

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.5544
Title:	An Act establishing an amendment to Bridgewater Town Charter Article VIII, Section 8-2 Citizen Referendum Petition Timeframe
Sponsor:	Rep. Dennis Gallagher
Committee:	Municipalities and Regional Government
Hearing Date:	July 22, 2026
Current Law:	Article 89, Section 8 of the Mass. Constitution (Home Rule Amendment) authorizes cities and towns to petition the General Court to enact special laws that apply to that community. This includes the adoption or revision of town charters. Article VIII, Section 8-2 of the Bridgewater Town Charter currently states that if within 10 days of the final passage of a measure, a petition signed by at least 5 percent of the total number of voters, protesting the measure, is filed with the town clerk, the measure shall be suspended and reconsidered. If not rescinded, the measure shall be submitted by the town council to the voters at the next town election. If the voters approve the measure, it will remain in effect; otherwise it will become null and void.
Summary:	This bill extends from 10 days to 30 days the timeframe for submitting citizen referendum petitions after the final passage of a measure by the Bridgewater Town Council. The remainder of the charter provision would remain the same. The bill states that the amendment requires voter approval prior to it becoming effective.
Notes:	This legislation was approved by the Bridgewater Town Council at the May 19, 2026 meeting by a vote of 9-0.