



NEWS RELEASE

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September 20, 2026

Massachusetts Voter Registration Records Dispute Leads to Lawsuit Against Brookline and Town Clerk

Plaintiffs seek court order compelling disclosure after two public records requests went unanswered

BROOKLINE, MA — The Committee for Massachusetts Voter Identification Ballot Question and its chairman, Jeffrey Cohen, have filed a lawsuit against the Town of Brookline and Town Clerk Ben Kaufman, alleging violations of the Massachusetts Public Records Law after the town failed to respond to two requests for voter registration information.

The complaint, filed September 14, 2026, in Norfolk Superior Court, alleges that Brookline failed to comply with its legal obligations to respond to legitimate public records requests within 10 days, the time required by state law.

The plaintiffs contend that they were left with no reasonable alternative but to seek judicial intervention after repeated attempts to obtain the requested records went unanswered.

Secretary of State directed requesters to municipalities

According to the plaintiffs, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin directed them to obtain voter registration information from individual Massachusetts cities and towns. The state has repeatedly refused to provide statewide voter files to the plaintiffs.

The plaintiffs followed Galvin's direction, submitting a public records request to Brookline on August 1, 2026, and a second, substantially similar request through the town's online portal on August 18.

According to the complaint, Brookline did not respond to either request, provide any of the requested records, or respond to a follow-up email seeking the status of the initial request.

The complaint states that, as of its September 14 filing, 29 business days had elapsed since the first request and 18 business days since the second, without the production of any responsive documents or information. State law requires a response within 10 business days.

Lawsuit seeks court-ordered compliance

The plaintiffs are asking Norfolk Superior Court to declare that the requested documents are public records subject to disclosure and to order Brookline to produce all responsive records within 10 calendar days of a court order.

The complaint also seeks reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, along with consideration of whether the defendants acted in good faith and whether exemplary damages are warranted under the Public Records Law.

The lawsuit names both the Town of Brookline and Town Clerk Ben Kaufman, in his official capacity. The complaint identifies the clerk as responsible for receiving and responding to public records requests.

The plaintiffs allege that Brookline's failure to respond violates G.L. c. 66, § 10. The allegations have not yet been adjudicated, and the court has not determined whether the defendants violated the law.

A broader question of government transparency

The Brookline dispute raises broader concerns about public access to government records and the ability of Massachusetts residents to obtain information necessary for meaningful civic oversight.

When citizens follow the procedures established by state officials to obtain public records, they should be able to expect a timely response from the government agencies responsible for maintaining those records.

The plaintiffs argue that the alleged failure to respond in Brookline is another example of the transparency concerns facing Massachusetts government.

They also point to the state's continued failure, according to the committee, to implement a 2024 ballot referendum question that received 72% voter support and called for audits of the Massachusetts Legislature.

The committee views both matters as part of a larger need for government accountability, accessible public records, and meaningful oversight of public institutions.

Seeking access to public records

The Committee for Massachusetts Voter Identification Ballot Question is a registered political committee whose stated purpose includes promoting election integrity and supporting a voter identification ballot question in Massachusetts.

Its members research and analyze public records concerning voter registration, including whether voter rolls are current, accurate, and compliant with applicable law.

The plaintiffs are asking the court to compel Brookline to fulfill its obligations under the Massachusetts Public Records Law and provide access to the requested voter registration information.

Case: *The Committee for Massachusetts Voter Identification Ballot Question and Jeffrey Cohen v. Ben Kaufman, in his official capacity as Clerk of the Town of Brookline, and Town of Brookline, Massachusetts*

Court: Norfolk Superior Court

Docket No.: 2682CV01051

Complaint filed: September 14, 2026

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