



CHANGE Illinois Testimony to the Illinois State Board of Elections

Submitted By:

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for your November 20, 2017 public hearing on the implementation of Illinois Public Act 100-46 (the automatic voter registration law).

CHANGE Illinois is a part of the steering committee for Just Democracy Illinois coalition, which also includes: Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago, Chicago Votes, Common Cause Illinois, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, & Illinois Public Interest Research Group. While we, as a member of that coalition, are submitting testimony to the Illinois State Board of Elections about the implementation of the AVR law, we wish to submit the following testimony as a supplement to that.

Our organization, as well as our coalition partners, worked hard to drive the campaign for the passage and signing of automatic voter registration (AVR) and believe that once fully implemented, AVR will act as a crucial safeguard against voter disenfranchisement and a great tool for expanding ballot access in the Land of Lincoln.

We strongly encourage Illinois and State Board, in its role as the chief voting and elections authority of the state, to implement the AVR law fully and effectively.

Statutes from the AVR law outline a clear implementation deadline of July 1, 2018 at the Secretary of State's office, in time for many eligible Illinois residents to be registered before the 2018 statewide and state legislature races next November. Because the Secretary of State's office includes the Department of Drivers' Services, and the majority of existing and future voter registration updates will occur through that office - whether it's when an eligible Illinois voter is receiving a new license or updating the address of a current one - the on-time implementation of AVR at the DMV will be critical for the law to be successful.

If there are barriers to timely implementation or to meeting this deadline, we, at CHANGE Illinois, encourage that agencies responsible for implementation work with the General Assembly to receive the necessary support and resources to overcome such challenges.

Eligible Illinois voters who have interacted with Driver Services (or any other state agency after the July 2019 implementation date) and thus, qualify to have their voter registration automatically updated by the AVR law, should not be potentially penalized because an unforeseen delay.

Because of the universal and – perhaps more telling – bipartisan support the AVR law had from the Illinois General Assembly, as well as the backing of dozens of organizations and their thousands of members, we believe this can and should be used as a resource for the State Board during implementation. CHANGE Illinois, as well as our members, coalition, and partner organizations can be called upon to help implementing agencies address any issues that arise, including raising political support for additional appropriations to these agencies.

We recognize and appreciate the challenges the State Board faces in implementing this law, especially given recent consequences from not having a state budget for the last several years.

Lastly, we would like to encourage the State Board to continue to give the public and specific communities that will be positively affected by this law additional opportunities to engage on this topic. This could include the scheduling of additional public hearings in the new year and after the March 20th primary election.

We look forward to working with the State Board and other implementing agencies to ensure the successful implementation of Public Act 100-46. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony.