

**AN INITIATIVE PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW
RELATIVE TO ELECTIONS IN THE CITY OF LOWELL
Under Article LXXXIX of the Amendments
to the Constitution of the Commonwealth**

To petition the Legislature to enact a special law relating to the City of Lowell for the purpose of establishing that after January 1, 2011, all elections for the city council and school committee of Lowell shall be conducted by the method known as choice voting. Choice voting maximizes voters' preference and ensures that votes are not wasted on candidates who have already received enough votes to win or who have no chance of getting elected.

Choice voting allows Lowell voters to rank candidates for city council and school committee in the order of their choice (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd choice, etc.). Voters can rank as many or as few of the candidates as they wish, and ranking more than one candidate does not affect a higher-ranked choice's likelihood of winning.

In choice voting, there are multiple rounds of counting votes. The candidates win by reaching a required threshold of votes. The threshold is calculated as the total number of valid ballots cast divided by the number of city councilors or school committee members to be elected plus one, plus one vote (i.e., (valid ballots cast/number of seats + 1) + 1). After totaling first-place votes, all candidates who have reached the threshold are declared elected. If no candidate has reached the threshold, then the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated. All of the voters who ranked the eliminated candidate as their top choice then have their second-choice candidate counted instead. Once a candidate reaches the threshold, any remaining votes for that candidate are transferred to the next-choice candidate. Surplus votes are transferred by giving all next choice candidates on the winner's ballot a "fraction" of the vote, which is calculated by dividing the number of surplus votes by the total number of votes for that candidate. This process of counting votes shall continue until all seats have been elected.

The city council for the City of Lowell shall adopt rules and procedures for the implementation of choice voting at least six months prior to the elections for the city council and school committee. The rules and procedures shall include the detailed algorithm for determining winners, how to handle ties and miss-marked ballots, and any other details deemed necessary or convenient and not inconsistent with the intent of this requested special law.

The Legislature may draft the form of the requested special law, provided it falls within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition, as set forth above.

FIRST THREE SIGNERS	Michael W. Gallagher	31 Waverly Avenue	Lowell	CIRCULATOR INFORMATION	SPONSORS OF THIS PETITION REQUEST THAT YOU RETURN THIS PETITION TO:
	Elkin Montoya	1521 Varnum Avenue	Lowell		Fair Vote Lowell c/o ONE Lowell 9 Central Street, Suite 203 Lowell, MA 01852
	William S. Taupier	208 Nesmith Street	Lowell		

INSTRUCTIONS TO CIRCULATORS AND SIGNERS

- **DO NOT ALTER THIS INITIATIVE PETITION IN ANY WAY. ADDITIONAL MARKINGS ON THIS PETITION MAY DISQUALIFY ANY SIGNATURES ON THIS PETITION SHEET.**
- For your signature to be valid, you must be a registered voter in the City of Lowell and your signature should be written substantially as registered. Do NOT sign the petition more than once.
- If you are prevented by physical disability from writing, you may authorize some person to write your name and residence in your presence.

SIGNATURE to be made in person with name substantially as registered (except in case of physical disability as stated above)	NOW REGISTERED AT (street, number and apartment number, if any) (city is Lowell)	DATE	WARD	PREC.
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