

Clerks Corner, August 2017

### **Much ado about voter registration?**

Same day registration, automatic registration and even lawsuits against registration, what is up with voter registration in Massachusetts? It is in the news almost as much as the tweets of the President of the United States of America. Looking back on the history of voting, there have been many revisions to the amendment that has allowed all men and then women to vote. In 1971, we even changed the voting age from 21 to 18.

Voter registration has rules and deadlines that exist for specific reasons. One must be 18 years old, a US citizen and not currently incarcerated by reason of a felony conviction to be eligible to vote. You must be registered a set amount of days in advance of any electoral event. This voter registration deadline is only one step in the multi-faceted process of preparing for any electoral event in Massachusetts. Are some of these deadlines outdated and unnecessary in the current age because of our technologically advanced society? Perhaps, but they are not the only ones. There is the 3 day waiting period for a marriage license as stated in Massachusetts General Law 207 §19 which is no longer necessary because neither the blood test nor the public posting is mandated, yet we still must adhere to it.

Registering to vote is hardly difficult today. One can do so by mail, at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or at a Clerk's office and even 24/7 online, [www.registertovotema.com](http://www.registertovotema.com). Amending voter registration has been done many times before and certainly can be and most likely will be accomplished again. However, before we disregard this one deadline and change just one piece of the election process one way or another research is paramount. An Election Task Force was even written into the Election Law of 2014 to do this research but has yet to meet and therefore, has not been able to give feedback to the Legislature. Reviewing the present process and its origins before requesting new processes is a must. Studying the present process by either being involved in it (as an election officer for example) and/or utilizing people who are in those positions (such as Clerks) would be the key to developing a structure that can appease those who want change while not losing the integrity of the process that currently stands.

Mark your calendars for Monday August 21, 2017 for the total solar eclipse and Saturday August 26, 2017 for Wenham Day. More information on Wenham can be found [www.wenhamuseum.org/fairs/](http://www.wenhamuseum.org/fairs/).

*Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014 and re-elected on April 6, 2017. For more information on the clerk's office, please go to [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov) or follow the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook.*