

Board of Selectmen Ballot Question Policy

Chapter 180 of the Acts of 1996 requires the Sudbury Board of Selectmen to provide registered voters the following information for any ballot question submitted solely to Town voters (other than a ballot pursuant to M.G.L. ch.53, §18A): (1) the full text of such question; (2) a fair and concise summary of such question; and (3) arguments for and against such question. See Attachment.

Further requirements include the following:

- The required information is to be sent to the voters at least 7 days before such an election.
- The Board of Selectmen, or when designated, Town Counsel, shall seek written arguments from the principal proponents and opponents of each question.
- The Board of Selectmen shall designate a date for receipt for such arguments and shall provide notice of such 14 days before the date arguments are to be received.
- The Board of Selectmen shall determine those best able to present the arguments for and against each question.
- If no argument is received within the time allowed, Town Counsel shall prepare such argument.
- No argument shall contain more than 250 words.

The requirements of this law will be implemented as follows for any ballot questions to be submitted for an Annual Town Election or a Special Town Election.

- Notice of proposed ballot questions and a request for written arguments for and against the questions will be posted on the Town website at least or 46 days before the election **plus additional days as needed to allow Board of Selectmen meetings for actions listed below.** The Board of Selectmen will also reach out to relevant parties including petitioners for citizen questions and ballot question committees.
- The Board of Selectmen will determine those persons best able to present the arguments for and against each question in an open meeting. In the absence of submission, Town Counsel will prepare the argument.
- Written arguments for and against ballot questions will be reviewed by Town Counsel for legal compliance. Neither Town Counsel nor the Board of Selectmen will review or edit the written arguments for substance, opinion, or accuracy.

Days before election	Action	Purpose
46 + days for BOS meetings	Notice of proposed ballot questions and request for written arguments	
39 + days for BOS meetings	BOS decides authors for pro and con arguments	To allow 14 days before due to Town Counsel
35+ days for BOS meetings	Wording of final ballot questions to Town Clerk	To comply with state ballot law
25 + days for BOS meetings	Written arguments submitted to Town Counsel	To allow 7 days for Town Counsel review and submission to BOS
18 + days for BOS meetings	BOS approves final warrant	
18 days	Delivery to printer	To allow printer 7 days before mailing date
11 days	Delivery to Post Office	To allow 4 days for mail
7 days	Posting and receipt of warrant	

Approved by the Board of Selectmen February 7, 2017.