

Record Groups CT

# Massachusetts General Court

Repository:  
Massachusetts Archives  
220 Morrissey Blvd  
Boston, MA 02125

Reviewed 2020-08-03

## Record Group List:

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## **Record Group Descriptions and Related Series:**

**Record Group Number: CT0**

**Record Group Name: General Court**

### **Historical Note:**

The Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay, chartered by the English Crown in 1629, sat as a General Court, which after the 1630 emigration to America became the government of the Massachusetts Bay colony. It consisted of colony freemen (company stockholders); and the governor, deputy governor, and assistants (magistrates) chosen by them. The latter group met separately as a Court of Assistants, but in 1634 its legislative powers were ceded to the General Court as a whole (Mass Recs 1: 117). At the same time it was agreed that freemen were to be represented by elected deputies (Mass Recs 1: 118); from 1644 these met separately as a House of Deputies, leaving the assistants in their nonjudicial capacity to serve in effect as the upper house of the General Court, the designation of Court of Assistants being reserved for their service in a judicial capacity. Current and certain former assistants also functioned executively from 1629 as a standing council. (See: Massachusetts. Council. Agency history record.)

In 1686, the 1629 charter having been revoked, the General Court ceased to function and governing power was in a crown-appointed Council and president (Joseph Dudley, 1686) and then governor (Sir Edmund Andros, 1686-1689) (the Dominion of New England). After the deposition of Andros and a brief interim government by the Council for Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace (Apr.-June 1689), colonial government was reinstated: the governor, deputy governor, and assistants elected in 1686 (Mass Recs 5: 513) resumed office, the assistants as Council serving both as executive body under the governor and as upper house of the General Court, while newly elected deputies (now more often called representatives) formed the lower house.

From 1692, under the charter of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, the General Court chose from among its annually elected members twenty-eight as Council, again to serve as executive body (but now under a crown-appointed governor) and as legislative upper house. The remaining members served as the lower house, regularly designated by 1705 as the House of Representatives.

When representatives elected to the General Court were discharged in Sept. 1774 by Gov. Thomas Gage, they met as scheduled in October and resolved themselves into a provincial congress, three of which governed successively outside Boston until July 1775, when the

General Court reconvened and elected a Council to serve as upper house and as executive body without governor--the resulting government to be known as the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, and from 1776 as the State of Massachusetts Bay. Meanwhile Gage governed in Boston with councilors appointed by royal writ of mandamus, from Aug. 1774 until the British evacuation in Mar. 1776. --Under the 1780 Constitution, the General Court was configured in its modern form, with a Senate as upper house (whose membership was originally elected annually to serve either as senators or councilors, the latter being chosen for an entirely separate executive Council by joint legislative vote), and a House of Representatives as lower house (Const Pt 2, C 1)

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/145429423>

### **Related Series:**

#### **Petitions of 1816 from Maine towns supporting separation of Maine from Massachusetts, 1816**

Identifier: CT0/97X  
Extent: 0.17 cubic feet (1 document box)  
Arranged: Arranged alphabetically by county, thereunder alphabetically by town.  
Notes: Formerly part of state secretary's: Miscellaneous collection, box 17;  
Forms part of: Separation of Maine papers.  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86132299>

#### **Petitions from Maine towns protesting action of the Brunswick Convention, 1816**

Identifier: CT0/98X  
Extent: 0.17 cubic feet (1 document box)  
Arranged: Arranged alphabetically by county, thereunder alphabetically by town.  
Notes: Formerly part of state secretary's: Miscellaneous collection, box 17;  
Forms part of: Separation of Maine papers.  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86095703>

#### **Petitions of 1819 from Maine towns opposing separation of Maine from Massachusetts, 1819**

Identifier: CT0/99X  
Extent: 0.17 cubic feet (1 document box)  
Arranged: Arranged alphabetically by county, thereunder alphabetically by town.

Notes: Removed from original papers for St 1819, c 161 (Massachusetts. Office of the Secretary of State. Passed acts ((M-Ar)229)) by N. Olsberg, Apr. 1979.; Forms part of : Separation of Maine papers.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122419973>

### **Petitions of 1819 from Maine towns supporting separation of Maine from Massachusetts, 1819**

Identifier: CT0/100X

Extent: 0.35 cubic feet (1 document box)

Arranged: Arranged alphabetically by county, thereunder alphabetically by town.

Notes: Removed from original papers for St 1819, c 161 (Massachusetts. Office of the Secretary of State. Passed acts ((M-Ar)229)) by N. Olsberg, Apr. 1979.; Forms part of : Separation of Maine papers.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86095704>

### **Depositions from the town of Lyman, Maine, 1816**

Identifier: CT0/1387X

Extent: 1 file folder (partial document box)

Notes: Formerly part of state secretary's: Miscellaneous collection, box 17; Forms part of: Separation of Maine papers.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122505950>

### **Memorial of Maine legislators supporting separation of Maine from Massachusetts, 1816**

Identifier: CT0/1474X

Extent: 1 file folder (partial document box)

Arranged: Arranged alphabetically by county, thereunder alphabetically by town.

Notes: Formerly part of state secretary's: Miscellaneous collection, box 17; Forms part of: Separation of Maine papers.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122613893>

### **Proceedings of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay, 1629-1686**

Identifier: CT0/1700X

Extent: 1.35 cubic feet (5 volumes)

Copies (series microfilm) 12 microfilm reels ; 35 mm

Copies (volume 2 transcript) 0.17 cubic ft. (1 volume)

Indexes 1 volume in 1 file folder

Arranged: In two subseries:

(1) General Court, including Court of Assistants (volumes 1-2, 4-5)  
(2) House of Deputies (volume 3);  
Arranged within each subseries chronologically by date of meeting.  
Notes: By Thaddeus M. Harris, 1839, pursuant to agreement signed by Joseph  
B. Felt at request of state secretary John P. Bigelow.  
Bound and shelved as: Court records, volumes 1-5 (for volume list  
see: Massachusetts. Council. Legislative records ((M-Ar)1701X))  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/83622662>

### **Resolves respecting the sale of eastern lands, 1781-1811**

Identifier: CT0/2032X  
Extent: 0.35 cubic feet (1 document box)  
Arranged: Arranged chronologically.  
Notes: Forms part of: Eastern Lands papers.  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122506118>

### **Records, 1629-1692**

Identifier: CT0/100X  
Extent: For current extent consult index database  
Database:  
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcsrch/RevolutionarySearchContexts.html>  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/79756796>

### **Commissary of Prisoners of War letterbook, 1777-1778**

Identifier: CT0/2471X  
Extent: 1 folder  
Notes: Originals loaned to Archives for photostatting sometime before 1985.  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/84670783>

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## **Record Group Number: CT1**

## **Record Group Name: General Court – Senate**

### **Historical Note:**

The Committee on the Treasury was first constituted as a standing committee of the Senate in 1848 (Senate Journal, Jan 12, 1848). It was known as the Committee on Ways and Means

from 1896 (Senate Journal, Jan 7, 1896). It considers all legislation affecting the finances of the Commonwealth and other matters referred.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/145429572>

**Related Series:**

**Proceedings of impeachment hearings, 1788-1825**

Identifier: CT1/1750X

Extent: 1 document box

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/988029449>

**Oral Histories with Senate Presidents and Minority Leaders, 2017**

Identifier: CT1/2758

Extent: 6 audio files

Digital Objects: [http://digitalarchives.sec.state.ma.us/uncategorised/collection\\_9b3d5341-e5b6-4d4f-b07c-319bd99d5871/](http://digitalarchives.sec.state.ma.us/uncategorised/collection_9b3d5341-e5b6-4d4f-b07c-319bd99d5871/)

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**Record Group Number: CT1.02**

**Record Group Name: General Court – Senate – Committee on Ways and Means**

**Historical Note:**

The Committee on the Treasury was first constituted as a standing committee of the Senate in 1848 (Senate Journal, Jan 12, 1848). It was known as the Committee on Ways and Means from 1896 (Senate Journal, Jan 7, 1896). It considers all legislation affecting the finances of the Commonwealth and other matters referred.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/145429566>

**Related Series:**

**Committee files, 1976-1983**

Identifier: CT1.02/669

Extent: 3.85 cubic feet (11 document box)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically by year.  
Notes: Files for 1976-1977, 1983 only.  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/78783347>

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## **Record Group Number: CT2**

## **Record Group Name: General Court – House of Representatives**

### **Historical Note:**

The lower house of the General Court consisted in the colonial period of deputies, first elected by freemen in 1634, sitting separately from 1644 to 1686 as the House of Deputies; in the intercharter period (from 1689), in the provincial period (1692-1780), and under the 1780 Constitution of elected representatives, regularly designated by 1705 as the House of Representatives. For further details see: Massachusetts. General Court. Agency history record.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122357368>

### **Related Series:**

#### **Reports of contested elections, 1777-1849 (bulk 1777-1843)**

Identifier: CT2/1151X  
Extent: 3.75 cubic feet (3 record center boxes)  
Arranged: In four subseries:  
(1) Journal of the Committee on Contested Elections, 1780-1834 (bulk 1780-1811)  
(2) Draft of book on contested elections, 1834  
(3) Papers on contested elections, 1783-1843  
(4) Papers for individual town cases, 1777-1843;  
Within each subseries, arranged chronologically.  
Notes: Series removed from: Massachusetts. Office of the secretary of State. House unpassed legislation ((M-Ar) 230), dockets 1134 and 4512-4521 (drawers 82-84). Additional materials from that series (and from: Senate unpassed legislation ((M-Ar)231)) removed for filming



only, as part of subseries (3), 1816-1849, and subseries (4), 1816-1825, then refiled.

Box 1: Subseries (1-3), subseries (4), 1777-1809.

Box 2: Subseries (4), 1809/1810-1812/1813.

Box 3: Subseries (4), 1813-1843.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/80563002>

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## **Record Group Number: CT2.02**

### **Record Group Name: General Court – House of Representatives – Office of the Speaker**

#### **Historical Note:**

Const Pt 2, C 1, S 3, Art 10 provides that the House of Representatives choose its own Speaker. A member of the majority party of that branch of the General Court, the Speaker presides over House sessions, serves as chair of the House Committee on Rules, and nominates the chair and majority party members of the other House standing committees.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122506006>

#### **Related series:**

##### **Speaker's legislative files, 1945-1948**

Identifier: CT2.02/255

Extent: 3.75 cubic feet (3 record center boxes)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically by term, thereunder by subject.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122405629>

##### **Speaker's administrative files, 1944-1948**

Identifier: CT2.02/1383

Extent: 2.5 cubic feet (2 record center boxes)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically by term, thereunder by subject.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86123352>

##### **Speaker's general correspondence, 1944-1948**

Identifier: CT2.02/1384

Extent: 1.25 cubic feet (1 record center box)  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86123350>

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## **Record Group Number: CT2.03**

### **Record Group Name: General Court – House of Representatives – Committee on Rules**

#### **Historical Note:**

Beginning in 1876 each chamber of the Massachusetts General Court appointed a standing Committee on Rules and Orders (House Journal, Jan 5, Jan 10, 1876), known from 1885 as the Committee on Rules. The committees are generally in charge of policy procedures, and consider all resolutions and petitions relating to recess studies, rule changes, and other referred matters that the committees deem necessary to the expeditious actions of the chambers. The two committees may sit concurrently.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/145429563>

#### **Related series:**

##### **Bribery investigation files, 1906**

Identifier: CT2.03/1136X  
Extent: 0.17 cubic feet (1 document box)  
Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/83026721>

##### **Cabinet and post-cabinet reorganization files, 1956-1977**

Identifier: CT2.03/2228X  
Extent: 5 cubic feet (4 record center cartons)  
Notes: Transferred to Archives from Littauer Library, Harvard University, April 13, 2000.  
Series constitutes part of the papers of William Augustus Waldron, an attorney practicing in Boston with an additional career in public administration. He held posts with the New York State Assembly and Constitutional Convention (1937-1938), the federal Dept. of Justice (1942), and the National War Labor Board (1942-1945); and in Massachusetts served with the Special Commission on the Structure of the State Government (1950-1954, from 1952 as executive director), as special assistant attorney general (1962), as

commissioner of administration (1963-1965), and as special counsel to the General Court's House Rules Committee (1969, 1971, 1973-1974) --See also: Massachusetts. Special Commission on the Structure of the State Government. Commission files, 1950-1954 (bulk 1952-1953) ((M-Ar)2227X); Massachusetts. Executive Office for Administration and Finance. Commissioner's administration subject files, 1956-1980 (bulk 1963-1965) ((M-Ar)2226)

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/79843117>

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## **Record Group Number: CT3**

## **Record Group Name: General Court – Sergeant-at-Arms**

### **Historical Note:**

Pursuant to St 1835, c 154 a sergeant-at-arms was appointed by the General Court. The sergeant-at-arms was required to serve processes and execute orders enjoined upon him by either or both branches of the General Court and was to attend members or clerks of either branch charged with a message from one branch to the other. Additional duties included preservation of order among spectators at legislative sessions; appointment and supervision of doorkeepers, watchmen, and assistants; maintenance and inspection of the legislative chambers; and providing security for the State House and grounds.

Subsequent legislation (St 1881, c 275; St 1887, c 128; see also PS c 5) added to and more clearly defined the custodial duties of the office. During the reorganization of state government in 1919, such responsibilities as the purchase of furniture, equipment, and fixtures were transferred to the superintendent of buildings (St 1919, c 350, ss 19, 22). In 1902 the sergeant-at-arms was granted powers of arrest equal to those of the Boston police for criminal offenses committed in or around the State House. St 1890, c 456 instructed the sergeant-at-arms to prepare and keep docket books of legislative agents and counsel. This function was transferred to the state secretary's office by St 1973, c 981.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/145429235>

### **Related series:**

### **Portrait photographs of Senate presidents and House speakers, 1898-1939**

Identifier: CT3/1296X

Extent: 5.36 cubic feet (99 photographs : glass photonegative in 5 boxes)

2.5 cubic feet (110 photographs in 2 record center cartons)

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/81988890>

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**Record Group Number: CT6.01**

**Record Group Name: General Court – Legislative Research Bureau**

**Historical Note:**

St 1954, c 607, which established the Legislative Research Council within the Massachusetts General Court, also provided that the council provide for the creation of a Legislative Research Bureau; the bureau assists members of the General Court and any committee and recess commission thereof in statistical research and fact-finding in connection with proposed legislation or other matters pertaining to the functions of the legislature. The Legislative Research Council determines all policies and appoints the director and assistants of the bureau.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122613804>

**Related series:**

**Administrative files, 1955-1966**

Identifier: CT6.01/271

Extent: 10 cubic feet (8 record center cartons)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/82111938>

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**Record Group Number: CT7**

**Record Group Name: Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus**

**Historical Note:**

The Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus, originally known as the Massachusetts Black Caucus, was constituted in Jan. 1973 by five Democratic members of the House of

Representatives of the General Court, all African Americans representing the Roxbury-North Dorchester section of Boston. The caucus is a nonprofit corporation now comprised of members of the House and Senate, with offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer. It holds monthly public meetings with its constituents, the African American communities of the Commonwealth.

**Additional Description:** <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122521138>

**Related series:**

**School racial imbalance subject files, 1963-1980 (bulk 1972-1975)**

Identifier: CT7/1148X

Extent: 0.7 cubic feet (2 document boxes)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/86132293>

**Legislative files, 1973-1975**

Identifier: CT7/1149

Extent: 1.25 cubic feet (1 record center carton)

Arranged: Arranged chronologically.

Additional Description: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/122560425>

**Caucus files, 1973-2004**

Identifier: CT7/2671

Extent: 22 record center cartons

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**Record Group Number: CT8**

**Record Group Name: Massachusetts Caucus of Women**

**Legislators**

**Administrative files, 1974-1990**

Identifier: CT8/1097

Extent: 2.50 cubic feet (2 record center cartons)

**Subject files, 1983-1992**

Identifier: CT8/1964

Extent: 7.50 cubic feet (6 record center cartons)

Notes: Includes some files that will be separated into Membership files (CT8/1964)

**Planning files, 1988-1991**

Identifier: CT8/1966  
Extent: 1 document box

**Task force files**

Identifier: CT8/1967  
Extent: 3.75 cubic feet (3 record center cartons)

**Membership files**

Identifier: CT8/1968  
Notes: Currently in series 1964

**Legislative priorities files, 1973-1989**

Identifier: CT8/1970  
Extent: 1.25 cubic feet (1 record center cartons)

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