

Please Cosponsor!

“Improving Voting Access” AMD #1277

Filed by Rep. Frank Moran

Amendment #1277 does two things to remove barriers to voting...

- 1. Ends the disenfranchisement of voters who don't return the municipal census &**
- 2. Improves polling place accessibility by requiring periodic inspections**

Separate Municipal Census from Voter Registration



Today, if a voter does not respond to the annual municipal census, they are punished by being placed on the inactive voter list. This penalty is a legacy of 19th-century poll taxes tied to property ownership. Massachusetts is one of the only states to punish voters this way.

The amendment would end this penalty – and ensure clean voter rolls the way other states do. Voters would be placed on the inactive voter list if:

- They changed their address with the U.S. Postal Service or;
- They are marked as a duplicate registration by the multistate Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).

The process of placing voters on the inactive voter list would be automated to the extent possible to reduce the workload on local election officials. There would be no change to the municipal census itself, which is used to ensure local services and to populate the jury pool.

Strengthen Accessible Polling Location Oversight



Voters with disabilities continue to face a myriad of obstacles to in-person voting – from physical inaccessibility to lack of functioning equipment inside polling locations. This amendment would require the Secretary of the Commonwealth - or their agent - to arrange an inspection of all polling places and early voting sites at least once every four years to ensure compliance with federal and state disability accessibility laws.

For more information contact gfoster@commoncause.org

Municipal Census is a descendant of the **poll tax.**

As late as the 1890 revision of the state election laws you had to be a male citizen 21 years or older who paid a tax in order to vote. The local tax assessors compiled the list of those who paid, and this in effect became the voter list.

An 1891 state constitutional amendment approved by MA voters and Chapter 51 of 1892 finally removed paying a poll tax as a qualification for registering and voting, but the assessors still compiled the list of those assessed a poll tax and sent it to the local registrars of voters, who used it to prepare the annual register of voters.

Today, registrars compile the Annual Town list, or municipal census, and it remains a basis for the annual register of voters by punishing voters who fail to return the census.



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