

QUESTION

7

Single-Family Homes

IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

This question asks voters if the state should create a cap for how much land cities and towns can require to build a single-family home, relaxing zoning regulations in some municipalities and streamlining the permitting process to build on smaller lot sizes.

CommonWealth
— BEACON —

ELECTION **2026** 

YES

A YES VOTE WOULD...

Cap the lot size requirement for single-family homes across the state at 5,000 square feet and limit frontage requirements to no more than 50 feet in areas served by public sewer and water.

PROPOSERS CLAIM

- In Massachusetts, local governments generally have the power to set minimum lot size requirements for new construction, leading to a patchwork of zoning regulations.
- Massachusetts's high minimum lot size requirements have suppressed the construction of smaller, lower-cost homes and contributed to the state's severe housing shortage.
- Cities and towns can use lot size requirements to restrict the number of residents and exclude lower-income buyers from their communities.

The Legalize Starter Homes campaign is led by Andrew Mikula, a Pioneer Institute senior housing fellow, and supported by pro-housing organizations like Abundant Housing Massachusetts.

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

- The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities would be tasked with creating and enforcing regulations for compliance.
- A task force convened by Gov. Maura Healey projects that the state must build 222,000 more homes between 2025 and 2035 to meet growing demand.
- In 2021, lawmakers passed the MBTA Communities housing law, which required cities and towns served by the MBTA system to zone for multi-family districts. Several dozen communities objected to what they saw as a weakening of local control under the law, bringing a handful of lawsuits that were ultimately unsuccessful.
- Massachusetts single-family home prices were at the national average in 1980, but have since increased more than any other state. The median single-family home price jumped 10 percent between 2023 and 2024, up to \$610,000.

NO

A NO VOTE WOULD...

Leave lot size restrictions and utilities requirements as they are — largely a matter of local control. Cities and towns are generally allowed to require lots bigger than 5,000 square feet and significant setbacks for new construction.

OPPOSERS CLAIM

- Overriding local land use decisions could increase density in municipalities not equipped to handle it.
- Tailored local control over zoning preserves local character and infrastructure like school, water, and sewer systems.
- Lawmakers have also expressed concerns that this housing policy matter requires fine-tuning (around sewer access definitions, for instance) that they say is not well-suited for a ballot measure.

The opposition includes groups like the Massachusetts Municipal Association, a local government trade group that wants to preserve local control, and some local groups of residents across the state.