

AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

Making voting work better for Massachusetts

Voting is central to being a good citizen. And yet, our voting system in Massachusetts hasn't kept up with the times. Nearly 700,000 Massachusetts citizens of voting age are not registered, while estimates are that nationwide, 1 in every 8 registration records contain a serious error.¹ Automatic Voter Registration is a **common sense change** that states from Alaska to Connecticut to Rhode Island to West Virginia have made to **modernize** the voter rolls, make voting **more accessible for working families**, and improve the **safety and security of our voting rolls**.

¹ According to Pew Charitable Trusts

How Automatic Voter Registration works:



1 When a Massachusetts resident gets a new or updated driver's license or changes their address with MassHealth, their information will be matched electronically with the central voter registry run by the Secretary of State.

2 Only information from U.S. citizens is forwarded to the Secretary of State and to local clerks. Noncitizens are automatically deleted.

3 If they are eligible to vote but not registered, or if they are registered at a different address, they will be mailed a post card letting them know they will be added to the voter rolls or their address will be updated unless the post card is mailed back.

Americans move, on average, every 7 years,² and AVR will help keep their registration up-to-date.



Highly mobile families, like military families, move frequently – some as often as every couple of years. As a result, many working families reach election day without having updated their registration, leaving them in a bind and making it much more likely they won't vote.

AVR is part of the solution, helping ensure that everyone's voter registration is up to date.

² According to FiveThirtyEight.com

Improving Safety and Security

Because of outdated systems, voter rolls are chock full of errors. That means that hundreds of thousands of registrations in Massachusetts have some sort of error—out-of-date addresses, registered at more than one address, deceased yet still on the rolls, and more.

The AVR bill will clean up the rolls, making them much more accurate.

It will do so by getting the latest information from the RMV and MassHealth and by joining 23 other states in the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).

ERIC takes each state's voter file and compares it to other databases, including those maintained by other states, the U.S. Postal Service and the Social Security Administration. Then it lets states know which records are in error.

To date, ERIC has helped voting officials eliminate the records of 8 million individuals who have relocated and 207,000 deceased individuals.



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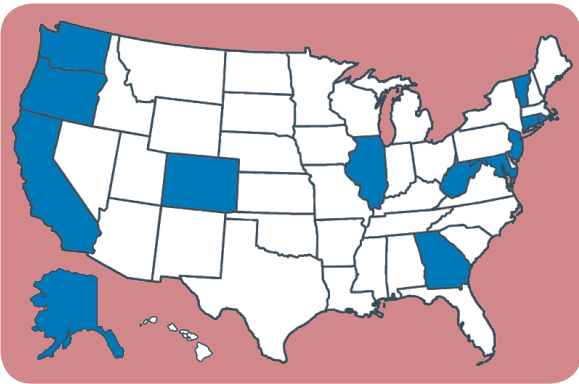
Lead Sponsors:

Senator Cynthia Creem and Representative Peter Kocot

Co-Sponsors:

21 Senators and 85 Representatives

Working Well in other States



AVR has been passed in **13 other states** (Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia), plus Washington D.C. with strong bipartisan support.

Oregon was the first state to implement the reform adding over 230,000 new voters to the rolls in just six months and updating 265,000 inaccurate addresses during the same period. More than 97,000 new voters participated in the 2016 election because of AVR. Oregon had a 4.1 percent increase in voter turnout, one of the largest increases in the country.

Coalition Members

Action Together Western Mass
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MASSPIRG

MassVOTE
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National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts Education Fund
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Our Revolution Cambridge
PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of MA)
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts
Progressive Democrats of America, Boston chapter
Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts
Progressive Massachusetts
SEIU Local 509
SEIU Massachusetts State Council
Sierra Club
Small Planet Institute
Union of Minority Neighborhoods

“The lackluster turnout in recent municipal elections... is further evidence to support automatic voter registration – a system that automatically updates voters' information whenever they alert one of several state agencies of a change of address or other pertinent change in their status.”

CAPE COD TIMES

“With some 680,000 Massachusetts residents eligible to vote but unregistered, this is a subject the Legislature should dive energetically into.”

The Boston Globe