

Be Informed: Massachusetts Ballot Question #3: Certain farm animal containment prohibition?

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These days, reporters have been replaced by commentators or in some cases, glorified bloggers.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 #3: Certain farm animal containment prohibition?

This measure was an initiative of the Humane Society of the United States and is two-fold pertaining to both confinement and sales. At some farms, certain animals are confined to small cages for breeding. Most notably, pigs, egg-laying hens, and calves which are being raised for veal. There are 10 states that currently ban the practice of confinement of these animals by farms, however only one state, California, has banned the **sale** of non cage-free eggs. Massachusetts would be the first state to ban the sale of veal or pork from confined animals, and from not just within the state but anywhere in the nation.

Oppose:

An extra financial burden will be placed upon farms in terms of logistically building larger enclosures and making it more difficult to generate a profit in a tough-to-make-a-profit industry. It will then translate into a higher price for the end-consumer. Outside of this specifically, the manner in which the question was drawn, and is unconstitutional: it encompasses those farms out of the state.

Propose:

Ethically speaking, it is cruel and unusual punishment for an animal to spend its entire life inside a small cage. It is said that you can judge a society by the way it treats its animals, and confining animals in this manner is a poor reflection of who we are. Alleviating suffering wherever it is, is an earmark of a compassionate evolved society.