

# Enable All Massachusetts Registered Voters to Participate in Open Town Meetings

## H.2274 – AN ACT AUTHORIZING REMOTE PARTICIPATION AT TOWN MEETING

### Background

An Act authorizing remote participation at town meeting (H.2274) would enable registered voters have care-giving responsibilities, are disabled, or have work, or another reason they are unable to physically attend their town's Open Town Meeting to use a smartphone or tablet to fully participate via the internet.

Filed by Rep. Carmine Gentile, this bill is endorsed by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Municipal Association, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

### What this law would enable any of a Town's registered voters to do

- Obtain credentials from the Town Clerk that enable their remote participation in all Sessions of a forthcoming Town Meeting
- Use their internet-connected smartphone or tablet to remotely check-in to a Session of Town Meeting via an audio/video interaction with a member of the Town Clerk's staff
- Listen to whoever is currently addressing Town Meeting - with real-time visual transcription
- View the queue of voters – both on-premises and remote - seeking to speak
- Request to speak in order to make, support, oppose, or amend a motion, ask a question, terminate debate, or raise a point of order
- Speak to Town Meeting – after being enabled by the Moderator
- Vote on the current Motion
- Audit their vote to confirm that it was correctly received and counted
- Report a discrepancy in the vote before that vote is finalized

### What this law would enable a Town's Moderator to do

- View the queue of voters – both on-premises and remote - seeking to speak
- Enable a remote participant to speak
- Initiate a vote
- Announce the results of a vote: both the total vote and the remote vote
- Be immediately alerted if
  - any remote participant reports a discrepancy after auditing their vote
  - a significant number of remote participants have suddenly become disconnected
  - continuous audio/video interactions with remote participants by members of the Town Clerk's staff detect proxy voting

H.2274 is available here: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H2274.pdf>