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### **Massachusetts Elections Were a Success -- Advocates Applaud Election Officials**

Boston - In the midst of a global pandemic, voters in Massachusetts set a record for the highest turnout election cycle in history, and they were able to do so in a safe, secure, and accessible election. The Election Modernization Coalition thanks and applauds legislators and election officials across the Commonwealth for working tirelessly to ensure that Bay Staters could make their voice heard.

As of today, approximately 3.46 million individuals, or about 72% of registered voters, cast ballots for the November 3 General Election. Of those, approximately 41% cast ballots through the mail or secure dropboxes, 28% voted early in-person, and 31% voted in-person on election day.

Voter registration numbers were also up. Since February 2019, Massachusetts has added 377,975 new voters, an increase of nearly 10%. The fact that so many new voters participated in our democracy - during a time when nationwide voter registration rates were down due to COVID-19 - demonstrates that common sense reforms like online voter registration and a 10-day instead of 20-day deadline to register before the election have a critical and clear impact in ensuring our elections are more participatory.

These numbers reflect keen interest in our elections, but they are also evidence that the temporary reforms passed this summer - vote by mail, extended early voting, and more - worked. Nearly 70% of voters took advantage of the opportunity to vote by mail or vote early. Not only did this allow Bay Staters who might otherwise not have been able to participate to vote, but it had a clear impact on election day itself, according to the nonpartisan Election Protection program. The Election Protection hotline usually records dozens of reports of long lines at the polls, but heard virtually no such complaints November 3. Election Protection volunteers instead reported conditions that were clearly COVID-safe: minimal lines or wait times and ample social distancing.

These reforms - vote by mail, early voting, early processing of ballots, poll worker flexibility and more - were especially necessary during a pandemic. But the pandemic is nowhere near over. With spring municipal elections only months away, it is clear that these reforms must not only be

extended but made permanent. They reduce barriers to and bolster voter participation, and they are now tried-and-true in the Commonwealth. We urge the Legislature, Secretary of Commonwealth, and Governor to act quickly in the next session to make these reforms permanent.

The Election Protection program recruited and trained over 2,000 on-the-ground volunteers this year. The Massachusetts Voter Table led phone and text banks. Both programs report that voters were enthused about vote by mail and early voting, and that our elections went off largely without a hitch, but there were some clear issues on Election Day. One stood out in particular. The Election Protection hotline fielded dozens of calls from would-be voters who were unable to participate because their voter registration was out of date. These voters overwhelmingly had thought they had updated their registration, but arrived at the polls to find that they were not on the rolls. Twenty-one other states have Same Day Registration for this reason; it is a clear reform that ensures no would-be voter is disenfranchised because of issues with their registration. That Massachusetts still does not offer Same Day Voter Registration is a glaring inadequacy. The Election Modernization Coalition looks forward to correcting it in the next legislative session.