The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 6,900 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters concerning their quality of life and work and their civic engagement during their studies at MIT. We support all measures that increase the civic engagement of the MIT community and strengthen student voices in politics, and thus strongly support H.692.

H.692 would enable the municipalities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to elect to allow the non-citizens of their communities to vote in municipal elections, upon the conditions that they continue to reside in the municipality and also intend to undergo naturalization in the future. This would give a political voice to a large minority population, which has previously gone unrepresented.

Cambridge’s residents come from many different nations, with 17.8% of its residents being non-citizens. In particular, international MIT graduate students, who comprise 41% of the total MIT graduate student population, represent approximately 2.5% of the total Cambridge population. Many of these students become permanent residents, live in Cambridge for many years while completing their degrees, and often continue to work in the United States after graduation. While they pay Massachusetts taxes, raise families, and become integral members of our community, they have no representation, even at the municipal level. The issues faced by our international graduate students are unique yet broad, concerning highly discussed topics of the Cambridge City Council such as transportation and housing. Thus, they deserve to have representation where topics that have such a dramatic impact on their lives are discussed.

The notion to allow non-citizen residents the right to vote is not new and is currently in law in 11 states. Given the national diversity of our community, we believe it is time to similarly give a political voice to our international students, and as such strongly support the passage H.692.

Prepared by the External Affairs Board on behalf of the MIT Graduate Student Council. April, 2019.

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1 [Cambridge CDD@344](#)
2 [MIT enrollment data](#)
3 [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)