

2010 Massachusetts Ballot Questions (2 Nov)



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If you live in Massachusetts you have likely received a red pamphlet titled, "Massachusetts Information for Voters: 2010 Ballot Questions" in the mail. While most of the information is straight forward, the details can be too much for most to read. While NewBedfordGuide.com will not back a candidate or state-wide ballot question, we believe it is important to present the facts so voters can make informed voting decisions. There are three state-wide binding ballot questions that Massachusetts voters get to vote on this 2 November (7 AM- 8 PM). You must be a registered voter by 13 October to participate!

Question #1: Sales Tax on Alcoholic Beverages

This is a simple question; do you or don't you want a sales tax on alcohol in Massachusetts. If passed (a yes vote), the law would remove the Massachusetts sales tax on alcoholic beverages and alcoholic. Last year a 6.25% sales tax was added to beer, wine and liquor.

Proponents say: We already pay an excise tax on alcohol so this is a double tax. This law hurts small business owners, especially those that sell alcohol near New Hampshire where there is no sales tax.

Opponents say: Should alcohol be except like food, clothing and prescriptions? Tax revenue from alcohol sales go towards health care services for 100,000 Massachusetts residents.

Question #2: Comprehensive Permits for Low or Moderate Income housing

This question is a bit more tricky and difficult to understand. This question is to repeal an existing state law that allows organizations building low-to-moderate income housing to get a single permit from a city or town's zoning board vice separate permits from each local agency or official having jurisdiction over the proposed housing. Confused yet? Currently, If a local agency disagrees with a permit that is approved by the zoning board (i.e. low income housing being built in an area that doesn't want it) they must go through the courts to overturn the permit to build. A "Yes" vote would repeal the current law of a single permit and would require separate permits from each local agency.

Proponents say: Local cities have lost control of what type of housing is being built in their area. Permits are being issued without regard to local agencies. Local agencies should have control of what type of housing is built in their area. This law allows state agencies to push affordable housing into towns/cities that do not want them.

Opponents say: The Affordable Housing Law has created 58,000 homes across Massachusetts (80% of affordable housing) outside of the larger cities. If this law is repealed less affordable housing will be built across Massachusetts and jobs will be lost.

Question #3: Sales and Use Tax Rates

This question is as simple as it gets; do you want your sales tax to remain at the current 6.25% or lowered to 3%? Last year Governor Deval Patrick raised the sales tax from 3 to 6% and this question repeals that tax hike. The bottom line is do you want more money in your pocket or more money in the state governments coffers for state spending?

Proponents say: On average, each Massachusetts resident would save \$688 on taxes. The reduced tax revenue does not reduce spending for cities/towns, police, firefighters, schools, roads or other essential services. It simple trims the government fat and puts money in your pockets.

Opponents say: Cutting the sales tax in half will reduce the state revenue by \$2.5 billion. The recession has forced communities to already cut spending and this money is needed for schools, health care and community services.

As always do your own research and get informed on the issues before casting your votes!

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