

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON ELECTION LAWS**  
**2025-2026 (194<sup>th</sup>) BILL SUMMARY**

**Bill Number:** H.854

**Title:** An Act relative to youth voter engagement

**Sponsor(s):** Rep. Joan Meschino (Hull)

**Hearing Date:** May 6, 2025

**Reporting Deadline:** July 5, 2025

**Prior History:**

2023-24 (H.705): Reported favorably; Referred to House Steering; Ordered to a third reading  
2021-22 (H.815): Ordered to a House Study

**Similar Matters:** S.526 (Sen. Patrick O’Connor – identical language)

**CURRENT LAW:**

*M.G.L. c. 51 § 1 – Qualifications of voters* : Massachusetts residents aged 18 and older are eligible to register and vote in local elections.

*M.G.L. c. 51 § 47A – Pre-registration of persons having obtained the age of 16* : Massachusetts citizens aged 16 or 17 are able to pre-register to vote. However, under current law, they are not able to vote until they turn 18.

**SUMMARY:**

This bill would amend MGL chapter 51 Section 1 to explicitly state that 17-year-old pre-registrants may vote pursuant to Section 47A.

It would also amend Section 47A to allow 17-year-old pre-registrants to vote in a preliminary or primary election if they will be 18 years old by the time of the subsequent special or general election. No other pre-registrants would be allowed to vote before reaching 18 unless otherwise permitted by law.