



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

September 11, 2014

Dear Honorable Members of the Board:

A fair, equitable and transparent electoral system forms the foundation of our democracy and of good, responsive government. I know you agree. Thus I appreciate the Board's desire to ensure that fairness, equity and transparency are reflected in our election laws.

The ordinance before you tonight is clearly well-intentioned, but it is with the greatest respect that I must also acknowledge that it is flawed. One thing I'm sure we have all learned from our years of public service is that bad legislation can do far greater harm than good, especially when it impacts the very foundation of our democratic process. The proposed ordinance leaves glaring gaps that effectively politicizing our planning and zoning boards, a grave move considering these critical boards are intended to remain outside the political process. If passed, I will veto this legislation.

But the work of ensuring fair, equitable and transparent elections is far from over. My administration will immediately begin pursuing sweeping clean election reforms by embarking on the following efforts:

- To truly increase participation and equity both for candidates and voters, we will pursue campaign finance reform via the adoption of the best system to publicly fund "clean" elections.
- To make voting more accessible to all, we will seek to adopt reforms aimed at improving election logistics and increasing participation, including but not limited to holding state and local elections on the same day, which could increase both participation and produce cost savings.
- To achieve the above goals and to increase electoral fairness, equity, access and participation, we will form a time-limited task-force to work with a broad swath of the community on these goals.

I believe it would best serve our residents if the members of the Board of Aldermen would join my administration in this effort.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Curtatone
Mayor

