



**United Way of
Massachusetts Bay
and Merrimack Valley**

April 1, 2022

To: State Representative Mike Moran and State Representative Aaron Michlewitz,

CC: Boston State Delegation, VOTES Act Conference Committee, Speaker Ron Mariano, and Senate President Karen Spilka

Dear Leader Moran and Chair Michlewitz,

A stronger democracy, pursuit of equity, and commitment to inclusion makes Boston a better place to live, work, and visit. With these priorities in mind, we write to request that you include Election Day Registration (EDR) in the final version of the VOTES Act.

The need for EDR in Boston is great. Roughly 65% of Bostonians are renters, and therefore change their addresses at a higher rate than homeowners. According to the 2020 census, 20% (about 135,000) of Bostonians changed their address within one year alone. In order to vote, these tens of thousands of people need to update their voter registration, and it's usually not until they go to vote that they become aware of this administrative barrier. Due to the registration deadline, it's too late and they aren't able to cast a ballot that counts, an unnecessary limitation to their fundamental right to vote.

We see the scope of need clearly reflected in the number of rejected provisional ballots in recent elections. In the 2020 general election, 1,412 provisional ballots were issued in Boston, of which 731 were rejected. **731 citizens who believed they were registered to vote, did not cast a ballot that was counted.** In fact, Boston accounts for 1/3 of all provisional ballots issued statewide that election. In reality, the scope of the problem is even larger because many voters who are told to fill out a provisional ballot are discouraged and leave without voting. Furthermore, there are many others who don't even make it to their polling location because they know their vote will not be counted. Never again should an otherwise eligible voter go to their polling place on Election Day and not be able to cast their vote.

Election Day Registration is also critical as a matter of equity. Recent research shows that EDR could lead to an increase in Black and Latino voter turnout as high as 17%. Given that 24% of

Boston's population identifies as Black and 20% identifies as Latino/Hispanic, we cannot emphasize enough how much EDR would benefit our collective pursuit of equity and inclusion.

If Election Day Registration were available in Boston, we'd see an increase in voter turnout, an increase in the confidence that people have in the democratic process, and an increase in civic engagement throughout every neighborhood in Boston.

As Representatives of our great city, we ask you to lead on voting rights and equity for all Bostonians by including Election Day Registration in the final version of the VOTES Act.

Sincerely,

The Boston Foundation

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

ACLU MA*	Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)*
Action for Equity*	Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations*
Anti-Defamation League New England*	Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN)*
American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts	Massachusetts Law Reform Institute*
Amplify Latinx*	Massachusetts Voter Table*
Boston Teachers Union	Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition*
Chinese Progressive Association	MASSCreative*
City Life / Vida Urbana	MASSPIRG*
College Bound Dorchester	MassVOTE
Common Cause Massachusetts*	More Than Words
Community Action Works Campaigns*	NAACP – Boston Branch
Conservation Law Foundation*	New England United for Justice
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative	Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts*
Environmental League of Massachusetts*	Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts
Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association	Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts*
Generation Citizen*	Progressive Massachusetts*
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization	Project R.I.G.H.T.
Greater Boston Section – National Council of Negro Women	Roca Inc.*
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston	Rosie's Place
Lawyers for Civil Rights*	The Good Governance Project – Boston College Law
League of Women Voters Massachusetts*	Union of Minority Neighborhoods
Madison Park Development Corporation	Unitarian Universalist Mass Action*
MassEquality*	
Mass NOW*	
Massachusetts Against Solitary Confinement*	<i>*Statewide group with significant Boston membership</i>