



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

133 Portland Street, Boston, MA 02114 · Tel: 617-523-2999 · Fax: 617-248-0881

Email: lwmvma@lwmvma.org · Website: www.lwmvma.org

ACTION ALERT

LWVM ACTION ALERT: URGE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO SUPPORT VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER CONFIDENCE BILL (S.2277)

BILL AWAITING HOUSE VOTE THIS WEEK

Please contact your STATE REPRESENTATIVE right away urging them to support the “Strengthening Voting Rights and Voter Confidence” bill, S.2277.

This legislation was drafted by the League and is supported by Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, as well as the Chairs of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, Senator Edward Augustus and Representative Anthony Petrucci. The bill passed overwhelmingly in the Senate in November 2005, and now awaits House passage.

This bill fulfills three key promises of the Empowering Voters Project advocacy agenda:

- **Providing a Voters’ Bill of Rights**
The legislation requires that Secretary of the Commonwealth provide a Voters’ Bill of Rights at every polling place, on the Secretary of Commonwealth’s website, and in appropriate publications of the Secretary of Commonwealth.
 - In the 2004 election, the Voters’ Bill of Rights, drafted by the League and signed by Governor Romney and Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin, and adopted as a Resolution, “Recognizing the Massachusetts Voters’ Bill of Rights,” by the Legislature, was voluntarily distributed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
 - Currently six states (California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Minnesota and Nevada) have laws requiring the posting of a Voters’ Bill of Rights in every polling place.
- **Expanding the Pool of Poll Workers**
The legislation removes the restriction that poll workers must live in that city or town and enable cities and towns to hire poll workers who live in another Massachusetts city or town. Also, the legislation enables people ages 16 and 17 to serve as poll workers, provided they satisfy certain requirements.
 - The National Council of State Legislatures Elections Reform Task Force reports that only 17 states, including Massachusetts, require that poll workers be registered in the community where they work.
 - At least 31 states allow students ages 16 and 17 to serve as poll workers if they meet certain criteria. According to the Elections Assistance Commission, the average age of a poll worker today is 72.
- **Ensuring the Continuing Impartiality of Administration of Elections**
The legislation prohibits elections officials from serving as campaign chair or co-chair, or treasurer for any campaign other than their own.
 - Elections officials in states across the nation have faced allegations of election fraud and a perception of impropriety. Some of these allegations revolve around the excessive involvement in political campaigns.
 - In 2001, Georgia passed a law that prevents its Secretary of State from serving on a campaign in any fiduciary capacity. A newly formed federal voting commission is examining problems in Florida, Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri.

The position paper, with the bill text and list of supporters, can be found at:
www.lwmvma.org/PositionPapers/S2277.shtml.

Find the name and contact info for your state rep here: www.mass.gov/legis/citytown.htm.

The League of Women Voters encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.