HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 1303 FILED ON: 1/16/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 391

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul K. Frost

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 passage of the accompanying:

An Act protecting the religious freedom of students.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Paul K. Frost	*7th Worcester*
Elizabeth A. Poirier	*14th Bristol*
James J. Dwyer	*30th Middlesex*
Alan Silvia	*7th Bristol*
Angelo L. D'Emilia	*8th Plymouth*
Sheila C. Harrington	*1st Middlesex*
James J. Lyons, Jr.	*18th Essex*
Bradley H. Jones, Jr.	*20th Middlesex*
Kevin J. Kuros	*8th Worcester*
Colleen M. Garry	*36th Middlesex*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 391

By Mr. Frost of Auburn, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 391) of Paul K. Frost and others for legislation to protect the rights of students to express religious viewpoints. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE
HOUSE
, NO. *2715* OF 2011-2012.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

An Act protecting the religious freedom of students.

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

Chapter 71 is hereby amended by inserting after Section 1B the following section:-

Section 1C. Notwithstanding any special or general law to the contrary, school districts beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, shall adopt and implement a local policy that allows for a limited public forum and voluntary student expression of religious viewpoints at school events and graduation ceremonies, in class assignments, and in non-curricular school groups and activities. Districts shall treat such expression on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner as the expression of a secular or other viewpoint and prohibits the district from discriminating against a student based on his or her expressed religious viewpoint. The policy must require the district to ensure that a student speaker does not engage in obscene or indecent speech and to provide a disclaimer that a student's speech is not endorsed or sponsored by the district.