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February 23, 2022

The Honorable Barry R. Finegold
State House, Room 511-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael J. Moran
State House, Room 39
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Cynthia Stone Creem
State House, Room 312-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Daniel J. Ryan
State House, Room 443
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Ryan C. Fattman
State House, Room 213-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Shawn Dooley
State House, Room 473-B
Boston, MA 02133

RE: An Act fostering voter opportunities, trust, equity and security (“VOTES Act”)

Esteemed Members of the VOTES Act Conference Committee:

I write to provide my strong support for a number of provisions contemplated in the VOTES Act legislation (S2554/H4367) engrossed by the House and the Senate.

As a civil rights lawyer, I know that the freedom to vote is one of the most fundamental rights we have—one that is under attack in state legislatures across the country. Here in Massachusetts, it is essential that we act to protect the freedom to vote and to ensure the accessibility and security of our elections. I thank both the House and Senate for putting forward meaningful voting rights legislation, and I am optimistic that the work of your conference committee will result in transformative legislation that will expand and protect this fundamental right.

I commend both the House and Senate for engrossing the following critical reforms: making early mail-in voting permanent, expanding opportunities for in-person early voting, expanding voting access for persons with disabilities, and ensuring meaningful access to the ballot for those eligible to vote in our jails and county correctional facilities, as well as for citizens re-entering society following a period of incarceration. I urge you to retain these critical reforms in your conference committee report.

I also encourage the conference committee to embrace same-day voter registration. Same-day voter registration will remove an existing barrier to participation in our elections and will ensure that the ballot is fully accessible to all eligible voters on the day they go to cast their ballot. At a minimum, I ask the conference committee to codify Election-Day voter registration, a significant improvement over the status quo, where too many Massachusetts residents who are otherwise eligible to vote are prevented from taking part in our democracy on Election Day.

I look forward to continuing to partner with the legislature, the Secretary, our colleagues in elections administration, voting rights advocates, the disability community, prisoners' advocates, and other interested stakeholders to protect voting rights and ensure that our elections are accessible to all eligible voters. Thank you for considering these comments.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Anne Johnson Landry, Assistant Attorney General and Senior Policy Advisor, at (617) 963-2027.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maura Healey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Maura Healey