

A PROPOSED 1969 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR  
CITIZENS FOR PARTICIPATION POLITICS

PART I: ELECTION LAW REFORM

The political campaigns of the past year graphically illustrated some of the ambiguities and shortcomings of Massachusetts electoral laws. In an attempt to change this situation, some individual members of CPP have submitted a series of bills to the 1969 General Court. It is hoped that local groups and members will actively work to support this legislation, including testifying at legislative committee hearings and educating and pressuring their local legislators. These bills include:

HOUSE NO. 2207 by Mr. Dukakis of Brookline:

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND REGULATING THEIR CONDUCT.

Section 1 - Requires popular election of all delegates, including national committeeman and national committeewoman, thus preventing possible recurrence of this year's incident at Chicago where these two members of the Democratic delegation refused to obey the results of the Massachusetts primary.

Sections 2 and 3 - Provide for district election of at least 2/3rds of the national convention delegates, thus reducing the chance of a boss-controlled delegation, and giving a fairer chance to challenging slates. Also eliminates fractional votes and the possibility that such reduced votes would be given to dissident members.

Sections 4 and 5 - Define that vacancies shall be filled by majority vote of the members of the delegation, thus preventing arbitrary or unfair substitutions such as the last-minute addition of non-elected delegates by the Democrats in Chicago.

Sections 6 and 7 - Define court jurisdiction to include out-of-state violations of the Massachusetts binding primary law, and clarifies the fact that there are penalties for refusal to abide by the decision of the voters in a primary.

petition by:

Michael S. Dukakis of Brookline  
Richard Cauchi of Boston  
Alvin Levin of Lincoln

PLEASE TURN OVER

HOUSE NO. 2208 by Mr. Dukakis of Brookline

AN ACT DEFINING THE HOURS POLLING PLACES SHALL BE OPEN DURING PRIMARY ELECTIONS.

This bill requires all polling places to be open at least 12 hours for primaries, and is a change in the original law which only says "at least two hours".

petition by:

Michael S. Dukakis of Brookline  
Richard Cauchi of Boston  
Alvin Levin of Lincoln

HOUSE NO. 2986 by Rep. Charles Ohanian of Watertown

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEES OF POLITICAL PARTIES, AND FOR THE BIENNIAL ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF STATE, WARD, AND TOWN COMMITTEES.

This bill would require that the two national committee members of political parties be popularly elected every four years, instead of being chosen by the State Committee. Also provides for the election of State Committee and Ward and Town Committee members every two years, as well as requiring these committees to meet at least twice a year. This is intended to make such committees more responsive to their constituents, and more publicly visible in their activities.

petition by:

Richard Cauchi of Boston  
Arsenia Danley of Winchester  
Alvin Levin of Lincoln  
Carolyn Stouffer of Hingham

HOUSE NO. 3907 by Rep. George Young of Scituate

AN ACT RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF DISTRICT AND AT-LARGE DELEGATES TO NATIONAL POLITICAL CONVENTIONS.

This bill provides for 2/3rd of national delegates to be elected by Congressional Districts, and is a change in the old law which only calls for "two from each district".

petition by:

Marjorie R. Schiller of Scituate

HOUSE NO. 320 by Rep. Michael Daly

A LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDING  
FOR VOTING BY CITIZENS OF EIGHTEEN YEARS AND OVER.

This bill is the first step toward a Constitutional Amendment to allow voting by 18 year olds. It must pass two consecutive joint sessions of the Legislature and a public referendum before it could become law in 1972.

Special Notes

A group of young people have established a state-wide committee titled "18 x 72" (Eighteen by 1972) to publicize this issue and pressure for its passage. The following statement explains some of their ideas and proposals for action.

"18 x 72" began December 5th, 1968, and is an organization of adults and young people dedicated to lowering the voting age in Massachusetts to the more reasonable and justifiable minimum of eighteen by 1972.

"Since this can only be done through an amendment to the State Constitution, we have committed ourselves to the following:

- (1) informing the public of the existence and the merits of a bill to lower the voting age to eighteen.
- (2) communicating public support of this bill to the elected officials of the Commonwealth.
- (3) transforming public support into votes both in the General Court and at the polls in a general election.

"We believe that most of the organization, labor, and enthusiasm needed to accomplish our goal must come from those presently below the minimum voting age, in order to demonstrate that young people are sincerely interested in obtaining the right to vote and that they possess the ability to carry out the decision-making responsibilities of citizenship."

(The bill to lower the voting age to 19, which did pass an initial step in 1967, is now felt to be an ineffective and unacceptable compromise, which would also make it more difficult to achieve an 18 year amendment.)

For additional details on what can be done in your community, contact:

18 x 72  
17 Oakland Street  
Lexington, Mass. 02173  
648-0805

