PRESS RELEASE

Youth Leaders to Host California Gubernatorial Forum in Fresno

Statewide Partnership Elevates Youth Voice in Civic Engagement

PUBLISHED: April 22, 2026

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), California State PTA (CAPTA), and Youth Leadership Institute (yli) will co-host *Our Future, Our Voice: A Youth-Led Gubernatorial Forum* on **April 30, 2026 at 5:30 PM** at the Fresno Convention Center.

This nonpartisan event will bring together gubernatorial candidates, young leaders, and community members from across the state for a dynamic evening of civic engagement, designed and led by young people. Unlike traditional forums, youth will not only participate in but also lead every aspect of the event, shaping the conversation and posing questions directly to candidates on the issues that matter most to their generation. Gubernatorial candidate and California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond has confirmed participation.

The evening will begin with a **Civic Engagement Festival** from **4:00 to 5:30 PM**, offering interactive opportunities for attendees to connect with organizations and resources that support ongoing civic participation. The evening will continue with the **youth-led gubernatorial forum** from **5:30 to 7:00 PM**, where young people will lead the conversation, moderate discussions, and pose questions directly to candidates.

In partnership with Capital Public Radio (CapRadio) as the statewide media partner and the Central Valley Journalism Collaborative (CVJC) as the local news partner, this event will amplify youth perspectives and youth-driven policy discussions to audiences across California. The forum's broadcast partner is KVPR (NPR), and it will be livestreamed by CMAC via their YouTube channel. N+ Univision will also livestream the forum via their YouTube channel and Facebook page.

This collaborative event reflects a shared commitment by CAPTA, PACE, and yli to elevate youth voices, expand access to civic engagement, and foster connections between young people and decision-makers.

Event Details

Date: April 30, 2026
Location: Fresno Convention Center
Civic Engagement Festival: 4:00–5:30 PM
Gubernatorial Forum: 5:30–7:00 PM

About CAPTA

California State PTA connects families, schools and communities. We are part of the foundation of our public-education system and a trusted messenger to millions of members, parents, families, educators and allied agencies throughout the state. PTA is the nation's largest volunteer-led child-advocacy association working to drive improvements in the education, health and well-being of all children and families.

We believe every adult has a responsibility to ensure that all children develop to their full potential. We believe parents are children's first teachers and that parent involvement is essential throughout a child's educational experience. We believe that family is the basic unit of society responsible for the support and nurturing of all children, and we recognize that "the family" may be defined in many ways. We believe our responsibility includes advocating for the safety and welfare of all children and the opportunity for a quality public education for every child.

About PACE

PACE is an independent, nonpartisan research center led by faculty directors at Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of California, Davis, the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of California, Berkeley. Founded in 1983, PACE bridges the gap between research, policy, and practice, working with scholars from California's leading universities and with state and local decision-makers to achieve improvement in performance and more equitable outcomes at all levels of California's education system, from early childhood to postsecondary education and training.

About yli

Young people, particularly youth of color and their allies, are deeply motivated to address inequities in their communities. At Youth Leadership Institute, young people realize their power by learning to use their voices to create meaningful change.

Change happens when conversations take place. At yli, we believe that conversations of real significance only occur when all voices are heard. And we're here to ensure that youth voice is heard. Loud and clear.

For more information, please contact PACE, press@edpolicyinca.org

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