

SENATE No. 395

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Cynthia Stone Creem

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 improving knowledge about voting rights.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Cynthia Stone Creem

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Middlesex and Norfolk

SENATE No. 395

By Ms. Creem, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 395) of Cynthia Stone Creem for legislation to improve knowledge about voting rights. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act improving knowledge about voting rights.

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: Chapter 51 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after Section 42H, the following section:-

3 Section 42I. (a) The state secretary shall design a pamphlet that provides relevant
4 information to formerly incarcerated persons about their voting rights and how elections are
5 conducted in Massachusetts.

6 The pamphlet shall:

7 (i) include information about who is eligible to vote and how to register to vote, including
8 information specifically related to the voting rights of persons formerly incarcerated;

9 (ii) be written in English to be comprehensible to an average 6th grade student;

10 (iii) be available in English and Spanish, and such additional languages as the state
11 secretary deems necessary or as required by law;

12 (iv) describe where, when, and how voting takes place; and

13 (v) include any other information the state secretary considers relevant.

14 The secretary shall update the pamphlet if there is any change to relevant Massachusetts
15 law.

16 (b) Annually, by January 31, the department of correction shall estimate the number of
17 inmates to be released in the coming year, and request from the state secretary sufficient copies
18 of the pamphlet described in subsection (a), along with sufficient copies of voter registration
19 forms, which the state secretary shall immediately forward to the department of correction.

20 (c) The department of correction shall distribute a pamphlet described in subsection (a)
21 and a voter registration form, each in the language most appropriate for the person, to a person
22 upon release from incarceration.

23 SECTION 2: Section 48 of Chapter 127, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is
24 hereby amended by inserting, in line 6, after the words “academic education,” the following
25 words:-

26 “voting rights education,”