

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

NONE

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 reducing signature requirements on nominating papers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

George Phillies

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*48 Hancock Hill Drive Worcester, MA
01609*

SENATE No.

By George Phillies, a petition (accompanied by bill) of George Phillies for legislation to reduce the required amount of signatures for nomination papers for candidates.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)

An Act reducing signature requirements on nominating papers.

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

1 The legislative purpose of this Bill is to increase the number of contested partisan
2 elections in Massachusetts by reducing the number of signatures required for a candidate to gain
3 access to the primary ballot (if the candidate is associated with a Political Party) or the General
4 Election Ballot (if the candidate is Unenrolled or is running as the candidate of a Political
5 Designation)

6 The Bill would amend M.G.L. Chapter 53, Section 6, as follows:

7 After “for governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, United States senator, and
8 presidential electors,” replace “ten thousand” with “five thousand”;

9 After “for state secretary, state treasurer, and state auditor,” replace “five thousand” with
10 “two thousand five hundred”;

11 After “for representative in congress,” replace “two thousand” with “one thousand”;

After “for state senator,” replace “three hundred” with “one hundred fifty”;

After “for state representative,” replace “one hundred and fifty” with “seventy-five”;

After “for councillor, district attorney, clerk of courts, register of probate, register of deeds, county commissioner, sheriff, and county treasurer,” replace “one thousand”, with “five hundred”;

After “except for clerk of courts, register of probate, register of deeds, county commissioner, sheriff, and county treasurer, in Barnstable, Berkshire, Franklin, and Hampshire counties,” replace “five hundred,” with “two hundred fifty”, And

After “and for any such offices in Dukes and Nantucket counties,” replace “twenty-five” with “thirteen”.

The text of the amended section of M.G.L. 53.6 with the amendments inserted in bold would read:

CHAPTER 53 NOMINATIONS, QUESTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS, PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

Section 6 Nomination papers; contents; number of signatures; unenrolled candidates

Section 6. Nominations of candidates for any offices to be filed at a state election may be made by nomination papers, stating the facts required by section eight and signed in the aggregate by not less than the following number of voters: for governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, United States senator, and presidential electors, five thousand; for state secretary, state treasurer, and state auditor, two thousand five hundred; for representative in congress, one thousand; for state senator, one hundred fifty; for state representative, seventy-

33 five; for councillor, district attorney, clerk of courts, register of probate, register of deeds, county
34 commissioner, sheriff, and county treasurer, five hundred, except for clerk of courts, register of
35 probate register of deeds, county commissioner, sheriff and county treasurer, in Barnstable,
36 Berkshire, Franklin, and Hampshire counties, two hundred fifty, and for any such offices in
37 Dukes and Nantucket counties, thirteen. In the case of the offices of governor and lieutenant
38 governor, only nomination papers containing then names and addresses of candidates for both
39 offices shall be valid. Nominations of candidates for offices to be filled at a city or town election,
40 except where city charters or general or special laws provide otherwise and nominations of
41 candidates for the office of regional district school committee members elected district-wide,
42 may be made by like nomination papers, signed in the aggregate by not less than such number of
43 voters as will equal one percent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state
44 election in the electoral district or division for which the officers are to be elected, but in no
45 event by less than twenty voters in the case of an office to be filled at a town election or election
46 to a regional district school committee elected district-wide; provided, however, that no more
47 than fifty signatures of voters shall be required on nomination papers for such town office or
48 regional district school committee elected district-wide. At a first election to be held in a newly
49 established ward, the number of signatures of voters upon a nomination paper of a candidate who
50 is to be voted for only in such ward shall be at least fifty.