

2016 MASSACHUSETTS BALLOT QUESTION VOTER GUIDE

VOTE NOV. 8, 2016!

Polls are open 7am to 8pm. To find your polling location: www.wheredoivotema.org
This year, Massachusetts will introduce Early Voting for statewide general elections. For dates and locations, please contact your local Clerk's office: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electclk/clkidx.htm>

Ballot Question:

The Basics:

Supporters Say:

Opposition Says:

Question 1: **Expanded Slot- Machine Gaming**

A YES vote would allow a second slot parlor to exist in Massachusetts.

A NO vote would maintain the current law allowing 1 slot parlor in Massachusetts.

Support for this measure comes from Eugene McCain, a real estate broker and developer. McCain has an agreement to buy the mobile-home property down the parkway from Suffolk Downs, racetrack in Revere, MA. McCain has stated he is considering a hotel, mix-use development and slot casino as part of the development proposal for this site.

Opposition states that the only sites for a slot casino in Massachusetts, that fit the State language, are Plainridge Park (which is already a slot casino), Brockton Fairgrounds (which is applying to be a resort casino) and Suffolk Downs, in Revere MA. Opponents include No East Casino, group formed to oppose in 2012 to oppose a casino at Suffolk Downs.

Question 2: **Charter School Expansion**

A YES vote would allow the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to approve up to 12 new charter schools or enrollment expansions in existing charter schools each year.

A NO vote would make no change to the number of charter schools allowed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Supporters say that charter schools are 1) public schools that have a proven track record of closing achievement gap - longer school days, more personal attention and great teaching, 2) almost 33,000 students are on wait lists 3) charter schools do no harm to school districts. Education funding is assigned to a student, not to a school. Supporters and funders include Gov. Baker, John Kerry - US Sec of State -, Families for Excellent Schools, Alliance for Business Leadership, Democrats for Education Reform, executives at Bain Capital, Fidelity Investments, Baupost Group hedge fund and private equity companies.

Opponents say that 1) charter schools take funding from public schools because operating costs - transportation, utilities, etc - remain the same for a district. Opponents say that \$400 million was siphoned from public schools in 2016. This would grow by an additional \$100M if measure passes. 2) Suspension rates for charter schools are highest in the state with charters schools not taking on new students. 3) Charter schools do not enroll as many English language learners or special needs students. Save Our Public School's supporters include Massachusetts Teachers Association, NAACP, Jewish Labor Committee, AFL-CIO, Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance and Citizens for Public Schools.

Ballot Question:

The Basics:

Supporters Say:

Opposition Says:

Question 3: Conditions for Farm Animals

A YES vote is a vote would prohibit the sale of eggs, veal, or pork of a farm animal “confined in a cruel manner.”

A NO vote would make no changes to the sale of eggs, veal or pork.

Supporters say the law will 1) prevent farm animals from being crammed into small cages; 2) will not affect liquid eggs (eggs out of the shell) and it will not affect food that includes eggs, veal, or pork as one of the ingredients. Supporters also state that cramming tens of thousands of animals into tiny cages promotes the spread of diseases. Supporters include organizations such as Humane Society, MA Sierra Club, MSPCA, Zoo New England, small farms and individual veterinarians.

Opponents say that Massachusetts is an expensive place to farm due to land costs, regulations and high costs of diesel fuel. The egg industry insists that cages are not cruel and disputes that there is an increased food safety risk in eggs from non-cage-free environments. Farmers emphasize that they’re not opposed to cage-free eggs, just against mandating that all eggs sold be cage-free. Opponents include United Egg Producers, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and Retailers Association of Massachusetts.

Question 4: Legalization, Regulation, & Taxation of Marijuana

A YES vote would legalize marijuana for recreational use for those 21 years and older.

A NO vote would make no change to current state laws on sale, cultivation or possession of marijuana.

Supporters say that legalizing marijuana would 1) phase out illegal marijuana sales, 2) end a system that they say has criminalized otherwise law abiding citizens, 3) create more revenue through taxes and 4) move marijuana sales from the streets. The proposed law would create a “Cannibis Control Commission” appointed by the State Treasurer to oversee sales, cultivation and products. Supporters include the Marijuana Policy Project, a national group that has funded similar initiatives.

Opponents say that if legalized, 1) kids will end up with greater access to marijuana 2) that MA already legalized marijuana for medicinal use and replaced penalties for possession for 1 ounce or less with civil penalties. Opposition is led by the Campaign for Safe & Healthy Massachusetts led by Gov. Baker, Mayor Walsh – Boston and House Speaker DeLeo.

Question 5: Yes! Community Preservation Act

A YES vote would create a small surcharge on local property tax bills which is then matched by a statewide trust fund to support each city/town (where passed) to create/preserve affordable housing, historic preservation and improve open space.

A NO vote would make no change to property tax and would not leverage statewide funds.

Supporters say this will help to stabilize communities by creating thousands of affordable housing units, restore and preserve historic buildings, develop and improve open space. Exemptions for low-income homeowners, low-and-moderate-income senior homeowners, and for the first \$100,000 of residential and business property value. The average voter would pay approximately \$24 (Boston 1% surcharge). The percent of surcharge can only be changed by voters.

There is no current organized opposition to Question 5.

On ballot in 16 cities and towns across Massachusetts: including Boston, Chelsea and Holyoke.

(Endorsed by Mass Voter Table)