



For Immediate Release: August 21, 2019

## Less than 1% of Maine 17-year-olds are Pre-registered to Vote

*County rates range from 0% to 2.3%*

**Los Angeles, CA** -- High school students in Maine can pre-register to vote at 17 years old. Students who pre-register are automatically registered to vote when they turn 18.

According to a new analysis released today by The Civics Center, *only 0.8%* of 17-year-olds in the state are pre-registered to vote. [The Civics Center](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes high school voter registration and civic engagement.

Maine's law allowing 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote took effect in [January 2018](#). As of June 19, 2019, Maine became the [16th state to adopt automatic voter registration](#) after [Governor Janet Mills signed a bill](#) that would automatically register eligible citizens to vote--unless they opt out--at designated state agencies, such as the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Beginning in January 2022, the law will also allow [16-year-olds to pre-register to vote](#) once they obtain their first driver's license.

Youth ages 18-29 make up only [15%](#) of the Maine population. In the 2018 election, voter turnout amongst 18-29 year-olds in the state was [36.4%](#), slightly above the 31% national average.

Despite the expansion in legislation and youth turnout, every county in Maine has a pre-registration rate lower than 3%.

In Cumberland County, which has the highest population of 17-year-olds in the state, the pre-registration rate is 1.5%. In counties with lower populations of 17-year-olds--such as Lincoln, Somerset, and Washington Counties--the pre-registration rate is 0%.

"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. "Schools, students, and communities working collaboratively can use pre-registration to dramatically increase youth civic engagement," Brill said. The Civics Center offers resources to high schools to promote voter registration.

By encouraging all Maine citizens to register and cast their ballot, officials acknowledge the importance of getting involved. "If you think it doesn't matter, then you're surrounding your future's decisions to be made by other people," [said Matthew Dunlap, Maine Secretary of State](#). "I would urge people to really participate and have your voice be heard."



## Maine Pre-registration by County

### Descending by percentage pre-registered

Maine County	# pre-registered as of 7/25/19	Estimated % pre-registered as of 7/25/19
Sagadahoc	9	2.3%
Knox	8	1.9%
Waldo	8	1.9%
Cumberland	49	1.5%
York	27	1.1%
Androscoggin	8	0.6%
Penobscot	9	0.5%
Piscataquis	1	0.5%
Aroostook	4	0.5%
Hancock	2	0.4%
Franklin	1	0.3%
Oxford	1	0.1%
Kennebec	1	0.1%
Lincoln	0	0.0%
Somerset	0	0.0%
Washington	0	0.0%

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Based on data provided by the Maine Secretary of State and 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](http://www.TheCivicsCenter.org).

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

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