



**Town of Natick**  
**Town Clerk's Office**  
13 East Central Street  
Natick, MA 01760  
508-647-6430

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Diane Packer

DATE: February 13, 2020

RE: Policy on Campaigning during Early Voting period

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Currently in Natick, Town Hall has been designated as the early voting location (polling place). Policies governing Town Hall are under the purview of the Board of Selectmen and therefore I am requesting that you approve the attached policy for any Early Voting period.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 54, Section 65 (attached) regulates campaigning on election day at the polling locations. There is no similar law for the early voting period or the locations for early voting. Attached is a proposed policy which is in line with Massachusetts General Law. The policy is the same policy that is in place on Election Day at the polling locations (which is the attached General Law).

## MGL Chapter 54, Section 65

### Activities at polling places; regulations; penalties

Section 65. At an election of state or city officers, and of town officers in towns where official ballots are used, the presiding election officer at each polling place shall, before the opening of the polls, post at least three cards of instruction, three cards containing abstracts of the laws imposing penalties upon voters, and at least three specimen ballots within the polling place outside the guard rail, and have available at the check in area at state elections a number of copies of the information for voters material provided for in section fifty-four at least one for every one hundred voters; and no other poster, card, handbill, placard, picture or circular intended to influence the action of the voter shall be posted, exhibited, circulated or distributed in the polling place, in the building where the polling place is located, on the walls thereof, on the premises on which the building stands, or within one hundred and fifty feet of the building entrance door to such polling place. In polling places in which voting machines or approved electronic voting systems are used, the samples of the ballot posted shall be, substantially, replicas of the ballot labels, cards or ballots upon which the voters must vote in using the particular machine or system. Pastors, commonly called stickers, shall not be posted, circulated or distributed in the polling place, in the building where the polling place is located, on the walls thereof, on the premises on which the building stands, or within one hundred and fifty feet of the building entrance door to such polling place. Such pastors shall be subject to all the restrictions imposed by sections forty-one and forty-four as to names and residences of candidates and the size of the type in which the names shall be printed; but no political or other designation shall appear on such pastors, and no vote by pastor shall be counted if such designation appears. The presiding election officer shall, at the opening of the polls, publicly open the packages containing the ballots and deliver them to the ballot clerks. All specimen ballots not posted shall be kept in the custody of the presiding officer until after the closing of the polls.

No rule, regulation or provision of law shall prohibit a person who is a member of a police or fire department of the commonwealth, or any political subdivision thereof, who is not on active duty, from distributing such material one hundred and fifty feet distant from a building entrance door to a polling place in an election where there appears on the ballot a referendum pertaining to, or affecting, the conditions of employment, including hours of labor and compensation, in the department of which said person is a member subject to the provisions of this section.

No person shall be allowed to collect signatures upon petitions, referendum petitions or nomination papers within one hundred and fifty feet from the building entrance door to a polling place.

Whoever posts, exhibits, circulates or distributes any poster, card, handbill, placard, picture or circular intended to influence the action of a voter, or any pastor to be placed upon the official ballot, in violation of any provision of this section, shall be punished by a fine of not more than twenty dollars.

## **Policy on campaigning during Early Voting**

Except as may be otherwise provided by any other General or Special Law of the Commonwealth, there shall be no electioneering or campaigning by candidates or anyone else within the building where Natick Early Voting takes place during Early Voting hours of the Early Voting period as defined by statute or regulation.

Electioneering or campaigning includes candidates greeting citizens or voters; the display of any signage, clothing, or other articles regarding any candidates, offices, or questions on the ballot; and petitioning or soliciting signatures for any purpose.