

Resolution Relating to

**PARTY DESIGNATIONS ON MUNICIPAL ELECTION
BALLOTS**

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s): Councilors Roof, Wright,
Hartnett

Introduced: _____

Referred to: _____

Action: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Fifteen

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, under Vermont law (17 V.S.A 2681a. local election ballots) “No political party or other
2 designation shall be listed unless the municipal charter provides for such listing, the town has voted at on earlier
3 election to provide such a listing or, in the absence of previous consideration of the question by the town, the
4 legislative body decides to permit listing;” and

5 WHEREAS, in 2011, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns was unable to find any other municipal
6 charters that have authorized the listing of party designation on local election ballots; and

7 WHEREAS, municipal charters in Barre, Brattelboro, and Windsor, expressly prohibit party
8 designations on ballots for candidates for municipal election; and

9 WHEREAS, St. Albans voted to have its charter changed in the 1990’s to not allow party designation on
10 ballots for municipal candidates; and

11 WHEREAS, Burlingtonians voted in favor of a charter change to not allow party designations on
12 Burlington School Board election ballots in the 1990’s; and

13 WHEREAS, this resolution does not intend to restrict the ability of any political party to assemble
14 caucuses, nominate candidates for municipal office, or support candidates in any way currently allowed by law;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, this resolution does not intend to restrict any candidate for municipal office from running
17 as a member of any political party, to include their affiliated party on campaign or other materials, or to otherwise
18 educate voters of their party affiliation; and

19 WHEREAS, this resolution does not intend to limit the public’s ability to educate themselves or others
20 about the party designation of any candidate or elected municipal official, or limit the public’s ability to hold
21 elected officials accountable for upholding the principles of any given political party on which the public’s
22 support is predicated; and

23 WHEREAS, this resolution intends to foster a local democratic process that encourages an educated
24 voting population that prioritizes candidates’ character and commitment to community over their party
25 affiliation; and

26 WHEREAS, the perception of the political process has been and continues to be viewed by many
27 members of our community as a system perpetually distracted by partisanship; and

28 WHEREAS, we as community leaders have an opportunity to take a practical step towards a less
29 partisan-focused democratic process;

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council directs the Charter Change Committee
31 to consider drafting a charter change to no longer include party designations on official election ballots for
32 candidates for any municipal office and to align its reasoning to do so with the ideals stated herein, with the
33 intention of allowing the community to vote on the matter on the town meeting day ballot in March 2016; and

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Charter Change Committee is asked to report back to the Council
35 no later than the January 4, 2016 City Council meeting.

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