

# Ballot Question 1

## NURSE-PATIENT RATIOS



### In Plain English...

If this referendum passes, there would be legal limits on the number of patients that could be assigned to each nurse in Massachusetts hospitals. This number would vary based on the hospital unit and the patients' conditions.

### A Yes Vote Would:

Enact nurse-patient ratios. The law would take effect in January 2019.

*The Massachusetts Nurses Association, a union representing about 20 percent of nurses statewide, is the main group pushing for this ballot initiative.*

### A No Vote Would:

Keep the current system in place, allowing hospitals to determine nurses' assignments.

*The Massachusetts chapter of the American Nurses Association, a professional organization, and the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association lead the opposition.*

### Advocates Claim:

#### PATIENT SAFETY

Current nurse staffing levels are unsafe, resulting in medical errors and hospital-acquired infections.

Strict government-mandated ratios override nurses' professional judgment and would not lead to better care.

#### HIRING MORE NURSES

The Bay State has one of the highest number of nurses per capita, enabling hospitals to hire more nurses as needed. Lower caseloads could attract more people into the profession.

Hospitals would need to hire less-qualified nurses to meet the ratios and could be forced to recruit nurses away from places like nursing homes.

#### HOSPITAL WAIT TIMES

Increasing the number of nurses would allow nurses to spend more time with each patient, and quality of care would improve. It would not lead to longer wait times.

Once a unit reaches its maximum staffing ratio, new patients would be forced to wait for another patient to be transferred, or hospitals could face big fines — even in significant crises.

#### COST

Many Massachusetts hospitals are owned by wealthy corporations, which pay large CEO salaries. This law could force hospitals to put more money toward direct patient care.

Complying with these ratios would be a huge financial burden. It could force hospitals to close unprofitable units, which often serve the most vulnerable.

### Other Things To Know:

- The Health Policy Commission, an independent state agency, estimates the cost at \$676 million to \$949 million annually, possibly forcing unprofitable units to close and insurance premiums to increase. Proponents dispute these figures.
- California is the only U.S. state that has implemented nurse-patient ratios. The results, according to UCSF research:
  - There was no clear link between staffing ratios and improved quality of care.
  - Nurses saw improved pay, lower burnout and lower injury rate.
  - Neither long wait times nor unit closures materialized.

But there are differences: California's law was implemented over five years, compared to eight weeks in Massachusetts. The California bill is more flexible — with the ability to adjust nurse-patient ratios and other hospital staffing levels.



# Ballot Question 2

## COMMISSION TO EXAMINE LIMITING MONEY IN POLITICS

### In Plain English...

If this referendum passes, it would create a commission of 15 unpaid citizens to write a report on money in politics.

Among other things, the report would propose language for a new amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would let Congress regulate political contributions and ensure that only people — not corporations or unions — could spend money on campaigns.

This ballot question is being billed as a way for Massachusetts voters to go on record as opposing the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision, which allowed unlimited outside political contributions by corporations.

### A Yes Vote Would:

Establish a commission on limiting money in politics.

*American Promise* — a group established to pass a campaign finance amendment — is the main group pushing for this ballot question. They are working on this issue nationally.

### A No Vote Would:

Not create a commission. Nothing would change.

*There is no official opposition to this ballot question. However, the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance — a conservative fiscal watchdog group — has spoken out against it.*

### Advocates Claim:

#### CITIZENS UNITED

This court case made it so that corporations, unions and people are all treated the same and can pour unlimited amounts of money into politics. But average people don't have the money to compete against billion-dollar companies.

In this system, we do not have equal representation. Overturning Citizens United is critical.

### Opponents Claim:

This court case clarified a cobweb of confusing rules around campaign finance. It created a system that is clear and fair. Everyone knows the rules, and everyone — corporations, unions, individuals — have an equal voice.

How you spend your money is how you express your opinions. This is about freedom of speech.

#### A 28<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT?

Amending the U.S. Constitution is the only way to overturn a Supreme Court decision.

Politicians use campaign finance regulations to silence their opponents. This amendment would further limit our freedoms.

#### IMPACT

Nineteen states have called on Congress to overturn Citizens United. If more states join the effort, there will be more pressure on politicians to act.

A commission that writes a report is a waste of time and resources. At the end of the day, it won't change anything since Citizens United is settled law.

### Other Things To Know:

- Amending the U.S. Constitution requires support from two-thirds of the U.S. House and Senate as well as ratification by three-quarters of the states (38 states).
- In 2012, Massachusetts lawmakers passed resolutions to "restore ... fair elections to the people." Advocates of this ballot question say it shows that people — not just Massachusetts politicians — support limiting corporate and union money in politics.

# Ballot Question 3

## MAINTAINING TRANSGENDER PROTECTIONS IN PUBLIC PLACES

### In Plain English...

This referendum asks voters whether to keep a 2016 state law that prohibits discrimination against transgender people in places open to the public, including restaurants, hospitals, hotels, sports stadiums and gym locker rooms.

Under the 2016 law, if there are separate public spaces for males and females — like restrooms — transgender people can use the space that matches their gender identity, rather than their biology or sex at birth.

### A Yes Vote Would:

Keep the 2016 law on the books, protecting transgender people.

*Freedom For All Massachusetts — an transgender advocacy group — is leading the effort to keep the 2016 law.*

### A No Vote Would:

Repeal the 2016 law that protects transgender people.

*The Massachusetts Family Institute — which says it affirms Judeo-Christian values — helped initiate the referendum.*

### Advocates Of The 2016 Law Claim:

#### SAFETY IN BATHROOMS

Since the law went into effect, there's been no increase in safety incidents in places like restrooms. The law makes it safer for transgender people who can face harassment.

### Opponents Of The 2016 Law Claim:

Opportunistic men or convicted sex offenders could exploit the 2016 law and pretend to be transgender, so they can access women's spaces — like locker rooms and restrooms.

#### DEFINING GENDER IDENTITY

The 2016 law only protects someone if their gender identity is sincerely held and part of their core identity. It does not protect people falsely claiming to be transgender.

There is no way to distinguish between those who are supposed to be protected and those using the law to prey on vulnerable people.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Industries come to Massachusetts because they can attract employees from all backgrounds. North Carolina's "bathroom bill" prompted boycotts and cost the state billions.

There are no long-term economic consequences. North Carolina's economy is now doing fine, despite a contentious fight over its "bathroom bill."

### Other Things To Know:

- This is the first statewide referendum on transgender rights in the country.
- The federal government does not explicitly prohibit discrimination against transgender people. The Trump administration's Justice Department reversed an Obama-era interpretation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that protected transgender people.
- State laws prohibit discrimination against transgender people in housing, employment, credit and public education. These laws are not being challenged.
- A UCLA study found no change in the number of criminal incidents in bathrooms after Massachusetts cities and towns passed their own laws protecting transgender people in public accommodations.