



House Elections Committee
May 23, 2023

Good morning, Chair Tsernoglou and members of the House Elections Committee,

Michigan League of Conservation Voters is writing in support of House Bills 4567, 4568, 4569, 4570, and 4594 to expand access to voting to more Michiganders.

HB 4567 removes the burdensome and inequitable requirement for an absentee ballot obtained with an affidavit of identity to be processed as challenged. Removing this requirement provides for absentee voting to mirror the same process as Election Day voting at polling locations.

HB 4568, eliminating the prohibition of paid rides to the polls, removes a provision of the law that has often been confusing for community-based organizations doing nonpartisan get out the vote activities. HB 4568 will increase access to in-person voting for voters who may lack access to their own vehicle or reliable transportation, which particularly affects seniors, college students, individuals with disabilities, and those with lower incomes. The ban disproportionately affects marginalized communities, further perpetuating inequities in the democratic process. Removing the ban will align Michigan with every other state in the nation and move us further toward ensuring equal and accessible voting opportunities.

HB 4569 does not just allow for pre-registration for 16 year olds but also mandates public education and outreach campaigns for public high school students to know about and take advantage of this new provision. This is especially exciting to our Democracy for All team, as we have been working closely with high school youth as part of our voter education efforts and internship programs. Pre-registration will be a new action step we can present to the youth we engage with to help insure that Michigan continues to lead the nation with youth voter turnout like we did in 2022. When voting becomes an early habit, people are more likely to continue voting throughout their lives. Pre-registration helps establish voting as a lifelong habit by engaging young people early and encouraging their ongoing civic participation.

HB 4570 increases the accessibility of the online application for an absentee ballot allowing voters the option to upload a physical signature. We support this bill as it opens up one of the



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most time-efficient ways of obtaining an absentee ballot to voters who may not have a driver's license or state ID.

HB 4594 implements the new constitution right for voters for a state-wide absent voter ballot and application tracking system. The statewide system will ensure voters in all jurisdictions are quickly notified of any issues with their applications or ballots, allowing them to correct them and ensure their vote is counted with fewer calls and trips to their clerk's office, freeing up time for both voters and election officials. This bill is a significant step forward for voters and election officials and will help combat misinformation while reassuring voters that their votes will be counted.

We thank you for having a hearing on this important package of bills today and urge you all to vote yes on each one.

Thank you,
Brooke Harris
Democracy for All Director
Michigan League of Conservation Voters