Securing Non-Citizen Voting Rights

Determining the Feasibility of Enabling Legislation in Massachusetts

A report prepared for:
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Securing Non-Citizen Voting Rights:  
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Spring 2005
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge those people who have helped us develop this report. We are appreciative of the input and advice offered by our classmates and faculty, which often identified new avenues of investigation and helped us overcome obstacles. In particular, we would like to thank Molly Mead and John Larsen. As our advisors, their guidance and encouragement has been invaluable.

We would also like to thank our clients, Ali Noorani, Executive Director, MIRA and Kathleen Coll, Coordinator, CIVRC who honestly communicated their expectations and offered assistance while allowing us to work independently.

Lastly, we must thank the legislators, community leaders, and especially the non-citizens who shared their experiences and expertise on the issue of non-citizen voting. Without the cooperation and participation of these individuals we would not have a report.
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Executive Summary

This study assessed the political feasibility of statewide enabling legislation, which would allow each municipality in Massachusetts to determine their voter eligibility. Passage of this legislation would allow municipalities to enfranchise non-citizen populations, however it does not guarantee that every municipality would choose to do so. In the current political climate, there is not enough support for the enabling act to become law. However, there is growing support for non-citizen voting nationwide, and action taken by lobbyists, activists, non-citizens, and other key stakeholders can lay the foundation for a more favorable outcome in the future.

Non-citizens constitute a large and growing percentage of the population in Massachusetts. Merely highlighting the inability to vote of a large segment of the population does not directly translate into a strong argument for non-citizen voting rights. To argue that the correlation between large non-citizen populations and voting rights is important, activists must demonstrate that allowing non-citizens to vote may not harm the political status quo, but would benefit non-citizens and ultimately the society as a whole through more inclusive political representation. In order to explore political perspectives of the enabling act, and non-citizen voting in general, interviews were conducted with legislators in Massachusetts, immigrant community leaders and members of the immigrant community.

Two Massachusetts communities, Cambridge and Amherst, have already approved non-citizen voting in municipal elections. However, the cities must submit home rule petitions to the state legislature every legislative cycle (a period of two years) for approval. In spite of local acceptance of non-citizen voting rights, the state has not approved these petitions. In order to provide the state with a more comprehensive option regarding non-citizen voting, State
Representative Alice Wolf (D-Cambridge) introduced enabling legislation in 2005. This bill would grant each municipality in Massachusetts the ability to independently determine voter qualifications. Municipalities could then pass laws allowing non-citizens to vote in municipal elections without needing further legislative approval.

When the home rule petitions were introduced last year, the bills were tabled in the Joint Committee on Election Laws, and were not given full consideration by the legislature. Therefore, the issue never reached the House or the Senate for discussion or consideration. The legislation appears to have little support given that it has only three sponsors. Legislators and legislative staff interviewed expressed a range of reasons explaining why the enabling act is not supported. Many legislators and staff argued that voting eligibility should be uniform throughout the state. There has been a recurrent discussion of the need to establish basic parameters for the legislation, such as a required minimum time as a U.S. resident. Most legislators, even many members of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, are unaware of the legislation. Those legislators who are aware of it know little more than what can be inferred from the title. Even though there seems to be little support for the enabling act, the introduction of the legislation has initiated discussion on non-citizen voting.

Building on the momentum provided by the home rule petitions of Amherst and Cambridge, as well as the introduction of the enabling act, other communities can continue the discussion of non-citizen voting in order to gain increased support for this issue. A non-citizen voting rights awareness campaign would bring to light the historical precedent for non-citizen suffrage, the importance of enfranchisement and emphasize the contributions non-citizens make to the United States.
Finally, we suggest that a wide-reaching immigrant rights organization, such as the Massachusetts Immigrant Rights Advocacy Coalition, take the lead on this issue. A coalition, organized and supported by MIRA, should be built among stakeholders. The Cambridge Immigrant Voting Rights Campaign could serve as a model for developing similar organizations in communities with large immigrant populations. Linking together non-citizens, municipal governments, and community members into a coalition would strongly influence communities and state government.
Introduction

Recently, a police officer working a roadside detail in Peabody was struck by car. The driver of the car was identified as a 17-year old girl who is an unlicensed immigrant. While not wishing to detract from the tragedy befalling the officer and his family, many media outlets vilified the girl solely on the basis of her status as an immigrant. During the week of April 23, Blute and Scotto, the morning hosts of the Boston area conservative radio station WRKO AM680, dedicated the week to immigrant issues. Although only representing a small portion of the population, many of the views expressed by the hosts and the majority of callers were clearly anti-immigrant. This sentiment was reflected by the State House, which defeated the in-state tuition bill, a law that would allow eligible high-school non-citizens to be eligible for in-state tuition. The legislature is now considering bills relating to driver’s licenses and health care for immigrants. All of these immigrant rights issues are receiving considerable scrutiny in Massachusetts.

However, non-citizen voting is not a significant part of the current political discussion in Massachusetts, or elsewhere in the United States. Enfranchisement of non-citizens and other immigrant issues reflect the missing pieces of national and state policy. As long as non-citizens are not allowed to vote, they will not be able to fully integrate into society and reap the benefits of living in the American democracy.

Non-citizens in Massachusetts are not allowed to vote at any level of government. The municipalities of Cambridge, Amherst, and Newton challenged the status quo and approved non-citizen voting in local elections. The cities sought approval from the state government. For the past two years, Cambridge and Amherst submitted home rule petitions to the State House to
authorize the local ordinances. Both times, the petitions stalled in the Joint Committee on Election Laws, where members expressed concern that passage of the ordinances would set up a situation in which there would be little or no consistency in state voting requirements (Wolf, 2005).

In response, Representative Alice Wolf (D-Cambridge) filed a petition in December 2004 titled, “An act enabling cities and towns to extend voting rights in municipal elections to certain non-citizens of the Commonwealth.” This enabling act would grant municipalities the right to independently determine voter qualifications while providing “a veneer of uniformity across the state” (Wolf, 2005). Eliminating the need for cities to submit home rule petitions every legislative cycle would be a powerful tool for municipalities committed to non-citizen voting. However, the current political climate renders passage of the enabling act unlikely.

The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and the Cambridge Immigrant Voting Rights Campaign are organizations dedicated to fighting for immigrant rights. They recognize non-citizen voting rights as a compelling concern in Massachusetts, and are investigating effective lobbying strategies. MIRA and CIVRC commissioned this study to assess the feasibility of passing enabling legislation, and to collect information to focus future efforts. The historical and theoretical background of non-citizen voting in the United States and in Massachusetts provides a context for the modern movement. Compilation of quantitative data from the U.S. Census and Massachusetts state government sources demonstrates the need for non-citizen voting. To gain perspective on the political feasibility of non-citizen voting legislation, a variety of stakeholders, including non-citizens, community leaders, and legislators were interviewed. Finally, a set of comprehensive recommendations for strengthening the campaign for non-citizen voting rights developed from the research results.
Historical Context

Non-citizens have been accorded the right to vote throughout the history of the United States of America. As early as 1692 non-citizens were allowed to vote and hold local office in Maryland. Non-citizens were also allowed to vote as far back as 1704 in South Carolina, 1747 in Pennsylvania, and 1787 in the Northwest Territory (Harper-Ho, 2000). Non-citizen suffrage is not a new discussion in local, state, and national politics. In fact, non-citizen voting has deep historical roots. Although there was not much controversy surrounding the legitimacy of non-citizen voting in the early years of our country, the topic has recently triggered a passionate debate. From State Supreme Court cases Stewart v. Foster and Spragins v. Houghton, to recent legislation proposed by Amherst and Cambridge, citizens have discussed the political impact and importance of non-citizen voting on democracy in the United States.

In 1809, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in Stewart v. Foster that aliens who had lived in a state for one year and paid borough taxes were entitled to vote in borough elections. In a similar case, Spragins v. Houghton, the Illinois Supreme Court found “that the authorities of the [state] constitution…intended to extend the right of suffrage to those who, having by habitation and residence identified their interests and feelings with the citizen, are…entitled to a voice in the choice of officers of the government, although they may neither be native nor adopted citizens” (Brozovich, 2002, p. 407). The contention that residents of a state or a city should have the right to democratic participation—to cast votes—to determine the well being of their place of residence has been widely discussed throughout the history of the United States.
The sentiment that non-citizen suffrage was a just and obvious practice of democracy waned as the War of 1812 approached. The Southern states (and a few Northern states, including Connecticut) feared the spread of alien suffrage. They perceived these new immigrants as a threat, due to the newcomers’ general dislike of slavery (Hayduk, 2004). After the War of 1812, the United States continued to move toward more nationalistic beliefs even as the growing country filled its need for easy labor by using immigrant workers (Hayduk, 2004). With the exception of Michigan, every new state to join the union limited voting eligibility to United States citizens (Harper-Ho, 2000). In spite of the strong anti-immigrant sentiments, non-citizen suffrage continued to thrive in many of the states that had originally allowed non-citizens voting.

Until the Civil War, voting rights were linked to property ownership, which actually benefited immigrants by giving most men, citizen or non-citizen, the right to vote by virtue of owning land (Harper-Ho, 2000). In the years leading up to the Civil War, western territories began reasserting their right to non-citizen suffrage. In 1845 the Wisconsin Territory described voting in its constitution as being permissible for “White male aliens if they had declared the intent to apply for citizenship” (Harper-Ho, 2000, p. 277). One noticeable contradiction to the enfranchisement of non-citizens in the West occurred in territories acquired during the Mexican War. California, New Mexico and Utah did not extend the vote to aliens in these territories. During the Civil War, the US Congress demanded even more from immigrants without extending enfranchisement by passing two acts: the Militia Act and the Enrollment Act of 1863. These acts obligated non-citizens to serve in the military, a requirement still in effect today (Harper-Ho, 2000).

As the United States entered into the twentieth century, support for non-citizen suffrage declined further. By 1900, only eleven of the original 22 states and territories that had allowed
non-citizen voting retained such legislation. By 1926 no states allowed non-citizen voting. In this year, the Arkansas Supreme Court upheld a referendum to defeat non-citizen voting in the state. The 1928 national election was the first “in which no alien in any state had the right to vote” (Harper-Ho, 2000, p. 282).

The fight for non-citizen suffrage recently gained renewed momentum. In 1992, Takoma Park, Maryland amended its charter to include all residents in eligibility both for voting and running for local office. In 1996, San Francisco attempted to pass legislation that would allow resident non-citizens to vote for school board in both public schools and community college elections. This legislation did not pass the Court’s inspection, however, due to a clause in the state constitution, which defines voters as United States citizens. In 2004, Proposition F, a ballot initiative in San Francisco narrowly lost with 49% of the votes. This initiative would have given non-citizen parents the right to vote in school board elections. Although non-citizen voting was not approved, San Francisco’s attempted legislation helped to build momentum for future attempts to allow non-citizen voting (The Immigrant Voting Project, 2005).

Non-citizen voting has reappeared in many other places throughout the United States also. Beginning in the 1970’s, New York City allowed non-citizen voting in school board elections. The practice continued until 2002, when the New York City school boards were eliminated. In February of 2005, Minnesota legislators proposed a bill enabling municipalities to once again allow legal non-citizens to vote in local elections. Chicago has permitted non-citizens to vote in school site council elections since 1988. Attempts to establish non-citizen voting (both successful and unsuccessful) have also taken place in Connecticut, Maine, North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington D.C. (The Immigrant Voting Project, 2005).
Massachusetts is now in the forefront of the campaign for alien suffrage. Three cities, Newton, Amherst and Cambridge, have passed legislation supporting non-citizen voting in local elections. The Cambridge legislation does not distinguish between documented and undocumented non-citizens, although it does require intent to naturalize. The Amherst legislation pertains to permanent legal residents only. The local initiatives passed in Amherst and Cambridge and were submitted to the state legislature for approval twice. The measures, called home rule petitions, were assigned to the Joint Committee on Elections Laws. Once received by the committee, the petitions languished and never moved beyond limited discussion by committee members. In the 2005 legislative session, Massachusetts State Representative, Alice Wolfe, introduced legislation that would enable municipalities to determine voting criteria for local elections. If passed, the legislation would allow municipalities to enfranchise non-citizen residents, without having to petition the legislature annually (The Immigrant Voting Project, 2005).

In recent years, opponents of non-citizen initiatives have become more vocal in their opinions. Some, such as a former Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization Service (now called U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services), have asserted that non-citizen voting initiatives “undermine the value of U.S. citizenship” (Brozovich, 2002, p. 450). What is not discussed, however, is the lengthy process or the level of commitment needed to even become a permanent legal resident in the United States. Also infrequently discussed is the amount of time that it takes to become a citizen once granted permanent legal resident status. As Brozovich (2002) states, even though permanent legal residents are eligible to apply for citizenship after five years, there is a backlog of nearly two million people. It is important to note that the statement by Brozovich was written 2002. The backlog has only increased over the last three
years. Therefore, the argument that permanent legal residents should simply apply for citizenship if they would like to vote does not have a rational basis in many cases. Non-citizen voting has existed in the United States since the birth of the country. Our Founding Fathers understood the importance of “no taxation without representation,” which is why all property-owning residents were allowed to vote in all elections. As the country expanded, it became even more necessary to invite immigrants into our political process, as a product of expanding the labor pool. After the Civil War, nationalist tendencies and an anti-immigrant mentality forced many states to redefine the criteria for voting rights. As the twentieth century approached most states no longer allowed non-citizen voting; by 1926 no states did.

The recent attempt to recapture voting rights for non-citizens has been difficult. At the same time, individual municipalities are succeeding. Therefore, non-citizen voting may become more widespread in the near future. As the 5th Court of Appeals stated in Cervantes v. Guerra, “they [aliens] have historically been the object of invidious discrimination…. aliens are a ‘prime example’ of a politically powerless minority” (Brozovich, 2002, p. 418). The court has also stated the reality of non-citizen voting in a most eloquent manner in the decision of Graham v. Richardson. Non-citizens are the “politically powerless minority” (Brozovich, 2002, p. 419).
Rationale and Theory

Immigration is a major policy issue in the United States today. With much of the United States’ population growth fueled by immigrants, reformers have called for tighter regulations and fewer benefits for non-citizens. However, in all the debate over the proper role of government in controlling immigration, little attention has been paid to an essential right: the right to vote. Coverage in the major media, including newspapers and television, is sparse and shallow. A search in the general news/major papers section of the Lexis-Nexis online database on April 23, 2005 for the past ten years found only 32 articles under the search terms “immigrant voting,” and only three articles for “non-citizen voting.” A similar search of the legal section of the Lexis-Nexis database for more in-depth articles revealed a similar lack of writing that directly discussed the issue of immigrant enfranchisement.

Regardless, the movement to give non-citizens voting rights is gaining momentum. As mentioned previously, cities across the United States have, in the last few years, already attempted to pass legislation allowing non-citizens to vote in a limited context, most often for school board elections. Both media and policy papers on this topic acknowledge this recent trend, while also calling for greater action.

Despite searching several databases, including Lexis-Nexis, J-stor, and other social science databases, journal articles advocating against non-citizen voting were not found. This is likely because the lack of voting rights for non-citizens is the current status quo, requiring fewer compelling reasons than a movement for change. Media outlets such as Fox News do include some anti-immigrant enfranchisement opinions to provide balance in an objective news article. For example, an article from Fox News on May 17, 2004 by Kelley Beaucar Vlahos quoted a
number of these opponents. Steven Camarota, director of the Center for Immigration Studies, says that allowing non-citizens to vote “just fundamentally cheapens citizenship.” In the same article, Robert Posada, spokesman for the Latino Coalition feels that, “There have to be special rights that citizens have that other immigrants who haven’t yet decided to become citizens shouldn’t have” (Vlahos, 2005). There are other, historically rooted policy stances taken against non-citizen voting; these will be addressed in relation to the arguments put forth by pro-non-citizen voting papers. Also, organizations such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform self-publish partisan literature, but this deals mostly with general immigration reform, and not voting rights in particular. There are a number of policy papers and books that advocate for non-citizen voting rights. These articles focus on three main areas: history, constitutionality, and rhetoric.

The history of non-citizen voting was covered previously. Basically, as the political climate and the demographic makeup of the United States changed dramatically in the twentieth century, support for anti-immigration practices increased. Before that, court decisions and state policies had often allowed immigrants to participate in all levels of democracy, from municipal to national (Eva, 2003). Currently, non-citizens are not allowed to vote at the municipal or state level, although a few exceptions have been made. At the federal level, the 1996 Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act made it a federal offense for a non-citizen to vote in national elections, but it does not preclude non-citizen enfranchisement at the state or municipal level.

In response, articles advocating for non-citizen voting have put forth many reasons why non-citizen voting (at all levels) is not only allowed by the constitution, but is perhaps even required. Elise Brozovich (2002) outlines both arguments in her article on non-citizen voting rights.
The Constitution of the United States is very clear on the permissibility of non-citizen suffrage; non-citizens cannot be denied the right to vote. Instead, Article I, Clause 2 states that “the House shall be elected ‘by the people of the states’ and the states determine the qualifications for the electorate” (Brozovich, 2002, p. 411). Harper-Ho (2000) goes further to say that “as long as states do not restrict the rights of the core electorate laid out in the other provisions of the Constitution, they are free to define the political community as they see fit, particularly at the state and local levels where Congress has no constitutional authority to constrain this right” (p. 288). Throughout history, the Supreme Court has also recognized that the states have authority in this arena. The 15th amendment states, “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (Section 1). While the amendment specifically includes citizens in its language, it does not exclude non-citizens either (Raskin, 1993). Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts proposed, in 1869, an extension to this amendment, which would have explicitly extended voting rights to non-citizens as well. It was opposed because many politicians, such as Illinois Senator Lyman Trumbull wanted to grant rights to white non-citizens while denying Chinese immigrants (Raskin, 1993).

Those who argue that the Constitution requires non-citizen voting use the strict scrutiny test, as developed by the Supreme Court, and apply it to the 14th Amendment. The strict scrutiny test applies to laws that specifically affect “suspect classifications” such as race. In order for the law to be constitutional, it must be proven to be both advancing a compelling state interest and doing so in a way that is least harmful to the injured group. The 14th Amendment says that “[No state shall] deny to any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws” (Section 1). In this case, non-citizens could be considered a suspect group because they are a minority and have
limited rights, and are thus more open to discriminatory practices and oppression. States may not be able to show a compelling interest, especially as the 14th Amendment obligates states to advance to non-citizens the same tools to protect their interests. However, the Supreme Court is unwilling to apply the strict scrutiny test, so perhaps showing a compelling state interest is a moot point.

Gabriela Evia (2003) draws interesting comparisons between the rhetoric against women’s suffrage and non-citizen suffrage. Both issues have been manipulated and used by politicians and groups to make similar arguments. The use of ideology to create an exclusionary environment is time-honored, but history also indicates that strong societal forces such as changing demographics and differing cultural norms provide a strong opposition. Evia (2003) outlines five arguments against the enfranchisement of women (historically) and non-citizens (today). They are: a perceived lack of knowledge, a fear of diminishing American values, a protection against conflicts of interest, a prevention of fraud, and a perception of a lack of stake.

During the anti-suffragist movement, women were viewed as ignorant and stupid, or at best irrational and emotional. This corresponds with a general lack of respect for the political awareness of the modern immigrant. Opponents of non-citizen voting may believe that language barriers prevent any meaningful transfer of information on current events, nationally and locally. Another perception may be that newness to the area also contributes to ignorance. However, many non-citizens are not recent immigrants, and their command of English has improved during their stay. In addition, there are many language education centers that include voter education in their curriculum. Lack of knowledge has also been struck down by the Supreme Court as a reason for denying voting rights to citizens who transfer states, rendering residency requirements for voting unconstitutional.
The anti-suffragist’s opinion that suffragettes would destroy families by making the sexes equal was based on the belief that only males had the right to vote. Similarly, non-citizen voting rights opponents believe that American values and society will be destroyed because they think that only citizens have the right to vote, a myth that has been debunked. There is a fear that giving voting rights to non-citizens equates them to citizens, but non-citizens still have a number of restrictions placed on them that differentiate them. For example, legal residents who want to maintain their status must not leave the United States for more than 6 months, and must register and report to the government.

Disenfranchisement based on a difference in opinion is morally wrong and unconstitutional, as the Supreme Court has ruled in Carrington v. Rash. Preventing women and non-citizens from voting on those grounds cannot be justified. After all, one of the keys to our democracy is the First Amendment to the Constitution, which calls for freedom of speech. In addition, much of this difference in opinion is fostered by fear-mongers who have made non-citizens the enemy, a classic “us versus them” designed to automatically place immigrants on the far end of the spectrum without any basis in reality. But why shouldn’t non-citizens vote for the same issues that many citizens do? In fact, Krishnan (2003) mentions this as one of the reasons why Americans should help non-citizens mobilize and gain political power. Immigrants are workers, and may side with blue or white-collar workers. They also pay taxes, but are not allowed to vote in local elections, which are a large factor in the decisions made regarding public goods. Enfranchising non-citizens may actually increase the political power of many different groups. There is no reason to suspect immigrants of any greater fraud than citizens. This tactic appeals to those who use fear as a tool, trying to scare their constituencies into believing that immigrants are all poor, uneducated non-English speakers who will be easily roped into
committing fraud. This argument is especially flawed since immigrants have much more to lose; they can be deported if found out and caught.

Citing lack of political stake as a reason for disenfranchisement is, like many of the above reasons, a tautology. Women were viewed as outsiders, and so were not allowed to vote, but they were also outsiders because they were not allowed to vote. The same holds for non-citizens. And in fact, both groups have a great stake in the socio-political fabric of America. Immigrants (both men and women) contribute to the workforce, pay taxes, create small businesses, and have even contributed to United States technological supremacy by fueling the science graduate education system. In addition, they use public school systems, and can even be drafted.

Many opponents of non-citizen voting still believe, even after learning of these rationales, that immigrants should be naturalized before taking part in elections. Yet, there is still an additional reason why preventing non-citizen voting is unfair to immigrants. The naturalization process in the United States is a long and arduous process, taking anywhere from seven years in the best case scenario to upwards of twenty years in the worst. During the intervening period, immigrants contribute to society: paying taxes, raising children, and building businesses. Immigrants pay into social security, even though many will never reap any benefits. While non-citizens wait for their naturalization to be processed, they are unable to voice grievances in the most powerful political arena, the ballot box. Those who argue that non-citizens should simply become citizens in order to participate in American democracy have overlooked naturalization as a significant barrier to enfranchisement. As a last note, Gabriela Evia (2003) mentions that the word “citizen” was once kept out of documents concerning suffrage so that non-citizens could be allowed to vote while women were not. The political
majority can use its power to keep its position in many different ways, and depending on the political tides, the offended minority can change at any time.
Sample Demographics

Five municipalities were chosen as sample communities from the Commonwealth. Boston, Chelsea, Framingham, Lowell and Springfield were selected based on location in the state, form of town governance, and knowledge that each municipality has an immigrant population (Figure 1). The samples share a number of common traits, including being relatively large urban areas and having large, growing immigrant populations. However, the municipalities differ in many aspects, including location, total population, population density and percentage of residents who are foreign-born and non-citizens. To provide a context for comparison, community profiles for each of the five sample municipalities include historical background and current demographic information. This discussion is included to help determine what, if any trends, immigration trends might exist statewide.

Figure 1: Non-Citizen population in five sample municipalities

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1 In order to direct our research, “5 key cities or towns” were originally identified to focus our investigation. As we have delved further into our research, we have renamed the four cities (Boston, Chelsea, Lowell Springfield) and one town (Framingham) as “sample municipalities.”
Boston

Boston is a historic city founded in the early 17th century and incorporated in 1882. Its first resident, Reverend William Paxton settled on Beacon Hill in 1622. Beacon Hill, which began as the home of a single man is now a bustling neighborhood of ten thousand. After Paxton settled, John Winthrop and the Massachusetts Bay Colony emigrated from England to Salem seeking religious freedom. The group found that the colony of Salem was not suitable for their needs, so they moved north. Winthrop chose the area now known as Boston, thus increasing the area from a sparsely settled landscape to a Puritan colony. Citizenship in Massachusetts was restricted to church members until 1664. From its beginnings as a Puritan settlement with an immigration rate of about two hundred and fifty people a year, Boston has turned into the hub that it is today (Banner, 2005).

As one of the oldest cities in the United States, Boston started as a homesteading community and has evolved into a regional economic and social hub. The economy of Boston is largely based in finance, health care, higher education and the service sector with the number of jobs at approximately 660,000 in 2002.

Boston has a total area of 89.63 square miles and a land area of 48.42 square miles. The total population of Boston is 589,141. According to the 2000 census, the basic demographic
breakdown of foreign-born populations within Boston is 95,155 non-citizens and 56,681 naturalized citizens with a total immigrant population of 151,836. Immigrants constitute 26 percent of the residents of Boston. Non-citizens constitute 16.1 percent of the city’s population (United States Census, 2005).

In 2003-2004, the Boston school district consisted of 19 percent students with little or no proficiency in English. This indicates that large portions of Boston schoolchildren are most likely immigrants who do not speak English as their first language (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2005).

**Chelsea**

Located across the Mystic River from Boston, Chelsea has long been an ideal setting for people to live and work. First settled in 1624, Chelsea became a town in 1739 and, in 1857 became an incorporated city. Today the city covers only 1.8 square miles resulting in above average population density. In addition to Boston, neighboring cities are Revere and Everett. As an inner urban suburb of Boston, Chelsea’s location on the Boston Harbor and close proximity to Logan International Airport makes it accessible by water, rail, land and air. U.S. Route 1 bisects the city and many neighborhoods exist in the shadow of the elevated highway. Also bisecting the city are State Highways 16, 60, 28 and Interstate 93. density is 11,860 people per square mile. The city is relatively small in area, but it
is dense. The racial breakdown of the Hub is about 55% White, 25% African-American, 8% Asian, 14% Latino and 8% other (United States Census, 2005).

**Framingham**

Founded as a town in 1700, Framingham has been home to various industries. Mills and factories once dotted the landscapes shaping what is now the downtown and town at-large. Today Framingham is a large suburb, located just less than 20 miles west of Boston. As the midway point between Boston and Worcester, Framingham is described as the hub of the Metro-West region. The local governance consists of a Town Manager, Board of Selectmen and the town hosts Town Meetings. With a resident population of just under 67,000, Framingham is the largest town in Massachusetts.

Overall, Framingham is the 14th largest municipality in the state. Neighboring municipalities include Natick to the east, Wayland and Sudbury to the north, Southborough and Marlborough to the west, and Sherborn and Ashland to the south. Both the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) and State Route 9 run through the town, providing a direct corridor to Boston, and spurring business. Given its close proximity to Boston and access to public transportation, Framingham is an attractive location for many businesses. Currently, the main employers in the town are non-manufacturing businesses. The Metro West Hospital and Framingham State College are two large local employers. Framingham offers employment in the
medical, educational, and biotechnology fields. A major retail market has developed along Route 9, providing jobs in the retail sector as well.

Framingham is largely white, but has members from a number of minority groups: Black/African-American, Asian, Hispanic and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The Latino population, the largest minority group, is divided into four categories, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Cuban, and other Hispanic or Latino, with Puerto Rican being the largest subgroup. The Asian community is more diverse, divided into 7 subgroups. The largest subgroup, Asian Indian, has just a few hundred more people than the next subgroup, Chinese. The remaining five subgroups are Filipino Japanese, Korean Vietnamese, and Other Asian.

According to 2000 Census figures, there are 14,150 foreign-born residents, 21% of the total population. Of the foreign-born residents 70% are non-citizens, accounting for 15% of the total population. Almost half of the children who are not native English speakers are classified as limited English proficient (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004). Slightly more than 45% speak Spanish as their native language while just fewer than 45% speak Portuguese.

Census data shows an increase in foreign-born population since 1985. In fact, between the periods of 1990-1994 and 1995-2000 the foreign-born population has more than doubled. Between 1990 and 2000 less than 10% of foreign-born residents were naturalized, a decrease from the previous decade when almost 40% were naturalized citizens. As the foreign-born population continues to increase, fewer foreign-born residents are becoming naturalized citizens.
Lowell was incorporated as a town in 1826. Prior to incorporation, the mill town was already taking advantage of its natural and man-made resources, namely the damming of the Merrimack and Concord rivers, causing the 30-40 foot waterfalls that powered the immense mills of Lowell. Without these natural resources, Lowell would never have become one of the premiere sites of the Industrial Revolution, attracting a large immigrant labor force. The first major influx of immigration to Lowell came in 1840 with the Irish population. Because of the mill-owners’ early discrimination against this first group of immigrants and their subsequent inability to live in mill housing, later immigrant groups created their own little cities away from the mills (Lowell National Historic Park, 2005).

Many immigrant groups came to Lowell hoping to prosper from the significant wealth the mills were bringing to their owners. According to the Lowell National Historic Park (2005), a 1912 map of the city demonstrates the diverse nature of the city. There were five major immigrant groups at that time, Polish, Russian, French-Canadian, Portuguese and Greek. According to ONE Lowell, an immigrant advocacy and research organization, the city’s immigrant populations currently consist of significant groups from Laos, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and a variety of African countries (2005). Jack Kerouac, famed author, was also born in Lowell. Raised by a hardworking French-
Canadian family, the legacy of immigrant workers passed on to Kerouac as it did to many generations in the city (Lowell National Historic Park, 2005).

Lowell is the fourth largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a population of 103,439. The city has a density of 7,506 people per square mile. Approximately 20% of the population is foreign-born, while roughly 41% speak a language other than English in the home (Massachusetts State Government, 2005). Approximately 16.5% of the entire voting-aged population is foreign-born, and about 38% of the immigrant population (6.5% of the total voting-aged population of Lowell) is naturalized and can vote in all elections, municipal, state and federal (MassVote, 2004).

Lowell’s school district consists of a considerable percentage of low-income and limited-English proficient students. The district also has a large percentage of minority students. Approximately 44% of Lowell students do not speak English as a first language. Of all students, 23.5% are limited-English proficient. The Lowell school district has a larger percentage of Latino and Asian students than the state of Massachusetts as a whole. Roughly 29% of Lowell students are categorized as Asian, more than six times that of the statewide percentage of 4.7%.

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**Springfield**

Thomas Pynchon and a group of men from Roxbury founded Springfield, Massachusetts in 1636. Pynchon named the new town after his hometown of Springfield, England. Over the years, Springfield has maintained its position as a regional economic crossroads and industrial city. In 1794, the first federal armory was established in Springfield. In 1839, a rail conduit was completed between Springfield and Boston, and in 1844, the Hartford and Springfield railroad did the same to New York City. The Civil War prompted an increase in industry, with factories churning out paper and textiles as well as rifles, while also increasing the trade of wool, flour, and cotton. During this time, the *Springfield Republican* was also a nationally recognized newspaper.

In the twentieth century, Springfield was one of the cities ordered to have busing to desegregate public schools. Its implementation was relatively peaceful, in contrast to the situation in Boston. Unlike its neighbor to the east, Springfield did not have a history of more brutal forms of oppression, although segregation did exist. Without hostility, and with a tradition of busing to magnet schools already in place, Springfield’s leaders, especially superintendent of schools Dr. John Deady, were able to develop an equitable citywide busing scheme.

Today, Springfield is large and diverse city. According to the United States Census, 2000, the population is 156,983, translating to a density of 4890 people per square mile. Springfield’s population has actually decreased by 3.1% between 1990 and 2000, after increasing by the same percentage between 1980 and 1990. 21.8% of the residents are Black or African
American, and there are also substantial numbers of Latinos. 27% identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race, with Puerto Ricans the largest ethnic group. Asians are the next largest minority, with Vietnamese making up 1% of the total population. With such diversity, those that are white (and not Latino/Hispanic) only make up 48.8% of Springfield.

Over 12,000 of Springfield’s residents are foreign-born, constituting 8% of the total population. Immigration accounted for a 4.7% increase in population between 1990 and 2000, while native residents had a decrease of 3.7%. In 2000 over 30% of Springfield’s population spoke a language other than English at home. Within that group 44% speak English less than very well. In the school year 2004-2005, 18.9% of students enrolled in the Springfield school district indicated that they spoke English as a second language. Of the total enrollment, 13.6% had only limited English proficiency.

Summary

Examination of these five municipalities served to expose demographic trends throughout the Commonwealth. The statewide average for foreign-born residents is 12% (Census, 2005). Four of the five sample municipalities are well above the state average, with 20% or more of their populations foreign-born. Only one municipality, Springfield, is below the statewide average at 8%. The high percentage of foreign-born residents in each municipality indicates that these communities may have large numbers of immigrant schoolchildren. However, further investigation is necessary to confirm this. As is reflected in the following passages, noting the number of children with English language proficiency and those enrolled in English language
learning programs can be used to approximate the number of non-citizen school children that may reside in a municipality.

A more complete analysis would include information collected from interviewing non-citizens, community leaders and elected officials in each of these communities. In particular, representatives from these groups should be surveyed to assess whether there is support for non-citizen voting initiatives in their respective municipalities. Although these municipalities are regionally dispersed, better analysis may be drawn from comparing municipalities with the largest non-citizen populations.
Statewide Demographics

Even though there are rational and legal arguments for non-citizen voting, the issue is moot if there is not a large disenfranchised non-citizen population. In fact, Massachusetts, as a traditional gateway state for immigrants, has many urban areas with high concentrations of foreign-born residents (Figure 2), and many of the voting districts that they live in do not provide adequate representation.

The Census, the most comprehensive pool of demographic information in the United States, is a good starting point for analyzing non-citizen populations. To test for significant non-citizen populations, an arbitrary limit was set: in order to qualify, municipalities needed to have more than 1.5 times the state average of 3.8%. Therefore, cities with a greater non-citizen community than 5.8% of the total population were considered to have a significant non-citizen population. By this criterion, 42 municipalities out of the 230 municipalities in Massachusetts had a significant non-citizen population. It is interesting to note that the distribution of non-citizens is heavily skewed towards these 42 cities, meaning that the remaining municipalities have very low non-citizen populations and many have no non-citizen residents.

Figure 2: Foreign-born Populations in Massachusetts (2000)

Source: 2000 U.S. Census
England headquarters for the Army, Fort Devens had the highest proportion of non-citizens, 42.94% of the total population (Table 1). The conversion of the base into affordable housing for the surrounding city of Devens, (named after the fort)

**Table 1: Ten Massachusetts urban areas with the highest percentage of non-citizens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>Foreign-Born</th>
<th>Non-citizen</th>
<th>% Non-citizen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Devens CDP</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>42.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>72,043</td>
<td>22,011</td>
<td>15,797</td>
<td>21.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville</td>
<td>77,478</td>
<td>22,727</td>
<td>15,650</td>
<td>20.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>101,355</td>
<td>26,218</td>
<td>17,935</td>
<td>17.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>589,141</td>
<td>151,836</td>
<td>95,155</td>
<td>16.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malden</td>
<td>56,340</td>
<td>14,489</td>
<td>8,831</td>
<td>15.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>105,167</td>
<td>23,267</td>
<td>16,245</td>
<td>15.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>89,122</td>
<td>20,348</td>
<td>13,584</td>
<td>15.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookline CDP</td>
<td>57,061</td>
<td>15,174</td>
<td>8,575</td>
<td>15.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>38,037</td>
<td>8,323</td>
<td>5,591</td>
<td>14.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

might help to explain its outlier status. The remaining top ten cities had non-citizen populations in the 14-22% range: Lawrence, Somerville, Cambridge, Boston, Malden, Lowell, Lynn, Brookline, and Everett. Geographically, all of these cities are located in eastern Massachusetts and most are associated with the Boston metropolitan hub. Two of the cities, Lawrence and Lowell, are former industrial centers in the Merrimac River Valley (Figure 3).

U.S. Census data was supplemented with information from the Massachusetts Department of Education (school year 2003-2004) identifying communities with a high percentage of foreign-born children attending public schools. In terms of non-citizen voting rights, this information is especially pertinent because of the impact that non-citizen parents could have on school board elections. Unfortunately, data on foreign-born children cannot be
collected directly, due to privacy issues. Instead, a marker, limited English proficiency (LEP) was employed to give a rough estimate of which school districts had the highest proportion of foreign-born children. A student is categorized as LEP if he/she is “a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary class-work in English” (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2005).

LEP is used as a marker because limited English proficiency implies a home environment where English is rarely spoken and thus the parents are likely to be foreign-born. However, foreign-born parents may also be citizens, and students with excellent English may be immigrants, so LEP has its weaknesses as a marker. Still, the U.S. Census does not count all non-citizens. Examining LEP provides a more complete analysis of non-citizen demographics by including undocumented aliens in the statistics.

A school district has a significant LEP population if the LEP rate is 1.5 times the Massachusetts average of 5 percent. This threshold of 7.5% was set using an arbitrary constant, 1.5, but it is consistent with the methodology used to gauge significant non-citizen populations in municipalities. Twenty-six of the total of 380 charter schools and school districts had a

![Figure 3: Top Ten Municipalities in Massachusetts with the highest non-citizen populations](image)
significant proportion of LEP students. The school district and charter schools with the highest proportion of LEP are all in Lowell (Table 2). The Lowell Community Charter

Table 2: Ten Massachusetts School Districts with highest percentage of LEP students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>LEP Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>980,818</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.03</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>15,117</td>
<td>23.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyoke</td>
<td>7,245</td>
<td>21.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>60,150</td>
<td>18.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>14,621</td>
<td>18.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitchburg</td>
<td>5,760</td>
<td>18.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>12,508</td>
<td>16.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>5,678</td>
<td>16.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville</td>
<td>5,616</td>
<td>15.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>8,897</td>
<td>13.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>25,055</td>
<td>13.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School had almost half of its students designated as LEP, and the Lowell public schools followed with 23.5%. The rest of the top ten school districts with significant LEP populations were: Holyoke, Boston, Lynn, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Chelsea, Somerville, Quincy, and Worcester (Figure 4).

It is interesting to note that many of the school districts with the highest LEP student percentages are not located in the same cities that have the highest proportion of non-citizens. One possible reason for this discrepancy is the fact that the two sets of data were collected in different years: 2000 and 2004. With the rising rate of immigration, the non-citizen populations may have migrated in the intervening years. Another explanation

Figure 4: Top Ten cities in Massachusetts: Highest Percentage of LEP Students.
might be that many non-citizens do not have children attending public school districts.

Even though there are significant non-citizen populations in Massachusetts, they are not well represented. Obviously they cannot vote, but in addition, they are not represented virtually by a politician with a similar background. Non-citizen populations consist primarily of people of color, but are overwhelmingly represented by non-minority officials. It is possible for White elected representatives to act in the interests of minority populations, but those populations do not necessarily identify with, accept, or trust that official.

Of the cities with the highest non-citizen population, only four have any people of color on the city council/board of aldermen (Table 3). Lawrence has four Latinos on its city council. There are two African-Americans on the Cambridge city council, two African-Americans and two Latinos on Boston’s city council, and one Asian-American on Lowell’s city council. Despite having the highest number of non-citizens in the state, a majority of these communities do not have local representation reflecting their diversity.

Table 3: Minority Representation for Selected Cities with Significant Non-Citizen Populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total reps on city council</th>
<th>Minority reps on city council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malden</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookline CDP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the school districts with the highest percentage of LEP students, the school committees are slightly more representative than the above city councils were. In terms of proportion of LEP students, five of the top ten school districts have minority representation (Table 4). The Holyoke school committee has nine members, of whom two might be of
Latino heritage. The Lawrence school committee has six members; two have last names suggesting Latino descent. The Boston school committee has seven members with three African-Americans and one Latino member. The Chelsea school board has eight members of whom two are of Latino origin. Somerville has one Latino out of nine members listed. The Quincy school board has no people of color. Considering that each of the districts have high numbers of children who are classified as LEP, and most school committees are not racially and ethnically diverse, it can be argued that these school boards do not reflect the diverse populations they serve.

Table 4: Minority Representation for Selected School Districts with Significant Non-Citizen Populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Total School Committee Members</th>
<th>Minority School Committee Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyoke</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitchburg</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerville</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more accurate investigation of the racial and ethnic background of elected officials needs to be conducted in conjunction with a comprehensive study of the link between a lack of representation and immigrant populations. Elected officials should represent the interests of their constituents and the children of their communities. Although it is possible for elected officials to represent all members of their constituencies without being immigrants, second-generation immigrants, or people of color, it is important to have diverse representation by elected officials.
Massachusetts is home to many non-citizens, especially in the urban areas surrounding Boston. While they pay taxes and send their children to school, they do not have a direct voice in government policies because of their inability to vote. Even if non-citizens are politically active, they cannot be sure of having a representative that will keep their best interests in mind. Giving non-citizens the right to vote would be in keeping with the democratic traditions of Massachusetts.
Legislative Input

Charged with the task of assessing the feasibility of the Enabling Act, Massachusetts State legislators were identified in the first stages of research as key informants. Considering legislation must first go through committee, in this instance the Joint Committee on Election Laws, committee members are primary stakeholders. Each member of the election laws committee was contacted to solicit participation in the research. Each committee member was contacted at least two times, by email and by phone. Of the seventeen committee members, 7 consented to be interviewed. In the end, three interviews were cancelled by the legislators and never rescheduled. In three instances, legislative aids responded in the absence of the committee member. Although our participation rate was under 50%, useful information was collected. Committee members were asked similar questions, and had similar responses. In addition to their individual responses, committee members also related general impressions about the views of the committee as a whole.

Alice Wolf, the lead sponsor of the enabling act acknowledged that a major barrier to the bill’s passage is the fact that many believe voting eligibility is a condition of citizenship. ‘[What they] don’t consider are the barriers to citizenship, [they] don’t consider that [immigrants] may not have the proper paperwork to apply for citizenship….they require [immigrants] for the economy and then want them to go back home” (2005). Even those who support the legislation recognize the bill as a “hard sell” (Wolf, 2005). Responses from the interviews show that there is little support for the bill. Some reasons include:

• Limited sponsorship

• Lack of familiarity with the bill
• Little discussion of the bill
• No perceived need
• Unwillingness of the state to cede power to municipalities
• Poor political climate

When interviews began in February, it quickly became apparent that most legislators were not aware of the legislation. Senator Brown (R-Plainville) explained that he asked his staff to do some, “checking around” on the bill and there was very little interest (2005). The legislature is reportedly a full two months behind schedule and therefore bills were just assigned to committees in April. This may explain in part the lack of awareness. The lack of support for the bill goes beyond lack of familiarity with the legislation. After discussing the text and purpose of the enabling act, committee members shared several additional reservations.

When asked about support for the enabling act, legislators discussed the need to have consistent voting requirements throughout the state. They suggested the need to establish basic parameters, such as minimum time in the U.S., as a part of the legislation. There was also some discussion of the state government giving too much power to municipalities (Legislative aide, 2005).

The bill’s sponsorship has been called into question. The bill’s second sponsor, Representative Byron Rushing (D-Cambridge) and the third sponsor, Representative Ellen Story (D-Amherst), represent two atypical municipalities. Amherst and Cambridge are the only municipalities that have approved non-citizen voting; both introduced home rule petitions to gain state authorization. One senatorial aide suggested, “You have to consider who their constituents are and who our constituents are…they pass some pretty wacky stuff over in Cambridge” (Senatorial Aide, 2005). The aide implied that the legislation would never pass committee
because legislators “would take too much heat in their districts [given that the current political climate] was “too hot to handle politically” (2005). He also said, “Anyone from Cambridge will not get this to pass” (2005). This was not a personal attack on Representative Wolf. Rather this statement pointed to the fact that many Massachusetts residents consider political decisions in Cambridge to be an anomaly when compared to the rest of the state.

Given the limited response from legislators, even after repeated attempts to schedule interviews, the apparent disinterest may indicate limited support for the initiative. The perceived unwillingness to participate in the study may stem from a lack of familiarity with the legislation, or may simply be indicative of opposition to non-citizen voting. According to one legislative aide, the initiative has no chance of passing in this session because Governor Romney would never sign it (Jimenez, 2005).

Initially two rationales supporting non-citizen voting were discussed with legislators: parents rights and the notion of “taxation without representation.” Legislators agreed that parents have a right to make decisions and act in the best interest of their children. Most believe that non-citizens parents would participate if allowed to vote. According to Dalie Jimenez, Legislative Aide/ Latino Liaison to Senator Jarrett T. Barrios:

*Non-citizen parents are definitely affected by everything that happens, and by everyone representing them at a local level. People who come here from another country usually come here because of political turmoil at home. They understand politics, and should be given the chance to learn more about U.S. politics. They become acclimated at a local level and then will be prepared to participate at a national level.*

Linking voting to taxation may also be an ineffective strategy. Representative Walsh (D-Lynn) noted that tax dollars pay for public works and social services provided to all residents, including non-citizens. He also said that merely because people cannot vote does not mean they
are not represented. He pointed out that he advocates for children in his district, so they are represented even though they do not vote. The extent to which non-citizens are able to partake in social services, such as Social Security reimbursements, is not certain. Jimenez offered in-state tuition as another example:

*Even though most immigrants are children of tax-paying citizens (most don’t even know they are immigrants), they cannot receive the benefits of living in the U.S. Many have their TPS (Temporary Permanent Status), are paying taxes and [are] abiding by the laws... they cannot participate in the benefits that citizens get.*

A final recurrent theme was the idea that voting is reserved for citizens. Legislators holding this belief fail to recognize the barriers to naturalization and discount the large number of residents unable to cast ballots for those who are making decisions which most directly impact their daily lives.
Immigrant Input

Immigrant Community Leaders

Speaking with community members was critical to get a sense of what the members of the communities were feeling about the enabling act. Seven immigrant community leaders, two non-citizens and one naturalized citizen were interviewed for this project. These people were chosen based on recommendations from our clients, as well as personal references and professional acquaintances. Each interview was between a half an hour and an hour in length and was most often conducted at the interviewee’s place of work. Interview subjects were asked questions pertaining to personal history, political participation, and knowledge of the enabling act, and opinions concerning non-citizen voting.

As has been demonstrated throughout this report, there are many arguments for and against non-citizen voting. From the sentiment that United States citizens are the only people who should be allowed to vote, to the view that all residents who work, live, participate in the community and pay taxes should be politically represented, Massachusetts residents in general and legislators in specific appear to have mixed opinions. The opinions of five immigrant community leaders from the Latino, Haitian and Nepali communities show that there is a strong interest in non-citizen voting rights. Although there is no agreement on the means, methods and final outcome of non-citizen voting advocacy at the state level or at the municipal levels, there is agreement on the significance of such efforts. The importance that has been placed on such endeavors by community leaders is noteworthy when analyzing this information.
Boston City Councilor, Felix Arroyo, considered the enabling legislation a catalyst to a discussion on the issue of non-citizen voting rights. He expressed that it is essential to “get the ball rolling,” and that it “provoked a debate” (Arroyo 2005). Nepali community activist Sonja Darai agreed that it is essential to propose legislation that would move toward providing the immigrant community truly representative governance at the municipal level. At the same time, she was wary of “radical legislation” (Darai 2005). In contrast to Arroyo’s opinion that this legislation is an essential catalyst for conversation, Darai was apprehensive about the possible outcomes of proposing an Enabling Act. She worried that this legislation would be considerably altered through the process and could conclude with many of the hard-won voting rights being lost or modified, to the detriment of the concerned parties (in this case, non-citizens) (2005).

All leaders agreed that legislators, non-citizens, and the general public, all need to be educated about the legislation. Considering that Wolf’s legislation has already been submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws, the leaders recognized the importance of educating both the legislature and the general public about non-citizen voting. Councilor Arroyo suggested that many people do not understand what is actually at issue here: equal representation for people of the community. According to the Councilor, many people believe that enabling legislation would take rights away from U.S. citizens (2005). Mirna Reyes, the Director of Education at Centro Presente, asserted that the most difficult problem facing proponents of non-citizen voting rights is public opinion regarding immigrants. She believed the average Massachusetts citizen wonders: “Why are they here? What rights should they have?” She felt that many U.S. citizens view non-citizens as criminals. If she was right, there will need to be a major emphasis on the contributions of immigrants to the economy in an attempt to reframe this prejudice (2005).
Silvio Almanzar, a Latino community leader from Medford and Somerville, offered that it would be necessary to help the general public understand how hard non-citizens, and immigrants in general work. He argued that the non-citizen population has a positive influence on the economy. Mirna Reyes agreed, pointing out that non-citizens contribute to the economy, both as workers as well as people who buy goods and services. She also pointed out that non-citizens also pay taxes, a commonly unrecognized fact. Almanzar added that not only do non-citizens positively impact the economy, but they also contribute to the rich diversity of the country, expanding our national culture.

Along with other community leaders, Silvio Almanzar also agreed that education is key, but his focus is on educating immigrants, themselves. “Educating small communities about the importance of voting and the meaning of voting and decision-making” is extremely important (Almanzar, 2005). Almanzar suggested that increasing awareness to foster voting and decision-making skills in the immigrant community would positively affect many immigrants. “They don’t have the right to vote. With an [awareness] campaign they could have a significant impact” (2005). Sonja Darai agreed that it is necessary to have an educational aspect to a campaign advocating for non-citizen voting rights. She explained that it is important to have a far-reaching movement to educate residents of Massachusetts about the history of non-citizen voting both in United States and Massachusetts.

In addition to the importance of an educational campaign for the public, Darai considered an educational campaign for immigrant advocates important. She argued that it is important for all people working for this campaign to have a strong understanding of the history of non-citizen voting. Darai added that a comprehensive analysis of past enfranchisement efforts is essential for this issue. It is also important that immigrant advocates know the history of other suffrage
movements. Drawing a parallel to the women suffrage movement Darai asked, “What were people saying during the anti-women voting campaign? What were their projections?” (2005). She is aware that such an ambitious undertaking would be extremely costly, and that fundraising efforts must begin soon in order to have any chance success (2005).

These community leaders also agreed that the benefits of non-citizen voting would outweigh any negative consequences. In fact, according to Sonja Darai, there are no possible negative effects from non-citizen enfranchisement. “Immigrant parents tend to stand apart, to feel a barrier. This is a great opportunity to bring parents to the PTA, to get involved” (2005). Councilor Arroyo agreed with Darai and stressed the fact that allowing non-citizens to vote would be a great opportunity to get parents involved in their children’s education. Mirna Reyes drew attention to the positive effects that enfranchisement could have on the performance of immigrant children in schools. This would lead to a feeling of validation for immigrant parents. With the right to vote, parents would feel as if they were truly part of their communities, and would thus participate more actively in their communities. Reyes felt that voting rights would enhance the well being of families by addressing some critical issues, such as the high dropout rates for Latino youth (2005).

Franklin Dalambert, Executive Director of the Haitian Coalition in Somerville, agreed with Reyes that enfranchisement could increase parent involvement in the public schools. By his estimation, there is currently no connection between the immigrant parents, elected officials and the school administration. This disconnect has detrimental effects on children and school systems as a whole. “The better educated are the kids, the better the community will be, and the better society will be” (Dalambert, 2005). School systems would only be strengthened by immigrant parent involvement. According to Silvio Almanzar, immigrant voting at the municipal level “will
give the people more realistic participation” in representative government. There is a large group of people not represented by the current system. “Everybody is not represented.” With non-citizen voting, there could be a real representation of the community. He asserted that the community is made up of people from many different backgrounds that could give much needed input to the legislators to make the community a better place (2005).

Councilor Arroyo agreed with the prior sentiments, but he also argued that a campaign for non-citizen voting could have negative effects on immigrant communities. There are two points that particularly worried him. First, there is a considerable chance that non-citizens will not become involved in the political process due to fear of deportation (even if not committing illegal acts). Second, there is a fear of “ethnic discrimination and rejection” based on non-citizen voting patterns. Arroyo worried that immigrants would fear being targeted because of their voting records. These fears are not to be misconstrued as reasons for discontinuing the campaign for non-citizen voting. Instead, they are mentioned in order to ensure that they will be discussed. The misconception about immigrants could be countered with a comprehensive awareness campaign (Arroyo, 2005).

Franklin Dalambert did not like to look at the negative. “People always see immigrants in a very negative way” (2005). While he agreed that there is a fear of deportation and ethnic discrimination, he contended that there is too much focus on the negative aspect of immigration, much of which is misconception. His statement links directly to the previous discussion on education. An awareness component for the public and elected officials is crucial to the success of the legislation. Dalambert went on to say that it is critical to focus on positive aspects of immigration, such as the benefits of immigrant business owners, the contribution of immigrants
to the U.S. economy, and the possibility the future holds for the immigrant children attending U.S. schools (Dalambert, 2005).

Councilor Arroyo added that the groundwork for an educational campaign has been laid. According to him, the enabling act proposed by Alice Wolf is not costly. In his opinion, the legislation is a good way to begin discussion, without using too many resources. Even if the legislation is not passed, it provides a vehicle for an awareness campaign. “Use the regular media. Use photos, use regular presentations, and use newspaper articles. Get the word out about non-citizen voting. Let them know the truth” (2005). Arroyo thought that such means would bring attention to the issue, and in turn educate the public without using monetary resources, which many of the advocacy organizations involved simply do not have.

Although these testimonials have much in common, there are significant differences in the methods that should be used to propose such changes to the political system, for the process of educating the public and starting conversation, and in the outcomes of possible legislation. One common thread throughout the interviews was the necessity to formulate a statewide awareness campaign about non-citizen voting rights. It would be important to inform the public about the many contributions of immigrants to the U.S. and, more specifically, communities in Massachusetts. The discussion of economic and cultural contributions made by immigrants, along with their involvement in the education system, could lead to a reversal of the notion that all non-citizens are criminals. Educating elected officials, advocacy leaders and especially the general public needs to be a priority.
Immigrant community members

Interviews were also conducted with two non-citizens, Romualda Jerome from Lithuania and an immigrant from Nepal, as well as with one Haitian-American, Benjamin Jerome, to collect their opinions on non-citizen voting and the possible impacts on their communities. Although attempts were made to conduct several interviews, only three were completed due to time constraints. This is not a comprehensive analysis given the amount of interviews, but will still give an idea of what the political participation of non-citizens is currently and what non-citizen voting rights could lead to.

A striking response, articulated by both non-citizens, related to their concerns about naturalization. Both non-citizens would like to be able to return to their native countries in the future (even if just to visit) but their understanding is that they would be unable to return if they became U.S. citizens. Nepal and Lithuania do not allow dual citizenship. This is not the case for all non-citizens, but for these individuals it is an important consideration. Franklin Dalambert, a naturalized U.S. citizen, voiced a similar concern. He has actually lobbied the Haitian government to adopt dual-citizenship with the United States. “When you become a U.S. citizen you are no longer Haitian. I see it [citizenship] as a legal formality to give you privileges…especially in the political process” (Dalambert, 2005). Although both non-citizens are committed to living in the United States, under current regulations they would never be allowed to vote. This may be a relevant concern for many non-citizens when deciding whether or not to apply for U.S. citizenship. Although this may not be useful information for lobbying materials, it is relevant for understanding the specific situations that immigrants face concerning naturalization.
When asked about participation in political processes, both non-citizens stated that they were not very politically active. When the question was reframed around participation in community organizations, all immigrants were actually quite politically engaged. The Nepali immigrant was in the process of beginning his own Nepali community organization. At time of the interview, Benjamin Jerome was participating in MIRA Immigrant Lobby Day at the State House. Romualda Jerome gave a testimonial to the assembled group during the opening session of Immigrant Lobby Day. Clearly these individuals are extremely politically active, even though they did not readily consider themselves to be.

In addition to being engaged in their communities, these immigrants were also extremely knowledgeable about the political processes of the United States. When asked to describe a situation in which voting rights could have benefited immigrant populations, Benjamin Jerome stated: “…the problem is that in some situations where you have a district with a large immigrant community that can’t vote, but policy will impact these people…. they are the silent majority” (Jerome, B. 2005). This knowledge of Massachusetts’ politics demonstrates a keen awareness of the system, and demonstrates the competence many immigrants have to participate in the political system.

When asked to discuss what is necessary for immigrants to become politically active, the Nepali immigrant stated that they need such resources such as English classes, computer classes and job skills. The other two individuals made references to the Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) throughout the interviews. While interview subjects discussed the importance of places like SCALE to immigrant communities, it was also noted that the waiting list at SCALE sometimes exceeds one year, and there is a similar wait for
many English classes in the state. At the same time, the Nepali immigrant emphasized that language classes are crucial to the political empowerment of immigrant communities.

Franklin Dalambert (2005) asserted that there would be more involvement from the non-citizen community if voting rights were granted. He believes that people do not feel they are part of the process and that their voices are not heard. Based on the opinions of Dalambert and other community leaders, it could be argued that if given more of a stake in the community, immigrants would participate more. It is important to note that non-citizen participation would affect everyone in the community, non-citizens and citizens alike. As such, there needs to be a concerted effort by supporters of non-citizen voting, regardless of their citizenship status, for the enabling act to be passed. As Romualda Jerome (2005) reminded, “Everybody here are all immigrants; we should all support immigrant’s issues…there’s no difference for those who came here before. We’re all immigrants.”
Recommendations

Passage of the enabling act is not likely. Even though there is a large immigrant population whose leaders support non-citizen voting, legislators are wary of jeopardizing their incumbency. While the political climate is beyond MIRA’s control, immigrant advocates should remain optimistic and look for opportunities to increase awareness, mobilize supporters and cultivate legislative sponsorship of a bill allowing non-citizen suffrage. Possible next steps for advocacy should include strategies to:

- Document Disenfranchisement
- Encourage Home Rule Petitions
- Develop a Comprehensive Awareness Campaign
- Link Non-Citizen Voting to Other Issues
- Establish a Collaborative

Document Disenfranchisement

A limited number of interviews were completed due to logistical constraints. An intern can conduct additional interviews with community leaders, local city councils, and non-citizens as well as collection of written testimonials would better illustrate feelings regarding disenfranchisement.

Research linking immigration status and ethnicity to a lack of representation in Massachusetts’ cities is essential for the documentation of disenfranchisement. The most efficient method of calculating the precise number of eligible voters in each city is to survey
elected officials in all municipalities with a large non-citizen population. Currently the data on non-citizen populations from the census does not exclude those under the age of eighteen. The surveys should also target immigrant issues specific to each city. The numbers of possible new voters can be used to influence political decision makers.

**Encourage Home Rule Petitions**

Many community leaders and legislators encouraged the filing of home rule petitions in other communities. Increasing the number of home rule petitions would demonstrate a need for non-citizen suffrage. The presence of such legislation would also act as a catalyst for political discourse and debate.

A future MIRA intern should use our research as a starting point by looking at the top ten cities with non-citizens. This intern could survey legislators and local elected officials from municipalities with significant non-citizen populations to better assess the impact of filing additional home rule petitions on the municipalities. In addition to surveying elected officials in the top ten cities, it will be important to discover municipalities that may have begun a discussion on non-citizen voting rights, such as Somerville and Newton. Using the information obtained through surveys, the intern should identify the local elected officials and legislators to be targeted for the most effective lobbying. It is important to keep up regular contact with all important legislators and local officials.

**Develop a Comprehensive Awareness Campaign**
The key to developing an effective lobbying strategy is creating an awareness campaign. Non-citizen voting rights legislation will never succeed unless there is a significant shift in public perception. In order to dispel the myriad misperceptions, MIRA should use interns and staff members from the Membership Organizing and Leadership Division to develop an awareness campaign targeting three distinct groups: legislators, the general public and immigrant community leaders.

The main strategy for the awareness campaign for legislators must take into consideration their busy schedules. This campaign should include “quick information,” such as fact sheets and lunchtime roundtable discussions. A MIRA intern could produce a fact sheet on non-citizen voting history, emphasizing the constitutionality of non-citizen suffrage and immigrant contributions to the community. Roundtable discussions will also be useful in this campaign. Another duty of the intern would be to coordinate regular discussions between immigrants and the legislators. The intern should identify important legislators, possibly using the interviews and quantitative data supplied in this report. Do not dismiss the power of regular contact with legislators and legislative staff. A legislative liaison, possibly a community leader, could coordinate this effort.

The most effective tool for influencing public opinion is mass media. MIRA needs to continuously monitor media coverage of immigrant issues. Dedicated immigrant community leaders are ideal candidates to act as media monitors. These monitors need to be willing and able to commit to the project for an extended period of time. In addition to monitoring the media on immigrant issues, the monitors will need to respond directly to the publicity through opinion columns and letters to the editor. Letters to the editor have more impact if immigrants, especially
non-citizens, write them. A network can be established between monitors to share information and maintain more comprehensive coverage.

In addition to responding to media attention, MIRA should take a more proactive stance. Interns will plan events that will attract media attention. Large-scale events, such as a rally for the Boston Tea Party, will generate substantial positive media attention for the immigrant rights campaign. The interns will also coordinate a series of small-scale events, such as rallies and participation at various related lobby days at the State House. Examples of participation include sign holding at election polls, roundtable discussions with community stakeholders, and attendance at events hosted by community groups such as the Union of Minority Neighbors.

Another way to reach the public is to utilize public access television. MIRA should use these stations to broadcast roundtable discussions with the community, immigrant group meetings as well as posting a calendar of events. Trained volunteers can develop a program about the historical precedent of non-citizen voting. This program can be solely based upon non-citizen voting rights, or could be a more comprehensive look at immigrant issues state and nationwide.

Community leaders play a central role in awareness efforts. They are the best spokespersons for this campaign. MIRA staff needs to develop a leadership program (which may already exist to some extent) that will enhance their skills. Training will focus on presentation skills. This leadership program will also develop organizational capabilities in order for them to eventually become the coordinators of the non-citizen voting rights campaign. This program will also bring leaders together and strengthen the networks that may already exist between the communities. The program will also identify potential leaders who can participate in and contribute to the awareness campaign. Community leaders must also be trained to educate their
non-citizen communities about the naturalization and voting processes as well as about the history of non-citizen voting rights.

**Link Non-Citizen Voting to Other Issues**

Non-citizen voting rights do not exist in a vacuum. Immigrant issues, such as driver’s licenses, health care, and in-state tuition are all intertwined. All of these are issues that affect how immigrants, especially non-citizens, are integrated into the social fabric of their communities. MIRA needs to present the immigrant issues together as a comprehensive package, not separately. In addition to presenting the issues of immigrants together, it is also important to link the many other social issues in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts has been at the forefront of many progressive social movements. Although many think of Cambridge as extremely liberal, residents need to be reminded that the city adopted limited suffrage for women well before it was nationally recognized. Similarly, Massachusetts has gone against the political current by permitting same-sex marriage.

**Establish a Collaborative**

MIRA needs to shift their focus in order to identify and include non-citizen voting rights as an essential immigrant issue for the organization. Non-citizen voting important not only in principal, but it also allows for reform and progress on other immigrant fronts. MIRA needs to redistribute the current workload and/or hire new staff dedicated to the collaborative. If interns are employed, they must be long-term, as short-term interns will disrupt the flow of progress. Boston has a wealth of potential interns. With so many colleges and universities at the doorstep,
it would be easy to find competent and passionate staff. It is also important to research financial aid options at these schools. This way, qualified people who may have limited financial means will have a chance and an incentive to participate in such a crucial campaign.

MIRA needs to take the lead on establishing a statewide coalition. This coalition must reach across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. The coalition should contain organizations like: the League of Women Voters, labor and trade unions, academic institutions, immigrant advocacy groups, community health organizations, municipal governments, local elected officials, PTA/PTO members, YMCA, and faith-based organizations.

MIRA needs to create a full-time position to coordinate this collaborative. This coalition must have regular meetings and report to the MIRA executives and board members. Members of the coalition, including to the volunteers should have access to the coordinator to ensure that there is no disconnect between organizational efforts.

These five strategies – documenting disenfranchisement, encouraging home rule petitions, developing a comprehensive awareness plan, linking non-citizen voting rights to all immigrant issues and organizing a coalition of immigrant organizations – offer the best hope for eventual passage of legislation securing non-citizen voting rights. Identifying and dedicating resources is perhaps the biggest obstacle to implementation. MIRA should use the analysis and recommendations in this report to define their role in the fight for non-citizen voting rights.
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City of Quincy, retrieved April 15, 2005, www.scstest.com/quincy
City of Worcester, retrieved April 15, 2005, www.ci.worcester.ma.us
Appendix I: Methods for quantitative analysis

Census Data

Census data was taken from the U.S. Census online site www.census.gov for the year 2000. All the municipalities in the state were selected then downloaded in a table. This spreadsheet included the variables of total population, foreign-born population, and non-citizen population. Data was saved into table format and analyzed in Microsoft Excel. The most pertinent results were the percentages of non-citizens in each CDP in Massachusetts. The percent was obtained by inputting a simple formula into Excel, the population of non-citizens divided by the total population.

In our analysis, the independent variable was place, a Census-defined geographic location. As defined by the Census, place is

A concentration of population either legally bounded as an incorporated place, or identified as a Census Designated Place (CDP) including comunidades and zonas urbanas in Puerto Rico. Incorporated places have legal descriptions of borough (except in Alaska and New York), city, town (except in New England, New York, and Wisconsin), or village (Census 2005).

The term Census Designated Place refers to

A statistical entity, defined for each decennial census according to Census Bureau guidelines, comprising a densely settled concentration of population that is not within an incorporated place, but is locally identified by a name. CDPs are delineated cooperatively by state and local officials and the Census Bureau, following Census Bureau guidelines. Beginning with Census 2000 there are no size limits. (2005).

In some states, CDPs may be defined within entities that may function as incorporated municipalities, but for the purposes of the census are regarded as minor civil divisions. For example towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut provide all the services of an incorporated municipality, but may also include both rural and urban area. CDPs may be defined to describe urbanized areas within such municipalities, for example, North Amherst, Massachusetts (Wikipedia, 2005)
**LEP Data**

LEP data is from Massachusetts Department of Education.  
[www.doe.mass.edu/ell/news04/0325lep.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/news04/0325lep.html)

**School Committee and City Council Data:**

We reviewed the city web page and classified an elected official’s race by either their photo or name. The term elected official in this study means an elected city council member or mayor. This is not the most scientific method to determine race for city officials, but was the only available method due to time constraints. A further study to investigate the race and ethnicity of elected officials in these ten cities and would be beneficial.

The same general method used to determine the racial makeup of city councils was applied to school committees and boards. We reviewed information published online by the school committees in the selected districts of Lowell, Boston, Lynn, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Chelsea, Somerville, Quincy, and Worcester was reviewed. Based on the names and/or photos presented, a cursory determination was made regarding race and ethnicity. This estimation is most likely not much different than the assumption many people in the communities would make themselves.

**Graphics**

Graphs were created in Microsoft Excel. Maps were created in ArcGIS 9 (ESRI), using GIS data from [www.massgis.com](http://www.massgis.com).
Appendix II: Interview Methodology

**Legislative Input**

Legislators were identified as key informants, given their ability to discuss and make decisions directly determining outcomes for proposed legislation. Since the enabling act was referred to the Joint Committee on Election Laws, those committee members were identified as major stakeholders. Various legislators were contacted to participate in this study. All members of the election laws committee were contacted. State Representatives and State Senators from the five sample municipalities—Boston, Chelsea, Framingham, Lowell, and Springfield—were contacted. Legislators from the top ten significant cities were contacted. Interviews with each of these individuals could not be conducted due to lack of response and time constraints. Alice Wolf, lead sponsor of the enabling legislation, was also consulted. Semi-structured interviews were based from the same list of questions. Most interviews were conducted at the State House and typically lasted 30 minutes. The membership listing, including contact information, for the Joint Committee on Election Laws is available online: [http://www.mass.gov/legis/comm/j15.htm](http://www.mass.gov/legis/comm/j15.htm)

Names of, and contact information for, all other legislators contacted may be taken from, [http://www.mass.gov/legis/](http://www.mass.gov/legis/)

**Immigrant Input**

Immigrant community leaders and immigrant community members were identified as key informants based on their knowledge of, and direct experience with, immigrant issues. Immigrant community leaders could discuss their own experiences and opinions in addition to offer generalizations from their respective communities. Seven immigrant community leaders were interviewed for this study. These people were chosen because of recommendations from our clients, as well as personal references and professional acquaintances. Additionally, input from immigrant community members was sought. In particular, participation of non-citizens was sought, as these individuals would be most directly impacted by the proposed legislation. Due to logistical and time constraints, two non-citizens and one naturalized citizen were interviewed for this project. The three individuals were selected based on their presence at Immigrant Lobby Day, hosted by MIRA, as well as from personal relations. Semi-structured interviews with both immigrant community leaders and immigrant community members lasted between one half to one hour and were most often conducted at the interviewee’s place of work. Interview subjects were asked questions pertaining to personal history, political participation, knowledge of the enabling act, and opinions concerning non-citizen voting.
Appendix III: Completed Interviews

Joint Committee on Election Laws


Eldridge, James. State Representative, Acton, MA. personal interview conducted March 10, 2005.

Panagiotakos, Steven. State Senator, Lowell, MA personal interview conducted April 7, 2005.

Walsh, Steven. State Representative, Lynn, MA, personal interview conducted February 22, 2005.

Other State Legislators:


Sannicandro, Tom. State Representative, Framingham MA, Personal interview conducted April 7, 2005.

Wolf, Alice. State Representative, Cambridge, MA personal interview conducted April 7, 2005; phone interview conducted April 11, 2005.

Legislative Aides:

Horgan, John. Research Assistant for State Representative Demetrius Atsalis, Barnstable, MA, personal interview conducted April 7, 2005.


Legislative aide. phone interview conducted, April 5, 2005.

Senatorial Aide. personal interview conducted, April 7, 2005.

Immigrant Community Leaders:

Almanzar, Silvio. Latino community leader from Medford and Somerville, personal interview conducted April 12, 2005.

Dalambert, Franklin. Executive Director, Haitian Coalition, Somerville, MA, personal interview conducted April 8, 2005.

Darai, Sonja. Nepali community activist, personal interview conducted, April 1, 2005.


Reyes, Mirna. Director of Education, Centro Presente, personal interview conducted April 4, 2005.

**Immigrant Community Members**

Darai, Netra. naturalized citizen, personal interview conducted April 6, 2005.

Jerome, Benjamin. naturalized citizen, personal interview conducted April 7, 2005.

Jerome, Romualda. Lithuanian citizen, personal interview conducted April 7, 2005.
Appendix IV: Interview Questions

*Interview questions for elected officials*

1) Are you familiar with the enabling legislation by sponsored Rep. Wolf?
   • What is your initial response?
   • Do you support the enabling legislation?
   • Is passage feasible?
   • What are the obstacles to passing the enabling act?
   • What is the most effective lobbying tool/strategy to encourage passage of the enabling act?

2) Do you support non-citizen voting for local elections?
   (school committee and/or municipal officials)
   • Why/Why not?
   • Under what conditions?
   • Can you support the enabling act without sanctioning non-citizen voting?

3) Is non-citizen voting supported in your district?
   • Do local elected officials in your community support non-citizen voting?
   • Do local elected officials endorse the enabling act?
   • Do your constituents support non-citizen voting?
   • Do your constituents endorse the enabling act?

4) Have you been invited to an Immigrants’ Day in the District?
   • If yes, could you tell me about your experience?
     - was non-citizen voting discussed?

5) Have you/will you participate in Immigrant Lobby Day?
   • What did you/do you hope to gain from the event?

6) Given your district has a large immigrant population, what are the possible impacts of non-citizen voting? (positive and negative)
   • Would local non-citizen voting rights increase overall electoral participation in your community?
   • What tangible benefits might occur if non-citizen voting was allowed?
   • What are the possible negative impacts of non-citizen voting?

7) What contributions do non-citizens make in this country?
   • Do you know any non-citizen or immigrant business owners?

8) What do you think of the phrase, "No taxation without representation"?
   • Does that apply to non-citizens? How?
Interview questions for immigrant community leaders

1) Are you familiar with the enabling legislation by sponsored Rep. Wolf?
   • What is your initial response?
   • Do your state legislators support the Enabling Act?
   • What are the obstacles to passing the Enabling Act?
   • What would be the most effective campaign tool to lobby for non citizen voting?

2) Do local elected officials in your community support non-citizen voting?
   • Do they support the enabling act?

3) Are your community members politically active?
   • Historically/typically in home country?
   • Have you hosted/will you host a “Day in the District?”
     -If yes, Can you discuss the experience?
     Was non-citizen voting Discussed?
     What did you/do you hope to gain from the event?
     -If no, Why? What is necessary for you to host?
   • Have you/will you and/or your community members participate(d) in Lobby Day?
     -If yes, Can you discuss the experience?
     Was non-citizen voting Discussed?
     What did you/do you hope to gain from the event?
     -If no, Why? What would encourage participation?
   • If not active, what would encourage them to be more politically engaged?
   • Does your organization have a formal lobbying component/department?

4) Are there any non citizen or second-generation elected officials in your community?

5) Given your community has a large immigrant population, what are the possible impacts of non-citizen voting in local elections?
   • Would local non-citizen voting rights increase overall electoral participation in your community?
   • What tangible benefits might occur if non-citizen voting was allowed?
   • What are the possible negative impacts of non-citizen voting?

6) How long have you lived in the US?
   • Would you discuss your experience in the naturalization process?
   • Are you a US citizen?
     -If yes, how long was your naturalization process?
     -If no, are you in the process of naturalization?
How long has it been?

7) What contributions do non-citizens make in this country?
   • Do you know any non-citizen or immigrant business owners?

8) What do you think of the phrase, "No taxation without representation"?
   • Does that apply to non-citizens? How?

Interview questions for immigrant community members:

Personal Info
1) Where are you from originally?
2) Where do you live now?
3) How long have you been in the US?
4) Are you a US citizen?
   • If yes, how long was your naturalization process?
     - Would you tell me about the (citizenship) process
   • If no, are you trying to become a US citizen?
     - Would you tell me about the (citizenship) process?
5) On average, how long does it take to become a US citizen?
6) Photo consent?
7) Tape record?
8) Are you a member of any community organizations?
9) Why did you come to lobby day?

Political Questions
1) Do you think paying taxes should give you the right to vote?
2) Would you vote in school board or municipal elections if you were able?
3) Can you tell me about a situation where you feel that the right to vote would have benefited you?
4) Do you know who your elected officials are?
Do local elected officials in your community support non-citizen voting

• Local or State?

5) Do you know of any non-citizen or second-generation immigrant elected officials in your community?

6) Do you think of yourself as being politically active? Such as working on a campaign, talking to others in your community about political issues, talking to elected officials, etc.
   • (If not active) What would encourage people from your community to be more politically active?

7) In general, are people in your community politically involved?
   • Historically/typically in your home country?

8) Have/will you participated a “Day in the District?”
   • If yes, Can you tell me about it?
     --Did you discuss non-citizen voting?
     --What did you/do you hope to gain from the event?
   • If no, Why? What is necessary for you to participate?

THIS QUESTION IS NOT FOR LOBBY DAY

9) Have you/will you and/or your community members participate(d) in Lobby Day?
   • If yes, Can you discuss the experience?
     --Did you discuss non-citizen voting Discussed?
     --What did you/do you hope to gain from the event?
   • If no, Why? What would encourage participation?

Additional questions for consideration:

• What would be the benefits of non-citizen voting?

What might be some problems with non-citizen voting?
To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill or resolve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PETITIONERS: LEGISLATOR/CITIZEN</th>
<th>DISTRICT/FULL MAILING ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice K. Wolf</td>
<td>25th Middlesex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron Rushing</td>
<td>9th Suffolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Story</td>
<td>3rd Hampshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIVE

AN ACT

ENABLING CITIES AND TOWNS TO EXTEND VOTING RIGHTS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS TO CERTAIN NON-CITIZENS OF 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:

SECTION 1. Chapter 51 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 1F the following section:–

Section 1G. (a) Sections 1G, inclusive, shall take effect in any city or town upon the approval by the legislative body and acceptance by the voters of a ballot question as set forth in this section.

(b)(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of chapter fifty-one of the general laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, non-citizens, 18 years of age or older, residing in a city or town that accepts section 1G, inclusive, may upon application have their names entered on a list of voters established by the municipal election officials, and may thereafter vote in any municipal election for school committee, school committee questions, city council and board of selectmen for so long as they remain domiciled in the municipality.
(2) The election officers of a municipality that accepts the provisions of section 1G, inclusive, are authorized to formulate regulations, guidelines, and registration forms to implement the purpose of this act. The voter registration forms shall include a declaration to be signed under pains and penalties of perjury by the non-citizen voter that: 1) s/he is residing in the municipality; 2) s/he intends in good faith to become a U.S. citizen and intends to begin that process, if eligible.

(3) Nothing in this act shall be construed to confer upon non-citizens the right to vote for any state or federal office or any state or federal ballot questions.

(c)(1) Upon approval by the legislative body, the action of the body shall be submitted for acceptance to the voters of a city or town at its next regular municipal or state election. The city or town clerk or the state secretary shall place it on the ballot in the form of the following question:

- "Shall (city or town) accept section 1G, inclusive, of chapter 51 of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body, a summary of which appears below"

- (Set forth here a fair, concise summary and purpose of the law to be acted upon, as determined by the city solicitor or town counsel.)

- (2) If a majority of the voters voting on said question vote in the affirmative, then its provisions shall take effect in the city or town after 90 days, but not otherwise.
(3) The final date for notifying or filing a petition with the city or town clerk or the state secretary to place such a question on the ballot shall be 35 days before the city or town election or 60 days before the state election.
PETITION -- HOUSE

CHIEF SPONSOR:
Representative Wolf of Cambridge

Home Rule petition from the City of Cambridge

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill or resolve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PETITIONERS: LEGISLATOR/CITIZEN</th>
<th>DISTRICT/FULL MAILING ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice K. Wolf</td>
<td>25th Middlesex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie C. Decker</td>
<td>42 Linnaean St., Apt. 3, 02138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth R. Reeves</td>
<td>340 Harvard St., 02139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henrietta Davis</td>
<td>120 Chestnut St., 02139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian P. Murphy</td>
<td>22 Mt. Auburn St., 02139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Denise Simmons</td>
<td>188 Harvard St. Apt. 4B, 02139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIVE

AN ACT TO ENABLE CERTAIN NON-CITIZEN RESIDENTS OF CAMBRIDGE TO VOTE IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

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

SECTION 1.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of chapter fifty-one of the general laws, or any other general or special law, rule or regulation to the contrary, non-citizens eighteen years or older who reside in the city of Cambridge may, upon application, have their names entered on a list of voters, established by the Elections Commission, for the city of Cambridge and may thereafter vote in any election for school committee members, school committee questions, and City Council. Such non-citizen members shall remain eligible to vote in school committee and City Council elections for so long as they remain domiciled in Cambridge.

SECTION 2.

The Election Commission is authorized to formulate regulations, guidelines and registration form to implement the purpose of this act. The voter registration forms shall include a declaration to be signed under pains and penalties of perjury by the non-citizen voter that: 1) s/he is residing in Cambridge; 2) s/he intends in good faith to become a U.S. citizen and intends to begin that process, if eligible.

SECTION 3.

Nothing in this act shall be construed to confer upon non-citizens the right to vote for any, state or federal office or any state or federal ballot questions.
Appendix VI: Memorandum of Understanding