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Voting Rights Advocates Urge Governor Baker to Sign Elections Bill Immediately

Today a conference committee released critical legislation that will help keep elections safe, accessible, and participatory this fall in the face of threats posed by COVID-19. It is a huge step towards ensuring that no citizen has to choose between their health and their right to vote, and it expands access to voting long needed in the Bay State. Lawmakers are expected to approve the bill tomorrow.

The Election Modernization Coalition supports the bill and urges Governor Baker to sign it into law immediately. The election reforms in the bill require significant time and effort to implement -- and with the primary election less than 10 weeks away, there is no time to waste.

The final legislation is similar to the versions passed by the House and Senate in late May and earlier this month, respectively. It will expand early voting options and make it easier to vote by mail in Massachusetts. All registered voters will automatically receive a mail ballot application for both the Sept. 1 state primary and the November general election. The Secretary of the Commonwealth is also charged with establishing an online portal so voters can request a mail ballot online. In addition, the bill offers protections for in-person voting and will expand early voting for the November general and implement it for the first time for the September primary.

The first ballot application mailing is slated to go out July 15, in just 16 days. If Governor Baker does not sign the bill quickly, this deadline will be difficult to meet.

The coalition urges the Governor to sign the H. 4820 immediately so that election administrators and local election officials can implement the legislation as soon as possible, and advocates and others can begin educating voters about these important changes.

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The Election Modernization Coalition includes Common Cause/MA, MassVOTE, the ACLU of Massachusetts, MASSPIRG, Mass Voter Table, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts.