

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 635**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Jennifer E. Benson***

*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 providing a local option for ranked choice voting in municipal elections.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Stephan Hay</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>
<i>Sarah K. Peake</i>	<i>4th Barnstable</i>

<i>Jay D. Livingstone</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>
<i>Sonia Chang-Diaz</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>
<i>Daniel R. Carey</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>
<i>Michael S. Day</i>	<i>31st Middlesex</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>4th Hampden</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>Lori A. Ehrlich</i>	<i>8th Essex</i>
<i>Diana DiZoglio</i>	<i>First Essex</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Smitty Pignatelli</i>	<i>4th Berkshire</i>
<i>Edward F. Coppinger</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>
<i>Edward F. Coppinger</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>
<i>John J. Lawn, Jr.</i>	<i>10th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 635**

By Ms. Benson of Lunenburg, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 635) of Jennifer E. Benson and others relative to providing a local option for ranked choice voting in municipal elections. Election Laws.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**

An Act providing a local option for ranked choice voting in municipal elections.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 44A of chapter 43 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “inclusive,” in line 7, the words:-  
3 section 103R of chapter 54.

4 SECTION 2. Section 77 of chapter 54 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking  
5 the words “marking a cross (X) in the square at the right of the name of each candidate for whom  
6 he intends to vote” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- “marking the ballot in a  
7 manner prescribed by the state secretary”.

8 SECTION 3. Said chapter 54 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 103Q  
9 the following section:-

10 Section 103R. (a) Notwithstanding any other general or special law to the contrary, in any  
11 city or town that accepts this section, a local election may be conducted using ranked choice  
12 voting in which voters rank the candidates for an office in order of preference. Ranked choice

13 voting elections may be used for elections with a single winning candidate or multiple winning  
14 candidates. Ranked choice voting elections shall be tabulated in rounds using the single  
15 transferable vote method. Winning thresholds shall be calculated based on the number of  
16 countable votes and the number of seats to be filled.

17         General provisions for a single-winner election and a multiple-winner election shall be  
18 specified by ordinance or by-law; provided, however, that a voter's lower ranked choice shall not  
19 impact the likelihood of a voter's higher ranked choice of being elected. The ordinance or by-law  
20 shall be enacted by the municipality's legislative body and the body shall request the input of the  
21 registrar of voters and town clerk or city election commissioners. The ordinance shall specify, at  
22 a minimum: (i) the method of calculating the winning threshold; (ii) how candidates with the  
23 fewest votes shall be eliminated before a subsequent round of the tally; (iii) how a vote for  
24 eliminated candidates shall be transferred to the voter's next valid choice; (iv) how a tie shall be  
25 resolved; (v) how a ballot that skipped a ranking or is otherwise mismarked shall be counted; and  
26 (vi) how a vote above the winning threshold for a candidate shall be transferred to an alternate  
27 choices in a multiple-winner election. Preliminary elections for local offices shall not be held in a  
28 city or town that has accepted this section.

29         (b) This section may be accepted by: (i) approval of a ballot measure submitted to the  
30 voters by the governing body of the city or town at a regular or special election; (ii) ordinance or  
31 by-law; or (iii) charter amendment.

32         (c) A city or town that accepts this section shall conduct a voter education and outreach  
33 campaign to familiarize voters with ranked choice voting.

34         (d) The ballot shall not interfere with a voter's ability to rank at least 1 write-in candidate.

35           (e) Not sooner than 4 years after acceptance of this section, a city or town that has  
36 accepted this section may return to its prior voting method by: (i) approval of a ballot measure  
37 submitted to the voters by the governing body of the city or town at a regular or special election;  
38 (ii) ordinance or by-law; or (iii) charter amendment.