

Massachusetts Ballot Campaign Taking Shape For Voter ID Proposal

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Massachusetts voters would be required to present identification to prove their identity at polling places, under an initiative petition that the head of the state Republican Party hopes to place on the 2022 statewide ballot. MassGOP Chairman Jim Lyons, a former state representative, announced the campaign in a Sunday, July 4 email in which he put out the call for at least 2,000 volunteers to help gather enough signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot.

“What’s clear to me, after serving eight years as a state lawmaker, is that Beacon Hill will never so much as debate the merits of voter ID laws, and that’s why we’re taking this question straight to the people,” Lyons wrote. In his email, Lyons linked to a Monmouth University Polling Institute survey in which 80 percent of respondents expressed support for requiring voters to show a photo identification in order to vote. The telephone poll was conducted from June 9 to June 14, with 810 adults in the United States.

Beacon Hill Republicans over the years have repeatedly pushed voter ID bills, which have failed to gain sufficient support to make it out of the Democrat-controlled Election Laws Committee. The coming debate over early voting and mail-in voting could give voter ID supporters a chance to offer their proposal. Opponents of voter ID proposals have asserted they could discourage eligible voters from casting ballots. Organizers behind initiative petition campaigns must file their proposed language, along with signatures from 10

registered voters, by the first Wednesday in August (Aug. 4 this year) to get in the running for next year's ballot. Petitioners must collect an initial round of 80,239 voter signatures by early December, and a second round of 13,374 signatures next spring in order to keep their petitions on the 2022 ballot track.