

# Proposal for a MassDems Commission on Healthy Democracy

**THE OPPORTUNITY:** MassDems is at a position of historic strength. This provides us with an excellent opportunity to advance the health of democracy in Massachusetts, as standard setters for the nation in a time of crisis for democracy. We should seek to advance three principles:

*full inclusion* of BIPOC populations in democratic participation;  
*increased engagement* of voters in the Democratic party;  
*more competitive* elections.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Healthy democracy in Massachusetts needs attention on all three fronts:

*full inclusion*

- *BIPOC participation– in 2020 and 2022 US census data, voting registration rates for African American, Hispanic & Asian American voters came in below the national average;*
- *Our candidate ballot access process for statewide and federal offices is the most restrictive in the country.*

*increased engagement*

- *61% of MA voters are no longer in a party and only 29% of voters are currently enrolled in the Democratic party.*

*more competitive*

- *Massachusetts ranks near or at the bottom across the country with regard to our number of contested elections, and 68% of voters in a recent survey agreed with the statement: “Democracy would be stronger in Massachusetts if elections here were more competitive, with more candidates running at all levels, and more incumbents facing challenges.”*

**THE ACTION STEP:** MassDems can be a champion for democracy by establishing a Commission for Healthy Democracy to find solutions for inclusion, engagement, and competitiveness. This Commission will study the challenges; run focus groups, listening sessions, and conduct survey research; study best practices around the country; and source, explore, and develop solutions and shared targets and KPIs that would determine success on inclusion, engagement, and competition. The Commission would answer questions like:

- How do we increase registration for communities that have been marginalized?
- How do we take down barriers and roadblocks to people running for office while protecting candidate quality?
- How do we get more people to register as Democrats? What causes some people to choose unenrolled? What encourages people to or drives them away from the Democratic party?
- Should we be focusing on youth voters? If so, how?