

Efforts to Lower the Voting Age in California, 1995-2020

June 28, 2023 | Avalon Bauman

Did you know that the California state legislature has a history of considering bills to lowering the voting age that dates back to 1995?

There have been multiple attempts, from both the senate and assembly, to give young people voting rights as early as age 14. The closest the state came to making a change to the current voting age was in 2020 with Proposition 18, which would have given 17-year-olds who would be 18 by the time of general elections to vote in primaries. California voters did not pass the proposition, with 56% of voters opposed.

See the next page:



Efforts to Lower the Voting Age in California

1995-2020

1995

ACA 23

- State-level
- Ages 14+
- Failed
- All Elections

Proposed allowing voting for those aged 14 and older. It was never set for a hearing in a committee.

2004

SCA 19

- State-level
- Ages 14+
- Failed
- All Elections

Originally included language that would have allowed voting starting at the age of 14, which would have counted for 1/2 of a vote. It was later amended to allow full voting for young people starting at the age of 16.

2016

ACA 2 & ACA 7

- State-level
- 18 Before General Election
- Failed
- All Elections

Would have allowed 17 year-olds that are turning 18 before the next general election to vote in primary or special elections taking place prior to the next general election. It failed to pass the Assembly .

2016

ACA 4

- State-level
- 18 Before General Election
- Passed

This precursor to Prop 18 put forth the constitutional amendment allowing 17-year-olds to vote on the ballot in 2020. It passed during the 2019-20 legislative session.

2017

ACA 10

- State-level
- 18 Before General Election
- Failed

Would have allowed 17 year-olds that are turning 18 before the next general election to vote in primary or special elections taking place prior to the next general election. It failed to pass the Assembly and no vote was taken on the Assembly floor.

2019

ACA 8

- State-level
- 18 Before General Election
- Failed

Would have allowed 17 year-olds that are turning 18 before the next general election to vote in primary or special elections taking place prior to the next general election. It failed to pass the Assembly.

2020

Prop 18

- State-level
- 18 Before General Election
- Failed

This 2019 constitutional amendment would have allowed 17-year-olds that are 18 by the time of the general election to vote in all primary elections. It failed at the ballot with 56 percent of voters in opposition to the measure.

