

SENATOR BECCA RAUSCH

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SENATOR RAUSCH FILES LOCAL OPTION RANKED CHOICE VOTING BILL

Legislation provides MA cities and towns easier path to adopting ranked choice voting for municipal elections through local ordinance or ballot measure.

Boston, MA - Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) and Representative Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox) filed elections reform legislation today to create an easier path for Massachusetts' cities and towns to adopt ranked-choice voting for local elections.

The **Local Option Ranked Choice Voting Act** (SD 241/HD 652) allows municipalities to adopt the voting option through local ordinance or ballot initiative. Under current Massachusetts law, cities and towns can only adopt ranked-choice voting through home rule petition, requiring approval by both the state legislature and governor. This bill gives municipalities greater autonomy in enacting ranked choice voting without approval of state government.

In the 2020 general election, a majority of voters in over 75 Massachusetts cities and towns voted in favor of Question 2, the ballot initiative to expanded ranked-choice voting for all non-presidential elections in Massachusetts.

"This timely legislation will give many Massachusetts voters more choice in their local elections, **which voters in 75 municipalities already said they want,**" **said Senator Rausch.** "Ranked choice voting increases opportunities for diverse candidates to run for office, including women candidates, candidates of color, and LGBTQ+ candidates, resulting in better governing and increased diversity among our elected officials. At a minimum, we as a Legislature should provide an easy path forward for our towns and cities to implement their residents' mandates for election reform."

"I have always been a big advocate for giving our municipalities more choices for what they believe will work well in their communities," **said Representative Pignatelli.** "I am happy to support giving our cities and towns the option to adopt ranked-choice voting systems for their local elections."

Ranked-choice voting is an electoral system allowing voters to rank multiple candidates in order of preference. Under this system, a candidate receiving over 50% of votes wins outright. If no candidate receives this majority, the last-place candidate is eliminated, and that candidate's ballots are redistributed to those voters' second-choice candidate. This process is repeated until a candidate receives a majority of votes.

Ranked-choice voting is currently enacted or used in political elections within 24 states, including 27 cities and towns for local offices. These municipalities include New York City, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Santa Fe as well as Cambridge, Amherst, and Easthampton, Massachusetts.

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Senator Becca Rausch represents the Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex District, comprised of Attleboro, Franklin, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, North Attleborough, Plainville, Sherborn, Wayland, Wellesley, and Wrentham.