

HOUSE No. 4248

By Mr. Ryan of Haverhill (by request), petition of W. J. Harty for a legislative amendment to the Constitution to provide for the revampment and modernization of county government, the abolition of county offices, the division, merger or consolidation of counties and the transfer of county offices or functions and powers or duties thereof. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy.

PROPOSAL FOR A LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO PROVIDE FOR THE REVAMPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, THE ABOLITION OF ANY COUNTY OFFICE, THE DIVISION, MERGER OR CONSOLIDATION OF COUNTIES AND THE TRANSFER OF COUNTY OFFICES OR FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OR DUTIES THEREOF.

1 A majority of all the members elected to the Senate and House
2 of Representatives, in joint session, hereby declares it to be ex-
3 pedient to alter the Constitution by the adoption of the following
4 Article of Amendment, to the end that it may become a part of
5 the Constitution [if similarly agreed to in a joint session of the
6 next General Court and approved by the people at the state
7 election next following]:

8 ARTICLE OF AMENDMENT.

9 ARTICLE . Article II of the Articles of Amendment to
10 the Constitution of the Commonwealth, as amended by
11 Article LXXXIX of the Articles of Amendment, is hereby
12 further amended by adding at the end the following section:—
13 *Section 10. County Government.*—The general court shall
14 have the power by statute to establish, and from time to time
15 to alter, a system of county governments within the common-
16 wealth; to determine the functions, powers and duties of such
17 governments; to transfer governmental functions, powers,

18 duties or office to or from county governments; to abolish
19 any county office; to establish, and from time to time to alter,
20 county boundaries; to divide, merge or consolidate counties;
21 to provide each county with legislative powers to be exercised
22 by a county legislative body; and to authorize counties to
23 adopt, revise or amend county charters for their self-govern-
24 ment, subject to ratification of such adoptions, revisions or
25 amendments by the voters of the county concerned, and to
26 such standards as the general court may prescribe. Insofar as
27 feasible in its judgment, the general court shall utilize counties
28 as the principal vehicle for regional local government in the
29 commonwealth. Provisions of this constitution establishing or
30 enumerating particular county offices, or defining their duties,
31 shall not be construed to limit the power granted by this section
32 to the general court to abolish or transfer such offices or func-
33 tions, powers or duties thereof, as in its judgment the public
34 convenience or necessity may require.