

From: Campaign for Vermont <info@campaignforvermont.org>

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To: "dsweaney@leg.state.vt.us" <dsweaney@leg.state.vt.us>,
"devans@leg.state.vt.us" <devans@leg.state.vt.us>,
"ddevereux@leg.state.vt.us" <ddevereux@leg.state.vt.us>,
"jcole@leg.state.vt.us" <jcole@leg.state.vt.us>,
"scopelandhanzas@leg.state.vt.us" <scopelandhanzas@leg.state.vt.us>,
"mhigley@leg.state.vt.us" <mhigley@leg.state.vt.us>,
"rhubert@leg.state.vt.us" <rhubert@leg.state.vt.us>, "rlaclair@leg.state.vt.us"
<rlaclair@leg.state.vt.us>, "plewis@leg.state.vt.us" <plewis@leg.state.vt.us>,
"lmartin@leg.state.vt.us" <lmartin@leg.state.vt.us>,
"mtownsend@leg.state.vt.us" <mtownsend@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: Election Day Voter Registration

Members of the House Government Operations Committee,

Campaign for Vermont (CFV) urges you to pass S.29 establishing Election Day voter registration in Vermont. CFV's mission is to reconnect middle class Vermonters with their government, to this end we believe that making the polls more accessible will increase voter turnout, participation, and faith in the political process.

Vermonters do not have a propensity for voter fraud. Less than 1 in every 14,000 voters in the 2012 election were ineligible to vote. Even nationally, examples of voter fraud in states with Election Day registration are very low. Maine, for example, experienced two instances in the past 38 years.

The current laws governing election fraud in Vermont impose up to a \$10,000 fine for each instance of fraud. With the Secretary of State's statewide voter checklist it should be immediately apparent if an individual has voted twice in an election. Given these protections, Campaign for Vermont believes a widespread spike in voter fraud is unlikely.

With Vermont's small districts - many elections are decided with only a few votes. With voter fraud levels at less than 1/100th of one percent, it seems more likely that an election would be decided by eligible voters denied their right to vote than those who would corrupt the system. If we assume that just

1 in 2,500 voters (less than one per town) are turned away for problems with their voter registration, it is five times more likely that an eligible voter would be turned away than a fraudulent voter be allowed to vote.

The 2014 election produced record low voter turnout in Vermont – below 50%. We should be asking ourselves what can be done to increase this percentage. Election day registration has been shown to increase voter turnout. According to Demos, a public policy think tank, “four of the top five states for voter turnout in the 2012 presidential election all offered Same-Day Registration,” and “average voter turnout was over 10 percentage points higher in SDR states than in other states.”

Given the challenges we have had with voter turnout and Vermonter’s fundamental right to vote, Campaign for Vermont supports Election Day Voter Registration provided reasonable steps are taken to avoid fraud. Now is the time to make the ballot box more accessible for Vermonters.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cyrus Patten, Executive Director

Ben Kinsley, Policy and Operations Manager

Campaign for Vermont is a grassroots, nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization. We are a network of over 20,000 Vermonters that are asking for policy reforms that will reconnect middle class Vermonters to their government, and create a more prosperous economy.

Learn more: <http://www.campaignforvermont.org>

