



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2020

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Voting Rights Groups Call for Urgent Action on HD 5075, a Bill Supported by Over 100 Organizations to Safeguard Fall Elections

Voting rights organizations including Common Cause Massachusetts, MassVOTE, the League of Women Voters, and the ACLU of Massachusetts testified before the Joint Committee on Election Laws today in support of HD 5075, An Act Ensuring Safe and Participatory 2020 State Elections in Response to COVID-19. They called for the Committee to act quickly to support the bill.

HD 5075 – filed by Representatives Michael Moran and John Lawn – has been endorsed by over 100 organizations in Massachusetts, as of Thursday afternoon. More endorsements are pending.

During the hearing, supporters of [HD.5075](#) testified that the bill will help ensure safe, participatory, and accessible elections during COVID-19, and also help protect the ability of local elections officials to manage a transition to a primarily vote-by-mail election. With the September elections only three months away and general elections, five, the advocates argued that in order for Massachusetts elections infrastructure to be able to handle the necessary changes, the committee and State House must act quickly.

“We support this bill because it is based on evidence and best practices from other states,” says **Pam Wilmot of Common Cause Massachusetts**. “It is comprehensive, and includes reforms that consider the needs of voters, but also of local elections officials who no matter what happens will be faced with a surge of absentee ballots and very different elections than in years past. One clear lesson learned from other states is that the necessary reforms will take all the time we have to implement, which is why we urge the Joint Committee on Election Laws to act quickly to move this critical bill.”

“Elections matter,” said **Rahsaan Hall, racial justice program director at the ACLU of Massachusetts**. “And this particular election will not only be impacted by COVID-19, but its results will determine the leaders who will govern as our country rebuilds. We need to take immediate, aggressive action to protect and facilitate the vote this fall – by mail, in person, and

in safety – in order to safeguard the ballot for everyone and avoid exacerbating systemic inequalities that particularly impact communities of color.”

Said **Cheryl Clyburn Crawford, Executive Director of MassVOTE**, "Through our testimony, we strived to make one thing clear: HD.5075 is the best chance Massachusetts has to adequately brace our elections for COVID19. This includes vote-by-mail; this includes expanded early voting; this includes personal protective equipment for poll workers. We know what needs to be done, so let's do it."

"Every voter deserves to cast a vote safely. We will work hard to ensure that voters with limited English proficiency can access multilingual materials for voting from the safety of their homes, as required by this bill," says **Beth Huang, the Director of the Massachusetts Voter Table**, a coalition of community organizations.

"It is critical that our fall elections are carried out in a way that assures voters and election workers can participate safely and that affirms the public's trust in the outcome," said **Patricia Comfort, executive director, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts**. "There is going to be a large increase in absentee ballots. We must make sure they can be handled in a way that does not cause massive disruption. Sending voters a ballot before the November election without requiring an application will help tremendously."

"As the saying goes, in crisis there is danger and there is opportunity. This bill seizes an opportunity to make our elections fairer and safer in 2020," said **Janet Domenitz, Executive Director of MASSPIRG**.

"HD5070 lays out a clear path forward to safely enable the voters of the Commonwealth, particularly those most disenfranchised by barriers to voting, to fully participate in our democracy despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 health crisis," says **Sophia Hall, Supervising Attorney at Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston**.

Organizations endorsing HD 5075 include:

Common Cause Massachusetts
ACLU of Massachusetts
MASSPIRG
MassVOTE
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Voter Table
Lawyers for Civil Rights
1199SEIU Massachusetts
Action for Equity
Alternatives for Community and Environment
American Federation of Teachers-MA
American Promise
Arise for Social Justice
Berkshire Democratic Brigades

Black Directors' Network
Black Economic Justistic Institute
Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, Inc.
Boston Democratic Socialists of America
Boston Ten Point Coalition
Boston Ujima Project
Burlington Democratic Town Committee
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc.
Cambridge Area Stronger Together (CAST)
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice
Chilmark Democratic Town Committee
City Life Vida Urbana
City Mission, Inc.
Clean Water Action MA
Coalition for Social Justice
Codman Square NDC
Conservation Law Foundation
Criminal Justice Reform Task Force of Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative - DSNI
End Mass Incarceration Together
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Equal Citizens
ForwardMA
Four Freedoms Coalition
Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution
Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association
Generation Citizen Massachusetts
Greater Boston Nazarene Compassionate Center Inc.
Greater Boston Section-National Council of Negro Women
Indivisible Martha's Vineyard
Indivisible Northampton
Indivisible Outer Cape
iVOTE
Jetpac
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston
La Comunidad, Inc
Lift+Every+Vote
MA Association of Community Development Corporations
MAPS-Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
March For Our Lives: Massachusetts
Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants
Mass Communities Action Network
Mass Equality
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts Peace Action

Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
MITvote
NAACP-Boston Branch
National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts
New England United for Justice
Next Leadership Development Corporation
Nonprofit Vote
PHENOM
Planned Parenthood
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts
Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts
Progressive For Democracy in America
Progressive Massachusetts
Project R.I.G.H.T.
Providers' Council- CareVote
Quincy Geneva New Vision CDC
Racial Justice Rising
Reclaim Our Democracy
Right to the City Boston
Rosie's Place
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
Small Planet Institute
Somerville Democratic City Committee
Sunrise Movement Boston
The Equal Democracy Project at Harvard Law School
The Real Cost of Prisons Project
The Women's Pipeline for Change
Toxics Action Center
Transformative Culture Project
Union of Minority Neighborhoods
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
Voter Choice for Massachusetts 2020
Worcester Interfaith
Young Democrats of Massachusetts
YWCA Cambridge
YWCA Malden
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

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The Election Modernization Coalition is comprised of the ACLU of Massachusetts, Common Cause Massachusetts, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, MASSPIRG, MassVOTE, and the Massachusetts Voter Table.