



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws
In Support of H.813 An Act relative to Same Day Registration
and S.435 An Act Allowing Election Day Registration
By Linda Freedman, LWVMA Specialist on Elections and Voting
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts requests that this committee add Same Day Registration as a voting reform in our state. Same Day Registration (SDR) in H.813 complements Automatic Voter Registration, making it convenient for people who do not deal with the Registry of Motor Vehicles or a state social services agency to register and vote on both early voting and election days. The League also approves Election Day Registration (EDR) in S.435 but would encourage you to make clear in a final version of these bills that voters can register and then vote both during the early voting period and on Election Day itself.

More than half of the people who use SDR in the 21 states which have adopted it were previously registered to vote but encountered a problem with their registration—a wrong address, a typo in their name—when they tried to vote. Both SDR and EDR enable the necessary corrections and allow voting without resorting to provisional ballots. Due to problems with provisional ballots, they are frequently not counted.

LWVMA prefers that this joint committee support H.813 and S.435 to permit citizens to register on Election Day or early voting days and then vote. That system is most widely used and helps voters to cast their ballots promptly and have them tallied with other votes, thus increasing participation in elections.

We feel strongly that SDR should be available during early voting periods. This ensures that qualified voters cannot be turned away at the polls or allowed to vote only by problematic provisional ballots. At the time of registration, the individual must provide proof of identity and residency. The voter must also sign an oath certifying citizenship, age, and lack of any impediments that would prohibit voting. The bills include substantial penalties for giving false information.

Benefits of Same Day Registration:

- Increases voter participation, a League priority. Voters are more likely to continue voting if they can register or re-register at the polls.
- An increase in costs should not be a deterrent. The costs are offset by fewer provisional ballots plus cleaner and updated voter rolls.
- SDR/EDR does not increase voter fraud. Multiple independent studies by the Brennan Center for Justice, Demos, the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office and others have found that voter fraud is as low in EDR/SDR states as in other states. While in-person voter fraud is rare, the penalties for voter fraud by individuals are very severe and serve as a further deterrent.
- Cyber criminals could manipulate registration lists and cause significant purges or changes in future elections. National security agencies found attempts to gain entry to registration lists in a number of states prior to elections. While reported as failed attempts, these attacks are likely to continue and become more sophisticated. If they are successful in penetrating state voter rolls, EDR/SDR could improve security by restoring accurate voter registration and the integrity of our elections.



The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges the Joint Committee on Election Laws to report a strong bill to implement Same Day Registration, either by approving these two bills or including Same Day Registration in an omnibus VOTES Act bill that you report out.

Thank you for your consideration.