

Be Informed: Massachusetts Ballot Question #2: Charter School Expansions?

City On A Hill Charter Public School (Facebook)

This November 8th, we will not only head to the polls to pick our nation's next president and vice-president, but we'll also determine what happens with a few local issues – in this year's case, four of them. While 35 initiatives were targeted, only these four made it to the ballot – there's always 2018.

Since 1996, Massachusetts has been voting on ballot measures each even number year – 32 in all. The state leans towards approval when it comes to these measures, 53% of the measures have been approved compared to 47% of them being struck down.

We've all heard the maxim "Be informed." when it comes to voting and what we'll attempt to do here is look at the four questions in an objective, factual way and share the general consensus and thought on both sides of the question.

Growing up, when I would watch the news, the reporter would do exactly that: report. Rarely could one tell which side of the issue that reporter or journalist was on. He would state the factual part of the story, then share what the proponents and opponents or detractors were saying. You were trusted to be intelligent enough to then make a decision.

These days, reporters have been replaced by commentators or in some cases, glorified bloggers. They make their stance on the issue clear, and spend most of their time attacking the opponents of their stance. It is an opinion piece, not the genuine article – pardon the pun. This has been the dearth of good, balanced journalism. I am a firm believer in presenting both sides and letting people decide and I also believe we can

do just that in a succinct and easy to understand manner.

Question #2: Charter School Expansions?

Currently, there is a state-wide cap on the number of charter schools allowed. That is a percentage of each school district's enrollment. The passing of this measure would allow the state to approve an additional **twelve** new charter schools **per year**. Districts cannot spend more than 10-18% – dependent on the district's school performance- of its school budget on charter schools. These new charter schools would not be subject to the cap.

Oppose:

The existence of charter schools drains much-needed resources and monies from the public schools. Charter schools will lead to more privatization of schools and away from local government oversight. Unlike, public schools which have elected board officials. charter schools have assigned board members which allows for corruption and lacks checks and balances. In addition, charter schools do not serve as many children with special needs.

Propose:

It would meet a demand: tens of thousands of students in Massachusetts want to attend a public charter school but cannot because there simply aren't enough schools. It would improve the education of the low-performing districts since they will receive priority, especially important since urban charter schools have been shown to achieve higher level of academic growth compared to traditional public schools. Higher education has a greater economic and social impact.