise this fundamental democratic right, unlike other states that are restricting it.

Courts are reviewing photo ID voting laws in Pennsylvania, Florida and Colorado. Supporters say these laws are aimed at rooting out voter fraud. But critics charge they are attempting to curtail Hispanics from voting. Hispanics generally vote Democratic and voted for President Obama in 2008 in large numbers.

"People around the country are trying to pass laws to make it impossible for you to vote. We are not like that," Becerra said.

Raphael Sonenshein, director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Politics at Cal State L.A., said after 2010, when Republicans gained majorities in certain statehouses, voting laws in those states became more restrictive.

"In some cases, they are preventing people who have been regular voters for 40 and 50 years. So that makes no sense," Sonenshein said.

About six potential new voters lined up at Pasadena City Hall Tuesday afternoon, part of the national event that included 13 other Pasadena locations.

Volunteers Denise Jones and Robin D. Smith of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a national group, backed up by Lilia Novelo of the City Clerk's office, agreed it's important to make registration easier, especially for young people and seniors who may need some help, and to remind those eligible to cast their votes Nov. 6.

"My button says 'Register and Vote,' not just 'Register to Vote,'" Jones said. "It's important to get people to the polls, there's a lot of issues out there in the atmosphere, and everyone's voice is incredibly significant."

Smith, originally from Washington, D.C., said she lived in Florida "two elections ago" and remembered the controversy over the vote count. "I knew when I came here I wanted to become more involved."

Smith said she also volunteered at a registration drive held at PCC Tuesday.

"We like to get these kids just out of high school," she said.

Alex Wasserman, who just turned 18, attends the Los Angeles County High School for the Performing Arts. He registered to vote Tuesday at CSULA.

"I feel my generation doesn't see the importance of voting. A lot of students don't take it seriously," Wasserman said.

Among those encouraging political action from young people at the CSULA registration rally was musical artist Taboo, of the popular hip-hop group The Black Eyed Peas.

"I'm here as a Mexican-American to get people to vote and to say 'I want to make a difference in our community,'" said Taboo, who grew up in Boyle Heights and Rosemead, he said.

Rocio Aguayo, a student at Arroyo Valley High School in San Bernardino and a member of Inland Congregations United for Change, said the group plans to contact 30,000 eligible voters. So far, she said, they've reached 3,000.

"The fact is, I can't vote because I'm only 16, but so many people can but don't," she said. "There are so many big issues that affect me and also affect these people who don't vote. I don't understand why you wouldn't."

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Aguayo said she was particularly concerned about Proposition 30, a tax increase that supporters say is needed to avoid painful cuts to school budgets.

But just a block from City Hall, San Bernardino resident Alexandria Williams said she hadn't registered and didn't plan to.

"I think it's just a bunch of back-and-forth from all the candidates, but never anything about me," said Williams, 21. "I guess it's a way to have a voice, but there are other ones."

At Cal Poly Pomona, an Associated Students Inc. registration drive resulted in 61 new voters.

"We've been holding voter registration events all summer and altogether its over 500 people," said Chris Osuala, ASI president.

Voters who have a signature on file with the DMV or a state ID number can register to vote completely online by going to [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov) and filling out the online forms.

People can register in person at city clerk offices, libraries and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Registrations can also be done directly at the local county registrar recorder's office.

Staff writers Ryan Hagen, Andrew Edwards and Janette Williams contributed to this article.

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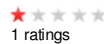
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### Students suspected of sexual assault at La Puente High School

Varsity soccer players are suspected of sexually assaulting freshman soccer players at La Puente High School. An attorney for the alleged victims spoke Monday regarding the allegations and lawsuit being filed by those students.

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