

HOUSE No. 3696

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act establishing a youth workforce system 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. PREAMBLE

2 The purpose of this act is to promote and support activities and programs that will
3 increase the education, skills and employment of youth in the commonwealth and their
4 successful integration into the commonwealth’s economy.

5 SECTION 2. FINDINGS

6 Whereas, employers choose and stay in Massachusetts because of the quality of its
7 workforce; and whereas, Massachusetts also leads the nation in innovation, technology
8 utilization, and attracting capital, all reflecting a quality workforce, the workforce is a critical
9 asset of Massachusetts’s economic well-being. Whereas, recent trends in teen unemployment,
10 high school dropouts, employer skill demands, demographic shifts within the United States, and
11 immigration into Massachusetts, point to a need to protect our most competitive asset, the
12 education and skills of our emerging workforce.

13 Whereas, the youth workforce development system in Massachusetts consists of a
14 number of programs across various state agencies, there is a need for better coordination and
15 alignment. Therefore, needs of young people out of the labor market and out-of-work, those who
16 have either dropped out of school or are at risk for dropping out must be addressed as well as the
17 development of educational pathways for young people to obtain a post secondary education
18 which is increasingly needed for successful entry into the labor market. There is no alternative if
19 Massachusetts is to fulfill the promise to all our youth and enable them to succeed in our
20 economy.

21 SECTION 3. PURPOSE AND CONSTRUCTION

22 The Youth Solutions Act of 2009 responds to that need with active and intensive
23 investment in youth employment, education pathways and efforts to reduce violence and dropout
24 rates in an integrated, coordinated and cost effective manner.

25 This Act will establish an effective, youth workforce and education system in the
26 Commonwealth through specific strategies, agency and community coordination and
27 collaboration and consistent investments and activities set forth in the Act.

28 This Act seeks to achieve the maximum level of coordination and co investment in each
29 of the agencies named herein, private sector employers, and philanthropic organizations in
30 Massachusetts. This Act will highlight and support proven investment strategies including
31 school-to-career connecting activities, youth-at-risk programs for a year-round employment
32 program for youth in all workforce regions, and grants for community safety initiatives.

33 SECTION 4. This act proposes that the following programs in the annual general
34 appropriations act be maintained at the following levels:

35 7027-0019..For school-to-career connecting activities: \$7,000,000;

36 7002-0012..For a youth-at-risk program of a year-round employment program for youth
37 in all workforce regions: \$8,000,000;

38 7061-9611..For grants or subsidies for after-school and out-of-school programs;
39 provided, that preference shall be given to after-school proposals developed collaboratively by
40 public and non-public schools and private community based programs and programs that provide
41 employment and training opportunities for high school students: \$5,550,000;

42 8100-0111..For a grant program to be known as the Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr.
43 Community Safety Initiative: \$13,000,000;

44 4590-1506..For a program to be administered by the department of public health to
45 support the establishment of a comprehensive youth violence prevention program: \$3,500,000;

46 SECTION 5. Chapter 315 of the acts of 2008 is hereby amended by inserting, after
47 section 4, the following section:-

48 Section 5. Implementation of dropout prevention and recovery strategies in each
49 workforce region based upon agreed upon dropout triggers to activate 1- local task force to
50 include workforce board and school district; 2- early district dropout identification and
51 intervention; 3- dropout recovery through outreach and reenrollment. Following the filing of the
52 commission's recommendations on May 15, 2009, there is hereby established a dropout
53 prevention and recovery grant program to: (i) provide school districts with funds to implement
54 early indicator systems; (ii) create capacity within regions by engaging local workforce
55 investment boards for outreach to dropouts and referral to local school districts and alternative

56 education programs; or (iii) provide funds to local districts or nonprofit programs to develop
57 alternative routes to a diploma or its equivalent to prevent students from dropping out and to
58 meet the needs of those returning to education: \$5,000,000.

59 SECTION 6. Section 89 of chapter 182 of the acts of 2008 is hereby amended by striking
60 subsection (b) and inserting in place thereof the following:-

61 \$5,000,000 shall be transferred to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund,
62 established in section 2 WWW of chapter 29 for grants to employer, education, workforce
63 partnerships to develop educational pathway projects for out of school youth.