
Massachusetts Election Reforms: A Guide for Local Leagues

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.registertovoteMA.com**
- 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 people don't have their licenses with them. 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://lwwma.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. Early voting this year starts Oct. 24 and ends Nov. 4 with Oct. 29-30 the only weekend option.
- 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. The Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition, which includes LWVMA, has issued its recommendations for implementing early voting in the state: <https://lwwma.org/voting-and-election-information/massachusetts-early-voting-challenge/>

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. Check in late summer for specific rules for pre-registration.
- 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 have paper forms in case a teen does not have a driver's license. Consider asking high schools if your League can make a presentation on pre-registration or publicize it some other way. You can also work with student government and other groups to get the word out and pre-register students.



MOVE 2016 Call to Action: Join the Movement!

How can you help educate, energize, and empower voters for Election 2016?

Answer the MOVE 2016 call to action and participate in one or more of the following activities:



1. Register voters at schools...community and senior centers...naturalization ceremonies...local nonprofits and service organizations...shelters and transitional housing.
2. Volunteer to join LWVMA's VOTE411.org Working Group.
3. Coordinate district-wide candidates' forums with other Leagues.
4. Inform voters about ballot questions through forums or other local outreach.
5. Help spread the word about new election laws and procedures.
6. Share our digital "pledge cards," voting reminders, and PSAs on social media.
7. Use League Choice Books to connect with community.

Election Timeline: Important Upcoming Dates

May 3: Deadline for legislature to act on any potential ballot questions

May 31: Last day to submit nomination papers to MA Secretary of State

July 6: Deadline for additional signatures to get questions on ballot

August: Pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds begins

August 19: Last day to register to vote/change party enrollment before state primary

September 8: State primary (note this is a Thursday, not the usual Tuesday)

October 19: Last day to register to vote/change party enrollment before general election

November 8: General election