

HOUSE No. 723

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Erika Uytterhoeven

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 expanding voting access for college and university students.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/17/2023</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>7/10/2023</i>

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By Representative Uyterhoeven of Somerville, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 723) of Erika Uyterhoeven relative to the designation of polling places. Election Laws.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 841 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**
—————

An Act expanding voting access for college and university students.

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 24 of Chapter 54 of the general laws, is hereby amended, by striking out Section
2 24, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:

3

4 Section 24: Designation of Polling Places

5

6 (a) Municipal legislatures, except where charters provide otherwise, shall, twenty days at
7 least before the biennial state or annual or biennial city election and ten days at least before any
8 special election of a state or city officer therein, designate the polling place for each voting
9 precinct and cause it to be suitably fitted up and prepared therefor. In a city or town which has

10 provided voting booths such booths may be placed in the public ways of such city or town,
11 provided said ways are left reasonably safe and convenient for public travel. It shall be in a
12 public, orderly, and convenient portion of the precinct; provided, however that if the municipal
13 legislature determines that the public convenience would be better served, the municipal
14 legislature may designate a polling place in an adjacent precinct of a city or town or may house
15 all polling places in a single building within the town. In any city or town, if the polling places
16 for two or more precincts are located in the same building and the total number of registered
17 voters in any such two or more precincts does not exceed three thousand, only one set of election
18 officers need be appointed for such precincts, but separate ballot boxes and voting lists for each
19 precinct shall be used. If, in a town of five precincts or less, all of which are located in one
20 building, the municipal legislature so votes, only one warden need be appointed to supervise all
21 such precincts, and the number of inspectors shall be determined by the municipal legislature,
22 without disturbing the balance between the political parties. There shall, however, be one clerk
23 appointed for each such precinct.

24

25 (b) Any precinct containing an institution for higher education, as defined in Chapter 15C
26 Section 3 of the general laws, with more than one thousand students, faculty or staff, who are
27 eligible to register to vote in the precinct, shall designate a polling place within one-half mile of
28 the institution for higher education. If a precinct contains a public institution for higher
29 education, as defined in Chapter 15A, Section 5, the public institution for higher education, upon
30 request from the election clerk, shall provide without charge to the municipality a facility for use
31 as a polling place that meets all applicable requirements under Section 24 and as established by
32 the Elections Division.

33

34 (c) Alcoholic beverages shall not be sold in any portion of a building which is designated
35 as a polling place, during voting hours or while ballots are being counted therein.

36

37 (d) When the polling places have been designated in the city of Boston, the board of
38 election commissioners of said city may post in such places as it may determine a printed
39 description of the polling places designated and may give further notice thereof; and when the
40 polling places have been designated in any other city or in any town, the municipal legislature of
41 such city in at least five public places in each precinct thereof, and the municipal legislature of
42 such town in at least three public places in each precinct thereof, shall forthwith post a printed
43 description of the polling places designated and may give further notice thereof.

44

45 (e) When a polling place in a voting precinct is changed from one location to another, the
46 board of election commissioners in the city of Boston, the municipal legislature in any other city
47 or town shall cause printed descriptions of such polling place to be posted in such public places
48 in such precinct as they determine and shall give notice by mail to each residence of one or more
49 registered voters therein.