

HOUSE No. 707

By Mr. Verga of Gloucester, petition of Anthony J. Verga and Jennifer L. Flanagan for the establishment of a task force (including members of the General Court) to investigate the methods of conducting state elections via the Internet. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN ONLINE VOTING TASK FORCE.

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. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the
2 contrary, there is hereby established an Online Voting Task Force
3 (“Task Force”). Said Task Force shall be established to conduct
4 research, studies, and interviews to investigate various methods of
5 conducting state elections via the Internet. The members of the Task
6 Force shall be as follows: The Secretary of the Commonwealth or
7 his or her designee; The Director of the Office of Campaign and
8 Political Finance or his or her designee; the Senate and the House
9 Chairs of the Joint Committee on Election Laws; a representative of
10 the state committee from each political party officially recognized
11 by the Commonwealth; two representatives from the Massachusetts
12 City and Town Clerks Association, one city clerk and one town
13 clerk; one Senator appointed by the Senate President; one Represen-
14 tative appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
15 five citizens appointed by the Governor, provided at least two of
16 which must have experience with elections law, and provided further
17 that one member have knowledge of Internet privacy and security
18 issues. Each member of the Task Force must be eligible and regis-
19 tered to vote in Massachusetts state elections. Within one hundred
20 twenty (120) days of the enactment of this bill the Task Force shall
21 be assembled.

1 SECTION 2. The appointed members of the Task Force shall be
2 responsible for conducting such reasonable research as is necessary

3 to prepare proposals and findings on the merits and demerits of var-
4 ious methods of conducting state elections via the Internet. Such
5 research may include but is not limited to the following: an evalua-
6 tion of the technological options available to the Commonwealth; an
7 examination of the potential negative consequences of instituting
8 such a system, such as, privacy, fraud, verification, and identity
9 issues; a study of the costs, both monetary and social, that each
10 system might entail, including a rigorous cost benefit-analysis of
11 each option; and an estimated timeline for the institution of such a
12 system.

13 The Task Force shall meet regularly and shall hold no fewer than
14 twelve (12) meetings during its tenure. No earlier than twenty (20)
15 and no later than twenty-four (24) months after the initial formation,
16 the Task Force must produce their final proposals and findings,
17 which must be distributed to the Governor, the Secretary of the
18 Commonwealth, and The Joint Committee on Election Laws.

1 SECTION 3. Subject to appropriation, a sum of two hundred
2 thousand dollars shall be expended for the purposes of this Act.