

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 115**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Nine**  
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An Act establishing an office of family and children's ombudsman..

*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. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006

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3 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:—

4 Section 214. There is hereby established an office of the family and children’s  
5 ombudsman under the exclusive supervision and control of a director who shall be appointed by  
6 the secretary of health and human services with the approval of the governor. The purpose of the  
7 office is to provide an independent voice for families and children who have been placed under  
8 the supervision of the department of social services.

9 The position of director shall be classified in accordance with section 45 of  
10 chapter 30, and the salary shall be determined in accordance with section 46C of said chapter 30.  
11 The director shall devote full time during business hours to the duties of the office. The director  
12 shall be authorized, subject to appropriation, to appoint and may remove such assistant directors  
13 and such other employees and consultants as may be necessary to perform the functions of the

14 office set forth in section 207. The provisions of chapter 31 shall not apply to the director, to  
15 such assistant directors as the director may appoint, or to such supervisory positions as the  
16 director may create.

17           The office shall have the following powers: (a) provide an independent resource  
18 for families and children to seek redress of grievances with the department; (b) monitor the  
19 department's compliance with existing laws, policies and procedures; (c) propose amendments  
20 and improvement of existing laws, policies and procedures to promote family preservation and  
21 reunification and children's safety, well-being and permanency; (d) serve as liaison among  
22 consumers, the department, the general court, the governor and the children's bureau; (e) identify  
23 and articulate to the general court, governor, public agencies and the public the needs of these  
24 families and children; (f) provide public information relative to laws and services affecting the  
25 families and children; (g) oversee the accuracy and timeliness of the department's reporting of  
26 data with regard to those children, and investigate consumer complaints and recommend to  
27 appropriate authorities solutions.