



**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ®  
OF MASSACHUSETTS

**TIME TO ACT**



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**Ask Your State Senator  
to Support Elections Bill**

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The Massachusetts Senate will vote in a few days on the bill for changes in the fall elections in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. That bill passed the House June 4 and is now numbered [H.4778](#), An Act relative to voting options in response to COVID-19. This is a strong bill and we hope the Senate passes it so it can go quickly to the Governor. The sooner this bill is signed into law, the sooner our election officials can take the steps needed to assure our fall elections are safer and more accessible.

**Please call or email your State Senator today and ask for their support of H.4778.**

The bill as passed by the House will:

- Mail applications for vote by mail ballots to every registered voter before the Sept. 1 primary and the Nov. 3 general election
- Create an online portal for voters to request a mailed ballot
- Expand in-person early voting for both elections
- Provide prepaid postage to return both applications and ballots by mail

- Allow election officials to process mailed ballots at a central location and before Election Day (results will not be tabulated or reported until polls close)
- Allow voter registration up to 10 days before each election rather than the current 20 days
- Count ballots postmarked by Election Day but received by the following Friday (Nov. 6) for the November election
- Require the Secretary of the Commonwealth to issue regulations for safe in-person polling place operation
- Establish that precaution taken because of COVID-19 is a legitimate reason to vote by absentee ballot

The primary election is 82 days from June 10 and the November election is 116 days away. There is no time to waste.

**Ask your Senator to help pass H.4778 now.**

Find your Senator's contact information [here](#).

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90 Canal Street Suite 414 Boston, MA 02114 | 857-452-1715

[lwvma@lwvma.org](mailto:lwvma@lwvma.org) | [www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org)

**Am I registered to vote?**

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>

**How to register to vote on line? Make sure you have either the last 4 digits of your Social Security number OR your driver license I.D. Number:**

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>

**Voting by Mail, background April 2020.**

Under the Massachusetts Constitution, absentee ballots are available for all elections to voters who are disabled, out of town on Election Day, or have a religious belief preventing them from voting at their polling place.

A new law has been passed clarifying that any person taking precaution related to COVID-19 in response to a declared state of emergency or from guidance from a medical professional, local or state health official, or any civil authority shall be deemed to be unable by reason of physical disability to cast their vote in person at a polling location.

It is the opinion of this office that you qualify for an absentee ballot due to physical disability if:

- You are ill;
- You are confined to your home because you may transmit infection; or
- You cannot leave your home because you are a member of a population vulnerable to illness;
- **You are staying in your home or avoiding your polling place as a precautionary measure in response to COVID-19.**

The law has also been updated to allow early voting by mail for any election held on or before June 30th. Early voting by mail is similar to absentee voting, but unlike absentee voting, no excuse is required.

### **Absentee Voter application:**

**<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee/English-Absentee-Ballot-Application.pdf>**

**For further information on you polling place, legislators, etc.  
See the LWV website**

**<https://www.vote411.org/>**

**Renew membership <http://lwvcapecod.org/PayPal.html>**

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## EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE FROM LWV

June 11, 2020

WASHINGTON – Today the CEO of the League of Women Voters, **Virginia Kase** issued the following statement in support of the Justice in Policing Act:

"Americans agree, federal policing laws in our country must be changed. For far too long, Black people and communities have been subjected to unimaginable abuse at the hands of law enforcement. The issues with policing are not simply the result of a few bad apples. It is the result of systems and policies born from the legacy of racial discrimination and oppression where Black people and people of color are treated as dangerous enemy combatants, rather than human beings with equal rights under our constitution. This problem cannot be trained away. The Justice in Policing Act of 2020 is a necessary first step towards creating systems of accountability that will make communities safer and begin the process of eliminating police brutality in America.

"This bill follows the strong police accountability framework that the League contributed to along with nearly 500 civil rights and justice organizations across the country. It includes measures that would ban police chokeholds like the one that killed George Floyd and prohibit police from using no-knock warrants in drug cases, like the one that killed Breonna Taylor. Additional pieces of the bill would transform how we handle police abuse in this country by creating a police misconduct registry and providing the Justice Department authority to investigate and prosecute police misconduct.

"Like all legislation, this is not a perfect bill, and we look forward to continuing to work with leadership in Congress to improve it before it reaches the floor of the U.S. House. The League of Women Voters looks forward to working with our partners in the civil rights community to support this important effort to advance a comprehensive justice reform bill towards passage."

Contact: Sarah Courtney | [202-263-1332](tel:202-263-1332) | [scourtney@lww.org](mailto:scourtney@lww.org)