

#VOTESAct

Testimony in Support of H.805 & S.459

An Act Fostering Voting Opportunities, Trust, Equity and Security

Joint Committee on Election Laws

May 19, 2021

Dear Chair Ryan, Chair Finegold, Vice Chair Vitolo, Vice Chair Gomez, and members of the Joint Committee on Election Laws,

The more than 100 undersigned organizations write jointly to make sure the committee knows that support for the VOTES Act is deep and broad.

Please accept this letter as testimony **in support of H.805 and S.459**, *An Act Fostering Voting Opportunities, Trust, Equity, and Security*, sponsored by Representative Lawn and Senator Creem.

Temporary voter access expansions passed during the COVID-19 pandemic, like mail-in voting and early voting in-person, were not just a win for public health, but for our democracy overall. We saw a significant increase in voter turnout that went beyond just the marquis names on the ballot. With such success in public engagement, it is important to make these reforms permanent. However, we must rise to the times and do even more.

With all eyes on voter suppression bills in other states, now is not the time to sit on the sideline. Massachusetts still has work to do to ensure that every eligible voter has access to a ballot.

The VOTES Act seeks to make the COVID-19 expansions permanent and strengthen our election infrastructure with key provisions like a back-end Automatic Voter Registration system, enrolling in ERIC, and enhancing our post-election audits.

Perhaps most important, it seeks to remove barriers to eligible voters by establishing Same-Day Registration and codifying jail-based voting practices for incarcerated eligible voters. Without these reforms, Massachusetts cannot say that we have done all that is necessary to ensure that every eligible voter can actually exercise the right to vote.

We must take a comprehensive and systemic approach to improve elections in Massachusetts and the VOTES Act does just that. This bill is not a laundry list of ideal policies, but a delicately woven tapestry of best-practices that will help Massachusetts move towards a more inclusive, welcoming Commonwealth.

We respectfully urge you to report H.805 & S.459 favorably out of committee in its entirety as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

ACLU MA
Action for Equity
ADL New England
American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts
American Promise
Amplify Latinx
Arise for Social Justice

Black Boston COVID19 Coalition
Black Economic Justice Institute
Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, Inc.
Boston Ten Point Coalition
Boston Ujima Project
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
College Bound Dorchester

#VOTESAct

Common Cause MA
City Life / Vida Urbana
City Mission, Inc.
Coalition for a Better Acre
Coalition for Social Justice
Codman Square NDC
College Bound Dorchester
Community Action Works Campaigns
Conservation Law Foundation
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
Edgartown Democratic Town Committee
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Equal Citizens
ForwardMA
Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution
Freedom House
Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association
Generation Citizen
Greater Boston Nazarene Compassionate Center Inc.
Greater Boston Section-National Council of Negro Women
GSM Labor Council
Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc. (IAC)
Indivisible Martha's Vineyard
Indivisible Massachusetts Coalition
Indivisible Outer Cape
iVOTE
JCRC
Jetpac Resource Center
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
La Colaborativa
La Comunidad, Inc.
Lawrence Partnership
Lawyers for Civil Rights
Lift Every Vote
League of Women Voters MA
Lowell Votes
Madison Park Development Corporation
MAPS-Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants
Mass Equality
Mass NOW
Mass. Assoc. of Community Development Corporations
Massachusetts AFL-CIO
Massachusetts Against Solitary Confinement
Massachusetts Communities Action Network
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

Massachusetts Peace Action
Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition
MASSCreative
MASSPIRG
MASSPIRG Students
MassVOTE
Massachusetts Voter Table
MITvote
More Than Words
NAACP-Boston Branch
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts
Next Leadership Development Corporation
Nonprofit Vote
Planned Parenthood MA
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts
Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts
Progressive Massachusetts
Progressives for Democracy in America
Project R.I.G.H.T.
Providers' Council- CareVote
Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts
Quincy Geneva New Vision CDC
Racial Justice Rising
Reclaim Our Democracy
Roca Inc.
Rosie's Place
1199 SEIU
Shana Bryant Consulting Services
Small Planet Institute
Sunrise Boston
The Good Governance Project - BC Law
The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization
The Real Cost of Prisons Project
The Women's Pipeline for Change
Transformative Culture Project
Union of Minority Neighborhoods
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
UTEC Inc.
VOTE New Bedford
Voter Choice Massachusetts
Worcester Interfaith
Yes - Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance
Young Demcorats of Massachusetts
YWCA Malden