



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

TODD M. SMOLA
REPRESENTATIVE
1ST HAMPDEN DISTRICT

BRIMFIELD • HOLLAND • PALMER
STURBRIDGE • WALES • WARE • WARREN

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 124
TEL. (617) 722-2100
FAX: (617) 722-2390
www.reptoddsmla.org
Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov
Conor.Welch@mahouse.gov

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Contact: Conor Welch
617-722-2100

Representative Smola supports bill expanding mail-in voting option until June 30

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) recently supported legislation that would provide a temporary three-month extension of the state’s mail-in voting law, moving the sunset date from March 31 to June 30.

House Bill 73, *An Act further providing for early voting by mail*, was engrossed by the House on March 1 and enacted on March 11. Representative Smola said the extension is needed to accommodate the large number of municipal elections that are scheduled to take place this year between April and June. The bill, which has also been enacted by the Senate, is now on Governor Charlie Baker’s desk for his review and signature.

“Mail-in voting will allow people to safely vote in their local elections while we are still facing the pandemic,” said Representative Smola.

House Bill 73 is the latest in a series of bills that have been passed by the House and Senate over the last 12 months to help ensure Massachusetts residents can safely exercise their right to vote during the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. In March of 2020, legislation was approved allowing cities and towns to postpone municipal elections and caucuses until a date certain falling on or before June 30, 2020 and authorizing early voting by mail using no-excuse absentee ballots.

In July of 2020, the House and Senate granted additional options to voters, including an expansion of mail-in voting and early in-person voting for the 2020 state primary and general elections. Most recently, during the Fiscal Year 2021 budget debate in November, the Senate proposed extending early mail-in voting to June 30, but budget conferees opted to roll that date back to March 31.

During floor debate, the House concurred with a Senate amendment that would ensure that voters who are blind, visually impaired, or have a disability that makes it difficult or impossible to effectively access a paper vote by mail ballot can request an accommodation from their local election official by phone or electronically. Such requests must be submitted no later than four business days before the election, and local election officials will be required to make “reasonable efforts to grant accommodations to the voter” once a request is received.

For additional information please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or (617)722-2100.

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