

New Bedford Election Prediction #1: voter turnout will be 23%

As the 2017 New Bedford election cycle comes to a close on November 7th, it's time to make a few predictions. I won't predict any of the candidate winners because some will perceive the predictions as endorsements and I'll have to deal with verbal beatings that will follow. Making scientific predictions based on data isn't acceptable to some even if the predictions come true – they will make the chicken and egg argument and I'd rather not deal with it.

My first prediction is that voter turnout will be 23%.

In 2015, voter turnout for the preliminary election was 7.89% compared to 9.41% in 2017 – a 1.51% increase. In 2015 the final election had a 22.78%, so on the surface it would make sense that the final 2017 election would result in a 24-25% voter turnout, right? Not so fast,

Why the higher turnout? In 2015, we only had two mayoral candidates thus not requiring a mayoral race in the preliminary elections. In 2017 we had three candidates for mayor requiring a preliminary election and it's mayoral elections that bring out the vote, likely resulting in the 1.51% increase. It's hard to determine if Charlie Perry has turned out the vote more than Maria Giesta, or because the three candidates in the 2017 preliminary election. I'm predicting that having a mayoral race in October is the main reason for the 1.5% spike and a 1.5% uptick is disappointing and tells me we won't see much of an increase over 2015 based purely on the mayor's race.

There is a ballot question that hopes to move the New Bedford mayoral term from two years to four. Considering Charlie

Perry's base seems to be energized from a strong showing in the October preliminary election and the ballot question organizers seem well organized, I'd suggest a slightly higher turnout in 2017 than in 2015 from 22.78% to a solid 23%.