

HOUSE No. 3148

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act Relative to the History of Slavery in the Commonwealth..

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 7 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding a new Section:

2 For the purposes of this section, the following words shall, unless the context indicates
3 otherwise, have the following meanings:

4 “Company” means any person, firm, corporation, partnership or combination of these.

5 “Contract” means any agreement, franchise, lease or concession including an agreement
6 for any occasional professional or technical personal services, the performance of any work or
7 service, the provision of any materials or supplies or rendering of any service to any state agency
8 or state authority of the public, which is let, awarded, or entered into with or on behalf of any
9 state agency or state authority.

10 “Enslaved Person” means any person who was wholly subject to the will of another and
11 whose person and services were wholly under the control of another and who was in a state of
12 enforced compulsory service to another during the Slavery Era.

13 “Investment” means to make use of an Enslaved Person for future benefits or advantages.

14 “License” means permission granted by a person to another to exercise a certain privilege
15 or to carry on a particular business.

16 “Majority-owned subsidiary” means a company that is at least fifty-one percent owned by
17 another company.

18 “Person” means any individual and any partnership, firm, association, corporation, or
19 other entity, or their subsidiaries.

20 “Participation” means having been a Slaveholder during the Slavery Era.

21 “Predecessor Company” means an entity whose ownership, title and interest, including
22 all rights, benefits, duties, and liabilities were acquired in an uninterrupted chain of succession
23 by the company.

24 “Profits” means any economic advantage or financial benefit derived from the use of
25 Enslaved Persons.

26 “Secretary” means the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

27 “Slavery” means the practice of owning Enslaved Persons.

28 “Slavery Era” means the period of time in the United States of America, Brazil, and the
29 Caribbean prior to 1889.

30 “Slaveholder” means holders of Enslaved Persons, owners of business enterprises using
31 Enslaved Persons, owners of vessels carrying Enslaved Persons or other means of transporting
32 Enslaved Persons, merchants or financiers dealing in the purchase, sale or financing of the
33 business of Enslaved Persons.

34 “Slaveholder Insurance Policies” means policies issued to or for the benefit of
35 Slaveholders to insure them against the death of, or injury to, Enslaved Persons.

36 “State agency”, all awarding authorities of the commonwealth, including, but not limited
37 to, all executive offices, agencies, departments, commissions, and public institutions of higher
38 education, and any office, department or division of the judiciary.

39 “State authority”, shall include, but not be limited to the: Bay State Skills Corporation,
40 centers of excellence, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, Community
41 Development Finance Corporation, Government Land Bank, Massachusetts Bay Transportation
42 Authority, Massachusetts Business Development Corporation, Massachusetts Capital Resource
43 Company, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, Massachusetts Corporation for
44 Educational Telecommunications, Massachusetts educational loan authority, Massachusetts
45 Health and Educational Facilities Authority, Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance
46 Corporation, Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, Massachusetts Horse Racing Authority,
47 Massachusetts Industrial Finance Agency, Massachusetts Industrial Service Program,
48 Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts
49 Product Development Corporation, Massachusetts Technology Development Corporation,
50 Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Massachusetts
51 Water Resources Authority, Nantucket Land Bank, New England Loan Marketing Corporation,
52 pension reserves investment management board, State College Building Authority, Southeastern
53 Massachusetts University Building Authority, Thrift Institutions Fund for Economic
54 Development, University of Lowell Building Authority, University of Massachusetts Building
55 Authority, victim and witness board, and the Woods Hole, Martha’s Vineyard, and Nantucket
56 Steamship Authority.

57 Section 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary the Secretary of
58 State is hereby authorized to publish a history of slavery in the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth
59 colonies and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a history of the participation and
60 involvement of the colonies and the Commonwealth in the slave trade and involvement in the
61 slave trade of companies currently doing business with the Commonwealth.

62 Such publication shall include but not be limited to:

63 An examination of the institution of slavery which existed within Massachusetts and the
64 colonies that became Massachusetts. The publication by the Secretary of State shall include an
65 examination of:

66 The capture and procurement of Africans;

67 The transport of Africans to Massachusetts for the purpose of enslavement, including
68 their treatment during transport;

69 The sale and acquisition of Africans as chattel property in interstate and intrastate
70 commerce; and

71 The treatment of African slaves in Massachusetts, including the deprivation of their
72 freedom, exploitation of their labor, and destruction of their culture, language, religion, and
73 families.

74 An estimate of the value of the enslaved persons as capital property and the profits
75 accumulated by their ownership.

76 An examination of the extent to which the Federal government in Massachusetts and
77 Massachusetts colonial and state governments supported the institution of slavery in

78 constitutional and statutory provisions, including the extent to which said governments
79 prevented, opposed, or restricted efforts of freed African slaves to repatriate to their homeland.

80 An examination of other forms of Federal and Massachusetts laws that discriminated
81 against freed African slaves in Massachusetts.

82 An examination of other forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against
83 freed African slaves in Massachusetts.

84 An examination of the participation and involvement of Massachusetts persons and
85 companies in the slave trade before 1638, during the period of legalized slavery in
86 Massachusetts, and after 1790. Such examination will include estimates of the profits earned
87 from such trade and concomitant transactions.

88 Recommendations of appropriate ways to educate the Massachusetts public of the
89 publication's findings.

90 A section on certain information provided by companies doing business with the
91 Commonwealth regarding records of participation or investments in, profits derived from
92 slavery, including slaveholder policies that that it wrote either directly or through a predecessor
93 company during the slavery era.

94 Section 3. To assist in the creation of the aforementioned publication, the Secretary, state
95 agency or state authority shall require companies that have entered into a contract with the
96 Commonwealth shall complete an affidavit certifying that:

97 The company has searched any and all records of the company or majority-owned
98 subsidiary and any predecessor company or its majority-owned subsidiary regarding records of
99 participation or investments in, or profits derived, from slavery; and

100 The company has disclosed any and all records of participation in or profits derived by
101 the company or majority-owned subsidiary and any predecessor company or its majority-owned
102 subsidiary from slavery, including but not limited to, issuance of slaveholder insurance policies
103 provided by insurance companies, during the slavery era, and identified names of any enslaved
104 persons or slaveholders described in the records.

105 Subsections (A) and (B) of section 3 apply only to companies, majority-owned
106 subsidiaries, predecessor companies, and predecessor majority-owned subsidiaries in existence
107 before 1889.