

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS
2025-2026 (194th) BILL SUMMARY

Bill Number: H.870

Title: An Act granting the town of Acton the authority to provide legal voting rights in municipal elections for town residents aged 16 and 17 years old

Sponsor(s): Rep. Dan Sena (Acton) and Rep. Simon Cataldo (Concord)

Hearing Date: May 6, 2025

Reporting Deadline: July 5, 2025

Prior History:
2023-24 (H.3973): Ordered to a House Study

Similar Matters: N/A

CURRENT LAW: *M.G.L. c. 51 § 1 – Qualifications of voters*

This section of MGL establishes the basic qualifications for voter registration. It states that every citizen of the United States who is 18 years of age or older, a resident of a Massachusetts city or town, not otherwise disqualified (such as by reason of criminal conviction or guardianship status as outlined in other sections), is qualified to register to vote in elections held in the Commonwealth. It also specifies that voter registration must comply with constitutional and statutory requirements regarding residence, citizenship, and age.

SUMMARY:

This bill seeks to provide legal voting rights in municipal elections to 16 and 17 year olds in any election for local offices, local ballot questions, and town meeting in the Town of Acton. The office of the town clerk shall establish a separate registration list for local voters aged 16 or 17 who shall fill out an alternative registration form.