

May 13, 2014



League of Women Voters®

Massachusetts

## Election Reform-At Last!

At last it looks like Massachusetts will significantly reform its election procedures!

The comprehensive election reform bill that the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and its coalition partners have been advocating for is coming up for a final vote.

The legislative conference committee reconciling the earlier House and Senate versions of the election reform bill reported their compromise bill, H.4072, to the House Monday, May 12. It is expected to be voted on by the House this week, perhaps as early as Wednesday, May 14, and the Senate shortly after. It will then go to the Governor.

The bill makes major reforms in the way Massachusetts conducts elections. It will provide for:

- Online voter registration.
- Online portal to check voter registration status.
- Pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds, who then automatically become eligible to vote when they turn 18.
- Early voting during business hours at a city or town's election office. Cities and towns can extend early voting hours to weekends if they choose and offer additional sites for early voting. Early voting begins with the 2016 election.
- Post-election audits of randomly-selected precincts after Presidential elections.
- Creation of an elections task force to study additional issues, including cost of early voting and need for additional sites and hours, voter fraud, wait times, and Election Day voter registration

"The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is pleased that the conference committee has approved this significant update to the state's election laws. Many of the provisions make it easier to register to vote and easier to cast a ballot. In this increasingly complicated world, these are critical goals," said Anne Borg, LWVMA co-president.

"When this bill is enacted and signed by the Governor, it will greatly improve Massachusetts' standing as a state that supports access to the polls. At a time when too many states are making it more difficult for citizens to register and to vote, Massachusetts should be proud to be moving in the opposite direction."

While this bill does not include Election Day registration, it does create a task force to review additional election-related issues. The conference committee has specifically charged this task force to investigate Election Day registration for Massachusetts. It will also review the need for additional early voting hours.

The bill does not contain any provisions for showing photo identification to vote.

We think this bill will now pass both the House and the Senate and then be signed by the Governor, but it can only help if you contact your legislators and let them know that you are pleased with these reforms and hope that they will support speedy passage of this bill.

You can read the full text of the bill: [H.4072](#)

You can find contact information for your legislators [here](#).