

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 674**

By Mr. Koczera of New Bedford, petition of Robert M. Koczera and others to implement a voting by mail demonstration project. Election Laws.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PETITION OF:

Robert M. Koczera  
Susan C. Fargo

Gloria L. Fox

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT A VOTING BY MAIL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official  
2 Edition, are hereby amended by inserting after Chapter 54A the  
3 following chapter:—

4 **Chapter 54B.**

5 **CITY/TOWN ELECTIONS TO BE CONDUCTED IN A LIMITED**  
6 **VOLUNTARY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.**

7 SECTION 2. Vote by Mail in Selected General Municipal Elec-  
8 tions. Notwithstanding the provisions of General Law Chapter 54,  
9 the Secretary of State shall by regulation prescribe a method for  
10 choosing twenty city or town elections to be conducted by voluntary  
11 balloting to be conducted by a voluntary vote by mail demonstration  
12 in twenty separate cities or town in the Commonwealth, under super-  
13 vision of the Secretary of State and at polling places for the next city  
14 or town election following the promulgation of regulations by the  
15 Secretary of State. This voluntary vote by mailing balloting shall be  
16 the sole method of voting in the community for the said election in

17 accordance with this act. The Secretary of State shall also prescribe  
18 by regulation a method for the selection of voluntary participants up  
19 to twenty by mail balloting in voluntary cities or towns. The Secre-  
20 tary of State shall adopt rules within 180 days following the effective  
21 date of this act to provide for the selection and conduct of city or  
22 town elections in the twenty voluntary cities or towns by mail in the  
23 next city or town elections and to achieve and maintain the max-  
24 imum degree of accuracy, impartially and efficiency on the proce-  
25 dures of voting and of counting, tabulating and recording votes by  
26 mail in accordance with this act.

1 SECTION 3. Procedures for conducting an election by mail. The  
2 Secretary of State, by regulation, shall establish requirements and  
3 criteria for the designation of places of deposit for the voluntary by  
4 mail ballots cast in the city or town election. The places designated  
5 under this section shall be open on the date of the election for a  
6 period of time as determined by the voluntary city or town partici-  
7 pating in such vote by mail demonstration.

8 The clerk of the city or town shall mail by nonforwardable mail  
9 an official vote by mail ballot with a return identification envelope  
10 and secrecy envelope not sooner than the 14th day before the date of  
11 the city or town election conducted by mail and not later than the  
12 10th day before the date of the city or town election, to each regis-  
13 tered voter of the city or town as of the 20th day before the date of  
14 the city or town election. If the clerk of the city or town determines  
15 that a registered voter of the electoral district as of the 20th day  
16 before the date of the election does not receive daily mail service  
17 from the United States Postal Service, the clerk of the city or town  
18 shall mail the nonforwardable mail an official ballot with a return  
19 identification envelope and secrecy envelope to the elector not  
20 sooner than the 19th day before the date of the election conducted by  
21 mail and not later than the 14th day before the date of the election.  
22 If the final day for mailing such ballots falls on a Sunday or holiday  
23 the receding day shall be the final day for mailing. The Secretary of  
24 State shall specify the date on which all ballots shall be mailed for  
25 any town election conducted by mail under this act.

1 SECTION 4. The cost associated with this demonstration voting  
2 by mail project shall be borne by the Commonwealth. The Secretary  
3 of the Commonwealth will make a report to the Joint committee on  
4 Election Laws and the Ways and Means committees of the Senate  
5 and House on the demonstration project.