

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #: H.4244

Title: An Act authorizing the town of Hingham to utilize alternative methods for publication of legal notices

Sponsor: Rep. Joan Meschino and Sen. Patrick O'Connor

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: July 22, 2025

Current Law: MGL Chapter 4, Section 13 (b) states that if a municipality is required by a statute, ordinance, by-law or judicial order to publish a legal notice in a newspaper or newspaper of general circulation, the municipality shall publish said notice in a newspaper which shall ensure that the legal notice appears in: (i) a newspaper's print publication; (ii) on the newspaper's website; and (iii) on a statewide website that may be maintained as a repository for such notices; provided, however, that if a newspaper does not maintain a website, publication on a statewide website and reference to the statewide website in the print publication notice shall satisfy the publication requirement.

Summary: Section 1 of the bill exempts the town of Hingham from any contrary statutes in order to use alternative methods of publishing legal notices.

Section 2 authorizes the town to publish a legal notice on the bulletin board or electronic visual display outside the town clerk's office and in a local newspaper, in either electronic or paper format, or on the town's website.

The legislation defines the term "website" as meaning the official website of the town of Hingham that is operated and maintained by the town's municipal government.

Section 3 provides for the law to take effect upon its passage.

Notes: This home rule petition was approved as Article 28 at the April 28-29, 2025 Annual Town Meeting by a unanimous vote.