The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
AN INITIATIVE PETITION
FOR A LAW

Under Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth

SUMMARY

This proposed law would implement a voting system known as “ranked-choice voting,” in which voters rank one or more candidates by order of preference. Ranked-choice voting would be used in primary and general elections for all Massachusetts statewide offices, state legislative offices, federal congressional offices, and certain other offices beginning in 2022. Ranked-choice voting would not be used in elections for president, county commissioner, or regional district school committee member.

Under the proposed law, votes would be counted in a series of rounds. In the first round, if one candidate received more than 50 percent of the first-place votes, that candidate would be declared the winner and no other rounds would be necessary. If no candidate received more than 50 percent of the first-place votes, then the candidate or candidates who received the fewest first-place votes would be eliminated and, in the next round, each vote for an eliminated candidate would instead be counted toward the next highest-ranked candidate on that voter’s ballot. Depending on the number of candidates, additional rounds of counting could occur, with the last-place candidate or candidates in each round being eliminated and the votes for an eliminated candidate going to the voter’s next choice out of the remaining candidates. A tie for last place in any round would be broken by comparing the tied candidates’ support in earlier rounds. Ultimately, the candidate who was, out of the remaining candidates, the preference of a majority of voters would be declared the winner.

Ranked-choice voting would be used only in races where a single candidate is to be declared the winner and not in races where more than one person is to be elected.

Under the proposed law, if no candidate received more than 50 percent of first-place votes in the first round, the rounds of ballot-counting necessary for ranked-choice voting would be conducted at a central tabulation facility. At the facility, voters’ rankings would be entered into a computer, which would then be used to calculate the results of each round of the counting process. The proposed law provides that candidates in a statewide or district election would have at least three days to request a recount.

The Secretary of State would be required to issue regulations to implement the proposed law and conduct a voter education campaign about the ranked-choice voting process. The proposed law would take effect on January 1, 2022.

Gregory D. Dennis 19 Wheaton Road Arlington
Deborah Otis 87 Athelstane Road, #1 Newton
Jordan Berg-Powers 18 Townsend Street, #1 Worcester
Susan A. Chalifoux-Zephir 900 West Street Leominster
Cristina Crawford 100 Prospect Street Sherborn
Rebecca J. Downing 172 Sycamore Street Holyoke
Shelli A. Pereira 10 North Ogden Street Fall River
Tanisha M. Sullivan 79 Milton Avenue Boston
Gladys Vega 116 Clark Avenue Chelsea
Thomas William Peake 55 Holyoke Street Easthampton

These names have been certified as names of registered voters in their places of residence. Original petition was filed on September 4, 2019.

SIGNATURE to be made in person with name substantially as registered (except in case of physical disability as stated above)

II. NOW REGISTERED AT

(street, number and apartment number, if any)

(city or town will be the same as stated below)

REGISTRAR USE ONLY:

I. SIGNATURE

to be made in person with name substantially as registered (except in case of physical disability as stated above)

II. NOW REGISTERED AT

(street, number and apartment number, if any)

(city or town will be the same as stated below)

WARD

PREC.

ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS OF MAY SIGN THIS SHEET.

City or Town

(over)
ATTENTION VOTERS: Before signing, read signer information on other side.  CITY OR TOWN:

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WARNING - criminal penalty for unlawfully signing, altering, defacing, mutilating, destroying, or suppressing this petition: fine of up to $1,000 or imprisonment for up to one year.

INSTRUCTIONS TO REGISTRARS

- You must time-stamp or write in date and time these papers are received.
- Check thus ✔ against the name of each qualified voter to be certified. For names not certified, use the code at the right. Draw a line through any blank spaces not containing signatures.
- Each sheet must be certified by at least three registrars. A facsimile stamp is acceptable.
- You must complete certification no later than June 29, 2020.

CERTIFICATION OF SIGNATURES

We certify that ________________ (number of names certified – use numbers and words) above signatures checked thus ✔ are names of qualified voters from this city or town.

At least three registrars’ names must be signed or stamped below.

Registrars of Voters or Election Commissioners of

ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS OF CITY OR TOWN MAY SIGN THIS SHEET.