

Town of Winchester

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

Town Hall 71 Mt. Vernon Street Winchester, MA 01890

Phone 781-721-7130 Fax 781-721-1153 townclerk@winchester.us

MaryEllen Lannon, Town Clerk

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Susan Verdicchio, Winchester League of Women Voters

From: MaryEllen Lannon, Town Clerk

Subject: Article 8 – Citizens Petition

Date: April 12, 2022

I have been asked by you to provide information regarding the implementation of the Citizens Petition concerning **An Act to Extend Local Voting Rights to all Adult Residents of the Town of Winchester** that is coming before the Spring Town Meeting April 25, 2022.

As the Elections Administrator and Town Clerk of Winchester the Commonwealth of Massachusetts doesn’t have a law that allows for my office to implement this language regardless of its passage at Town Meeting. The current definition of a voter requires the person(s) to be citizens of the United States, either naturalized or born. Therefore I would not be able to utilize the **Voter Registration Information Systems** database which is the state system we currently use to register voters, print voter lists, and maintain voters and record keep early and absentee ballot information.

As this is a Citizens Petition requesting Special Legislation by the State Senate and House of Representatives; I would not be able to take such steps to create a new process unless or until the state acts favorable on this issue for the entire Commonwealth.

Certainly, should the State vote to make such a request outlined in Article 8 law; then the Town Clerk’s and Elections Administrators across the Commonwealth would need to receive instructions and procedures from the Secretary of the Commonwealth for its implementation. Individual towns and cities cannot make up our own procedures.

As I understand this petition your request is to impress upon the state with a positive vote of the town meeting from Winchester and in doing so hope to compel the state legislature to change the current definition of a voter as well as other aspects of the current laws; such as the definition of a candidate.

As your Town Clerk it is my duty to uphold the legal requirements for all elections and should the state make an amendment to the current election laws my office would certainly do what is required under the new legislation. Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns. Thank you