

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Senate Passes Automatic Voter Registration Bill

BOSTON – Today, **Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)**, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, and the Massachusetts Senate passed *H.4671, An Act automatically registering eligible voters and enhancing safeguards against fraud*. The legislation creates a framework in which eligible voters will be automatically registered to vote when receiving services from the Registry of Motor vehicles, MassHealth, and other participating state agencies. The framework will be overseen and implemented by the Secretary of State.

“Automatic voter registration will allow the Commonwealth to work towards making sure that the hundreds of thousands of eligible citizens who are currently not registered to vote can participate in our democracy,” remarked Senator Anne Gobi, “Enacting this legislation will help engage more individuals politically while giving the Commonwealth a valuable tool that will help clean up active voter lists and ensure that they are clear and free of error.”

“It should be the state’s burden to register voters – not yours,” said **Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)**. “Long work hours and confusion about the registration process are barriers for many citizens. And thousands of Massachusetts citizens are eligible to vote today, but aren’t registered. Registering to vote must be as simple as possible, and this legislation implements a process where any eligible citizen receiving certain state services is automatically registered. Today is a major victory for voting rights and social justice.”

The legislation bolsters voter-data security. It updates the requirements for transmission of voter registration affidavits and requires the Secretary of State to promulgate regulations to ensure registration is done through electronic transmission, with data security protocols and integration with the online portals.

The legislation increases penalties associated with voter fraud. It orders that whoever knowingly provides false information in connection with automatic voter registration shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years or both.

The legislation includes multiple opt-out procedures for those who do not wish to be automatically registered and it expands the Secretary of State's Address Confidentiality Program to allow voters to withhold their information from municipal street list records.

For more information please contact Senator Gobi's office at 617-722-1540.

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