HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 1995 FILED ON: 1/17/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 604

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Robert M. Koczera

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to early voting.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Robert M. Koczera	*11th Bristol*
Jay R. Kaufman	*15th Middlesex*
Cory Atkins	*14th Middlesex*
Michael D. Brady	*9th Plymouth*
Denise Andrews	*2nd Franklin*
Marjorie C. Decker	*25th Middlesex*
Jennifer E. Benson	*37th Middlesex*

HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 1995 FILED ON: 1/17/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 604

By Mr. Koczera of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 604) of Robert M. Koczera and others for legislation to provide for early voting in cities and towns. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act relative to early voting.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

"SECTION 1. Chapter 54 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition is hereby amended by inserting after section 25A the following section:-

Section 25B. (a) Pursuant to a request, in person, by a qualified voter, as defined in section 1 of chapter 51, the local election officers and registrars of every city or town shall allow any qualified voter to cast a ballot for any biennial state election, special state election, primary, special primary or any other election vote prior to an election day as set forth this section.

(b) Early voting shall begin on the seventh day preceding an election. The early voting period shall end on the day preceding the election.

(c) For the purpose of early voting, a polling place shall include a city hall election office and a town hall clerk's office and the registrars of each city or town shall identify and provide for additional centrally- located, suitable and convenient early voting polling places within each city or town for use during the early voting period. The designation of an early voting polling place shall be made 30 days in advance of the election.

(d) The registrars for each city or town shall publish this location of the early voting polling place as well as the applicable dates and hours. Said publication shall occur during the week prior to the commencement of the early voting period. Notice of the dates and hours of early voting shall be sent to every newspaper listed in the Directory of New England Newspapers and Periodicals, located in such town or city. Notice of the dates and hours of early voting shall also be conspicuously posted in the office of the city clerk or on the principal official bulletin board of each city or town and any other public building deemed necessary.

(e) The state secretary shall provide a sufficient number of early voting ballots to the registrars of each city or town for use during the early voting period. The early voting ballots shall be similar to the official ballots used on the election day; provided, that they shall be printed on paper differing in color from that used for the official or absentee ballot. The ballots shall be delivered to the registrars of each city or town 30 days in advance of the early voting period.

(f) Early voting ballots shall be provided to each qualified voter who participates in early voting.

(g) Prior to the commencement of early voting, the registrars for each city or town shall prepare a list for the early voting polling place, containing the names and residences of all persons qualified to vote therein, as the same appear upon the annual register, and shall reasonably transmit the same to the election officers at every polling place designated by the registrars.

(h) The presiding election officer at the early voting polling location shall cause to be placed on the voting lists opposite the name of any qualified voter who participates in early voting the letters ”EV” designating an early voter.

(i) At the end of each day during the early voting period, the presiding election officer shall separate, compile, and record the early ballots cast at each polling location into the appropriate ward and precinct. The resulting list of early voters shall be updated daily and saved electronically. By 5:00 P.M. on that day before the election day, the list shall be forwarded to the appropriate ward and precinct location.

(j) Sections 24, 25, 25A, 65, 72, 73, and 75 shall apply to polling places during early elections.

(k) The ballot boxes for early voting shall be sealed and locked and maintained securely by the election officers.

(l) The registrars for each city or town shall designate a location for the counting of early ballots. The early voting ballots shall be opened at the close of all polling locations on election day. All totals shall be added to the totals at the relevant wards and precincts.”