

## DFT Rebuilds After Appeal Vote

Expelled DFT President Steve Conn lost his appeal to overturn five misconduct convictions at the Sept. 17 membership meeting. More than 1,000 members attended. The vote was 527-479 but 185 short of the two-thirds needed to overturn the convictions. Interim president Ivy Bailey said the DFT now must rebuild its strength through solidarity and mobilization.

“This union should be about its members, not about one individual,” Bailey said.

Several members brought the charges against Conn, including a teacher who was assaulted at a membership meeting at the IBEW Hall. Conn refused to meet with her or hold a conference with the attacker, as required by the constitution and bylaws. After the incident, which was recorded on security cameras, the IBEW barred the attacker from the building. After law enforcement officials reviewed the tapes, the attacker was arrested and is facing criminal charges.

Under Conn’s tenure, the Wellness building where the DFT rents office space also banned the DFT from holding its executive board meetings there. Arguments at executive board meetings escalated and disrupted the workplace because Conn refused to make BAMN members leave the meeting, even after a vote to expel them.

The eight-month presidency produced deep divisions in the union and no successes for its members. Conn’s call for



the dismissal of abusive principals rallied a few dozen protesters at those schools. Still two of the three principals remain. He demanded placement letters by June that never came. And he unsuccessfully grieved the pay schedule when one paycheck was delayed by the calendar, an

power, sometimes at his own members, that’s his only move.”

After a few months in office, Conn stopped working at the DFT office.

Conn supporters said the union has been acquiescent toward the administra-

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expected occurrence every five to seven years.

“Conn wants us to be distracted from focusing on the bigger issues because he’s terrified,” Emma Howland-Bolton, one member who brought charges against Conn, said at the meeting. “His playbook is limited to shouting, sometimes at people in



### Solidarity Fridays Go Viral

The Clippert School staff joined the DFT’s “Solidarity Fridays” campaign that started this month. DFT members wore the buttons “United We Bargain – Divided We Beg” on Friday, Oct. 2. The DFT and our DPS sister unions are employing creative ways to show solidarity for negotiating a new contract in June. The DFT contract expires on July 1. Show your union strength on Fridays and snap a photo for the DFT Facebook page. Send it to [mweertz@dft231.com](mailto:mweertz@dft231.com).

# Putting Our Differences Aside

## Interim President



Ivy  
Bailey

When I won election 10 months ago as vice president and was appointed executive vice president, my number one focus became the membership. I took an oath to uphold the constitution and bylaws of the DFT and serve you, the membership.

Many of you don't know me. And I don't know many of you. But as Stephen Covey says in his book "7 Habits of Highly Effective People," we should seek first to understand the other, and then for ourselves to be understood.

I hope to have the opportunity to meet every member either at a membership meeting, a union training session, or through a school visit.

It's time to rebuild our union. We have to put our differences aside, take our emotions out of the equation, and just look at the facts.

Michigan is now a right to work state. The legislature is still Republican and anti-teacher. Rick Snyder is still the governor. Detroit Public Schools still has an emergency manager in place who does not have to negotiate. Strikes by public employees are still prohibited and members could be fined up to \$7,500 (and \$350 daily) for participating in one.

Like it or not, laws have passed to control and destroy us.

Therefore, we have to employ creative ways to combat this anti-teacher/anti-union push in Lansing, and frankly, in the nation.

Our survival lies in our membership coming together, working in the community, talking to our neighbors, and standing strong in the face of adversity. When an action is called, we have to have 100 percent of our members involved. Not 99.9 percent. One hundred percent!

## DFT Rebuilds After Appeal Vote

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tion in recent years. They have endured frozen steps and a 10 percent pay cut. The district, however, has been under emergency management for most of the last decade. Emergency management creates dictator-like authority in which the EM can impose financial concessions. Further, a new seniority law, mandatory evaluations, and Right-to-Work laws went into effect. Anti-strike laws have been on the books for years that threaten teachers with daily fees if they strike.

This also ignores the fact that the DFT successfully challenged the evaluation system and won. All evaluations were thrown out. The union sued over the 10 percent pay cut and got two bonuses. The DFT also got the district to relent on

a 10 percent pay cut for the 2014-15 school year.

Perhaps Conn's biggest blunder was his refusal to expel BAMN from DFT meetings.

"I was 100 percent behind him when he got in," said member William Weir. Things changed for Weir when Conn resisted members' requests to remove BAMN from membership meetings. "Why are they more important than we are? Why couldn't he listen to us?"

Weir was upset when the membership voted to hold off on a rally but Conn held it anyway. "It made us look crazy, 10 or 12 people around a school."

An election for a new DFT president will be held within 120 days.

**THE DETROIT**  
teacher

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# Updates . . .

## Retirement Announced

DFT member Jacquelyn Jones-Frederick has announced her retirement. If you have retired from DPS in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

## Supplies and Class Size Reports

Forms for supplies and class size reports will be delivered to your building soon. Please fill them out and return them to the DFT in the envelope or by fax at 313-875-3511.

## Bailey Elected to Metro Detroit AFL-CIO Board

AFT Michigan's Community and Member Mobilizer Nikhol Atkins (who is often on hand at the DFT) was elected Executive Vice President of the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO at the Labor Council's convention in September. Re-elected to the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO Executive Board were Donna Jackson, President of the Detroit Paras, John McDonald, President of HFCC Teachers, and Ruby Newbold, President of DAEOE. DFT Interim President Ivy Bailey was newly elected to the Executive Board.



**Nikhol Atkins**

Concerning Nikhol, don't worry, Executive Vice President is a volunteer position. She will continue doing her outstanding work with AFT Michigan.

## Classrooms Supplies Grant

This school year, it's estimated the **average teacher will spend nearly \$500** of their own money on supplies for their classrooms. As a history teacher in the Bronx, Charles Best was doing just that, which inspired him to create DonorsChoose.org, an online nonprofit that allows teachers to post classroom project requests that anyone can help fund with donations big and small. DonorsChoose.org has a partnership with the annual Limeades for Learning initiative. Go to DonorsChoose.org for more information on:

- Why teachers use their own money on supplies and how it impacts the classroom
- What types of projects teachers submit to DonorsChoose.org.

## DFT Retiree Chapter Meeting Dates

(Michigan First Credit Union, 27000 Evergreen, Lathrup Village)

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2015 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2015 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015 - 11:30 a.m. (Holiday Luncheon, TBA)  
 Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, March 8, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, April 12, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, May 10, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, June 14, 2016 - 11:30 a.m.

*All retired teachers are welcome! We need you. Come and join us.*

# Bernstein Supports Swim Lessons for Detroit Kids

The inability to swim puts students in danger, as was the case with a 14-year-old who drowned two years ago in a East Detroit High School pool.

Mark Bernstein, University of Michigan Board of Regents member, donated swimsuits, life vests and swim lessons to students at Marcus Garvey Academy and Spain School in September. Bernstein will pay for lessons at the Downtown YMCA and transportation to get the students there and back.



**Mark Bernstein is funding students to receive free swim lessons at the Downtown YMCA.**

**DFT Website  
has up-to-date  
information  
[www.DFT231.com](http://www.DFT231.com)**

# Writing One Song Led to 25 and a Book

Music therapist Richard Cross wants a red carpet from his car when he arrives at Turning Point Academy for work. He's joking of course. But he also doesn't mind the attention he's getting from publication of a new music textbook and CD.



**Detroit teacher Richard D. Cross with his new published book.**

"I told my parents to ask about my speaking fees before they talk to me," he said, in his humble and joke-cracking way. The Wyandotte Bacon Memorial District Library asked his speaking fees when they asked him to speak and sign his new book "Celebrate with Sound!"

Cross is known for composing the Lemonade Day song and having it published. His new book has 25 creative holiday chants with body percussion and classroom instruments.

Writing chants for the curriculum all started when fellow teacher Wilma Darty asked if he had any chants for the U.S. Constitution.

"I didn't have anything so that's the first one I wrote," said Cross, a 28-year music therapist. "Then I looked for Halloween. Didn't have anything. Now I have at least one for each holiday." He even wrote a Positive Behavior Intervention Support song. Each chant comes with a "Did You Know?" page of facts about the topic.

Cross has been composing songs for years but the chants around seasons, holidays and the Constitution will give him a second income. The book and CD were released by Alfred and are available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Royalty checks will start to roll in in March.

"I've been writing songs for years," said Cross who has a bachelor's degree in jazz studies, post-bachelor's degree in music therapy, and a master's in teaching from Wayne State University. Cross has studied with jazz pianist Matt Michaels, Motown arranger David Van DePitte, and music therapy pioneer Carol I. Collins. But his work in the classroom is with severely emotionally impaired students. Music is a way to reach them.

"They love to sing, they love to dance," he said. "I try to give these kids a different opportunity to perform."

"It's a non-threatening medium. It allows kids to express themselves."

# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

## DFT Gets 5,000 Books for Members

Detroit teachers at turnaround schools got the pick of 5,000 free books for their classrooms. Made possible through AFT and the First Book organization, the books arrived on Sept. 30 for teachers.

"The books help our members jump start their literacy programs," said Ivy Bailey, DFT Interim President.

This is the second time the DFT and its sister unions brought free books to Detroit. Two years ago, all DPS teachers got to stock up from a shipment of 50,000 titles.

"Teachers spend a lot of money out of their pockets for supplies," Bailey said. "This is a way for the union to help out."

Maria Davis was happily surprised at the caliber of the books.

"These are some nice books," said Davis, a teacher at Burton International School. "I was kind of skeptical because sometimes free stuff is not so nice. These books are up-to-date."

Davis and other teachers got to choose from authors James Patterson, Rick Riordan and Ally Carter and many others. A seasonal favorite was Tim Burton's exotically illustrated "Frankenweenie."

If you weren't able to pick up books at the union hall of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees last week, there's another opportunity.

More than 65,000 books are being shipped to Detroit for our members on Oct. 17. They will be AFSCME Region 1 office on Lafayette Avenue.



**DFT member Allyson Guy, DFT Interim President Ivy Bailey, and member Maria Davis pick up their free books Sept. 30.**



English teacher Karen Careathers (center) wrote the grant to get a library make-over at DCP @ Northwestern. She is pictured here with Principal Kenyuano Jones and representatives from the Pistons and Farm Bureau Insurance, who funded the project.

### Detroit Collegiate Prep @ Northwestern Gets Library Make-Over

Detroit Collegiate Prep @ Northwestern unveiled its new library on Sept. 21. Last May, the Detroit Pistons and Farms Bureau Insurance sponsored a contest for a library make-over. More than 50 Michigan schools applied, but it was the writing of DCP @Northwestern English teacher Karen Careathers that won the contest.

During the entire summer, the Pistons and Farm Bureau Insurance worked diligently to make this happen. The library was completely renovated with new carpet, furniture, technology and an all-Piston theme with graphics and decorations on the walls. Retired and current Pistons players participated such as, Earl Cureton and Aron Baynes. They awarded students gifts and backpacks. Careathers looks forward to the new library bringing higher academic achievement for the students.



### Spain School Shows its Union Solidarity

Wearing blue and yellow Spain School shirts and union buttons, the Spain staff showed its solidarity Oct. 2. Teachers and other DPS union members at the school are participating in "Solidarity Fridays" by wearing the union buttons "United We Bargain – Divided We Beg." The DFT and its sister unions are gearing up for negotiating a new contract in June. The current DFT contract expires July 1. Members across the district are making creative gestures to show union solidarity.

"Spain School is checking in," said Lakia Wilson, Spain building rep and DFT executive board member. If your staff participates in Solidarity Fridays in a unique way, send a photo to the DFT at [mweertz@dft231.com](mailto:mweertz@dft231.com) so we can post it on our Facebook page.

## Two Time Survivor Teaches Awareness to Students

Middle school students at Sampson Leadership Academy kicked off their second annual "Positively Pink" celebration on Oct. 1. Eighth-grade students wore pink ribbons in honor of their teacher and PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) coach, Dr. Jacqueline Blakely. Dr. Blakely is a two time breast cancer survivor. Students in grades 6–8 wrote messages on pink ribbons to decorate their classroom door.



Dr. Blakely held a discussion on the importance of getting mammograms and how they save lives. One seventh-grade student, John Reed, said he lost several family members to breast cancer. "I have lost three of my aunts and two of my cousins to this terrible disease," Reed said. Sampson's parent organization is in the process of organizing on-site mammograms for women in the community who cannot afford them or do not have transportation to the hospital or doctor's office.

## DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS NOTICE REGARDING UNION SECURITY AGREEMENTS AND AGENCY FEE OBJECTIONS

As a general matter, employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement containing a union security clause are required, as a condition of employment, to pay an agency fee equal to normal union dues. While the wording of these claims is not perfectly uniform, none require more than the payment of this agency fee to retain employment.

Under the Detroit Federation of Teachers' By-Laws and policy on agency fee objections, employees who are not members of the union, but who pay agency fees, pursuant to a Union security clause, may request a reduction in that fee based on their objection to certain kinds of Union expenditures.

The policy provides an objection period each year followed by a reduction in the objector's fee for the twelve months beginning with the start of the school year. Briefly stated, the Detroit Federation of Teachers' objection procedure works as follows:

- The agency fee payable by objectors will be based on the Detroit Federation of Teachers' expenditures for those activities or projects normally or reasonably undertaken by the Union to represent the employees in the bargaining unit with respect to their terms and conditions of employment.

Among these "chargeable" expenditures are those going for negotiations with the employer and employing departments, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with representatives of the employer or employing departments, discussion of work-related issues with employees, handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance procedure, administrative agencies or informal meetings and Union administration. In the past, approximately 85 percent of the Detroit Federation of Teachers' expenditures have gone for such activities. Reflected in this percentage is the chargeable portion of the affiliation fees (per capita) paid to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Among the expenditures treated as "non-chargeable," which objectors will not be required to support, are those going for community service, legislative activity unrelated to wages, hours or working conditions of represented employees, certain public relations activities, support of political candidates, cost of affiliation with organizations (and unions) other than the AFT and members-only benefits. In the past, approximately 15 percent of DFT's expenditures have gone for such "non-chargeable" activities. The percentage of the AFT's expenditures on "non-chargeable" activities has been generally between 20-25 percent.

- Objectors will be given a full explanation of the basis for the reduced fee charged to them. The explanation will include a more detailed list of the categories of expenditures deemed to be "chargeable" and those deemed to be "non-chargeable," and the independent certified public accountant's report showing the Union's expenditures on which the fee is based. Audited financial information relating to the chargeable, non-chargeable expenses of the AFT will be provided at the same time. Objectors will have the option

of challenging the union's calculation of the reduced fee before an arbitrator, pursuant to the AAA Rules on Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Details on the method of making such a challenge and the rights accorded to

those who do so are found in the DFT's By-laws and policy on agency fee objections, a copy of which will be provided to objectors along with the explanation of the fee calculation.

- Objections must be received by DFT each school year. In addition, agency fee payers who are new to the bargaining unit may object within thirty days of receiving this notice, either in the new employee packet or in the Detroit Teacher (where necessary, retroactive to the commencement of their union security obligation and for the duration of the current agency fee year) and employees who resign union membership may object within thirty days of becoming an agency fee payer. Employees filing late objections for either of these two reasons should so indicate in their letter of objection.

- The letter of objection should include the employee's name, address, and school at which employed. Objections must be sent to: Agency Fee Objection, c/o Detroit Federation of Teachers, 7700 Second Ave., Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202.

# Winning a Fair Contract in June

By Terrence Martin  
DFT Labor Relations Administrator

Several DFT members and I attended the LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) conference in August at the Greektown Casino. This is an important organizing conference put on by AFT Michigan. The point is to get members from locals whose contracts expire in 2016 to get trained to run successful contract campaigns.

Our members attended workshops like "Public Narrative," on how to share their personal stories about why they are engaged in their union.

Most important, we got trained on effective strategies for successful negotiations. As you know, our contract expires on July 1, 2016. We got trained on how to involve the community and rank and file members in the negotiation process. We know that members want – first and foremost – a wage increase. You also want affordable health care. Knowing the most important contract goals for our members is where we start our negotiation process.

Members also have told us that high on that list is to lower their class size or caseloads and to preserve their collective bargaining rights.

This leads to the forming of our contract campaign committees. This means getting together a group of members and activists who will help to support the negotiating team in organizing and mobilizing members around contract issues. Their tasks would be to perform actions around issues that matter most to us.

We start now in order to prepare ourselves to win a fair contract in June. We cannot be too strong, too organized, or too prepared to start this important work.



From left to right: Bonnie Halloran, president of Lecturers Employee Organization at U-M; Joanne Wittbrodt, president of AFT 2000 at Wayne County Community College; Michael Wade, Taylor Federation of Teachers; Eric Lindemier, AFT Michigan organizer; and Terrence Martin, DFT Labor Relations Administrator

## Student Funded through DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund

The DFT Memorial Scholarship Committee met with its award recipient Oct. 5 at the DFT offices. Last spring the committee awarded Stefan Carter a \$3,000 scholarship to attend Wayne State University's College of Education.

Stefan attended Fairbanks Elementary School, Hutchins Middle School and Northern High School. He is a lifetime resident of Detroit, has one son, and hopes to teach in the Detroit community. Stefan is a Morris Hood Scholar and works for the College of Education as a student assistant and peer mentor.

"The DFT Memorial Scholarship Committee is delighted to have such a worthy recipient," said Paula Trilety, treasurer of the committee.

The DFT Scholarship Fund was established by former DFT President Mary Ellen Riordan in the 1980s. Since that time we have awarded scholarships on a yearly basis to WSU students pursuing teaching.

The Scholarship Fund is a non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible. If you would like to contribute, kindly send a check payable to the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund, Attention: Paula Trilety, Treasurer; 7700 Second Ave. Suite #427, Detroit, MI 48202.



**DFT Memorial Scholarship Committee members Sandra Ambrose, Charlene Smith, Paula Trilety, Ivy Bailey, WSU student Stefan Carter, Jeanetta Cotman and Candice Laurence.**

## — The Choice is Ours —

More than 100 Detroit parents, community activists, and clergy members mounted four buses to Lansing Sept. 29. They had a lot to tell their legislators.

Mostly it was this: after almost 10 years of state mismanagement, let us control our own schools.

They encouraged state leaders to support the recommendations of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit School Children. The coalition urged the end of emergency management, a return of control to the school board, and relief from the debt the district accumulated under the state takeover, among other recommendations.



Four buses from various locations left the city in early morning to talk to legislators about the future of the Detroit Public Schools, calling it "The Choice is Yours Lansing Advocacy Day."

Detroit parents relayed their displeasure at how many neighborhood schools have been closed.

"The parents in the Brightmoor area don't have a high school," said Ivy Bailey, DFT Interim President. Legislators were invited to the main floor of the Rotunda to hear the discussion.

Leading the cause were representatives from the Detroit Parent Network, 482 Forward, NAACP Detroit Chapter, Black Family Development, New Detroit, Detroit Chamber, United Way, American Federation of Teachers, the office of the mayor of Detroit, Congress of Communities, and the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation.

"It was great," Bailey said. "It was more powerful because it was parents."

# New Playground for Marcus Garvey

A gleaming new state-of-the-art playground welcomed kids at Marcus Garvey on Sept. 11. Thanks to a partnership between the school, the United Auto Workers and General Motors, the students are beneficiaries of \$750,000 in new playgrounds, gardens and soon-to-come basketball courts.

"The best part about it is seeing how the kids took off after it," said Cathy Clegg, from GM.

Cindy Estrada from the UAW, said she felt one emotion looking at the playscape: "Happy!"



"The gardens are so incredibly important for the kids," Estrada said. "That makes me most happy."

Health and physical education teacher Bill Hoover has worked with the partnership for several years to get a playground for a school with 460 kids but no outdoor facilities.

"Before there was nothing," Hoover said. "It was like, 'Don't throw rocks.'" On Sept. 11, swarms of students climbed up ropes, hanged upside down, slid down the new green slide, and had smiles across their faces.

Garvey teacher Susan Dropiewski is spearheading the gardening program. The UAW and GM has partnered with Hoover to get more than \$10,000 in supplies for Garvey's swim club, chess team, and physical education program, as well as helping with school uniforms, shoes, school supplies, the year-end Fun Day. They also support Garvey's Career Day, Spring Michigan State University and Saugatuck Dunes State Park Field Trip, and physical plant assistance to permit Garvey's UAW Ford Summer Program and so much more.

Butzel Jr. High was built in 1963. In 2013, the UAW and GM announced a gift of \$750,000 to build a Fitness and Health Park at the school, now renamed Marcus Garvey Academy. The Sept. 11 reveal of the playground included dignitaries for both UAW and GM.

They came to visit in their own play clothes and happy faces.



Garvey principal James Hearn, Cindy Estrada, UAW vice president; S. Kris Owen; Sue Dropiewski, Garvey special education teacher; Cathy Clegg of GM; and Bill Hoover, physical education teacher at Garvey.

## NOMINATIONS AND DATES FOR DFT PRESIDENT ELECTION

October 6, 2015	Nominating Procedures and Schedule of appropriate dates announced. Placed on DFT Website, Detroit Teacher and sent to schools.
October 8, 2015 MEMBERSHIP MTG	<b>OPEN NOMINATIONS.</b> Nominations open at the October 8, 2015 Membership Meeting. Nominations may be hand delivered to Election Committee at the Oct. 8 meeting; or mailed or hand delivered to <i>Election Committee, 7700 Second Avenue, Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202</i> , before the Nov. 7, 2015 deadline.
November 7, 2015 MEMBERSHIP MTG	List of nominees posted and additional nominations accepted from the floor. <b>NOMINATIONS CLOSED</b> as last order of business.
November 9, 2015	<b>Unofficial</b> list of nominees posted to website and schools. Notice sent to those nominated with request for acceptance and statement for the <i>DETROIT TEACHER</i> .
November 16, 2015	Second Notice sent to those nominated with request for acceptance and statement for the <i>DETROIT TEACHER</i> to those nominees who have not responded.
November 23, 2015	<b>DEADLINE FOR ACCEPTANCES AND STATEMENTS.</b> Must be mailed or hand delivered to <i>Election Committee, 7700 Second Avenue, Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202</i> , before 5:00 p.m.
November 24 2015	Notice sent to candidates who did not send a statement for the <i>DETROIT TEACHER</i> that no information will be printed.
December 1, 2015 EXEC BOARD MTG	<b>DEADLINE FOR FILING GRIEVANCES</b> on nominations and acceptances. Grievance(s), if any, heard by Election Committee and Executive Board.
December 3, 2015 MEMBERSHIP MTG	<b>Grievance Appeal(s)</b> , if any, to membership at Membership Meeting, December 3, 2015
December 4, 2015	<b>Official</b> list of nominees posted to website and schools. Official Ballot sent to printer.
December 4, 2015	<i>The Detroit Teacher</i> sent to schools. Campaign Literature sent to schools.
TBD	<b>Ballots/Voting Materials</b> mailed to members' homes and <b>VOTING BEGINS</b>
TBD	<b>If Ballot has not been received</b> , call Union office at (313) 875-3500. Membership will be checked and arrangements made to replace missing Ballot.
TBD	<b>BALLOTS TALLIED</b> by American Arbitration Association.
TBD	<b>RESULTS</b> Posted on DFT Website, in DFT Office and sent to schools.

**OCTOBER 21, 2014 – CANDIDATE'S ELIGIBILITY DATE**  
**OCTOBER 20, 2015 – VOTER ELIGIBILITY CUT-OFF DATE**