

**SENATE . . . . . No. 687**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Cynthia S. Creem*

*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 relative to special juveniles.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Cynthia S. Creem</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> [District] <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Gloria L. Fox</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> [District] <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jeffrey Sánchez</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>

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By Ms. Creem, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 687) of Cynthia S. Creem, Gloria L. Fox, James B. Eldridge, Carl M. Sciortino, Jr. and others for legislation relative to special juveniles. The Judiciary.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

An Act relative to special juveniles.

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

1                   SECTION 1. Said chapter 119 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
2 further amended by adding the following new section:--Section 39DD. (a) For the purposes of  
3 this section, the term “dependent on the court” shall mean subject to the jurisdiction of the court  
4 for the findings, orders, and referrals enumerated in this section but shall not constitute a finding  
5 of legal incompetence.

6                   (b) The divisions of the probate and family court department shall hear  
7 petitions of persons, who have attained the age of 18 but remain under the age of 21, seeking a  
8 determination that, as a result of abuse, neglect, or abandonment that the petitioner suffered as a  
9 child, it is in the best interest of the petitioner not to return to the petitioner’s or the petitioner’s  
10 parent’s previous country of nationality or country of last habitual residence.

11                   (c) Upon reviewing the petition and any supporting affidavits, the court shall  
12 issue findings of fact which (1) declare the petitioner dependent upon the court as defined in this  
13 section; (2) determine whether the petitioner suffered as a child from abuse, neglect or  
14 abandonment as those terms are defined in 110 CMR 2.00, chapter 119 or in section 3 of chapter  
15 210 of the General Laws; (3) determine whether reunification with one or both parents is not  
16 viable due to the abuse, neglect, or abandonment; and (4) determine whether as a result of the  
17 abuse, neglect or abandonment, it is not in the petitioner’s best interest to be returned to the  
18 petitioner’s or the petitioner’s parent’s previous country of nationality or country of last habitual  
19 residence.

20                   The health and safety of the petitioner shall be of paramount, but not exclusive,  
21 concern in the above determinations. When considering the health and safety of the petitioner,  
22 the court shall consider whether the petitioner’s present or past living conditions will adversely  
23 affect his physical, mental, moral or emotional health.

24 (d) The petitioner under this section may also request orders necessary to  
25 protect against further abuse, including, but not limited to, filing a complaint for an abuse  
26 prevention order as set out in chapter 209A of the General Laws.

27 (e) The court may refer the petitioner to a probation officer for assistance and  
28 such officer shall have the authority to make referrals to an appropriate public or private  
29 organization or person for psychiatric, psychological, educational, occupational, medical, dental  
30 or social services. The petitioner may not be compelled to participate in the referrals.

31 (f) The court shall hear the petition and issue the findings of fact under this  
32 section before the petitioner attains the age of 21.

33 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the divisions of the  
34 probate and family court department or the juvenile court department from issuing similar  
35 findings of fact to those in subsection (c) in any proceedings related to a child.