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Only 19% of Rhode Island Teens Are Pre-registered to Vote

County pre-registration rates range from 12% to 26%

Los Angeles, CA -- 16- and 17-year-old Rhode Island high school students can pre-register to vote. Pre-registered students are automatically registered to vote once they turn 18.

A new analysis released by The Civics Center reveals that 19% of 16- and 17-year-olds are pre-registered to vote in Rhode Island. [The Civics Center](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes high school voter registration and civic engagement.

Providence County, with the largest population in the State, has the lowest preregistration rate -- just 12%. On the flip side, Bristol County, with the lowest population has the highest preregistration rate at 26%

In 2011, Rhode Island's [Voter ID law](#) took effect requiring voters to provide a valid form of identification upon showing up to cast their ballots on the day of the election. In all counties except for Bristol, the pre-registration rate was lower than 20%.

[A recent study](#) suggests that Voter ID laws disenfranchise those who may not already possess or have access to a driver's license and other valid forms of identification--a potential problem for many 16- and 17-year-olds. In fact, according to the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#), Rhode Island voter registration and turnout have decreased among young people since the state's Voter ID law took effect.

"Pre-registering teens is vital to getting young people to vote and ensuring they have an opportunity to shape their future," said The Civics Center's Director Laura W. Brill, a practicing attorney and former law clerk to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The Civics Center offers resources to high schools to promote voter registration.

"Democracy, quite simply, is meant for everybody. We should always be looking for ways to make it easier for people to participate," [said Rhode Island Senator Gayle L. Goldin](#), who proposed bills to both repeal RI's Voter ID law and to allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will turn 18 on or before the general election. "When we identify roadblocks that keep people from participating, it's our job in the General Assembly to address them, and these bills are meant to do just that."



Rhode Island Counties
Based on Pre-Registration Data

Descending by percent pre-registered

Rhode Island County	# pre-registered in 2018	Estimated % pre-registered in 2018
Bristol	346	26%
Washington	680	19%
Newport	380	19%
Kent	701	18%
Providence	2,119	12%

Based on data provided from the Rhode Island Secretary of State and the United States Census Bureau.

About The Civics Center.

The Civics Center is dedicated to building the foundations of youth civic participation in high schools through education, research, advocacy, and volunteer organizing. The Civics Center is a project of Community Partners, a charitable 501(c)(3) organization. For more information, please visit www.TheCivicsCenter.org.

For our reports on pre-registration in [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Oregon](#), [Utah](#), and [Delaware](#) please see our prior posts in the links provided.

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