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The League of Women Voters was founded over 100 years ago as a nonpartisan organization to ensure every citizen's right to vote. The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes SB 287, the bill banning the Secretary of State, and county, city, or township clerks from providing prepaid postage on any absentee voter ballot return envelope, as a barrier to voting.

This bill seems to be a response to Secretary of State Benson's use of \$2 million in 2020 to reimburse local clerks if they provided prepaid postage envelopes, and to communities such as Oakland County that paid for the postage for all its absentee ballots in the general election. But this is not new.

The Chester Township Clerk was quoted in the Lansing State Journal saying that its community has been paying for postage for over 28 years. We do not know how many other communities have done the same.

During the November 2020 election, only 183 clerks out of over 1500 clerks across Michigan requested reimbursement to cover prepaid postage for 977,705 absentee ballot return envelopes, according to the Secretary of State's office.

When you look at this single bill, it might not seem monumental to ask a voter to pay \$1.02 to return his/her absentee ballot—after all they also have the option to use drop boxes and not pay anything. But included in the Senate Republican package of bills, there is SB 273 that requires a super majority of members of county board of canvassers, unelected officials and accountable to no one, to approve the location of each drop box. Their decisions could result in no drop boxes in Michigan.

And then there is SB 307 that requires the full text of all ballot proposals to be printed in their entirety instead of the current 100 words. This would greatly increase postage for returning the absentee ballot. In essence, a new poll tax.

In 2016, 63% of Michigan's voting age population voted, and in 2020, 74% of the voting age population voted. This was the highest percentage in 60 years. Of the 5.5 million votes cast in the year of the COVID pandemic, 3.23 million were cast by absentee ballots -59%!

This increase in voting in Michigan should be celebrated, and together we should look at ways to make sure more citizens vote in the next election. We urge you to work with the League of Women Voters and other organizations to look for ways to improve voter participation. We need to make sure every citizen can vote without any artificial barriers. We urge you to oppose passage of SB 287.