

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #: H.4701

Title: An Act authorizing the town of Orange to increase the membership of the Board of Selectmen

Sponsor: Rep. Susannah Whipps and Sen. Joanne Comerford

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: November 17 – November 21, 2025 written testimony only

Similar matters: H.4245 (Mattapoisett), H.4602/S.2668 (Monson)

Current Law: Chapter 41 of the Mass. General Laws, Section 1, requires each town to elect a board of selectmen consisting of three or more members, who serve terms of not more than three years.

Summary: Section 1 of the bill would authorize the town of Orange, notwithstanding contrary provisions of Chapter 41, to establish a 5-member board of selectmen. Members would be elected for three-year staggered terms of office, so that the term of at least 1 member expire each year. This section also confirms that the board of selectmen shall continue to have the powers and duties of a board of selectmen under general or special laws.

Section 2 ratifies, validates and confirms actions that were previously taken by the board of selectmen and town meeting to increase the size of the board of selectmen, authorizing those actions as if this act had already been in effect.

Section 3 ensures that members now serving on the board of selectmen will continue to serve until the expiration of their current terms of office, unless they vacate the office sooner.

Section 4 provides for the act to take effect immediately.

Notes: Approved as Article 22 at an October 27, 2025 Special Town Meeting by a vote of 84 in favor, 47 opposed with 2 abstaining.

According to the sponsor's office, on October 26, 2017, voters at a Special Town Meeting approved a proposal to increase membership on the board of selectmen from three to five members. On March 5,

2018, voters elected two additional members to the board, and since then the town has continued to fill seats on the board as necessary. Subsequently, upon further review by the town counsel, it was determined that the town had not followed proper statutory procedures to increase the membership of the board of selectmen, and steps were taken to approve and file this home rule petition.