

HOUSE No. 697

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

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 increasing voter turnout.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>	<i>20th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/17/2023</i>
<i>Nicholas A. Boldyga</i>	<i>3rd Hampden</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>F. Jay Barrows</i>	<i>1st Bristol</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 697

By Representative Jones of North Reading, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 697) of Bradley H. Jones, Jr. and others for legislation to establish a special commission (including members of the General Court) to investigate ways of increasing voter turnout. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act increasing voter turnout.

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. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be a
2 special commission to study and provide recommendations on the practices the Commonwealth
3 may take to increase voter turnout in Massachusetts. The special commission shall seek to find
4 the quantifiable effects of various methods in which voter turnout may be increased through
5 policy measures. The study shall seek to use an econometric difference in differences model or a
6 more robust regression model that the commission sees fit, with longitudinal panel data to
7 examine the effects of different election laws on targeting increased voter turnout. The special
8 commission shall investigate states in the United States or other countries that have implemented
9 election laws to increase voter turnout and determine the feasibility of instituting a similar
10 approach in the commonwealth. Furthermore, the study shall show whether or not there is a
11 statistically significant effect on voter outcome after the laws are enacted. The commission shall
12 also seek to find the differences in policy preferences of non-voters and voters in the
13 commonwealth and whether or not an increase in voter turnout would affect policy outcomes and

14 quantify that effect. Election laws regarding voter turnout that shall be studied must include, but
15 are not limited to, a statewide voting holiday, an entry into a lottery cash prize for voting, a tax
16 credit for voting, access to the ballot for voting eligible incarcerated individuals, and a tax
17 penalty for those who don't vote. The special commission shall also make recommendations for
18 guidelines and approaches to dealing and implementing the election laws with the strongest
19 outcomes and feasibility. The special commission's recommendations may include, but are not
20 limited to, implementing one or multiple elections laws or keeping the current laws the same.
21 Furthermore, these recommendations shall consist of the best practices for announcing and
22 implementing their final recommendations. If necessary, the special commission may seek
23 advice from statisticians, econometricians and political scientists to determine the best method to
24 model and approach this topic to achieve the most robust and sound results.

25 SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of the house and senate chairs of the joint
26 committee on election laws, who shall serve as the co-chairs; the speaker of the house of
27 representatives or a designee; the president of the senate or a designee; the house minority leader
28 or a designee; the senate minority leader or a designee; the president of the Massachusetts Town
29 Clerks' Association or their designee; the president of the Massachusetts City Clerks'
30 Association or their designee; and four members to be appointed by the Governor, two of whom
31 shall be individuals from a public interest group involved in election matters, one of whom shall
32 be an individual with experience administering city elections chosen from a list of three names
33 submitted to the Governor by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and one of whom shall
34 be an individual with experience administering town elections chosen from a list of three names
35 submitted to the Governor by the Massachusetts Municipal Association. Staff from the joint
36 committee on election laws and staff from the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections

37 Division shall provide the necessary assistance. The commission shall hold no less than four
38 public hearings.

39 SECTION 3. The commission shall submit its report and findings, along with any
40 recommendations, to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee
41 on election laws, and the clerk of the house of representatives and senate within 12 months of the
42 passage of this legislation