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Mass. English Plus Coalition, 126 High St., Boston, MA 02110

November 1, 2000

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the City Council,

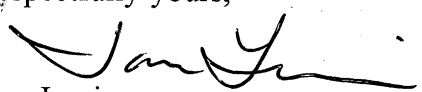
As the Director of an agency which promotes equal access for English Language learners and civic participation for immigrants, I urge your support for a home rule petition allowing for non-citizen residents in Cambridge the right to vote in School Committee elections.

Cambridge is one of the most diverse communities in our state and has always supported the value of cultural and linguistic diversity. If Cambridge indeed takes pride in the diversity of its residents, which include many recent and older immigrants who are not yet citizens, it should assist them to participate fully in the life of the City, including the political process. As you know, most immigrants want to become citizens but are prevented to do so for a variety of reasons, one of which is not having the opportunities to learn English. Another is many immigrants are asylees who are currently waiting to have their status adjusted. These immigrants pay taxes, they contribute to the economy of the city, they enrich the cultural life of the city, they sent their children to the public school. At the minimum, they should be allowed the opportunity to have a voice in the implementation of policies affecting their children.

Most non-English speaking immigrants we work with are literate in their native language and are very knowledgeable of current events and the politics within this country and their cities, even more so than many native born Americans. They are connected through their access to ethnic papers, radio programs and other sources of translated information. Immigrants will participate in the political process and will cast an informed choice if they are given a chance to do so. I therefore urge your support for Cambridge's resident voting rights initiative that is before the City Council.

Thank you very much.

Respectfully yours,


Tom Louie
Director

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Consent Communication #9

A communication was received from
Ton Louie, Director of Mass. English
Plus coalition transmitting support for a
home rule petition allowing for non-
citizen residents in Cambridge to vote
in School Committee elections.

In City Council November 20, 2000

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