



MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

**Joint Statement in Support of Making Election Day a State Holiday in MA**

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 7,000 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters concerning their quality of life and civic engagement during their time at MIT. MITvote is a non-partisan student group that works to increase voter turnout and civic engagement on campus. **Both of our groups support the creation of a state holiday for Election Day, such as the measure presented in [H.1493](#). However, we urge the sponsors of this bill and legislature to expand the scope of these measures to include not only presidential elections, but designate a state holiday every election day.**

A state holiday for Election Day provides time to vote for those who may otherwise not make it to the polls and signals the importance of civic participation in Massachusetts. **This measure is especially important for students who are disproportionately affected by the time commitment required to vote.** Students must find time to vote while navigating inflexible class schedules, deadlines, and extracurricular activities. Many students spend their entire extended work day on campus, which may be far from their polling place, thus inhibiting them from making it to the polls. Furthermore, students have especially limited transportation options for getting to the polls, as most do not have personal vehicles. An Election Day holiday would remove many of the stressors that may otherwise prevent students from performing their civic duty.

In addition to making voting more accessible for students, **a statewide holiday demonstrates the importance of civic participation and elevates voting as a priority in Massachusetts.** Instituting a statewide holiday is a strong statement that voting is important and worth recognizing. This recognition is especially important for students so as to establish the habit of voting at a young age. **Making voting easier for students, many of whom are first- or second-time voters, helps form the habit of voting and increases the likelihood that these individuals will continue voting throughout their life.**

For these reasons, **we urge the sponsors of the bill to expand the scope of election day holiday legislation to include the November election day every year, not just presidential elections.** Elections for US Congress, state-level elections, and local elections are all critical opportunities for civic participation, and the same ballot box accessibility should be afforded to voters for these elections as well.

If you would like to know more about student voting or would like to discuss additional methods of making the ballot box more accessible to students, please reach out to the graduate student council at [gsc-eab-state@mit.edu](mailto:gsc-eab-state@mit.edu) or MITvote at [vote-exec@mit.edu](mailto:vote-exec@mit.edu).

*Prepared by the External Affairs Board on behalf of the MIT Graduate Student Council and by MITvote.  
[April 2021]*