



2026 Norfolk Democratic Town Committee Voters Guide

Dear Voter,

Welcome to the **2026 Norfolk Democratic Town Committee's Voters Guide**, a comprehensive resource designed to provide clear, accurate, and accessible information to assist you in making informed decisions. We are committed to supporting an engaged and informed electorate by presenting important election details, background information, and key issues for consideration.

In addition to providing an impartial overview of each ballot question, this guide also includes the Norfolk Democratic Town Committee's position on each question, along with a brief summary explaining the reasoning behind that position.

We hope you find this guide to be an invaluable resource and appreciate your commitment to taking time to ensure you are an informed voter.



NORFOLK DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE 2026 BALLOT QUESTION ENDORSEMENTS

- Question 1: Expand Public Record Law - **YES**
- Question 2: Collective Bargaining - **YES**
- Question 3: Change to Primary Election Rules - **NO**
- Question 4: Election Day Voter Registration - **YES**
- Question 5: State Revenue Limit - **NO**
- Question 6: Natural Resource Conservation - **YES**
- Question 7: Single Family Homes - **YES**
- Question 8: Recreational Marijuana - **NO**
- Question 9: Fire Arms Regulation - **YES**

 **VOTE ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 3RD**



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Question #1

Expanding the Public Records Law Expands the state's public records law to cover additional government records, including certain legislative and gubernatorial records.	Supporters argue that: • Government officials should be more transparent and accountable to taxpayers. • Residents, journalists, and watchdog groups should be able to review how decisions are made and how public money is spent. • Applying public records rules to the Legislature and Governor's office would make Massachusetts more consistent with transparency standards in many other states. • Greater access could help identify waste, conflicts of interest, or poor management.	Opponents argue that: • Legislators need some confidentiality to discuss policy, negotiate agreements, and perform their duties effectively. • Releasing more internal communications could discourage open discussion among elected officials and staff. • The Legislature and Governor's office already release many documents voluntarily and have other oversight mechanisms. • A broad public-records requirement could create administrative burdens and legal costs
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES.	As Democrats, we believe that voters have a right to know what our elected officials are doing—and elected officials must be accountable to the public. We believe that greater access to public records gives voters and the media the oversight needed to hold representatives accountable and weed out bad actors. We believe this ballot measure also protects legitimate constituent assistance and the internal research and deliberation involved in developing policy positions. It strikes the right balance: more transparency and accountability without compromising constituent privacy or the policymaking process.



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Question #2

Collective Bargaining for CPCS Employees – Allows eligible employees of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (the public defender agency) to unionize and collectively bargain.	Supporters argue that: • Collective bargaining can help improve pay, benefits, and working conditions. • Better compensation and workplace conditions may help recruit and retain experienced public defenders and support staff. • Lower turnover could improve continuity and the quality of legal representation for people who cannot afford an attorney. • Many other public employees in Massachusetts already have collective bargaining rights.	Opponents argue that: • Unionization could increase personnel costs for the state. • Collective bargaining may reduce management's flexibility in making staffing and operational decisions. • Changes to pay and benefits should be handled through the state's budget and management processes rather than labor negotiations. • Higher labor costs could require additional state funding or tradeoffs with other priorities.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES .	As Democrats, we believe that each and every individual is entitled, enshrined in our Constitution's 6th Amendment, to legal counsel in a criminal prosecution. The Supreme Court upheld this right in 1963 in <i>Gideon v Wainwright</i>, saying that States must provide attorneys to criminal defendants, regardless of their ability to pay. The low pay of public defenders creates a shortage of public defenders, leading to demanding workloads, less time spent on cases, and an unequal system where your ability to pay does impact your access to adequate legal representation. Better pay would incentivize more lawyers to become public defenders, lessen workloads, and allow each case to be given the time it deserves, as well as attract the best and brightest lawyers. CPCS staff attorneys are some of the only State employees without access to a collective bargaining unit to help them fight for better pay and working conditions



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Question #3

State Primary Elections – Changes the state's primary election system.	Supporters argue that: • Every voter, including independents, can vote in the same primary without choosing a party ballot. • Candidates have an incentive to appeal to a broader range of voters rather than primarily to their party's base. • The system can increase competition, especially in districts where one party dominates. • It may encourage more moderate candidates and reduce partisan polarization.	Opponents argue that: • Political parties should be able to choose their own nominees through party primaries. • In a heavily Democratic or Republican district, the general election could feature two candidates from the same party, leaving voters of other parties without a candidate from their party in November. • Minor-party candidates may find it harder to reach the general election because only the top two candidates advance. • The new system could confuse voters and require changes to election administration
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote NO.	In a strong two-party system, each parties voters should be able to choose their parties nominee. Primaries can serve as testing grounds for new ideas and new candidates within a party and serve an important function. This would weaken the impact of parties and allow elites to control more elections. Massachusetts has a long history of unenrolled voters, who are free to choose the party ballot they pull in a primary, giving most people a choice to vote for any candidate they choose to in a primary. The top two vote-getters may not reflect the will of the voters if more candidates from one party decide to run, splitting that parties voters and giving the opposition two higher numbers. There are other, better ways to improve democracy, such as same day registration and ranked-choice voting



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Question #4

Election Day Registration – Allows eligible voters to register and vote on Election Day.	Supporters argue that: • It makes voting more accessible for people who miss the registration deadline, move shortly before an election, or discover a registration problem on Election Day. • More than 20 other states and Washington, D.C., already allow some form of Election Day Registration, and supporters say it has increased voter participation. • Election officials can verify eligibility before issuing a ballot, helping ensure only eligible voters vote. • It reduces the chance that eligible voters are turned away because of paperwork or administrative errors.	Opponents argue that: • Processing registrations on Election Day could increase workloads for local election officials and lead to longer lines at polling places. • The current advance registration deadline gives election officials more time to verify voter information and prepare accurate voter rolls. • Implementing Election Day Registration could require additional staffing, equipment, and funding for cities and towns. • They argue the existing system already provides multiple ways to register before Election Day, including online, by mail, and in person
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES.	As Democrats, we believe in lawful and equal access to the ballot box. This change would allow more people to vote, reduce the burden to voting, and reduce voters being turned away due to paperwork. The ballot initiative will increase voter turnout. Massachusetts allows for same-day registration for early voting, so Town Clerk's have been able to successfully implement this in another form



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Question #5

State Revenue Limit & Rebate – Changes rules governing the state's tax revenue limit and rebates.	Supporters argue that: • Taxpayers should automatically receive refunds when the state collects more revenue than is needed under the legal limit. • A revenue cap encourages fiscal discipline and limits government spending growth. • Families and businesses would keep more of their earnings through rebates. • Returning surplus revenue to taxpayers can stimulate the economy because people can decide how to spend or save their own money	Opponents argue that: • The proposal could reduce state revenue by billions of dollars over time, limiting funding for education, transportation, health care, public safety, and local aid. • Revenue can fluctuate from year to year, and automatic rebates could make it harder for the state to respond to recessions or emergencies. • Budget priorities should continue to be set annually by elected lawmakers rather than through an automatic formula. • Cities and towns could face pressure if state aid declines, potentially leading to service cuts or higher local property taxes.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote <u>NO</u>.	As Democrats, we are aware of the rising costs to cities and towns are making the need for state aid ever more present. These taxes help to fund schools, roads and bridges, health care, environmental protection, public transportation. Federal funding cuts, mainly to MassHealth, will strain the State budget going forward, as Massachusetts tries to make up for lost federal revenue while ensuring that as many residents remain insured and hospitals remain solvent The State maintains a balanced budget each and every year, as mandated by our State Constitution, despite no new taxes in the past few budgets. Often times, surplus spending gets invested into our State's 'Rainy Day' stabilization fund



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Question #6

Natural Resource Conservation Fund – Creates a fund for land and natural resource conservation.	Supporters argue that: • The fund would provide a stable source of money to protect forests, rivers, wetlands, farmland, and drinking water. • It would help expand and maintain parks, trails, and other outdoor recreation areas. • Dedicated funding would improve long-term planning for conservation and climate resilience. • It uses existing tax revenue, rather than raising taxes or creating a new tax.	Opponents argue that: • Dedicating tax revenue to one purpose reduces the Legislature's flexibility to fund other priorities such as education, transportation, or public safety. • Even without a tax increase, directing up to \$100 million annually to a dedicated fund could require reducing spending elsewhere in the state budget. • Decisions about annual spending priorities should remain with elected lawmakers through the normal budget process rather than being fixed by ballot initiative.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES .	As Democrats, we value the protection, conservation and restoration of our natural resources and environment and we value the creation of green space, parks, and outdoor spaces that are accessible to all. Dedicating funding to these purposes will ensure that our elected officials who make the budget properly fund our environment, regardless of revenue fluctuations elsewhere in the budget. Solving and preparing for the future of the climate crisis, protecting clean air and drinking water, and ensuring we protect habitats requires long-term planning and a stable source of funding that this fund can help provide.



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Question #7

Single Family Homes – Limits certain local lot-size requirements to make it easier to build single-family homes.	Supporters argue that: • Massachusetts faces a significant housing shortage, and restrictive zoning contributes to high home prices. • Allowing homes on smaller lots can increase the supply of housing and improve affordability. • Smaller lots can reduce the cost of land per home, making homeownership more attainable. • More housing near jobs and services can support economic growth and reduce long commutes. • Statewide standards can help address local zoning rules that supporters believe unnecessarily limit housing construction.	Opponents argue that: • Cities and towns are best positioned to decide zoning rules based on their own infrastructure, environment, and community needs. • Smaller lots could increase demands on schools, roads, water, sewer, and other local services. • Communities may want to preserve neighborhood character, open space, or environmental protections through local zoning. • A statewide rule could reduce local flexibility and override decisions made by local elected officials and residents.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES.	While we value local zoning decisions, this measure will allow Massachusetts to increase the supply of housing and allow more people to attain the dream of home ownership. The solution to the housing crisis is simply to build more homes, and this would achieve that goal, without forcing cities and towns to approve large apartment complexes in neighborhoods, and other large structures, as is happening under Chapter 40B.



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Question #8

Prohibit Retail Sale of Adult Recreational Use Marijuana – Would end legal retail sales of recreational cannabis while leaving the medical marijuana program in place.	Supporters argue that: • Legal retail marijuana has increased access to high-potency cannabis, especially for young people. • Greater marijuana availability may contribute to impaired driving and other public safety concerns. • Some research suggests heavy cannabis use can increase the risk of mental health problems in susceptible individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults. • The economic benefits from cannabis taxes do not outweigh the potential public health and social costs. • Medical marijuana would still be available for patients with qualifying conditions.	Opponents argue that: • Repealing legal sales would likely push many consumers back to the illegal market, where products are untested and untaxed. • The regulated system requires testing for contaminants, child-resistant packaging, labeling, and licensing standards that do not exist in the illicit market. • The legal cannabis industry supports jobs, businesses, and generates tax revenue for the state. • Adults should be free to purchase and use marijuana legally, similar to current law. • Eliminating legal stores would not eliminate demand for marijuana.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote NO.	Making recreational marijuana illegal will not reduce marijuana usage but will push people to find it in illegal and unsafe ways. Legal marijuana creates jobs, small businesses, and generates valuable revenue for the state, all of which would be lost pushing the demand to the illegal market. Adults should be allowed to purchase and use marijuana if they so choose, and there are laws, similar to alcohol, to help protect against drunk driving and other negative consequences.



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Question #9

Firearms Regulation – A referendum on the state's 2024 firearms law; a "Yes" vote upholds the law, while a	Supporters argue that the law: • Regulates ghost guns by requiring serialization and registration of key components. • Expands the state's Extreme Risk Protection Order (red flag) process to allow additional people, such as certain medical professionals and school administrators, to petition courts in limited circumstances. • Updates restrictions on assault-style firearms and devices that can increase a firearm's lethality. • Prohibits firearms in additional "sensitive places," such as polling places and school buses. • Builds on Massachusetts' long-standing gun safety framework, which supporters say has helped the state maintain one of the nation's lowest firearm death rates.	Opponents argue that the law: • Places additional burdens on law-abiding gun owners rather than focusing on criminals. • Expands restrictions on where licensed individuals may carry firearms. • Broadens definitions and regulations that they believe create confusion for firearm owners and dealers. • Imposes new licensing, training, and compliance requirements that they view as costly and unnecessary. • Raises constitutional concerns under the Second Amendment, arguing that some provisions go beyond what is permitted by recent Supreme Court decisions. Several provisions have been challenged in court.
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Our Position	Rationale
The Norfolk Democratic Town Committee encourages voters to vote YES.	As Democrats, it is a top priority to reduce the incidence of gun violence in this country. This legislation does not take away guns from law-abiding gun owners. This bill expands on Massachusetts impactful gun safety laws, by strengthening red-flag laws, and regulating ghost guns, which are currently unregulated and untraceable weapons, typically purchased by people who cannot access a firearm legally elsewhere.