

HOUSE No. 4985

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carmine Lawrence Gentile and Alice Hanlon Peisch

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act authorizing remote participation at town meetings in the town of Wayland.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>6/27/2022</i>
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>	<i>6/27/2022</i>

HOUSE No. 4985

By Representatives Gentile of Sudbury and Peisch of Wellesley, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4985) of Carmine Lawrence Gentile and Alice Hanlon Peisch (by vote of the town) that the town of Wayland be authorized to allow remote and hybrid participation at town meetings in said town. Election Laws. [Local Approval Received.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act authorizing remote participation at town meetings in the town of Wayland.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding chapter 39 of the General Laws, or any general or special
2 law or charter provision to the contrary, the town of Wayland may hold annual and special town
3 meetings with voters located in a common, physical location, fully remote or partially remote, to
4 be known as a hybrid town meeting.

5 SECTION 2. Prior to holding a fully remote or hybrid town meeting, as authorized under
6 section 1, the select board shall appoint a committee to gather information and present a
7 proposed plan to hold such a meeting. The committee shall include but not be limited to: (i) the
8 moderator;(ii) a member of the select board; (iii) the town clerk: and (iv) no fewer than 4
9 registered voters of the town. Such committee shall be subject to the open meeting laws, public
10 records laws and conflict of interest laws, and shall hold no fewer than 2 public hearings prior to
11 presentation of the plan to the select board at a special meeting, which hearings and special
12 meeting shall be noticed by posting for 2 weeks on the town website a highly visible notice

13 setting forth the time, date and place of the hearing and special meeting. The plan shall include
14 information describing the technology to be used, the protections embedded therein to ensure
15 that only registered voters can participate and that the votes will be secure.

16 SECTION 3. Following approval of the proposed plan by the select board, the committee
17 shall provide such assistance to the moderator as may be needed to design and implement a
18 testing plan for the remote technology; provided, however, that no remote or hybrid town
19 meeting may be held under this act until the moderator and select board have successfully
20 conducted a mock hybrid town meeting of at least 100 voters.

21 SECTION 4. Any town meeting held remotely or in hybrid form in accordance with this
22 act shall be recorded and the recording shall be made available for public viewing on the town's
23 website for no fewer than 30 days following the conclusion of the meeting. The recording shall
24 also be a permanent record of the town, subject to disclosure upon request.

25 SECTION 5. All actions taken at a remote or hybrid town meeting held in accordance
26 with this act shall be ratified, validated and confirmed to the same extent as if the town meeting
27 had been conducted entirely in person.

28 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon its passage.