

August 2016

## Massachusetts Set to Vote on Four Ballot Questions

*Boston voters will also decide on whether to accept the CPA*

The Massachusetts Attorney General has certified four initiative petitions for the Secretary of State to place on the November 8th state election ballot. In Boston the question of adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) will also be on the ballot.

### Expanded Gaming

**Question 1** would allow the state to issue an additional gambling license for a site that meets specific criteria, namely that the facility is located in proximity to a horse racetrack and is an adequate size. Suffolk Downs meets these requirements. The question would allow the addition of slot machines at the designated facility.

### Fair Charter School Access

**Question 2** would authorize the increase of 12 new charter schools annually above the existing charter cap in underperforming school districts in the state that have demonstrated the greatest demand, such as Boston. The seats in these schools would be capped at 1% of total statewide public school enrollment, which would allow for substantial growth in charter seats for Boston residents.

Question 2 is the most controversial question for which millions will be spent by pro and opposition groups. The pro group is Great Schools Massachusetts supported by businesses, individuals and business-sponsored organizations. The opposition group is the Campaign to Save our Public Schools, whose

fundings include the two statewide teachers unions (ATF and MTA) and the BTU.

### Preventing Animal Cruelty

**Question 3** would further regulate the conditions of animals on commercial farms in the state. The ballot question would impose a fine on holding animals in a “cruel manner” including confinement in a space that prevents them from “lying down, standing up, fully extending the animal’s limbs, or turning around freely.”

### Regulate and Tax Marijuana

**Question 4** would regulate the public sale of marijuana by applying an excise of 3.75% on each sale and limit sale to individuals 21 years or over. The tax proceeds would be allocated to a Marijuana Regulation Fund to support implementation of the law and regulation of the marijuana industry. Public use of marijuana would be prohibited in the same manner as tobacco. A commission within the state Treasurer’s Office could establish further regulations.

### Boston CPA

**Question 5** on the Boston ballot would enable the voters to decide whether the City would adopt the CPA. Acceptance would impose a 1% surcharge on taxable real property with a \$100,000 value exemption for both residential and business parcels. CPA proceeds are restricted to affordable housing, open space and park and playground improvements, and the preservation of historic resources.