

Offered by Councilor Josh Zakim

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CITY OF BOSTON



IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN

AN ORDINANCE INCREASING ACCESS TO VOTER REGISTRATION

WHEREAS, The ability for all citizens to participate in elections is a fundamental civil right and a central principle of our democracy; and,

WHEREAS, Massachusetts currently has a voter registration cutoff law that requires voters to register at least 20 days prior to participating in an election. In the City of Boston, residents must opt-in to the voter registration system; and,

WHEREAS, Restrictions on registration disenfranchise voters and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and minority residents. The City of Boston should explore opportunities to increase access to voter registration during routine interactions with residents such as including Boston Public Schools registration and neighborhood parking permit applications to establish an automatic opt-out voter registration system.

NOW THEREFORE,

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston, as follows:

Section 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter XI shall be amended by adding at the end thereof, the following new section and subsections:

11-11 Voter Registration Accessibility.

11-11.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to increase access to voter registration by making voter registration forms available at additional locations and establishing an automatic voter registration system.

11-11.2 Availability of Voter Registration Forms.

- A. The Boston Public Library shall make voter registration forms available in conspicuous locations at all branch libraries. Voter registration forms shall be provided to individuals when applying for library cards.
- B. All Boston Public High Schools and Boston Public Schools Welcome Centers shall provide pre-registration information and forms to all students eligible to pre-register. Voter registration forms shall also be provided to parents or legal guardians when registering children for school. Boston Public Schools shall allow students a later start time on Election Day provided that the student proves that such time was used for voting purposes. Students may be asked to provide school officials with an “I Voted” sticker, a signed note from an election official or poll worker, or any other document approved by school officials in order to show that such time was used for voting purposes.
- C. The Boston Transportation Department, hereinafter referred to as Department, shall provide registration materials to individuals applying for or renewing resident parking permits. The Department shall also add a date of birth requirement on the resident parking permit forms and an optional request for an RMV ID. The Department shall share the information from the completed resident parking permit form with the city’s Elections Department to automatically register such individual. The following information shall be included on the resident parking permit forms:
 - 1) An opt-out option with an explanation stating that if residents check the opt-out box, their information will not be shared with the Elections Department.
 - 2) A statement concerning affiliated party explaining that unless otherwise noted, applicant will be registered as Unenrolled.

Section 2.

If any provision of CBC 11-11 shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then such provision shall be considered separately and apart from the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 3. Effective Date.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed in Council: January 17, 2018