



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY THREE

HOME RULE PETITION

- WHEREAS,** The narrative that immigrants built this country is often used as a calling card for diversity, yet continuous roadblocks and red tape are used to further strip down the rights of those who have built a life in this city; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Immigrants with "legal status" constitute over 28% of the city population, pay on average 2.3 billion dollars in taxes annually, hold roughly 6 billion dollars in collective spending power; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The disenfranchisement of any tax-payer from the electoral process is inconsistent with the fundamental American principle of "No taxation without representation" and undermines our City's ideological foundation; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The process to obtain full citizenship carries many financial and time-related barriers, and while this process moves slowly, new Bostonians are unable to vote for the municipal representatives who are making policy decisions that affect their everyday lives; *and*
- WHEREAS,** As of January 2022, fifteen municipalities across the country have restored municipal voting rights to non-citizens, including eleven in Maryland, two in Vermont, San Francisco, California, and New York City; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The Boston City Council believes that all legal residents, regardless of citizenship status, deserve the ability to decide who represents them on issues that affect them; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Excluding such a significant portion of our City's population from full political participation threatens the health of our democracy and prevents us from building a sustainable and prosperous government; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**
- ORDERED:** That a petition to the General Court, accompanied by a bill for a special law relating to the City of Boston to be filed with an attested copy of this Order be, and hereby is, approved under Clause One (1) of Section Eight (8) of Article Two (2), as amended, of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, provided, that the General Court may vary the form and substance of the requested legislation within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition.

**PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW RE:
AN ACT RELATIVE TO VOTING FOR ALL LEGAL RESIDENTS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

SECTION 1. Right to Vote in City of Boston Elections.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of chapter fifty-one of the general laws, or any other general or special law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, every legal resident that is eighteen (18) years of age or older who resides in the city of Boston may, upon application have their names entered on a list of legal voting age residents established by the board of election commissioners for the City of Boston. Such individuals on the list of legal voting-age residents may vote in any election for local offices and local ballot questions in accordance with this act. For the purposes of this act, "*legal voting age residents*" are anyone eligible to vote pursuant to this act in a local election or upon a local ballot question in the City of Boston.

SECTION 2. Regulatory Authority

Said board of election commissioners shall promulgate all necessary regulations, guidelines, and registration forms to implement the purposes of this act. The voter registration forms shall include a declaration to be signed under pains and penalties of perjury by the applying non-citizen voter that: (1) the individual is a legal resident of the city of Boston and the United States; (2) the individual, in good faith, intends to become a U. S. citizen and intends to begin that process, if eligible. Every non-citizen legal voting age resident who signed this declaration shall remain eligible to vote in any municipal election as long as they remain a resident in the city of Boston.

Legal Voting Age Residents must register 10 days before all preliminary and municipal elections. This deadline also applies to an address change. Mail-in voting procedures shall be available to legal voting age residents under this act. The board of election commissioners shall establish an application form and promulgate procedures for legal voting residents to vote by mail.

SECTION 3. State and Federal Elections.

Nothing in this act shall be construed to confer upon non-citizens the right to vote regarding any candidate for state office, federal office, or federal ballot questions. If a local ballot question appears on a state election ballot, the board shall print a separate ballot for the local ballot question at the expense of the City of Boston.

SECTION 4. Severability.

The provisions of this act are severable, and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 5.

The City of Boston is hereby authorized to pass ordinances to implement the purpose of this act subject to all the provisions of the Boston City Charter.

SECTION 6.

This act shall take effect one voting cycle after its passage.

Filed on: December 13, 2023