

HOUSE No. 831

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Lindsay N. Sabadosa and Joanne M. Comerford

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 amending the special act charter of the city of Northampton to allow for early mail-in ballots.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/27/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>1/27/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 831

By Representative Sabadosa of Northampton and Senator Comerford, a joint petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 831) of Lindsay N. Sabadosa and Joanne M. Comerford (with the approval of the mayor and city council) relative amending the charter of the city of Northampton to allow for early mail-in ballots in said city. Election Laws. [Local Approval Received.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act amending the special act charter of the city of Northampton to allow for early mail-in ballots.

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

1 Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2012, shall be amended as follows:

2 SECTION 1. Amend article 8 by inserting after section 8-6 a new section 8-7 as follows:

3 “EARLY MAIL-IN BALLOTS. (a) Each active registered voter in the city shall be issued
4 automatically an early mail-in ballot for each preliminary election, regular city election, special
5 city election, or local ballot question. Each active registered voter shall continue to receive an
6 early mail-in ballot by mail until the death or disqualification of the voter, cancellation of the
7 voter's registration, or placing the voter on inactive status, (b) Such ballots shall be mailed to
8 each such registered voter not less than 14 days prior to the election at the address at which such
9 voter registered to vote, and shall include a ballot, a security envelope in which to conceal the
10 ballot after voting, a larger envelope in which to return the security envelope, and a declaration
11 that the voter must sign under penalty of perjury that they meet the qualifications to vote, and has

12 not voted in any other ward at this election. (c) A registered voter may obtain a replacement
13 ballot if the ballot is destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received by the voter. (d) Such ballots may
14 be returned by mail, in person at the office of the city clerk, or in such ballot drop box as the
15 Mayor may designate. (e) Such ballots shall be counted if postmarked by election day and
16 received not later than the third day after election day. (f) The city may supplement the
17 provisions of this section by ordinance not inconsistent herewith. (g) Nothing in this section shall
18 prohibit or otherwise limit the right of a voter to vote in person during early voting period, if any,
19 or on election day.”, and by renumbering section 8-7 to section 8-8.

20 This act shall take effect upon its passage.

21 If the foregoing is not passed:

22 SECTION 1. Amend article 8 by inserting after section 8-6 a new section 8-7 as follows:

23 “REQUEST FOR EARLY MAIL-IN BALLOT. (a) Not more than ~~14~~21 days prior to any
24 preliminary election, regular city election, special election, or local ballot question, the city clerk
25 shall mail an application for early mail-in voting to each active registered voter in the city. The
26 applications required pursuant to this subsection shall be in a form prescribed by the city clerk in
27 accordance with state and federal law; provided, however, that said applications shall: (i) include
28 clear instructions for completing and returning the application; (ii) allow a voter to designate the
29 mailing address to which the ballot shall be sent; and (iii) be pre-addressed to the local election
30 official with postage guaranteed. (b) Any voter applying for an early mail-in ballot shall, without
31 specifying a reason therefor, be issued a ballot for such election. (c) The early mail-in ballot
32 packet shall include a ballot, a security envelope in which to conceal the ballot after voting, a
33 larger envelope in which to return the security envelope, and a declaration that the voter must

34 sign under penalty of perjury that they meet the qualifications to vote, and has not voted in any
35 other ward at this election. (d) A registered voter may obtain a replacement ballot if the ballot is
36 destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received by the voter. (e) Such ballots may be returned by mail, in
37 person at the office of the city clerk, or in such ballot drop box as the Mayor may designate. (f)
38 Such ballots shall be counted if postmarked by election day and received not later than the third
39 day after election day. (g) The city may supplement the provisions of this section by ordinance
40 not inconsistent herewith. (h) Nothing in this section shall prohibit or otherwise limit the right of
41 a voter to vote in person during early voting period, if any, or on election day.”, and by
42 renumbering section 8-7 to section 8-8.

43 This act shall take effect upon its passage.