

At their May 20, 2026 meeting, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the below statement:

### SELECT BOARD STATEMENT: OPPOSITION TO ARTICLE 3

The Select Board voted 4 to 1 to oppose Article 3.

This citizen petition proposes a fundamental, structural change to Sudbury's governing framework - our Town Charter. While we understand that this proposal stems from recent, highly emotional frustrations in our community, we must remember that a Charter amendment is permanent. We should never rewrite our town's constitution as a quick reaction to a temporary political dispute.

While the Board fundamentally agrees that accountability is essential, Article 3 is poorly drafted and lacks meaningful public review, and would weaken Sudbury's governance structure in three distinct ways:

**First, there are no stated grounds for a recall.** The language is dangerously vague. It does not require a legal finding of malfeasance or misconduct. Without explicit legal guardrails, this opens the door to costly recall elections based on simple policy disagreements.

**Second, the 10% signature threshold is too low.** A small, highly motivated minority could force an expensive special election, potentially allowing a losing candidate's supporters to overturn the will of the majority. To put this into perspective, our surrounding neighbors, including Acton, Maynard and Hudson, require a much higher threshold - typically 20%.

**Third, the 3-month protection window is too short.** Allowing a recall process to begin just 90 days into a new term completely changes how people govern. Public officials will hesitate to make complex, long-term decisions for the good of Sudbury if they know a recall can be triggered almost immediately. That does not strengthen accountability; it incentivizes short-term politics.

Ultimately, this proposal will discourage residents from running for office. Campaigns require significant time, energy and money. Forcing candidates to face the threat of a second campaign within months favors those with the flexibility, time, and fundraising networks to sustain back-to-back elections.

That burden will not fall evenly. It directly discourages working parents, young professionals, and residents without deep pockets from ever stepping forward to serve their town. Furthermore, the simultaneous successor election means a replacement candidate could ultimately be elected with far fewer votes than the official originally chosen by the broader electorate.

In short, Article 3 is flawed because it fails on all three fronts: it provides no legal defined grounds for a recall, it sets a signature threshold that is far too low compared to our neighbors, and it implements a defenseless 3-month window that paralyzes effective governance.

Changes of this magnitude should go through a comprehensive Charter Review process with broad public engagement, and careful legal analysis. Article 3 is simply not ready for prime time.

The Select Board majority recommends a vote against Article 3 tonight, so we can do this work the right way, together. Thank you.