



Massachusetts law about elections and voting

A compilation of laws, regulations, cases, and web sources on elections and voting law.

Best bet

[Elections Division](#), Mass. Secretary of State. Everything you need to know about the elections process, including how to register to vote, how to vote by absentee ballot, how to run for office, and much more. Provides text of ballot questions.

Massachusetts laws

- [MGL c.10, s.42](#), State Election Campaign Fund
- [MGL c. 50](#), Elections, General Provisions
- [MGL c. 51](#), Voters and Registration
- [MGL c. 52](#), Political Committees
- [MGL c. 53](#), Nominations, Primaries, Initiatives
- [MGL c. 54](#), Wards, Voting Districts and Voting
 - [MGL c.54, s.25B](#) Early Voting
- [MGL c. 55](#), Campaign Finance and Disclosure

Massachusetts regulations

[950 CMR 46](#) Post-election audit procedures

[950 CMR 47](#) Early voting

[950 CMR 48](#) Ballot question petitions

[950 CMR 49](#) Confidential voter registration

[950 CMR 50](#) Voting equipment

[950 CMR 51](#) Polling place accessibility

[950 CMR 52](#) Voting and counting procedures for paper ballots

[950 CMR 53](#) Voting and counting procedures for voting machines

[950 CMR 54](#) Voting and counting procedures for electronic voting systems

[950 CMR 55](#) Certification of nomination papers and petitions

[950 CMR 56](#) Administrative proceedings concerning practices of local election officials

[950 CMR 57](#) Voter registration

[950 CMR 58](#) Central registry of voters

[950 CMR 59](#) State ballot law commission: adjudicatory proceeding

[950 CMR 60](#) Voting equipment loan fund

[970 CMR 1](#) Campaign finance activity

[970 CMR 2](#) Political expenditures

[970 CMR 3](#) Rules of procedure

[970 CMR 4](#) Public finance regulations

Selected case law

[Crawford v. Marion County Election Board](#), 553 US 181, 128 S.Ct. 1610 (April 28, 2008)

In a 6-3 split, the US Supreme Court upheld an Indiana requirement that voters show government-issued identification at the polls.

[Libertarian Association of Mass. v. Secretary of the Commonwealth](#), 462 Mass. 538 (2012)

Substitution of candidate. "This case involves the proper interpretation of a Massachusetts election law that governs the filling of a vacancy where a candidate nominated for "state, city or town office" withdraws, dies, or otherwise becomes ineligible prior to an election."

[McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission](#), 572 US __ (2014). Removes cap on total amount an individual can contribute to federal candidates.

Political parties

[Directory of All Parties and Designations](#)

Web sources

[Candidate's Guide to Special Elections](#), Mass. Secretary of State Elections Division

"This guide is intended for use by candidates running in special elections to fill vacancies in the U.S. House, Senate, state Senate and state House of Representatives."

[Federal Election Commission](#). Administering and Enforcing Federal Campaign Finance Laws. Includes a searchable database of who is giving what to whom and guidance in satisfying filing requirements

[Mass. Office of Campaign and Political Finance](#)

Includes forms and guidance for filing under the campaign finance law, as well as instructions for obtaining public documents from the office.

Must employees be given time off work to vote?

Look at [MGL c.149 s.178](#) . This law was originally passed in 1887, and has been modified ten times, the most recent being in 1913. The following is from **Labor and Employment in Massachusetts: a guide to employment laws, regulations, and practices**, 2nd edition, by Jeffrey L. Hirsch (Lexis, loose-leaf):

"Time Off to Vote

Massachusetts laws requires that employees who apply be granted a leave of absence to vote during the two hours after the polls open in their districts. Payment for voting time is at the discretion of the employer. Most employees have time to vote before or after work. One or two hours in most cases is the maximum time needed to vote. Employees should explain their reasons for needing more time and may also be requested to prove that they have voted by providing the name of the precinct where they cast their ballot."

[State Felon Voting Laws](#), ProCon.org

Chart "provides links to each state's laws on felon voting and places each US state within one of five categories ranging from harshest (may lose vote permanently) to least restrictive (may vote while in prison). Applications for re-enfranchisement and clemency have been provided for the states which require them."

[State Ballot Question Petitions](#), Mass. Secretary of State Elections Division, 2017

How to get a question on the ballot.

[Voting as an Ex-Offender](#), Nonprofit Vote.org

"This is a short up-to-date state guide to voting for ex-offenders."

[Where Do I Vote?](#), Mass. Secretary of State

Find your polling place in Massachusetts.

Print sources

[America votes!: A guide to modern election law and voting rights](#), American Bar Association, 2008

[Massachusetts Election Administration, Campaign Finance and Lobbying Law](#), MCLE, 2016

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