

HOUSE No. 4624

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Ten

An Act improving coordination of the youth workforce development 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. A Youth Solutions Commission shall be established to identify youth
2 workforce best practices and programs nationwide and to evaluate programs currently supported
3 by the commonwealth.

4 The commission shall consist of 29 members 1 of whom shall be the secretary of labor
5 and workforce development, or his designee, who shall serve as chair; 1 of whom shall be the
6 secretary of education, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of elementary and
7 secondary education, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of higher education,
8 or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of social services, or his designee; 1 of
9 whom shall be the commissioner of youth services, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the
10 commissioner of transitional assistance, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of
11 mental health, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the president of the Commonwealth
12 Corporation, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of public health, or his
13 designee; 1 of whom shall be the chair of the house committee on ways and means, or his

14 designee; 1 of whom shall be the chair of the senate committee on ways and means, or his
15 designee; 2 of whom shall be the chairs of the joint committee on education, or their designees; 1
16 of whom shall be a member to be appointed by the speaker of the house; 1 of whom shall be
17 appointed by the senate president; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the
18 house; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; and 11 of whom shall
19 be appointed by the secretary of labor and workforce development, 2 of whom shall be a
20 representative of the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association; 1 of whom shall be a
21 representative of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents; 1 of whom shall be a
22 representative of the Massachusetts Community Action Network; 1 of whom shall be a
23 representative of YouthBuild; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Center for Labor
24 Market Studies at Northeastern University; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the
25 Massachusetts AFL/CIO; 1 of whom shall be a representative selected from a list of 3 nominees
26 proposed jointly by the Massachusetts Dropout Prevention Commission; and 3 of whom shall be
27 experienced in successful youth workforce program efforts including, without limitation: public
28 schools, the nonprofit sector, law enforcement or municipally-administered after-school and
29 recreation programs.

30 SECTION 2. The Youth Solutions Commission will be responsible for reviewing
31 existing program strategies in youth employment, education pathways and efforts to reduce
32 violence and dropout rates in an integrated, coordinated and cost-effective manner. The
33 commission will propose adoption of policies, laws, regulations and/or other actions necessary to
34 establish an effective, youth workforce and education system in the Commonwealth through
35 specific strategies, agency and community coordination and collaboration and consistent
36 investments. The commission should seek to achieve the maximum level of coordination and co-

37 investment in each of the agencies named herein: private sector employers, and philanthropic
38 organizations in Massachusetts including a review of proven investment strategies including
39 school-to-career connecting activities, youth-at-risk programs for a year-round employment
40 program for youth in all workforce regions and grants for community safety initiatives.

41 SECTION 3. The commission shall examine and make recommendations on: (1) better
42 coordination between dropout prevention/recovery, alternative education, youth safety
43 initiatives, postsecondary education opportunities and summer and year-round youth
44 employment programs; (2) linking violence prevention programs with productive and enriching
45 education and employment programs; (3) youth transitions from summer employment to year-
46 round employment or an internship programs; (4) youth employment programs that have had
47 consistent success in increasing high school graduation rates for at-risk youth; (5) improved
48 connections between high schools and postsecondary education programs in high-demand sector
49 areas to be updated at least once in a twelve month period; and community colleges to four year
50 institutions through articulation agreements; (6) linkages between public-private organizations
51 and private employers so ensure youth have access to private sector jobs; (7) an apprenticeship
52 system with private sector employers including on-the-job training and employer tax incentives
53 or wage subsidies; (8) implementing the recommendations of the Massachusetts Graduation and
54 Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission in Making the Connection, and the best practices
55 from Project Reconnect as a model to re-engage youth; (9) reviewing existing alternative
56 education program options, assessing the need for additional program approaches and making
57 recommendations to increase capacity for innovative programming to meet the needs of
58 disconnected youth; (10) examining policy to encourage after-school and out-of-school
59 programs to connect youth with community-based experiences outside of an educational setting;

60 (11) track the long-term effects of all youth employment and education programs through wage
61 record matching and graduation rate reporting

62 SECTION 4. The commission shall conduct its first meeting not less than 90 days after
63 the effective date of this act and shall conduct not less than 3 public hearings in geographically
64 diverse regions of the Commonwealth. The commission shall submit a report of its findings and
65 recommendations together with legislation, if any, to the clerks of the house of representatives
66 and the senate who shall forward the same to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee
67 on education and the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means not later than
68 May 15, 2011.