

## California Voting for 17-Year-Olds Amendment (March 2020)

[https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Voting\\_for\\_17-Year-Olds\\_Amendment\\_\(March\\_2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Voting_for_17-Year-Olds_Amendment_(March_2020))

Introduced by Rep. Evan Low (D-28), Rep. Randy Voepel (R-71) and Rep. Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-80), the California Voting for 17-Year-Olds Amendment may appear on the ballot in California as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on March 3, 2020 or November 3, 2020.

The ballot measure would amend Article II of the California Constitution to lower the voting age from 18 to 17.

**Text of measure:** Constitutional change – the measure would amend Section 2 of Article II of the California Constitution to say, “A United States citizen who is at least 17 years of age in this State may vote.”

**Arguments for: Generation Citizen** submitted an argument in support of the constitutional amendment, which said, "Like many states, California suffers from low voter participation. Extending voting rights to 17-year-olds can spur a long-term increase in turnout, because voting is habitual, and research shows that age 17 is a better time than 18 to establish the habit. California has already taken important steps to encourage youth engagement, including allowing 16-year-olds to preregister to vote and establishing High School Voter Education Weeks. ACA 8 builds on these efforts with a solution that has proven effective in the dozen countries that allow voting by citizens under age 18, and in the municipalities in the United States that have taken such a step."

**Arguments against: Election Integrity Project California, Inc.** filed an argument in opposition to the constitutional amendment, which said, "17-year-olds are legal minors. Under that definition, they are still considered children. They are almost all still living at home and under the strong influence of their parents. This is not conducive to independent thought and voting without undue pressure from their immediate superiors... 17- year-olds will almost always still be in high school, and under the strong influence of their teachers. This again makes it less likely that they would be expressing their own, independently thought-out choices were they to be allowed to vote."

**Status:** In California, a two-thirds vote is needed in each chamber of the California State Legislature to refer a constitutional amendment to the ballot for voter consideration. On August 22, 2019, the California State Assembly voted 57 to 16 in favor of the amendment, needing 53 votes to pass. **The amendment now goes to the California State Senate for a vote.**