

Welcome!
This website is about voting
in the City of Brockton, MA.

Click on the links to the left for information.

Population of the City of Brockton	94,304
Number of registered voters in November 2007	42,837
Number of registered voters at this posting in September 2008	44,123

Presidential Election Day 2008

IS

Tuesday, November 4th.

All polling places are open from 7:00 AM until 8:00 PM.

If you are in line at 8:00 PM, you *will* be able to vote.

Read on for helpful information, or click on a topic:

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Where to Vote

If you are already registered, and if you are not sure where to vote:

- Call the Elections Commission: 508-580-7117 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.
Extra hours on October 15th: 8:30 AM - 8:00 PM, *or*
- Go in to the Elections Commission office in City Hall, 1st Floor,
next to the elevator, *or*
- Go online to the city's website: www.brockton.ma.us
Then click on "Where do I vote?" on the left. Then fill in your
address, *or*
- Click on "Where do I vote?" on this Web page above-left, and type in
your address.

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Register to Vote

You need to be registered **by 8:00 PM on Wednesday, October 15th**
if you want to vote on November 4th.

Call or go in to the Elections Commission in City Hall, 1st floor, next to the elevator.

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Extra hours on October 15th: 8:30 AM - 8:00 PM

- If you register(ed) at the Registry of Motor Vehicles/RMV, save your receipt.
- If you know you will need an Absentee Ballot, apply right away. You have until Noon the day before the election. You can vote on an Absentee Ballot if:
 - you know you will not be in Brockton on election day, *or*
 - you cannot get to the polls because of a disability,
or for example, if you know you will be in the hospital, *or*
 - your religion doesn't permit you vote at the polls.

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How to Vote At Your Polling Place

- **Sign in.** Say your street address first. You will be given a ballot.
- **Vote** in any vacant voting booth. Use the marker in the booth to mark your ballot. Fill in the ovals next to your choices. If you want to "write in" someone's name, be sure to also fill in the oval next to the name.

If you make a mistake on your ballot, you can ask for a new ballot. You can ask for up to two new ballots.

- **Sign out.** Say your street address first.
- **Put your own ballot into the voting machine** yourself. Either side up is okay.

That's it!

Important: The Accu-Vote voting machine:

- will not accept a ballot that has no choices marked on it;
- will not accept a ballot that has too many choices marked on it.

If the voting machine does not accept your ballot, a polling official will give you another ballot to mark.

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Practice on a SAMPLE Ballot

Try to read and practice filling out a sample ballot with all the names and ballot questions BEFORE November 4th. You can take your marked ballot into the voting booth with you and copy from it onto the official ballot. You may not show it around, though, to other voters or poll workers.

Look for a practice ballot in these places:

- By about October 10th, go online and visit the city's website at: www.brockton.ma.us The Elections Commission will post SAMPLE ballots. Read under the word BROCKTON to find the ballot for your ward and precinct.
- [On October 21st at the Brockton main library](#), there will be a ballot-study event for new citizens and all other first-time voters. Call 508-580-7890 ext. 205 for information.
- If you are in an educational program, ask if the program is a member of VERA2008 (Voter Education, Registration, and Action campaign: VERA08). VERA's website is: www.nelrc.org/VERA/index.htm VERA distributes practice ballots to its program members.

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Help Yourself Vote

Being able to read English well is NOT a qualification for voting. If you want help:

- Take a friend or family member with you into the voting booth.
- Read and mark a practice ballot or other paper at home. Take it with you into the voting booth to help you remember how you want to vote.
- For state elections, fill in the "Voter Checklist" on the back of The Official Massachusetts red booklet called, "Information for Voters." You can take the Checklist when you vote to help you remember your choices.
- Before you go into the polling place, read the ballots that are posted outside.
- Ask a polling official for help. Two poll workers will be in the booth with you.
- If you make a mistake on a ballot, just ask a poll worker for a new ballot. You can ask for up to two more ballots.

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The November 4th Ballot: Two Sides in 2008 Explanations and Texts

Side One: Choose:

President and Vice President; state and county officials

See [Practice on a SAMPLE ballot](#).

Side Two: Vote "Yes" or "No" Questions

- **Massachusetts statewide ballot questions.**

It will be helpful to understand these words:

- "Proposed" is 'suggested.'
- An "initiative" is something that is started first.
- A "petition" is a 'request.'

These "Questions" are three "laws proposed by initiative petition."

Every voter in Massachusetts will be asked to "approve" ("**Yes**") or not approve ("**No**") each of the 3 petitions, or "requests."

The *official* text of each ballot question is in The Massachusetts Official, red booklet called "*Information for Voters: The 2008 Ballot Questions*" booklet. Each household with a registered voter receives one booklet in the mail in September. This red booklet also has arguments IN FAVOR of and arguments AGAINST each ballot question.

Here are BrocktonGOTV's *unofficial summaries* of the questions and what your vote "Yes" or "No" will mean:

(1) State Personal Income Tax

Summary: A new law to lower the state personal income tax rate from the current 5% to 2.65% from January 1, 2009 to January 1, 2010. The request is to then eliminate (means: "get rid of" or "remove") the state personal income tax beginning on or after January 1, 2010.

A vote "**Yes**" means that you "approve" of this request and that you want it to become the new law.

A vote "**No**" means that you do not approve of the request and that you do not want it to become the new law. The state personal income tax would stay the same as it is now: 5%.

(2) Marijuana

Summary: A new law to change the current criminal penalties (means: "fines" or "punishment") to civil penalties for possession of one ounce or less of marijuana. (Civil penalties are less than criminal penalties.)

A vote "**Yes**" means that you "approve" of this request and that you want it to become the new law.

A vote "**No**" means that you do not "approve" of the request and that you do not want it to become the new law. The current laws about having marijuana would stay the same as they are now.

(3) Dog Racing

Summary: A new law to start on January 1, 2010. The law would prohibit (means: "forbid," "not allow") dog races any place where people are betting money or making wagers (means: "gambling" or "betting") other things on which dogs they think will win.

If this request becomes the new law, a person who does bet money or gambles on which dogs will win would have to pay a penalty (means: "a fine") of \$20,000.

A vote "**Yes**" means that you "approve" of this request and that you want it to be the new law.

A vote "No" means that you do not "approve" and that you do not want this to be the new law. All the current laws about dog racing would stay the same as they are now.

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Also on Side Two:

- **Three "City of Brockton Proposition 2 ½ Override Questions"**

Explanations: There are many newspaper articles online to read about these questions. You can Google "Proposition 2 ½ in Brockton Massachusetts".

It will be helpful to understand these words:

- '2 ½' is 2 ½%, or 2.5%. "Proposition 2 ½" is a Massachusetts state law that was passed by the voters in 1980. It is often called "Prop 2 ½" -- "Prop two and a half." *Source: "What is Prop 2 ½?" at www.lexopengov.com/prop2_and_one_half.aspx*

The law is complicated, so please see the "Sources" as you read below. In summary, this law tells cities and towns in Massachusetts how much they can bill their residents for taxes in a year, and the law also tells how by much -- by what percent -- cities or towns can raise taxes from one year to the next: by not more than 2 ½%.

If a city or town wants to raise more taxes than the Prop 2 ½ law allows, the city can ask its residents to vote to "override" the law. Brockton's City Council voted to ask the city's residents to vote on whether the City can raise taxes for the purposes it is requesting.

- "Override" is 'over' + 'ride.' To override a question or a decision or a law is to make it not mean anything anymore.

Brockton voters might override just one question on the November 4th ballot, or, they might override two questions, or all three questions.

If the majority of voters overrides a question or questions, it will mean that they agree it is okay for the City of Brockton to collect more taxes for the purposes in the question(s).

If voters override the law, Prop 2 ½ also says that cities and towns must use the additional taxes for the purposes that they requested during the first year of the new taxes. After the first year, the additional tax monies go into the "General Fund" and can be used wherever needed. *Source: "David Dahl, September 27, 2008, "Tax*

hikes on Nov. 4 ballot in Brockton, Walpole, Needham"
www.boston.com/bostonglobe/regional_editions/overridecentral/

Texts

- To "assess" is, in this case, to send a bill for taxes.

The full, *official* texts of the 3 ballot questions are below. We have *unofficially* added what happens if each question passes or does not pass and what happens if all 3 questions pass or do not pass:

- 1.** Shall the City of Brockton be allowed to assess an additional \$1,130,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of providing additional police officers and police patrols coverage in the Brockton Police Department (\$780,000) and additional firefighters in the Brockton Fire Department (\$350,000) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008?

If Question 1. passes: An average home-owner in Brockton will pay an additional \$30.96 in taxes. *Source: Mayor Harrington's office.* The Police Department will hire 10 patrolmen, and the fire department will hire 6 firefighters. These positions have been vacant because of the budget. *Source: Christine Legere, August 21, 2008:*
www.boston.com/news/local/Massachusetts/articles/2008/08/21/tax_hikes_part_of_nov_vote/

If Question 1. does not pass: "Coverage" for the police and fire departments will stay the same as it is now under the current budget.

- 2.** Shall the City of Brockton be allowed to assess an additional \$210,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of providing additional funding to the Brockton Public Libraries for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2008 for the purpose of providing additional staffing and materials?

If Question 2 passes: An average home-owner in Brockton will pay an additional \$5.72 in taxes. *Source: Mayor Harrington's office.* The Brockton Public Libraries will return to their full staff and library hours. *Source: Ibid. Christine Legere, August 21, 2008.*

If Question 2 does not pass: "Staffing and materials" at the libraries will stay the same as they are now under the current budget.

- 3.** Shall the City of Brockton be allowed to assess an additional \$2,250,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of providing additional funding to the Brockton Public Schools for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2008 for the purpose of meeting educational reform funding requirements and transportation?

If Question 3 passes: An average home-owner in Brockton will pay an additional \$61.28 in taxes. *Source: Mayor Harrington's office.* The Brockton Public Schools will get back use of 27 buses for school transportation and implement required reforms. *Source: Christine Legere, July 31, 2008: www.boston.com/news/localarticles/2008/07/31/council_puts_tax_hikes_on_nov_ballot/*

If Question 3 does not pass: "Reform and transportation" for the public schools will stay the same as they are now under the current budget.

If all 3 questions pass: An average home-owner in Brockton will pay \$97.96 in additional taxes. *Source: Mayor Harrington's office.* The city will spend the additional money as requested in the Questions.

If all 3 questions do not pass: None of the questions will be funded, and all services will stay the same as they are now under the current budget.

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