

HOUSE No. 554

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Edward R. Philips

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to equipping public elementary and secondary schools with panic alarms or emergency mechanisms.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Edward R. Philips</i>	<i>8th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/11/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 554

By Representative Philips of Sharon, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 554) of Edward R. Philips relative to equipping public elementary and secondary schools with panic alarms or emergency mechanisms. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 685 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to equipping public elementary and secondary schools with panic alarms or emergency mechanisms.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding after section 97 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 98. Equipping public elementary and secondary schools with panic alarms or
4 emergency mechanisms

5 Section 1. (a) For the purpose of this section “panic alarm” shall mean a silent security
6 system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a life-threatening
7 or emergency situation requiring a response from law enforcement.

8 (b) Except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection e. of this section, each public
9 elementary and secondary school building shall be equipped with at least one panic alarm for use
10 in a school security emergency including, but not limited to, a non-fire evacuation, lockdown, or
11 active shooter situation. The alarm shall be directly linked to local law enforcement authorities
12 or, in the case of a school building located in a municipality in which there is no municipal
13 police department, a location designated by the Superintendent of State Police, and shall
14 immediately transmit a signal or message to such authorities upon activation. The alarm shall not
15 be audible within the school building.

16 (c) Each panic alarm required under this section shall adhere to nationally recognized
17 industry standards, including the standards of the National Fire Protection Association and
18 Underwriters Laboratories.

19 (d) Each panic alarm required under this section shall be installed solely by a person
20 licensed to engage in the alarm business under sections 57, 58, and 59 chapter 147 of the general
21 laws.

22 (e) A school district may equip its elementary and secondary school buildings with an
23 emergency mechanism that is an alternative to a panic alarm if the mechanism is approved by the
24 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

25 (f) A school district that is in the process of building a school may be required to install a
26 panic alarm system.

27 Section 2. Funding of panic alarms or emergency mechanisms.

28 The Massachusetts School Building Authority shall be responsible for funding the full
29 cost of the panic alarms required in public elementary and secondary school buildings in any
30 district pursuant to section 1 of section 98 or alternative emergency mechanisms approved by the
31 department pursuant to that section. A school district that, prior to the effective date of this act,
32 installed a panic alarm or alternative emergency mechanism approved by the department may
33 receive reimbursement for those costs.

34 Section 3. Rules, regulations.

35 The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate rules and
36 regulations to establish a program to effectuate the purposes of this act.