



PROPOSAL 3: VOTING REFORM POLICIES

A proposal to authorize automatic and Election Day voter registration, no-reason absentee voting, and straight ticket voting; and add current legal requirements for military and overseas voting and post-election audits to the Michigan Constitution.

This proposed constitutional amendment would allow a United States citizen who is qualified to vote in Michigan to:

- Become automatically registered to vote when applying for, updating or renewing a driver's license or state-issued personal identification card, unless the person declines.
- Simultaneously register to vote with proof of residency and obtain a ballot during the 2-week period prior to an election, up to and including Election Day.
- Obtain an absent voter ballot without providing a reason.
- Cast a straight-ticket vote for all candidates of a particular political party when voting in a partisan general election.

Should this proposal be adopted?

- Yes
- No

What would it do? This proposal would institute changes to Michigan's voting process and enshrine several statutory rights with Michigan's Constitution (Article II, Section 4). If passed, the measure would:

- Protect the right of every registered voter to vote a secret ballot.
- Send an absentee ballot to military service members and overseas voters at least forty-five days before an election, upon application.
- Allow the option on all partisan general election ballots to vote "straight party."
- Automatically register citizens to vote, unless they decline, when they are conducting business with the Secretary of State's office.
- Allow a citizen to register to vote in-person anytime through the election with a completed registration application and proof of residency.
- Allow voter registration *by a mailed application* on or before the fifteenth day prior to an election.
- Provide access to any-reason absentee voting during the forty days before an election.
- Mandates audits of election results to ensure accuracy and integrity of the state's elections.

What is current policy? Federal law requires that any military service members and overseas voters who request an absentee ballot be sent one at least forty-five days before the election, as long as they request it in advance of that deadline. With regards to voter registration, individuals must register at least thirty days before an election. Michigan is one of fourteen states with a deadline at least thirty days prior to Election Day. Michigan does currently allow individuals who are at the Secretary of State's Office to register to vote, if they ask to do so, but it does not automatically register eligible voters or update their

voter information during these interactions. And finally, to vote by absentee ballot today, voters must meet specific criteria. They must either be at least 60 years old, be out of town when the polls are open, or be unable to vote on Election Day due to a physical disability, religious tenets, or incarceration.

Does Michigan allow straight-ticket voting? Straight-ticket (or straight party) voting was previously allowed in Michigan, allowing voters to choose all a party's candidates on the ballot by checking a single box. This practice was banned in 2016 by the Michigan Legislature. In September, the Court of Appeals upheld the ban, and the straight-ticket voting option will not be on the November ballot. This proposal, if passed, would add language to Michigan's Constitution that would reinstate straight-ticket voting.

How does this proposal relate to procedures in other states? According to the National Conference of State Legislatures:

- Eight states currently allow or offer straight-ticket voting.
- Thirteen states and the District of Columbia allow for automatic voter registration.
- Seventeen states and the District of Columbia offer same day voter registration (and in 2019, Washington will also offer it). Fifteen states and the District of Columbia allow this same day registration on Election Day, while North Carolina and Maryland allow it during early voting.
- Twenty states, including Michigan, require voters to fit certain criteria to obtain an absentee ballot. Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia allow any qualified voter to vote absentee, without needing to provide an excuse.

Arguments from Supporters:

- Democracy is most effective when people participate. Similar policies have facilitated greater voter participation.
- Automatic voter registration during SOS visits increases the accuracy of voting rolls and reduces the processing of costly paper registrations for local communities.
- The policy improves election accuracy, protects voter privacy, and alleviates voting barriers: work/family obligations, transportation issues, and long lines.

Supporters include but are not limited to: Promote the Vote (ballot question committee); The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan; Detroit Regional Chamber, the League of Women Voters of Michigan; Michigan League for Public Policy; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of Michigan and the NAACP Detroit Chapter; Secretary of State Candidate Jocelyn Benson (D); Sierra Club Michigan Chapter; and the Michigan United Auto Workers.

Arguments from Opponents:

- Any-reason absentee voting makes it more difficult to detect fraud and thus compromises the integrity of the process.
- Same day voting is a logistical challenge for municipal officials and the Secretary of State (i.e. new technology, training, and volume of work for poll workers).
- Some of these provisions are unnecessary as they are already in law (i.e. secret ballots, military/overseas absentee ballots send dates, and post-election audits).

Opponents include but are not limited to: Promote My Vote (ballot question committee) and Secretary of State Candidate Mary Treder Lang (R).