Mike Bloomberg’s Voting Rights Policy

Mike believes that the right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights in American democracy, and it should be protected. In recent years, many states have successfully increased voter registration and turnout by implementing sensible policies that make voting more convenient for eligible citizens. Unfortunately, other states have moved in the opposite direction—restricting the rights of certain individuals to vote, limiting the availability and accessibility of polling places, and collectively purging millions of voters from the rolls. The burden of disenfranchisement falls most heavily on communities of color. We must ensure uniform protections and access for federal elections across states, end partisan gerrymandering, and modernize our nation’s aging election infrastructure and protect it from cybersecurity threats.

1. Protect the voting rights of all Americans and prevent discrimination and voter suppression.

- Reinvigorate enforcement of the Voting Rights Act and ban states from purging eligible voters. Mike will establish a new Voting Rights Act formula for determining pre-clearance requirements for certain jurisdictions in order to stop discriminatory voting laws before they are enacted. He will also block states from purging voters—including due to inactivity, incomplete cross-checks, and returned, non-forwardable mail. Voters should be removed from voting rolls only if they affirmatively request removal or there is objective evidence of their ineligibility (e.g., due to death, moving out of state, etc.).

- Restore voting rights to individuals convicted of a felony post-incarceration. Mike will ensure that individuals who are convicted of a felony and incarcerated immediately have their full voting rights restored upon release. Pre-trial detainees must also be allowed to register and vote. Mike would not permit states to use fines, fees, or other impediments to delay restoration of the right to vote in federal elections after a person is released from prison.

- Ensure uniform federal standards for voting across states. Mike will create a non-partisan commission to set federal standards for voting and eliminate disparities that disproportionately affect communities of color, Native Americans, transgender people, and people with disabilities. He will also require states with voter ID requirements to accept, subject to reasonable verification, sworn affidavits of eligibility.

- Launch a campaign to educate the public about voting rights and laws. Mike will invest federal resources to raise awareness of voting rights and laws and encourage all eligible voters to

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1 National Conference of State Legislatures, Automatic Voter Registration, April 2019
2 National Conference of State Legislatures, Felon Voting Rights, October 2019
3 The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Democracy Diverted: Polling Place Closures and the Right to Vote, accessed December 2019
4 Brennan Center for Justice, Voter Purge Rates Remain High, Analysis Finds, August 2019
5 Brennan Center for Justice, The New Voter Suppression, January 2020
6 Brennan Center for Justice, Voting Machines & Infrastructure, accessed December 2019
register to vote.

- **Ensure voter protection on Election Day.** Mike will expand the federal observers and election monitoring program within the Department of Justice.

2. **Promote fair elections and eliminate partisan influence.**

- **Prevent partisan gerrymandering.** Instead of allowing the party in power to draw federal congressional districts that will serve their political interests, Mike will require all states to establish independent redistricting commissions to draw districts in a way that does not give an advantage to one party or group, through a transparent process.

3. **Make it easier and more convenient for eligible Americans to register and vote in federal elections.**

- **Simplify the voter registration process for eligible voters.** Mike will mandate automatic voter registration, enrolling eligible voters when they first interact with state government agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles. This will include contacts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service. Mike will also require states to allow same-day registration to ensure that eligible voters are not turned away on Election Day. He will require states to allow online registration to further simplify the registration process for eligible voters and save taxpayer dollars. And Mike will pre-register 16- and 17-year-old students to vote as part of an improved civics curriculum.

- **Make voting more convenient for eligible voters.** Mike will mandate early voting to allow eligible voters to cast their ballots in person at least 15 days before Election Day. He will also require states to allow voting by mail, and mail ballots to voters at least 45 days before federal elections.

- **Ensure that polling places are accessible and conveniently-located.** Mike will require states to have convenient polling place locations that are near public transportation, implement federal standards for a sufficient number of polling places, and require states to have sufficient polling hours to ensure voter access. He will also require and fund accessible voting equipment for people with disabilities and conduct research into access issues to ensure that all eligible voters are able to cast their ballots, including those needing language assistance and individuals with physical disabilities. And Mike will allow legitimate provisional ballots filed at incorrect polling places to be counted, subject to reasonable verification.

4. **Ensure the security and integrity of elections, and modernize U.S. federal election infrastructure.**

- **Upgrade and standardize voting machines, equipment, and ballots.** Mike will provide a regular, reliable federal funding stream for upgrading and maintaining election infrastructure, including mandating the use of standardized, state-of-the-art voting machines and providing training and technical assistance for election officials. He will require the use of standardized paper ballots for federal elections that are counted by hand or by specified secure devices and
audited prior to election certification.

- **Certify the integrity of election infrastructure and guard against cybersecurity threats.** Mike will require DHS to assess threats prior to elections, in a manner consistent with current cybersecurity practice. Mike will also fund states to conduct risk-limiting audits prior to election certification.