

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.500
Title:	An Act relative to corporate disclosure when dealing with cities and towns
Sponsor:	Rep. John Thurber
Committee:	Economic Development and Emerging Technologies
Hearing Date:	September 25, 2025
Reporting Deadline:	November 24, 2025 (subject to extensions under House Rule 27)
Prior History:	N/A-New File
Key Terms:	MGL refers to the Massachusetts General Laws.

A corporation refers to a domestic corporation established either by the general laws or a special law for any one or more of the purposes mentioned in section 4 of chapter 180 of MGL or organized under chapter 180 on or after October 1, 1971. These purposes include for:

- any civic, educational, charitable, benevolent, or religious purpose
- the prosecution of any antiquarian, historical, literary, scientific, medical, chiropractic, artistic, monumental, or musical purpose
- establishing and maintaining libraries
- for supporting any missionary enterprise having for its object the dissemination of religious or educational instruction in foreign countries
- promoting temperance or morality in the commonwealth
- fostering, encouraging or engaging in athletic exercise or yachting
- encouraging the raising of choice breeds of domestic animals and poultry
- the association and accommodations of societies of Free Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias or other charitable or social bodies of a like character and purpose

- the establishment and maintenance of places for reading rooms, libraries or social meetings
- establishing boards of trade, chambers of commerce and bodies of like nature
- providing nonprofit credit counseling services
- encouraging agriculture or horticulture; for improving and ornamenting the streets and public squares of any city or town by planting and cultivating ornamental trees therein and also otherwise improving the physical aspects of such city or town and furthering the recreation and enjoyment of the inhabitants thereof
- purchasing, holding, preserving and maintaining burial grounds in accordance with the provisions of chapter one hundred and fourteen
- establishing a not-for-profit association of employers as authorized by section twenty-five E of chapter one hundred and fifty-two, including such not-for-profit associations of employers organized as nonprofit corporations.

Current Law: Chapter 3 of MGL concerns the General Court. Sections 39-50 deal with the regulations for lobbying the General Court. These sections include provisions:

- Requiring individuals and entities engaging in lobbying to register with the Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Providing annual registration and semi-annual disclosure reports to the Secretary of the Commonwealth and paying an annual registration fee
- Prohibiting certain actions like contingent compensation and gifts to public officials
- Completing an in-person or online educational seminar on lobbying law annually before registering

The lobbying laws in Massachusetts include provisions regarding the acts to influence or attempt to influence the decision of any officer or employee of a city or town when those acts are intended to carry out a common purpose with executive or legislative lobbying at the state level. If the municipal lobbying relates to a common purpose of lobbying at the state level, meeting the definition of lobbying, and the advocate meets the criteria of being either an executive agent, a legislative agent, or both, then they must register as a lobbyist with the lobbyist division.

Chapter 180 of MGL governs corporations for charitable and other purposes as well as their directors, officers, and members. This chapter deals with the incorporation process, the purposes for which a corporation may be formed, the powers, governing structure,

liability, by-laws, consolidation and merger processes, and the dissolution processes for corporations.

Summary: This bill amends chapter 180 of MGL by inserting a new section, section 30, that establishes disclosure requirements for corporations when they lobby or intend to lobby at the municipal or state level. This new section lays out what these corporations shall disclose and where they shall post these disclosures.

Section 1 amends chapter 180 of MGL by inserting a new section, section 30, which shall deal with corporate disclosure when participating in lobbying activities at the municipal or state level.

Subsection (a) of this new section requires any corporation, which does not possess legal or appointed governmental power at the municipal or state level, to issue a disclaimer stating that they are a non-governmental organization, and that any written or digital information they have made accessible to the public has been developed by their organizations. This disclaimer shall be posted in a clearly visible and accessible place, including, but not limited to, the corporation's website. Any corporation that is lobbying or plans to participate in lobbying for legislative proposals shall post said disclaimer on the corporation's email, website, social media platforms, and any other form of digital content accessible to the public.

Subsection (b) of this new section defines the term "public record" as any written statement, audio or video recording of a public proceeding, including, but not limited to a public hearing.

Subsection (c) of this new section requires any corporation and their representatives speaking on behalf of their proposals in a public forum, including, but not limited to, town meetings and public hearings at the state and local levels, to submit a disclaimer to be included on public record stating their status as a non-governmental organization. This disclaimer shall be made readily accessible to the public when requested through a public records request.

Subsection (d) of this new section requires all corporations to include a statement on their website, and on any of their written or digital content that is accessible to the public, information clearly stating the sources of their funding. This information shall include but not be limited to any individuals, groups of people, or committees providing financial support to the corporation. Such a statement shall be posted in a conspicuous and easily accessible format for the public.