

Why I am Voting Yes on Ballot Question A - it's time to fix county government

Mark R. Forest, October 15, 2026.

Cape Codders deserves a county government that spends responsibly, follows the law, delivers effective services, and answers to the people it serves.

Voting YES on Question A gives Cape Codders an opportunity to examine how county government works and recommend meaningful improvements.

Our county charter was approved by the Legislature and adopted in 1988. Given the uniqueness of its structure, it requires a thorough review every five years. So far, the record is not good.

For example, in 2020, the charter review was primarily focused on the recall of a County Commissioner. After many months of work, that effort failed. The proposed Ballot 2024 ballot question – expanding the power of the county Assembly - was voted down by Cape voters because it came out of the blue... not out of a thorough an open, transparent charter review process. The ambiguous language it attempted to clarify was never even outlined or explained on the ballot measure. Local Editorials, and even the League of Woman voters opposed it.

When the charter review process started up again in 2025, strong disagreements quickly emerged among the panel members, the Committee Chairman resigned, and the job was never finished.

A comprehensive and transparent review of the County government & the Charter is important. It is long overdue, and it is time to finish the job.

Question A would establish a charter study commission with an elected representative from every Cape Cod town. It would examine our governing structure, hear from residents, and recommend changes to the voters. Any proposed changes must be explained and presented to the voters. The voters have the final say.

The study commission will examine if responsibilities are clearly defined? Are financial decisions transparent? Are departments organized efficiently? Does the county government provide the regional leadership and the services that our fifteen towns need? Do we need 18 paid politicians with benefits overseeing a budget that is roughly the size of Truro's?

A thorough review should identify what works, what needs improvement, and how the charter language can be made clear and consistent. The panel will examine ways to improve accountability and transparency.

Every town on Cape Cod has undergone a review like this, and in some cases several times. In 2024, nearly 72 percent of Massachusetts voters supported authorizing an audit of the Legislature. It is time we bring that same passion & commitment to accountability & transparency here on Cape Cod.

We should welcome this scrutiny. Taxpayers deserve answers, employees deserve effective leadership, and residents deserve a voice in shaping their government. This is why I am voting yes on Question A— and I urge you to do as well. It's time to fix the charter, and fix county government.