

HOUSE No. 599

By Mr. Capeless of Pittsfield, petition of John J. Fitzgerald for legislation relative to the appointment, powers and duties of custodians of voting machines. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-Seven.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT, POWERS AND DUTIES OF CUSTODIANS OF VOTING MACHINES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 54 of the General Laws is
2 hereby amended by striking out section 30A, inserted
3 by section 2 of chapter 310 of the acts of 1943, and
4 inserting in place thereof the following:—

5 *Section 30A.* Notwithstanding any contrary pro-
6 vision of section thirteen, where voting machines are
7 used the city or town clerk or election commissioners
8 shall appoint in writing one or more custodians of
9 voting machines, who shall assist him in the prep-
10 aration and upkeep of voting machines, shall instruct
11 the election officers in the use of said machines, and
12 shall perform their duties under the supervision of
13 the city or town clerk or election commissioners. If a
14 voting machine requires adjustment during the
15 course of an election, a custodian shall, if requested
16 to do so by the warden, make such repairs or adjust-

17 ments as may be required to return the voting ma-
18 chine to operating condition, and for this purpose
19 may enter within the guard rail in any polling place,
20 but he shall not make any such adjustments or repairs
21 except in the presence of not less than two election
22 officers of the precinct, who shall be designated by the
23 warden so as to give equal representation to the two
24 leading political parties. No person holding an ap-
25 pointment as an election officer under section eleven
26 shall be appointed a custodian under this section.
27 No person shall be appointed or act as a custodian in
28 a voting precinct where he is a candidate for election,
29 nor shall such person be permitted to perform any
30 work in advance upon a voting machine to be used in
31 such a precinct.

1 SECTION 2. Section 69 of said chapter 54, as ap-
2 pearing in the Tercentenary Edition, is hereby
3 amended by inserting after the word "supervisors"
4 in line 1 the words: —, custodians of voting ma-
5 chines, — so as to read as follows: — *Section 69.* No
6 persons except the election officers, supervisors,
7 custodians of voting machines, the city or town clerks,
8 and voters admitted for the purpose of voting, shall,
9 during the progress of an election and until the public
10 declaration of the vote, be permitted within the guard
11 rail, unless authorized by the election officers for the
12 purpose of keeping order and enforcing the law.

1 SECTION 3. Section 70 of said chapter 54, as
2 amended by section 16 of chapter 411 of the acts of
3 1943, is hereby further amended by inserting after the
4 word "supervisors" in line 2 the words: —, cus-
5 todians of voting machines, — so as to read as fol-

6 lows:— *Section 70.* No more than four voters,
7 besides election officers and supervisors, custodians of
8 voting machines, and the city or town clerk, in excess
9 of the number of marking compartments provided,
10 shall be allowed at one time within the guard rail.
11 Where voting machines are used, the number of voters
12 allowed within the guard rail shall not be more than
13 twice the number of voting machines provided. After
14 the time fixed for closing the polls, no voters shall be
15 admitted within the guard rail, except the election
16 officers and supervisors, and except voters who are
17 then in the polling place or in line at the door thereof.
18 The presiding officer of the polling place shall provide
19 or cause to be provided to each voter so outside the
20 guard rail a card or slip bearing such voter's name,
21 and the voter shall as soon as practicable present the
22 same to one of the ballot clerks and shall then be per-
23 mitted to vote if otherwise qualified. When the polls
24 are closed, the presiding officer shall cause a police
25 officer or other qualified person to be stationed at the
26 end of the line of persons waiting to vote to see that
27 no other persons vote than those who were in the
28 polling place or in line at the door at the time fixed
29 for closing the polls. After the last voter in line at
30 the door has entered within the guard rail, the voters
31 shall be allowed five minutes in which to cast their
32 votes.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the train was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm, humid air of the South. I had heard that the weather in the North was harsh, but I didn't realize how cold it would be. The wind was biting, and the snow was falling in soft, silent drifts. I pulled my coat tighter around me and looked up at the sky. The sun was hidden behind a heavy blanket of clouds, and the world seemed to be in a state of quiet desolation.

I had come here for a new beginning, for a chance to start over. I had left behind a life of struggle and hardship, a life where every day was a battle for survival. I had dreamed of a place where I could breathe freely, where I could be who I truly was. But now, standing in this foreign land, I felt a sense of uncertainty. I didn't know anyone here, and I didn't know what the future held for me. The only thing I was sure of was that I had to keep going, no matter how difficult the journey ahead might be.

The train chugged along, carrying me further into the heart of the North. The landscape was a mix of rolling hills and dense forests, with small towns and villages scattered throughout. I saw people of various backgrounds, some looking at me with curiosity and others with indifference. I felt a sense of isolation, as if I was an outsider in a strange land. But as I looked around, I began to see the beauty of this new world. The snow-covered fields were peaceful and serene, and the sound of the train was a comforting rhythm in the quiet of the winter.

I had heard that the North was a place of opportunity, a place where hard work could lead to a better life. I had come here with a dream, a dream of a better future. I had come here with a heart full of hope and a mind full of determination. I had come here to find a place where I could belong, a place where I could make a difference. I had come here to find a place where I could be happy.

The train stopped at a small station, and I stepped out into the cold. I looked up at the sky and felt a sense of peace. I had made it. I had reached a new beginning. I had found a place where I could belong. I had found a place where I could be happy. I had found a place where I could make a difference. I had found a place where I could be who I truly was.