



**Contact:**

Jennifer Abbott– 617-807-0371  
Frieda Dweck  
Andrea Steenstrup  
[yesnewtoncharter@gmail.com](mailto:yesnewtoncharter@gmail.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 26, 2017

**Yes for New Charter Challenges Move to Obstruct Charter Approval Process**

**Newton, MA** — Yesterday, 14 Newton City Councilors filed legislation to reduce the size of the City Council. They intend to pursue this action through a Home Rule petition.

This move by opponents of the new charter is meant to confuse the public and obstruct a years-long democratic process that will culminate on Election Day, November 7.

The proposal comes at the eleventh hour, without any hearings, public process, or research. It is irresponsible and disrespectful to the voters of Newton, who overwhelmingly approved the formation of the Charter Commission in 2015 and elected its 9 members.

A Home Rule petition requires passage by the City Council, approval by the Mayor and state legislature, and then comes back to Newton voters for a referendum. Once the public is able to give feedback, some co-docketers may have a change of heart. There is no guarantee that this process will be successful and end with the desired result: a smaller City Council.

The Commission spent 17 months conducting exhaustive research and provided opportunity for public input at every turn. Their final recommendations, approved by all 9 members, are a comprehensive set of coherent changes that (among other important updates) reduce the size of the council to 12 members, require that all seats be elected citywide, preserve ward representation, and impose term limits on all elected officials.

The proposal filed yesterday by incumbent city councilors deals only with the size and composition of the council. It is one that the Charter Commission debated and ultimately rejected. It will not deliver a complete package of improvements to city government.

Under the proposal, 50% of the council would have no accountability to most voters. While elected by 500–1,000 votes, they could hold positions of significant citywide power such as Committee chairs and even Council President. This is a bad structure: still too large, unrepresentative, and lacking in term limits.

This last-minute and self-serving proposal by sitting councilors is ill-conceived, narrowly-focused, and obstructionist. It is a the perfect example of why we need to approve the Charter Commission's thoughtful proposal on November 7.

###