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Vermont Senate Committee on Government Operations  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: Support for S.297 – Mobile Voting Opt-In Legislation

Dear Chairman Collamore and Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations,

I am writing to enthusiastically express my support for S.297, legislation that would establish a mobile voting opt-in system in the State of Vermont. I write in my capacity as President of MiddVotes, Middlebury College's nonpartisan student organization dedicated to voter registration and civic education. A small but mighty team of undergraduates, MiddVotes has registered thousands of students to vote and supported hundreds of students in mailing their absentee ballots or accessing local poll stations.

My lived experience as President of MiddVotes has been marked by great enthusiasm for the future. My peers are incredibly thoughtful, politically engaged, and conscious of the importance of voting – now more than ever. Despite our proactivity, privilege, and energy, we regularly encounter the difficulties of the voting landscape. Voter registration and absentee voting deadlines vary incredibly by state, and identification requirements are constantly changing in certain areas of the nation. These challenges are tenfold for military personnel and voters with disabilities, necessitating an innovative and equitable solution for our most vulnerable – yet equally deserving of representation – populations. Having registered hundreds of college and high school students to vote in the last three years, I can confidently attest to the necessity of modernizing our elections system.

Technological advancements have the potential to enhance democratic participation and advance electoral processes. Contrary to what many believe regarding the integration of modern technology in elections, we can use digital platforms to sustain our fragile liberal democracy in a secure, yet transparent, way. The Mobile Voting Project offers a creative and sustainable solution to the issue of voter accessibility for communities that are often overlooked and underrepresented in republican government. Military personnel – our country's bravest individuals who physically put their lives at risk and leave their families behind to protect us – deserve an easier voting process during active deployment. Individuals with disabilities, who often face ableism and discrimination, deserve to participate in an election system defined by integrity and warmth.

I am acutely aware of threats – both foreign and domestic – to our elections. I am conscious of how vulnerable technology can be at its lowest, and believe that we must be vigilant about our personal

information falling into the hands of bad actors. At the same time, I believe that we must reform and modernize our most sacred democratic institution, the right to vote. The Mobile Voting Project has repeatedly demonstrated the security and efficiency of its mobile voting technology. The beauty of technology is that it is verifiable, testifiable, and subject to experiment – and isn't that what our democracy is? The greatest of experiments? If and when necessary, we can improve, verify, and update this technology to reflect our best interests.

There is also something to be said about S.297's opt-in approach, which respects the voter's right to choose how to vote. As an alternative or additional pathway for participation, mobile voting provides the required freedom and flexibility for making our most important political choice. In addition to helping our active military personnel and individuals with disabilities, S.297 would allow single mothers, overworked nurses, busy teachers, weary police officers, and other valuable laborers to vote without additional stress. Municipalities would have the freedom to decide how to implement mobile voting technology, without compromising election security and accommodating municipal budgets.

I urge you to carefully consider and support S.297, positioning Vermont as the nation's leader in accessible, modern voting practices. As a native New Yorker, I was pleasantly surprised and inspired by Vermont's robust tradition of civic engagement. This legislation would continue and maintain that tradition in the face of a discombobulated and demoralizing federal administration.

I welcome the opportunity to testify before the Committee if you have any questions or concerns that I can address. Thank you for your consideration, service, and labor of love.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniza Tazabekova