



Notice and Agenda Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission

Sudbury DEI Commission Meeting
Thursday, July 8, 2021
7:30 PM Open Session

Please click the link below to join the virtual Sudbury DEI Commission Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86563751167>

For audio only, call the number below and enter the meeting ID on your telephone keypad.
978-639-3366 or 470 250 9358 Meeting ID: 865 6375 1167

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Open meeting by roll call vote.
3. Public Comments.
4. Welcome Reverend Marjorie Matty.
5. Commission Goals and Timeline:
 - Celebrating Sudbury - Community Building Event.
 - Discuss strategies to enhance DEI Commission visibility in town.
 - Survey.
 - Bill S. 465 update – legislation to extend voting rights in municipal elections to noncitizen voters of the commonwealth. (See report below)
 - DEI Office hours/meet and greet.
6. Review and approve minutes from June 24, 2021 meeting.
7. Upcoming agenda items/next meeting planning.

8. Adjourn meeting by roll call vote.

“This listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Co-Chairs which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.”

The next Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission meeting is scheduled for **July 22, 2021 at 7:30 PM.**

**A Report on Massachusetts House Bill 770 and Massachusetts Senate Bill 465
For: The Sudbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission and the Public
Date: July 8, 2021**

Massachusetts House Bill 770, sponsored by State Rep. Mike Connolly (D-Cambridge) and Senate Bill 465, sponsored by State Senator Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton) both propose to allow non-citizen residents of Massachusetts to vote in local (municipal) elections for school committee, select board, city council or town meeting, and local referendums. The proposed state-wide legislation applies only to non-citizens who are in the country legally, and would allow them to vote only in town, not state or federal elections. (Currently federal law prohibits non-citizens from voting in federal elections but states can permit non-citizens to vote in local and state elections.)¹

Representative Connolly and Senator Eldridge argue that non-citizen residents of Massachusetts are already participating in civil life by running businesses in our communities, volunteering in schools and on local boards, and of course, paying taxes. (According to Representative Connolly, in 2019 immigrant-led households in Massachusetts paid \$3.3 billion in state and local taxes.) Prohibiting non-citizens from voting in municipal elections is the epitome of “Taxation without Representation.”

On the national level, taxes paid by non-citizens go to support social safety-net programs such as Medicare and Social Security, which immigrants are not allowed to access. A 2019 report by WBUR pointed out that, “A similar dynamic plays out at the local level...non-citizen residents are expending considerable amounts of money in sales and property taxes, without any say in local politics. Although their tax revenue funds public schools, libraries, and roads, they cannot vote on any proposal that would direct how those dollars were spent. Although their contributions pay the salary of elected officials, they cannot select a mayor, alderman or school board official to advocate for their interests.”²

There is a long history of allowing non-citizens the right to vote in this country. By 1900, more than half of US States had allowed some form of non-citizen voting. Unfortunately, this changed due to anti-immigrant sentiments following WWI. Currently, non-citizens are allowed to vote in local elections in San Francisco, California, nine communities in Maryland, and two communities in Vermont.³

During the past 15-20 years, communities including Brookline, Newton, Somerville, Wayland, and Amherst have approved home rule petitions seeking to allow non-

¹ <https://newbostonpost.com/2021/06/24/non-citizens-voting-yes-say-massachusetts-immigrant-advocates/>

² <https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2019/02/27/allowing-non-citizens-to-vote-ivan-espinoza-madrigal-lauren-sampson>

³ https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_permitting_noncitizens_to_vote_in_the_United_States

citizens the right to vote in local elections. However, each petition requires approval from the state legislature, which so far has not given it. On Thursday, June 24th, 2021, the state Legislature's Joint Committee on Election Laws conducted a hearing where elected officials and their constituents presented their reasons for supporting many of these Home Rule Petitions, along with House Bill 770 and Senate Bill 465. No one argued against the bills at that hearing.⁴ The next step in the process is for the Joint Commission on Election Laws to hold an executive session to issue its recommendations.

Some statistics to consider:

Massachusetts has approximately **7.1 million residents**.⁵ About **8% of those (over half a million people) are non-citizens** and are therefore not allowed to vote in local elections.⁶

Currently, **Sudbury** has a population of approximately **19,855**. **12.66%** of the population are foreign-born: **8.88%** naturalized citizens and **3.78% (750) non-citizens**.⁷ Approximately **71.8% (14,255) of all Sudbury residents are age 18 or older**, and therefore eligible to vote.⁸ However **84% (630) of Sudbury's non-citizens are age 18 or older**, and therefore would be eligible to vote should the proposed bill be approved.⁹

In the most recent **Sudbury Town Elections (March 29, 2021) only 2223 votes were cast** (16% of the town's registered voters.)¹⁰ If this proposed bill were approved, an additional **630 Sudbury residents** could be eligible to vote in the Town Election.

⁴ <https://newbostonpost.com/2021/06/24/non-citizens-voting-yes-say-massachusetts-immigrant-advocates/>

⁵ <https://populationu.com>

⁶ <https://migrationpolicy.org>

⁷ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/sudbury-ma-population>

⁸ <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ma/sudbury/demographics>

⁹ <https://www.towncharts.com/Massachusetts/Demographics/Sudbury-town-MA-Demographics-data.html>

¹⁰ <https://sudbury.ma.us/election/309/>

Massachusetts Senate Bill Number 465 –
filed on 2/19/21 by Senator James B. Eldridge

An Act extending voting rights in municipal elections to noncitizen voters of the commonwealth.

Chapter 51 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 1F the following section:-

Section 1G. (a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

“municipal election”, an election for mayor, school committee, city council, town council, board of selectmen, select board elections, a school committee referendum, a local ballot referendum or other municipal elections.

“noncitizen voter”, a person 18 years of age or older with legal immigration status who is not a citizen of the United States.

“noncitizen voting limitations”, a noncitizen voter’s inability to vote for: (1) the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Member of the Senate or Member of the House of Representatives pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 611; (2) a state office; or (3) initiative petitions authorized under article XLVIII of the constitution.

“noncitizen voter registration form”, a voter registration form that only a noncitizen voter uses.

“noncitizen voting rights”, a noncitizen voter’s right to: (1) vote in a municipal election; (2) participate in a town meeting; and (3) be a candidate and serve, if duly elected, in a municipal elected office.

“town meeting”, an open town meeting or a representative town meeting established pursuant to chapter 43A.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of chapter 51 or any other general or special law to the contrary, a municipal election official shall enter a noncitizen voter’s name on a list of noncitizen voters upon the noncitizen voter’s submission of a noncitizen voter registration form. Within 5 days of entering the noncitizen voter’s name on the list, the municipal election officer shall notify the noncitizen voter: (1) of the noncitizen voting rights; (2) of the noncitizen voting limitations; and (3) that voting in a federal election may jeopardize the noncitizen’s application for United States citizenship.

(c) For as long as the noncitizen voter remains a resident of the town in which the noncitizen voter has registered to vote, the noncitizen voter may exercise the noncitizen voting rights. A noncitizen voter shall only remain registered to vote in one municipality at a time.

(d) The state secretary shall issue a noncitizen voter registration form. The voter registration form shall include a declaration to be signed under pains and penalties of perjury by the noncitizen voter that the noncitizen is a resident of the municipality in which the noncitizen voter desires to vote.

(e) The state secretary and the election officer of a municipality shall disseminate the noncitizen voter registration form at the same places and in the same manner that the state secretary and election officer of a municipality disseminate the voter registration form for a United States citizen.

(f) The state secretary shall issue regulations to implement this section.¹¹

¹¹ <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S465>