



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws
In support of H.834/S.505 An Act establishing same day registration of voters
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No eligible citizen should show up at the polls on Election Day and be turned away because of a typo in their address or a name change due to a recent marriage or a processing error at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Currently, 22 states offer same day voter registration without problems or fraud; it is time for us to join them.

In the November 2024 Presidential election, 5,106 voters came to the polls expecting to vote but encountered a problem with their registration status; they were allowed to cast a provisional ballot. But 65% of those provisional ballots were rejected after the polls closed. That means 3,309 people thought they were registered to vote and expected their provisional ballot to count but it did not. Of the 3,309 rejected ballots, only 27, less than 1%, were rejected because the voter failed to show an appropriate form of identification. Over 99% of provisional ballots were rejected for administrative reasons that might well have been resolved through same day voter registration.

As the name implies, same day registration allows eligible individuals to register to vote on Election Day and at early voting sites after they complete and sign an affidavit of registration and present specified identification. They can then vote. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, on behalf of our 44 local Leagues across the Commonwealth, strongly supports H.834/S.505 An Act establishing same day registration of voters, as we have for over a decade. It is way past time for Massachusetts to enact same day voter registration. We need this law in place in time for the 2026 election.

In many states, a large percentage of people who use same day registration are registered voters who discover when they arrive at the polls that an error in their registration may prevent their vote from being counted. Same day registration allows the voter to immediately correct the error so that their vote is guaranteed to be counted. Common errors that may prevent a vote from being counted include an administrative typo in a name or address or a failure to update a surname change after marriage. Others are eligible residents who thought they were registered but whose name was not on the voter roll, for whatever reason.

Enacting same day registration will greatly reduce the need for provisional ballots at polling places, and the election officials currently handling provisional ballots can instead register people to vote. Provisional ballots are frequently rejected because election officials cannot find any evidence the voter is registered. Same day registration would mean those citizens could register on the spot and cast ballots that count.

The League urges this committee to report favorably this same day voter registration bill. By doing so, you will help remove one of the remaining barriers to registering and voting in our state and will improve the efficiency of the elections process. We look forward to supporting such a bill as a continuation of the progress Massachusetts has made in voting access.

Our democracy and its bedrock of public trust in free and fair elections is under attack as never before. It is crucial for Massachusetts to set an example as a state moving to increase—not decrease—access to the polls and secure elections. These times demand that Massachusetts goes on record as supporting and enhancing the ability of all citizens to vote.

Thank you for your consideration.