July 15, 2016

Dear Speaker DeLeo and Chairman Dempsey,

We are writing to ask you to override Governor Baker's veto of Secretary Galvin's elections budget. The legislature did a great job expanding and protecting the right to vote and modernizing elections by enacting the 2014 Election Modernization Law. Many of the reforms contained in the new law are being implemented for the first time this year, including early voting, pre-registration of 16 year-olds, and audits of election equipment. All of these reforms require additional resources to implement properly, and we are concerned that a significantly diminished Elections Department budget will impede the Secretary from performing all the needed activities, putting these reforms at risk.

Secretary Galvin has told the Boston Globe that he believes this money is critical to successful implementation of the new law and will be using the money for this purpose.

We believe that it is important to make this first attempt at early voting in Massachusetts a success. Our election modernization coalition has challenged the cities and towns to implement a robust early voting effort, and we would hate to see early voting weakened by this cut to the Elections Department budget.

We understand that revenues are tight, but these decreases go way beyond the 1% across-the-board cuts proposed by the Governor. By removing the "prior appropriation continued" language approved by the House and Senate, the Governor is cutting over $800,000. When added to the 1% cuts, this is a budget reduction of over $1 million, or about 6% of the Elections budget. We believe that this is too much. Please help ensure the success of the Election Modernization law, and help support the right to vote, by restoring Secretary Galvin's elections funding.

Sincerely,

Pam Wilmot, Common Cause Massachusetts

Janet Domenitz, MASSPIRG

Jean Cherdack, League of Women Voters MA

Cheryl Clyburn-Crawford, MASSVOTE

Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

Lisette Le, Massachusetts Voter Table