

# Voter Information

## VOTER REGISTRATION

Massachusetts residents may register to vote at the Town Clerk's Office any weekday during business hours. Special voter registration hours are provided twenty (20) days before any election. Residents may also register at any Registry of Motor Vehicles office, other State agencies, and other City/Town Clerk's offices. Mail-in voter registration forms are available at the Town Clerk's office (413-283-2608). Pursuant to a new federal law, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), you must provide a copy of identification if you register by mail by either using the last 4 digits of your social security number or a Massachusetts driver's license number. **Residents may not register to vote or change their party information using the annual Town census form.**

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING

To register to vote in Massachusetts you must:

- Be a Massachusetts resident; and
- Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election

Penalty for Illegal Registration: Fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years or both. (Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 56, Sec. 8)

## APPLYING FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS:

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is 12:00 p.m. on the day before the election. If the election falls on a Monday, the deadline is 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the election.

Absentee ballots may only be applied for if the voter

1. Will be absent from Palmer during the hours the polls are open. (This includes active members of the armed forces or merchant marines, their spouses, or dependents and persons confined in a correctional facility or a jail, except if by reason of felony conviction.)

2. Has a physical disability
3. Holds religious beliefs which would prevent the voter from coming to the polls on election day.

Permanently disabled voters may obtain a note from their physicians which should then be filed with the Town Clerk. These voters will be mailed an absentee ballot application prior to election day.

A voter may request an absentee ballot by completing an application form or with a **signed** note. The note must state the applicant's name as registered, voter's address, address to which the ballot should be mailed and, in the case of unenrolled (independent) voters applying for a ballot for a primary election, which party's ballot you are requesting.

A family member may also request an absentee ballot for another family member (application by family member.) A "family member" is defined in MGL Chap 50, Sec. 1 as: a spouse or any person living in the same household with the voter (even if they are not related); OR in-laws, father, mother, sister or brother of the whole or half blood, son, daughter, adopting parent or adopted child, stepparent or stepchild, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent or grandchild.

Absentee ballots that were mailed to the voter can either be mailed back to the Town Clerk or hand-delivered to the Clerk's office by the voter or a family member.

## **VOTING AT THE CLERK'S OFFICE**

A voter may cast his/her absentee ballot at the Clerk's office during normal working hours at a mutually convenient time. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is 12:00 p.m. on the day before the election. If the election falls on a Monday, the deadline is 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the election.

**Warning:** Illegal absentee voting, including making a false application, is punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 and up to five years in prison