Student Voting Guide for Massachusetts

2016 Registration Deadlines and Election Dates
Voter Registration Deadline: 20 days before Election Day
Registration Deadline: October 19
Election Day: November 8

Voter registration forms, polling place locations, and more information can be found at http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/

Register to vote online at www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/

Register at School or Home?
Students have a choice about where to register to vote.

School address:
• Students attending college in Massachusetts may register at their school address. You must plan to return after temporary absences, like summer break, but do not have to plan to reside at that address permanently.

Permanent address:
• Students may choose to register or remain registered at a permanent address in Massachusetts or outside the state. In this case, students may need to vote by absentee ballot.

You may only be registered and vote in one location.

For other states’ registration information visit: www.campusvoteproject.org/studentguides

What Type of ID Do I Need to Vote?
You only need to present identification when voting in person or mail a copy when voting by mail if all of the following apply:
1. You are a first-time voter
2. You registered by mail or registration drive, and
3. You did not include a copy of an ID with the application.

• Acceptable forms of ID include a Massachusetts driver’s license or state ID card. You may also use a utility bill, a bank statement, a government-issued check, a paycheck, or any other government document that has your name and address. If your student ID does not contain your local address, an alternative form of identification must be provided.
• If you cannot show ID, you can cast a provisional ballot.

What Type of ID Do I Need to Register?
Massachusetts’ voter registration form asks for your Massachusetts driver’s license or ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security Number. Make sure you have it when completing your registration form.

Where Do I Vote?
Make a plan. Look up your polling location and hours at: www.wheredoivotema.com/

www.campusvoteproject.org
A Project of the Fair Elections Legal Network
Common Questions

Will voting in Massachusetts affect my federal financial aid?
Where you register to vote will not affect federal financial aid such as Pell Grants and Perkins or Stafford loans or your dependency status regarding FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Will I lose my scholarship if I register to vote in Massachusetts?
Generally, no. If you receive scholarship money from a state, county, town, or a private entity (i.e., an entity other than the federal government) you should confirm that residency in a particular place is not a requirement of the scholarship and/or that voter registration in Massachusetts will not affect your eligibility.

Will registering to vote in Massachusetts affect my driver’s license or car registration?
Registering to vote in Massachusetts makes you a resident for the purposes of your driver’s license and vehicle registration. If you drive your vehicle in Massachusetts, you have 30 days from when you register to vote to register your vehicle and get a Massachusetts driver’s license. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles.

Will registering to vote in Massachusetts prevent my parents from claiming me as a dependent on their taxes?
No. Students are often told that registering to vote in a different state from their parents will make them lose their dependency status. This is not true. Where you register to vote will have no effect on your parent’s tax status.

Does being an out-of-state student for tuition purposes affect my right to vote in my college community?
No. You may choose to vote in your college community or back home regardless of your tuition status.

How Can I Vote?

By Mail
• Registered Massachusetts voters may vote absentee if they will be absent from their city on Election Day, have a physical disability that prevents them from voting at the polling place, or they cannot vote at the polls because of religious beliefs.
• Your absentee ballot must be received before the polls close, but you cannot deliver an absentee ballot directly to the polling place on Election Day.
• If you are voting from outside the U.S., your completed absentee ballot can be received up to 10 days after the election, but it must be postmarked on or before Election Day.

Early In Person
• If you know you are going to be out of town on Election Day, you may request to complete your absentee ballot application and cast your ballot in a single visit.

On Election Day
• The polls must be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. for statewide elections; however, some municipalities can open their polls as early as 5:45 a.m. Contact your local clerk to verify polling hours.
• If you still want to vote at the polls after receiving an absentee ballot, you must go to the county clerk, who will issue a certificate permitting you to vote in person.