



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RELEASE: As Last Week's Election Makes Clear, Massachusetts Must Implement Ranked Choice Voting

Boston, MA – For the second State Primary in a row, the candidate that has won a highly-contested Congressional Primary in Massachusetts walked away with less than 25% of the vote. In 2018, Lori Trahan won the Third Congressional District Democratic Primary with only 21.7% of the vote. Last week, Jake Auchincloss won the Fourth Congressional District Primary with only 22.4% of the vote. It has now become the exception, not the norm, for winning candidates to achieve majority support in highly-competitive, widely-contested races. Ranked choice voting, however, can fix that.

“While we celebrate the record-setting turnout in last week’s September 1 Primary, the election makes one outstanding fact clear – Massachusetts must implement ranked choice (RCV) voting this fall,” **said Cheryl Clyburn Crawford, Executive Director at MassVOTE.** “RCV strengthens our democracy by empowering voters and candidates alike. Instead of settling for any one candidate, individuals can vote with their ideals by ranking candidates in order of preference. As a result, RCV has proven to promote diverse candidates, increase voter turnout, and increase voter choice and competition. The city of San Francisco, for example, elected their first female African-American mayor under RCV.”

“By implementing RCV this fall, Massachusetts has an opportunity to lead the way in pioneering democracy reform across the country,” **said Alex Psilakis, Policy and Communications Manager at MassVOTE.** “Only one other state – Maine – has implemented RCV state-wide, yet the policy has proven an immense success there. In the 2018 midterm elections, RCV ensured that winning candidates achieved majority support. This year, the state is expanding RCV to apply to presidential elections, revealing just how popular and practical the policy is. While

states like California, Minnesota, and Colorado practice RCV in some cities and towns, Massachusetts would become only the second state to implement the policy fully.”

Currently, one city in Massachusetts practices RCV, while two more have voted to implement the policy in the coming years. Cambridge has utilized RCV since the 1940s, applying the electoral system to City Council and School Committee races. Candidates that typically struggle in our traditional electoral system, like female candidates and candidates of color, have thrived under RCV. As a result, Cambridge has one of the most diverse, representative City Councils in the country. Alongside Cambridge, Amherst and Easthampton have voted to use RCV. If Question Two passes this fall, RCV would be used in primary and general elections for all Massachusetts statewide offices, state legislative offices, federal congressional offices, and certain other offices beginning in 2022.

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MassVOTE is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization dedicated to voting rights, voter education, and social justice.