

# The Detroit News

## ‘Promote vote’ petition would OK no-reason absentee

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*Lansing* — Voter advocacy and civil rights groups are teaming up for a petition drive and potential ballot proposal that would allow no-reason absentee voting in Michigan and same-day registration. The League of Women Voters of Michigan, the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan and the state and Detroit branches of the NAACP filed petition language with the state last month and are awaiting form approval to begin collecting signatures.

The proposed amendment to the state Constitution would extend deadlines to register to vote by mail, allow residents to register in person at any time with proof of residency and vote absentee by mail or in person without reason. The proposal would also enshrine various voting options in the state Constitution, including straight-party voting, which could otherwise be banned under a 2015 law currently suspended amid a legal battle.

The “[Promote the Vote](#)” coalition will face a tight deadline and a high hurdle to make the ballot. If approved as to form, organizers will need to submit at least 315,654 signatures by June 30 but are aiming to collect 425,000 to provide a cushion. They intend to use a combination of volunteer and paid circulators.

The committee submitted the ballot language to the Michigan Bureau of Elections on Jan. 22, a spokesman confirmed. Staff is reviewing the form, and no hearing date has been set for potential approval. Organizers are planning kick-off meetings for Feb. 21.

Under current law, Michigan residents must be registered to vote at least 30 days before an election. Absentee voting is limited to those who are older than 60 or provide another valid excuse, such as plans to be out of town on Election Day. Twenty-seven states do not require a reason for absentee voting, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, and 37 states allow some form of early in-person voting.

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