

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

## BILL FILING TEMPLATE

*Be It Enacted, by the Senate and House of Representatives, etc., as follows:*

SECTION 1. Chapter 54 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition is hereby amended by inserting the following provisions:

(a) Pursuant to a request, in person, by a qualified voter, as defined by Section 1 of Chapter 51 of the General Laws, the local election officers and registrars of every city or town shall allow any qualified voter to cast a ballot for any biennial state election, special state election, primary, or special primary prior to an election day. Cities and towns may also provide for early voting in elections not held in conjunction with State elections.

(b) Early voting shall begin on the 20<sup>th</sup> day preceding an election. The early voting period shall end on the 6<sup>th</sup> day preceding an election.

(c) In order to allow for early voting, the registrars of each city or town shall identify and provide for at least one centrally-located and convenient polling location within each city or town for use during the early voting period. The designation of an early voting polling location must be made 30 days in advance of the election. The location and hours of the polling location are within the discretion of the registrars of each city or town. However, each early voting polling location must be open for eight hours on each weekday during the early voting period. The polling location must be open for an aggregate of eight hours each weekend during the early voting period. Further, the polling location shall be accessible to persons with disabilities and suitable voting machines shall be made available to all qualified voters.

(d) The registrars for each city or town shall publish the location of the early voting polling place as well as the applicable dates and hours. Said publication shall occur

during the week prior to the commencement of the early voting period and at least once a week during the early voting period. Notice of the dates and hours of early voting shall be sent to every newspaper listed in the Directory of New England Newspapers and Periodicals, located in such town or city. Notice of the dates and hours of early voting shall also be conspicuously posted in the office of the city clerk or on the principal official bulletin board of each city or town and any other public building deemed necessary.

(e) The secretary of state must provide a sufficient number of early voting ballots and Early Voting Certificates to the registrars of each city or town for use during the early voting period. The early voting ballots shall be similar to the official ballots used on the Election Day with the exception that they shall be printed on paper differing in color from that used for the official or absentee ballot. The ballots and Early Voting Certificates must be delivered to the registrars of each city or town 30 days in advance of the early voting period.

(f) Early voting ballots and Early Voter Certificates shall be provided to each qualified voter who participates in early voting.

(g) Qualified voters shall sign, under the pains of perjury, an Early Voter Certificate, swearing that they are voting under their legal name and address and that they will not partake in any fraudulent activities while participating in the early voting period. The Early Voting Certificate will also require qualified voters to provide their ward and precinct information. In order to facilitate the organization of ballots by ward and precinct on election night, the Early Voting Certificate shall be attached to the sealed early voting ballot.

(h) In compliance with Section 60 of Chapter 51 of the General Laws, before the commencement of the early voting period, the registrars for each city or town shall prepare a list for the early voting polling location, containing the names and residences of all persons qualified to vote therein, as the same appear upon the annual register, and shall reasonably transmit the same to the election officers at every polling location designated by the registrars.

(i) The presiding election officer at the early voting polling location shall cause to be placed on the voting lists opposite the name of any qualified voter who participates in early voting the letters in capital EV designating an early voter.

(j) At the end of each day during the early voting period, the presiding election officer must separate, compile, and record the early ballots cast at each polling location into the appropriate ward and precinct. The resulting list of early voters shall be updated daily and saved electronically. By 5:00 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> day before the Election Day, the list shall be forwarded to the appropriate ward and precinct location.

(k) Sections 65, 66, 72, 73 and 75 of chapter 54, governing the conduct of elections shall apply to the conduct of polling locations during early elections.

(l) The ballot boxes for early voting shall be sealed and locked each night and maintained securely by the election officers.

(m) The registrars for each city or town shall designate a location for the counting of early and absentee ballots. The early and absentee ballots shall be opened at the close of all polling locations on election day. All totals shall be added to the totals at the relevant wards and precincts.