

Pass Mass Amendment

Petitioners' Quick-Start Guide – 2017



Compiled for more casual petitioners, those who are more likely to focus their petitioning towards friends and acquaintances, and are not interested in “pounding the pavement.” (Every signature counts!) For those who want to gather signatures from the general public, please visit our website and download the Petitioners’ Comprehensive Guide.

Includes:

Instructions on How to Petition

Frequently Asked Questions form

For links, to get more involved, get on our email list(s), or for more information, see passmassamendment.org.

Questions? Email us at passmassamendment@gmail.com, or call 978 808 7173.

How to Petition

If you can give the effort an hour, or 2, or 10, you might discover how much fun it can be! Every signature we gather counts.

What IS Petitioning?

Petitioning involves asking voters for their signatures in order to influence legislators and make law. As a petitioner, you will speak directly with the public about what PMA is doing -- promoting bills to help limit the influence of Big Money on our political process -- and why we're doing it.

As a petitioner, you will be:

1. asking people to sign our petitions, and making sure that they do it correctly.
2. gathering up the sheets of signatures and handing them in to your petitioning coordinator.

See below for more information on How to Petition.

“Who would I ask for signatures?”

You should ask people you know, such as friends and family, coworkers, people you know in your church, clubs, and other civic organizations. However, most signers will be people you don't know – “friends you haven't met yet.” You'll probably find that petitioning is fun, and a great way to meet like-minded people.

“By myself or with others?”

You can go it alone but you can also **join a team!** Contact us at 978 808 7173 or passmassamendment@gmail.com, and we will direct you to people who are petitioning near you. You can also sign up for our Action-List to see who else may be petitioning in your area.

Please note that the Action List, which is monitored, is intended for sharing information pertinent to this signature drive, such as great events for petitioning, like festivals, or outreach to other petitioners to join forces or trade ideas.

HOW TO GATHER SIGNATURES – THE DETAILS

1st, gather your materials: Go to our website, passmassamendment.org. You can print out blank petitions at the “Get Petition Forms” page, and a list of other stuff you’ll need at the “Petitioner Checklist” page. While you’re there, visit the “Standout Sign” page to see how to make a terrific sign that’ll attract attention. (Some people like to and others don't.)

2nd, choose a place: Pick a spot where lots of people go. Movie lines and other places are waiting, crowded street corners, and in front of supermarkets and other stores. (If in front of stores, make sure to stand outside the door, close enough to be near the foot traffic, but do not block the foot traffic.) Check out the “Places to Petition” page on our website for ideas for great petitioning places.

Note!! Small gatherings are good for discussions of the issues, and large gatherings are better for getting more signatures quickly.

3rd, ask for signatures!

- Start the conversation in any way that works for you. Some examples we've found useful:
 - Ask for their help to get a referendum question on the ballot, or
 - Get their attention with what the ballot initiative is about, such as "help get control over our democracy," or
 - Ask if they're a registered voter, then jump quickly to why we're asking!
- Ask people where they are **registered to vote**, which may be different from where they currently live.
- Provide the petition form for the town they are registered in. If you have one already ready to go for that town, great! Otherwise, use a blank petition form to create one. You do this by printing the name of this city/town on the correct place(s) on a blank petition form.
- Respond to questions about that the petition is for. (Check out our “FAQs” page on the website for some help.) This will probably be enough for most people. You might say things like:
 - “We're trying to get Big Money out of politics,”
 - "We're asking voters to sign the petition so that we can put these questions on the ballot in 2020,"
 - "It's not to vote yes or no right now. It's just to put the questions on the ballot."

STRICT RULES TO FOLLOW

- **Only registered voters** are allowed to sign, and all should be registered in Massachusetts.
- **Signers must sign on the sheet designated for the correct town** (the one they are registered in): The town name needs to be on the sheet, in the space provided. Only voters from that town can sign on that sheet.
- **Signers must write the street address where they are registered to vote.** For example, college students may live in Boston but be registered in the town they came from, and so in many cases would be providing their street address from their home town (on a petition form designated for that town).
- **No other marks on the petition form**, other than the signature, street address, and town:
 - Do not highlight, underline, or write "see other side."
 - Do not put your initials or any other designation on the petition sheets.
 - Do not mark on the petition form itself where you left off from the previous session. Use stickie notes as described below to keep track of your "numbers."
 - Do not scribble on the form to get the pen started. Instead, use a scrap piece of paper.
 - If a voter signs incorrectly or makes an error, **do not erase or make changes**. Leave the incorrect line intact and ask the voter to sign his or her name and address again on the next line.
 - **If the signature is not readable**, have them print (neatly) their name next to their signature on the same line.
- **Married females should not sign as, e.g. "Mrs. John Smith."** As with all signers, they need to sign the name that they registered with, for example Mary Smith, instead. Note, though, that middle initials are not required.
- **Persons with physical disabilities may authorize another individual to sign for them** in the voter's presence but one spouse may not sign for the other.
- **There cannot be more than one town/city represented on a petition page.** Note that all the neighborhoods of Boston, such as Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Allston can all be on the same petition page, under "Boston."

IMPORTANT NOTES

- **Do not try to convert people** if they are against our ballot measure. If they want an explanation, of course, take a couple minutes to talk to them, but if it's taking longer, it's best to give them a flyer (quarter page version) and let them look at it later. They can email and call us for more information as well, at 978 808 7173 or PassMassAmendment@gmail.com.
- **Please bring everything** listed in the Petitioners' Checklist whenever you go out to petition.
- **Get email addresses if you can** (but on a separate pad of paper, NOT on the petition forms). We are fighting to protect our democracy, and this fight will take years. We need to keep people up to date on our work and the progress we are making. When more people follow our progress, the legislature will feel more pressure!
- Please try to remember to **ask people to ask their legislators to endorse PassMassAmendment**. We will need 25% of our legislators to vote YES in 2 consecutive sessions of the legislature. In the Petitioners' Comprehensive Guidebook we've provided you with a list of all Mass. state legislators, inc. their contact information, as well as the web address for those who need to find out who their legislators are.
- **Petitioners have a constitutional right to petition in public spaces**, even if the location is privately owned. (Be sure that you're not obstructing foot traffic, and that are being respectful of pedestrians' and shoppers' "personal space.") The document (below) from Secretary William Galvin's office explains your constitutional right to petition. We recommend that you read the documents available at the "Petitioner Legal Rights" page on the website before hitting the streets for the first time.
- If a store manager doesn't understand that it is OK for you to petition, show them the documents. If that doesn't do the trick, ask them to call the police. The police can be very helpful. Towns do not want to get sued because the police did not protect your constitutional rights. Just asking the store manager to call the police is usually enough.
- If it has gone this far and the police officer asks you to leave, **it's your choice**: If you refuse, you run the risk of being arrested, which we don't encourage. Instead, at any point in this process (prior to being arrested), you can choose to walk away and find a more hospitable place to petition. If you who welcome the challenge of being arrested, we suggest that you consult with a lawyer beforehand.

ORGANIZING THE FORMS

Organizing the forms in the field can be a challenge. Here are a few suggestions:

- Have the town you are in on the top, with a few nearby towns underneath, alphabetized by town.
- Have other towns alphabetized on another clipboard.
- Keep a list of towns that you already have forms for, on a separate piece of paper. This way you'll easily know if you need to prepare a new form for a town or just look through your clipboard!

To help you report to coordinators how many signatures you gathered that day/week:

At the end of the day, take a stickie note and put an arrow on it. Then place the stickie on the form so that the arrow is on the last signature you got that day. You can also write the date above the arrow, and the next date that you get signatures below the arrow. Do this for each town you got signatures for. Write only on the stickie notes, NOT on the petition forms themselves.

HANDING IN THE FORMS: Please go to the Hand in Petitions page on the PassMassAmendment website for more information.

PassMass Amendment

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) (2017) Out-of-Statate Donations

Why is this ballot initiative (and its corresponding statehouse bill H.3484) important?

PassMassAmendment's goal is to end the corrupting influence of corporations and big money on the political process. With this petition we aim to address the issue by limiting political contributions from out-of-state donations to Massachusetts elections and ballot questions.

Here's a recent example of why we're concerned: Vast sums were spent on 2016's ballot question #2. Whether you were for or against charter schools, it is appalling that so much of the money spent to influence our political process and lawmaking came from outside of Massachusetts.

This bill would limit the amount of funds that out-of-state donors can contribute to Massachusetts elections and ballot questions.

How can I help?

PassMassAmendment is a totally grassroots, all-volunteer organization that runs on people power. We really need *your* help to gather signatures, and to spread the word about what we are trying to do. We also need people to act as regional coordinators of this effort.

Each signature you gather will put added pressure on the legislature to act! We only have until November 22nd, the date by which petition forms need to be submitted to local elections officials for certification. If you can not turn in the petition forms to these officials, please mail them to us by November 15th. (See the Circulator Information box on the petition forms themselves for where to send them.)

While you're at it, contact your state legislators to support the bill that corresponds to our ballot initiative, [H.3484](#), and ask friends and family to do the same. Check out [our other bills](#) as well!

Why petition, if you have Legislative Bills in the Statehouse? Our experience shows that success will depend on building a network of petitioners. What's more, our legislative sponsors (see the list at the website) tell us that the increased number of signatures helps get our bills to the floor.

Where can people find petitions? Please see the page on our website with this information.

Can people download a petition form to help petition, sign themselves, and/or get a few of their friends to sign? Absolutely! Please see www.PassMassAmendment.org.

How to help:

- Sign up for our email list. Action Alerts will follow.
- Contact your legislators. Ask them to endorse PassMassAmendment.
- Volunteer your time. PassMassAmendment@gmail.com, 978 808 7173. This is a true grassroots effort.
- Donate. We run on a bare bones budget. No one gets paid, but we need money for printing and office supplies.