



## SAME DAY VOTER REGISTRATION POSITION PAPER

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The LWV of Delaware supports Same Day Registration.**

### **Why Does Delaware Need Same Day Registration?**

- ✓ Same Day Registration makes voting accessible and convenient by removing barriers to participation. All eligible citizens have an opportunity to vote, even if their names have been incorrectly purged or were not added to the registration list in time for the election.

### **Same-Day Registration protects against in-person voter Fraud.**

- ✓ It will not impact the integrity of Delaware's elections because new registrants are required to show proof of residency and sign an oath attesting to their identity and citizenship face-to-face before an election official. However, in Delaware, in-person voter fraud is not a problem. To date, according to the State Election Commission, not a single documented incident of voter fraud let alone a formal complaint, has occurred for any state election where voter registration is required.
- ✓ It will increase security because election databases will pick up any new voter who registers in two places.

### **Registration deadlines limit voter participation.**

- ✓ Delaware is one of twenty-eight states that end voter registration 25 days or more before Election Day, well before debates are held, advertisements are run, and before most voters focus on the election.

### **States with Same Day Registration have higher voter participation.**

- ✓ States with Election Day Registration have had higher voter turnout than those without Same Day Registration for over 25 years. Data show an average voter turnout 10 percentage points higher than the average turnout for non-Same Day Registration states in November 2012. The top five states all had Same Day Registration. (Demos, *Voters Win With Election Day Registration* (January 2009), available at <http://www.demos.org/publication/what-same-day-registration-where-it-available>)

### **Who Benefits from Same Day Registration?**

- ✓ All voters. 61.7 percent of eligible voters participated in the 2008 presidential election. Another 21 percent, 44 million American citizens, were not registered to vote. Experts predict that Same Day Registration could bring many of these citizens into the system. *Voter Registration: Assessing Current Problems*, Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on Rules and Administration, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1 (2009) (statement of Prof. Stephen Ansolabehere), available at <http://rules.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=CommitteeSchedule.Testimony&HearingID=c33b5ae8-ae8-413e-85db-a256ce6169f6&WitnessID=e394ba39-8bf4-441c-8ed3-6e8c68cf4b23>.
- ✓ **The historically disfranchised and recent movers.** 28 million voting age people in America moved between 2011 and 2012, representing 11.4% of all voting age individuals.\* The young, people of color\* and low-income populations are among the most mobile. Many of these individuals want to vote but are not able to register at their new addresses before registration deadlines pass, or do not know they were required to re-register. Same Day Registration offers a ready remedy. New residents can simply re-register at their new voting precinct on Election Day and vote. (\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Geographic Mobility/Migration 2011-2012; 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*, Internet Release Date: April 2009.)
- ✓ **Election administrators.** Election administrators like this process because it's easier to implement than provisional ballots. The existing Same Day Registration procedures are efficient: unlike most provisional ballot processes, each voter casts a valid ballot and is registered for the next election.

### **Same Day Registration Legislative Reform has Bi-Partisan Support**

- ✓ Republican and Democratic secretaries of state and legislators support Same Day Registration. Academic research finds there is no evidence that it produces a skewed partisan benefit. \*(Craig Leonard Brians & Bernard Grofman, "Election Day Registration's Effect on U.S. Voter Turnout," 82 *Social Science Quarterly* 170 (2002); and Jerry W. Calvert & Jack Gilchrist, "Suppose They Held an Election and Almost Everybody Came!," 26 *PS: Political Science and Politics* 695 (1993).)

**We support Same Day Registration legislation which would allow all eligible Delawareans to register to vote and cast a ballot at their polling places on Election Day!!**

**The LWV of Delaware and the Same Day Registration Coalition believe that any bill must adhere to the following principals:**

- *Same Day Registration in Delaware must apply to every state government-administered federal and state election--including all primary elections.*
- *Same Day Registration in Delaware must be offered to both new registrants as well as eligible citizens who need to update their registrations.*
- *All votes recorded through Same Day Registration must be counted as regular ballots.*
- *Voter registration requirements under Same Day Registration procedures must be uniform to registration requirements for non-SDR voters.*
- *Same Day Registration in Delaware should be made available at all official polling locations.*

The LWV of Delaware is a member of the Same Day Registration Coalition.

- This Position Paper contains information compiled by Demos.