

Primary Sponsor Bill Summary

Senate, No. 7	Proposal for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to voting rights
Sponsor:	Senator Liz Miranda
Legislative amendment to:	Article III of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution
Proposed legislation:	<p>The bill proposes a constitutional amendment to restore the right to vote of incarcerated felons who are citizens. To amend the constitution, this bill will have to pass in two successive sessions of the legislature and then the proposal will be a ballot question. From its founding, Massachusetts permitted incarcerated people to vote. But in 1997, some incarcerated people formed a political action committee to gather information on elected officials' voting records on prison issues and encourage incarcerated people and their families to vote based on this information. Acting Governor Paul Cellucci immediately suggested a constitutional amendment to take away their right to vote. In 2000, the ballot question to do that passed with 60% of the vote, leaving only Maine, Vermont and Washington DC as jurisdictions allowing incarcerated felons to vote.</p>