

MICHIGAN



"PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES"

PROTECTION & ADVOCACY
SERVICE, INC.

Elmer L. Cerano, *Executive Director*

December 18, 2018

**COMMENTS BY MICHIGAN PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SERVICE, INC.
REGARDING PROPOSED SAME-DAY VOTER REGISTRATION**

Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS) is Michigan's protection and advocacy program, mandated to serve persons with disabilities in the Great Lakes State. As part of its advocacy work, MPAS advocates for equal access to voting for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities turn out to vote in lower proportions than the general public. One barrier to voting is the lack of accessible transportation to the polls. Any proposed legislation that adds travel requirements, such as separate travel to a clerk's office to register and then to a precinct to vote, compounds the challenges faced by people with disabilities in exercising their voting rights. Further, relying on absentee balloting to ensure accessibility is not sufficient because the absentee process itself does not protect the right to cast a private ballot. Finally, requiring personal appearance at a clerk's office adds pressure to make the clerk's office accessible to all who need to register there.

We recognize that clerk-based registration is built into the current system. The passage of Proposal 3 creates a new opportunity to improve access for voters with disabilities. The state should take the time to get it right.

Please feel free to contact Mark McWilliams, Director of Public Policy and Media Relations, in MPAS' Lansing office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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