

Automatic Voter Registration

REP. PETER KOCOT (HD 2500), SEN. CINDY CREEM (SD 1791)



Massachusetts

COMMON CAUSE

What is it?

Automatic voter registration (AVR) is the next step in voting rights. It shifts our voter registration system from an opt-in to an opt-out one, involving more citizens and making elections more free, fair, and accessible. It also costs less in the long run and makes voting rolls more accurate and secure.

Under AVR, every eligible citizen who interacts with the RMV and other voter registration agencies will be automatically registered to vote, unless they say no. The legislation also requires Massachusetts to further improve the accuracy of our voting rolls by joining the Electronic Registration Information Center.

There's a problem.



680,000 voting age citizens are not on the rolls.

Cutting Edge

Oregon and California became the first two states to have AVR in 2015. Alaska, West Virginia, Vermont, and Connecticut also adopted this cutting edge reform in 2016, Alaska by ballot initiative on Nov 8th by a 64% vote. **Massachusetts should be next.**

Concerns

Using modern technology to process registration will make voter rolls more accurate and cost-effective. Databases and opt-out procedures will ensure that only those eligible will be registered. If someone is mistakenly registered, they will be not be penalized.

Making voting rights automatic - Boston Globe Editorial, September 22, 2015

"The measure simply reverses the status quo: Would-be voters currently have to opt in to get enrolled; soon, voter registration will happen by default when receiving or renewing a license from the department of motor vehicles. So the onus now rests with the government, and not with citizens. The right to vote is granted automatically and without unnecessary barriers, as it should be, unless the individual opts out..."

Critics of universal automatic registration...say it could lead to voter fraud, since the new system potentially could enroll people who shouldn't be on the voter lists. But **modernizing the process and relying on technology will only make voter lists more accurate and the system more cost-efficient.**"

