HOUSE . . . . No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

Michelle L. Ciccolo

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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 establishing ranked choice voting for certain offices in the town of Lexington.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Michelle L. Ciccolo	*15th Middlesex*	*1/9/2025*

HOUSE . . . . No.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *4223* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

_____

An Act establishing ranked choice voting for certain offices in the town of Lexington.

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. Effectiveness of this Act

2   This act shall take effect upon its passage, and elections for the Town offices described

3   herein shall take place in accordance with this Act on or after January 1, 2025. The provisions of

4   this Act shall supersede all inconsistent provisions of Chapter 753 of the Acts of 1968, as

5   amended as of January 1, 2025.

6   SECTION 2. Definitions

7   Chapter 753 of the Acts of 1968, as amended by Chapter 284 of the Acts of 1976,

8   Chapter 120 of the Acts of 1985, Chapter 117 of the Acts of 2019, and Chapter 3 of the Acts of

9   2020 is hereby amended by inserting Sections 1A and 1B as follows:

10   Section 1A

11   The terms below shall have the following meanings for the purposes of Sections 1A and

12   1B:

13   "Batch elimination," the simultaneous defeat of multiple candidates, as provided in

14   Section 1B(d).

15   "Concluded ballot," a ballot that does not rank any continuing candidate or that contains

16   an overvote at the highest-ranked continuing candidate.

17   "Continuing candidate," a candidate who has not been defeated or elected.

18   "Elected candidate," a candidate who has obtained sufficient votes to be elected, whether

19   there are additional election rounds before the election has concluded, or the election concluded

20   after the vote during which they were elected.

21   "Election threshold," the number of votes sufficient for a candidate to be elected in a

22   multi-seat election. It

23   is calculated by dividing the total number of votes counting for continuing candidates in

24   the first round by the sum of the number of seats to be elected plus one, disregarding any

25   fractions, and then adding one.

26   "Highest-ranked continuing candidate," the continuing candidate with the highest ranking

27   on a voter's ballot.

28   "Last-place candidate," (i) the candidate with the lowest vote total in a round of the

29   ranked- choice voting tabulation; or (ii) a candidate that is defeated in batch elimination.

30   "Overvote," a circumstance in which a voter ranks more than one candidate at the same

31   ranking. "Plurality voting," the voting system in which the candidate receiving the most votes is

32   declared the winner, even if such candidate does not receive a majority of the votes cast in the

33   election.

34   "Ranked choice voting," a method of casting and tabulating ballots in which voters rank

35   candidates for office in order of preference.

36   "Ranking," means the number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express

37   the voter's preference for that candidate. Ranking number one shall be the highest ranking,

38   ranking number two shall be the next-highest ranking, and so on.

39   "Skipped ranking," a circumstance in which a vote does not use a ranking and ranks a

40   candidate with a subsequent ranking (e.g., a voter casts their votes as follows: (1) Jane Doe; (2)

41   Michael Smith; (4) Mary Johnson).

42   "Surplus fraction," the number equal to the difference between an elected candidate's

43   vote total and the election threshold, divided by the candidate's vote total.

44   "Transfer value," the proportion of a vote that a ballot will count to its highest-ranked

45   continuing candidate. Each ballot shall begin with a transfer value of one. If a ballot counts to the

46   election of a candidate under subsection 1B(d)(1), it receives a lower transfer value.

47   Section 1B

48   (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1, or any other special or general law to the

49   contrary, on or after January 1, 2025, the following town offices shall be elected by ranked

50   choice voting, except for (1) a single-seat office when the number of certified candidates is less

51 than or equal to two, or (2) a multi-seat office when the number of certified candidates is less

52 than or equal to the number of seats to be elected, provided that this Section 1B shall not affect

53 the term of office of any such elected official or elected member of such board, committee or

54 authority elected on or before December 31, 2024.

55   (1) moderator;

56   (2) select board;

57   (3) school committee;

58   (4) Lexington housing authority; and

59   (5) planning board.

60   (b) In any single-seat election, each round shall begin by counting the number of votes

61 for each continuing candidate. Each ballot shall count as one vote for its highest-ranked

62 continuing candidate. Concluded ballots shall not be counted for any continuing candidate. Each

63 round shall end with one of the following two outcomes:

64   (1) If there are more than two continuing candidates, no candidate may win the seat

65 outright by a

66   plurality or majority vote and instead, after a vote, (i) the last-place candidate shall be

67 defeated; or (ii) the last-place candidates shall be defeated in batch elimination, and a new round

68 shall begin; or

69   (2) If there are two continuing candidates, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be

70 defeated, the candidate with the most votes shall be elected, and tabulation shall be complete.

71   (c) In any multi-seat election, each round shall begin by counting the number of votes for

72   each continuing candidate. Each ballot shall count, at its current transfer value, for its highest-

73   ranked continuing candidate. Concluded ballots shall not count for any continuing candidate. In

74   the first round only, the election threshold shall then be calculated. Each round shall proceed as

75   follows:

76   (1) Any continuing candidate who meets or exceeds the election threshold shall be

77   elected. Each ballot counting for an elected candidate shall be assigned a new transfer value by

78   multiplying the ballot's current transfer value by the surplus fraction for the candidate. Each

79   elected candidate shall be deemed to have a number of votes equal to the election threshold in all

80   future rounds, and a new round shall begin; each candidate having exceeded the Election

81   Threshold in the initial ballot shall be removed or listed as "ELECTED" on all subsequent

82   ballots for continuing candidates until the election is complete;

83   (2) If no continuing candidate has more votes than the election threshold and the sum of

84   the number of elected candidates and continuing candidates is more than the sum of the number

85   of seats to be elected plus one, the last-place candidate shall be defeated or the last-place

86   candidates shall be defeated in batch elimination, and a new round shall begin; or

87   (3) If no continuing candidate has more votes than the election threshold and the sum of

88   the number of elected candidates and continuing candidates is equal to the sum of the number of

89   seats to be elected plus one, the continuing candidate with fewest votes shall be defeated, all

90   other continuing candidates shall be elected, and the election is complete.

91   (d) Batch elimination shall apply to the largest possible group of continuing candidates

92   such that the sum of the votes for batch-eliminated candidates is less than the individual number

93   of votes for every continuing candidate not in the group; provided that the number of continuing

94   candidates not batch-eliminated is at least one more than the remaining number of positions to

95   elect.

96   (e) Ties shall be resolved as follows:

97   (1) If two or more last-place candidates are tied and batch elimination applies, each tied

98   candidate to whom batch elimination applies shall be defeated accordingly.

99   (2) If two or more continuing candidates are tied but are not in last place, the order of

100   said tied continuing candidates shall be determined by the number of votes received by each tied

101   candidate in the prior round; or

102   (3) If two or more last-place continuing candidates are tied and batch elimination does

103   not apply, the continuing candidate with the fewest votes in the prior round shall be defeated. If

104   two or more continuing candidates were also tied in the prior round (i.e., two continuing

105   candidates were tied in the previous round, but batch elimination did not then apply), the

106   continuing candidate with the fewest votes in the next-prior round shall be eliminated. If two

107   last-place continuing candidates are tied at the end of the first round and batch elimination does

108   not apply, then the two tied continuing candidates shall have a run-off before the next round. The

109   continuing candidate with fewer votes in the runoff will be defeated, and any remaining rounds

110   in the election will proceed according to this Section 1B. This process shall be applied

111   successively as many times as necessary, a tie shown in any prior round shall be decided by

112   referring to the standing of the candidates in the round immediately preceding the tie.

113   (f) The Town Clerk may, at the Town Clerk's discretion, publish guidance or rules on the

114   administration of elections conducted according to this Act; provided that any such guidance or

115   rules shall be limited to logistical, accessibility, or other similar guidance or rules that are purely

116   administrative in nature; and provided further that any guidance or rules hereunder published

117   shall be limited to ensuring the integrity and efficient functioning of the election.

118   (g) In any election conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Section 1A and

119   Section 1B, the Town Clerk shall publish election results that show the tabulations by round,

120   along with any additional information that may be required by applicable law.