

By Mr. Rosenberg, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 364) of Stanley C. Rosenberg and Peter V. Kocot for legislation to establish an electoral reform commission to improve voter participation in the Commonwealth . Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Three.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO IMPROVING VOTER PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

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. There is hereby established a Special Commission
2 within the meaning of M.G.L. c. 4, § 2A, to be known as the Elec-
3 toral Reform Commission. The purpose of the Commission shall
4 be to the best of its ability, to determine the causes of low voter
5 participation and turnout in Massachusetts and to investigate and
6 make policy recommendations to encourage and facilitate greater
7 voter participation and to ensure fair and democratic elections in
8 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1 SECTION 2. The Commission shall consist of no less than eigh-
2 teen members, and shall include two members of the House of Rep-
3 resentatives, one of whom shall be appointed by the Minority
4 Leader, and two members of the Senate, one of whom shall be
5 appointed by the Minority Leader. The Governor shall appoint one
6 member. The Secretary of the Commonwealth shall appoint the
7 remaining members, who shall consist of individuals with expertise
8 in the field of election laws or who have demonstrable knowledge
9 and experience in the field of electoral reform, and shall include
10 representatives of the following organizations: (a) Asian Pacific
11 American Association; (b) Associated Industries of Massachusetts;
12 (c) Dunk the Vote; (d) Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce;
13 (e) League of Women Voters of Massachusetts; (f) Massachusetts

14 A.F.L.-C.I.O; (g) Massachusetts Bar Association; (h) Massachusetts
15 Taxpayers Foundation. (i) Massachusetts Voter Education Network
16 (Mass Vote); (j) N.A.A.C.P.; (k) ¿Oiste?: Latino Civic Initiative; (l)
17 Youth Vote Massachusetts;

1 SECTION 3. The Secretary of the Commonwealth shall call the
2 first meeting of the Commission within thirty days of the enact-
3 ment of this legislation, at which meeting the Commission shall
4 elect a chair from among its members. The Commission shall
5 meet at least once per month, at the call of the chair. Eleven mem-
6 bers present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. The Commis-
7 sion shall hold at least one public hearing.

1 SECTION 4. Members of the Commission shall serve without
2 compensation. The Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
3 shall provide administrative support for the commission. The
4 Commission may also seek, accept, and expend any grants or gifts
5 of money, professional services, consultant services, clerical and
6 other services and supplies from the federal government and any
7 other public or private source in the course of its investigation.

1 SECTION 5. The Commission may seek from any official or
2 agency of the Commonwealth such information as is necessary to
3 carry out its duties and functions, and all officials, agencies, and
4 political subdivisions of the Commonwealth are hereby directed to
5 supply such information to the maximum extent consistent with law.

1 SECTION 6. At the request of the Governor, or of the Secretary
2 of the Commonwealth, or of the Attorney General, or of the Leg-
3 islature, or of its own volition, the Commission may form task
4 forces to address specific issues. The Commission may appoint
5 individuals who are not members of the Commission to serve on
6 such task forces.

1 SECTION 7. The Commission shall report to the General Court
2 the results of its investigation and its recommendations, together
3 with drafts of legislation necessary to carry such recommendations
4 into effect by filing the same with the Clerk of the House of Repre-
5 sentatives on or before the first Wednesday in December, 2003.