

# Voting Access and Preparation for Youth in Foster Care: Strategies for Supporting Civic Engagement

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# Civic Engagement for Youth in Foster Care

## Governor signs bill that encourages foster youth to vote

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A voter puts her ballot into the box at Fire Station 73 in Newhall on Tuesday. Katharine Lotze/Signal

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Efforts to engage California's foster youth in the political process have become law after Governor Jerry Brown signed a new piece of legislation this week.

## The Imprint YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS



Ivory Bennett, youth voice contributor.  
Photo courtesy Ivory Bennett.

“And as a former foster youth, I see no party or particular politician who is fully focused on the policies and legislation that will protect and defend the humanity of current and former foster youth. Escapism is a familiar refuge for foster youth – escaping abuse and neglect, escaping strangers and unfamiliar adults, escaping a system that does more harm than good most of the time.”

# The Midwest Study

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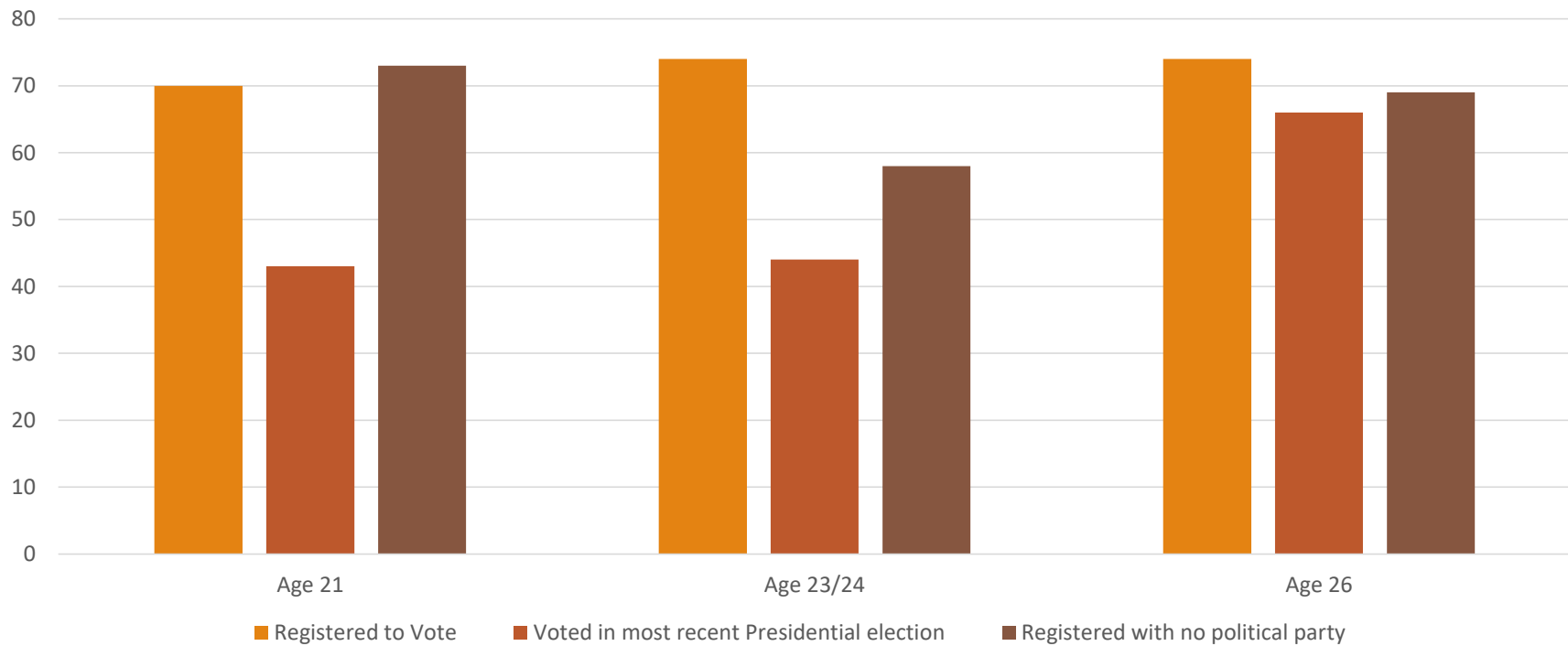
*The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth* (Midwest Study):

- A longitudinal study following a sample of young people from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois as they transition out of foster care into adulthood.
- Data were collected at age 17/18, 19, 21, 23/24, and 26
- Questions on voting were added at age 21



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# Midwest Study Data on Voting



# Midwest Study Data on Voting

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Compared with a nationally-representative sample of young people from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, young adults in the Midwest Study were:

- Less likely to report trusting the government
- Less likely to register to vote or vote
- More likely to be uncertain or ambivalent about their political ideology and party identification
- More likely to register Democratic