

II. Revisions or Amendment of a Charter

(This process is often referred to as a Special Act, Home Rule Petition, Governor’s Bill)

Process

1. Voters, the Mayor or Town Council can initiate a petition (Section 7-9) and must collect signatures from at least 10% of all registered voters at the most recent town election.
2. The Town Council can accept or reject the petition.
3. IF the TC rejects a petition from a mayor, it is dead. If it was submitted by residents, there is a process for residents to resubmit after gaining an additional 5% of the number of registered voter’s signatures.
4. **The supplemental petition, or the resubmitted petition is voted on by the town voters in a special election.**

Characteristics

1. Initiated by voters*, or a mayor or city council, or legislative body
2. Can pertain to any law, including for a charter, related to that city or town
3. Can happen at any time
4. Requires a majority vote of the Town Council
5. No limitations on what can be revised or amended in the Charter
6. Fewer process requirements
7. No requirement for voters to vote or for information to be distributed**
8. **Requires the approval of the Governor and the two branches of the Legislature.**

Legality

1. Allowed by the Home Rule Amendment, Article LXXXIX the Massachusetts Constitution, Article II Section 8
2. Implemented by the Home Rule Procedures Act (Chapter 43B)

*Residents can initiate the process but must follow the “Initiative Petition”, Section 7-9 in the present Charter

**However, if the petition is deemed significant it may be decided by the mayor or city council (the presenters of the petition) that it should be approved by the voters of the city or town.

