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## Massachusetts Election Reforms 2015-16: A Guide for Local Leagues

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The 2014 Election Modernization Law calls for **online voter registration, early voting, pre-registration of teens, post-election audits** and a **task force to evaluate these reforms and recommend additional changes**. The first three changes, in particular, will impact League voter service efforts. Here are some ways your League can work with these changes.

### Online Voter Registration

- Effective: June 2015
- The law allows anyone with a driver's license or RMV-issued ID to register to vote online at [www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/)
- Impact on Local Leagues: At registration events, you can offer to help voters register on their phones or tablets, but have paper registration forms available if something goes wrong. If you plan to bring a computer to do online voter registration, be sure to confirm availability of internet service at the venue in advance. Prior to the registration event, review the new procedures for online registration; LWVMA has screen shots of the registration form on our website to help familiarize you with the process. Go to: <https://lwvma.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/MA-OVR-Overview.pdf>

### Early Voting

- Effective: Presidential election, November 2016.
- The law allows early voting only in the regularly-scheduled biennial state elections, i.e., November of even-numbered years. There is no provision allowing early voting to be expanded to primaries or town/municipal elections.
- The law allows early voting to start the Monday two weeks before the election and end on the Friday before the election, during normal business hours. Any weekend early voting would have to be the weekend *before* the weekend before the election.
- The law permits more than one early voting location and hours beyond regular election office business hours at the discretion of towns and cities.
- Impact on Local Leagues: Your League can talk to your town or city election officials about their plans for early voting, and encourage them to include some night and weekend hours. If it looks like a town meeting warrant article may be necessary to offer expanded hours or multiple locations, LWVMA will let local Leagues know.

### Pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds

- Effective: August 2016
- The law allows 16- and 17-year-olds to register at the RMV, online, or using paper voter registration forms, and they will receive notification and automatically go on the voter rolls when they turn 18.
- Impact on Local Leagues: At high school registration drives, many more students will be eligible to register, and they will be able to register online with their phones and tablet (but it will be a good idea to have paper forms as backup). Consider asking high schools if your League can make a presentation on pre-registration or publicize it some other way next year. You can also work with student government and other groups to get the word out and pre-register students.

