

To Board of Selectmen:

Submitted herewith is a request for your unbiased consideration of the recall petition I plan to offer for town meeting approval April 1st. Specifically, I ask that you consider the following in response to the Government and Bylaws unfavorable recommendation before your own endorsements in the voter information booklets. In each paragraph below I restate the Government and Bylaws position and a counter argument.

1. Government and Bylaw Position. “There are strong state ethics laws in this state which would allow most of the reasons that a recall would be used to be done by the state”

To my knowledge there is no law that allows the state to unelect any elected official. It can only be done by the same process used to elect officials. I have contacted the Attorney Generals Office for clarification on this. I believe selectmen need to also contact the Attorney General and ascertain if the state can undo the election process by any means other than elections by the voters. How long might such a process take, even if allowable?

2. Government and Bylaw Position. “It would discourage people from running for office”.

Why? The petition specifically exempts judgmental activities inherent to the duty of the office from recall. Why would anybody faithfully acting in accordance with the powers delegated to the offices be discouraged. The recall provision only provides for recall of officials for actions contrary to the letter of the law, and violations of laws they swear to uphold.

3. Government and Bylaw Position. “It would require the Town to take on the substantial financial burden associated with hiring lawyers to oversee the recall petition process.”

Does the town have to take on a substantial financial burden associated with hiring lawyers to oversee the normal election process? I understand the polls are monitored only to ensure people are freely allowed to vote without intimidation by duly sworn and authorized volunteers, and or the Rockport Police. I have asked the attorney general office to comment on whether anything but normal voting protections and procedures would be required. I would ask selectmen to do the same.

4. Government and Bylaw Position. “It would allow the small number of 20 voters to start the process.”

Each of the 85 or so Massachusetts Municipalities that have recall petitions have different requirements for initial affidavits. However 4 Towns actually allow a single registered voter to begin the process. The Towns of Mansfield, Medfield, North Reading, and Norwood allow one voter to start an affidavit. The 2020 populations of these locales were 23,860, 12,799, 15, 554, and 31, 611 according to data from Wikipedia. Numbers for starting the process are necessarily arbitrary but hardly unreasonable especially as every recall petition in the state has higher thresholds as the process unfolds.

5: Government and Bylaw Position. “GBL believes in respecting the electoral process.”

This recall petition does nothing BUT respect the electoral process. It recognizes the electoral process as the means to reaffirm past voters decisions as well as overturn them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Zenas Seppala, Lead Petitioner, March 13, 2023