

SENATE No. 436

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joseph A. Boncore

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 An act concerning ballots.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Joseph A. Boncore

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Suffolk and Middlesex

SENATE No. 436

By Mr. Boncore, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 436) of Joseph A. Boncore for legislation concerning bilingual ballots. Election Laws.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE DOCKET, NO. 2285 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act An act concerning 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 SECTION 1. Chapter 54 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding at the end of
2 section 86 the following:-

3 A voter in any city or town within the Commonwealth that requires bilingual ballots shall
4 be entitled to apply for and receive papers, explanatory matter, and instructions in bilingual form
5 as provided in section 87. For all translated ballots in languages that do not use the Roman
6 alphabet, including but not limited to Chinese and Khmer, the state secretary shall provide for
7 the transliteration of all candidates' names as part of the bilingual ballot in consultation with
8 language-minority community groups and media. Transliteration means the representation of a
9 candidate's name with non-alphabetic characters, in a language that does not use the Roman
10 alphabet, according to the same standards used to transliterate city, county or state names on the

11 bilingual ballot: 1) Standard representations of common names shall be used as can be found in
12 dictionaries; 2) Less common names shall be represented by characters that approximate the
13 phonetics of a name in consultation with language-minority civic organizations or the media.

14 All candidates shall be provided with a written copy of the proposed transliteration of
15 such candidate's name. Within seven days of receiving the proposed transliterations of such
16 candidate's name, that candidate may provide written notice to the state secretary of a
17 modification of the proposed transliteration of candidate's own name or decline to have
18 candidate's own name transliterated on the ballot. If a candidate does not respond, the state
19 secretary shall proceed to use the transliterated name assigned. The state secretary shall have
20 final approval of the transliteration and provide public notice of official transliterated names as
21 soon as practicable to relevant civic organizations and ethnic media to ensure consistency.

22 SECTION 2. Chapter 54 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding at the end of
23 section 87 the following:-

24 Upon application by a voter who resides in any city or town within the Commonwealth
25 that requires bilingual ballots, the state secretary shall prepare and furnish all papers, explanatory
26 matter, and instruction required by this section in bilingual form. Transliteration of all
27 candidates' names shall be completed as provided for in section 86.