

On Thursday March 10<sup>th</sup> the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth emailed all election clerks with the **draft** regulations pertaining to early voting for their review and comment. Under the provisions of General Laws chapter 54, section 25B(o), "the state secretary shall promulgate regulations to implement this section including, but not limited to, a process for establishing additional early voting locations and a process for applying for, receiving, separating, compiling, recording and securing early voter ballots." The Secretary of the Commonwealth provided these draft regulations to the elections community for review and comment prior to opening them for public comment. They will be opening them for public comment in April and will notify each elections office of the public comment period and hearing on the proposed regulations. As of this time the Somerville Elections Department has not been notified of the dates of this period.

#### Summary of Early Voting Draft Regulations

- Early voting will be used for all biennial elections.
- Voting period shall run from the eleventh business day preceding the general election, until the close of business on the business day, preceeding the business day before the election.
- Voters may vote either in person at a designated early voting location, or by mail.
- A city may provide additional early voting hours beyond the department's regular business hours, including weekend hours.
- The early voting site shall include the election office or another location within the building
- A city may also provide additional early voting sites at discretion of the registrars.
- The local election officials will designate sufficient staffing for the designated early voting location(s).
- Any qualified voter wanting to vote early may file an application for an early voting ballot with the city election official, by mail, or in person, which must be received before noon on the last day of the early voting period.
- The voter will be marked off on a voting list, similar to the way a voter is marked off on Election Day. Each location should have space available for voters to mark their ballots privately.
- After marking the ballot the voter will enclose the ballot in an early voting envelope, and fill out a voter affidavit
- The local election officials must on Election Day deliver each of the early voting ballots to their designated precincts in order for the ballots to be processed through the correct voting machine.
  - The local election officials also have the option to set up a central tabulation facility