HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 456 FILED ON: 1/11/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 160

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Benjamin Swan

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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to establish an office of youth development.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Benjamin Swan	*11th Hampden*	*1/11/2013*
Gloria L. Fox	*7th Suffolk*	*2/1/2013*
Elizabeth A. Malia	*11th Suffolk*	*1/11/2013*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 160

By Mr. Swan of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 160) of Benjamin Swan, Gloria L. Fox and Elizabeth A. Malia for legislation to establish an office of youth development within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *3106* OF 2011-2012.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act to establish an office of youth development.

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

SECTION 1. Whereas, analysis of current social and health status indicators indicate that an unacceptable number of urban youth are becoming involved in the criminal justice system, experiencing high rates of homicide and suicide, engaged in violence and anti-social behaviors, becoming abusers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, experiencing a high rate of pregnancies and sexual transmitted disease, and leaving school without marketable skills. There is clear and present danger that the current socio-economic status of this generation of urban youth will have a negative impact on the general well-being of the entire society of the Commonwealth; and Whereas, public schools have historically been in place as the above stated phenomenon developed, and in spite of the many changes implemented and proposed, do not present the model nor infrastructure needed to provide an appropriate model to ameliorate the situation with urban youth; and Whereas, the current negative social, economic and health status indicators for urban youth may be defined as predictors for negative future social and economic outcomes; and Whereas, violent behaviors, both as victim and perpetrators, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and infant mortality, sexual transmitted disease, delinquent behaviors, and suicide are clearly identified as public health concerns, Therefore, Notwithstanding any act to the contrary, this act provides that there shall be established within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, a state-wide office of youth development within the Department of

Public Health which shall organize and implement pilot programs in Boston, Springfield, New Bedford, Fall Rivers, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke, and Worcester to demonstrate a coordinated-comprehensive youth development services delivery system to improve and promote good citizenship among youth, between the ages of seven and eighteen. All programs and activities shall be coordinated with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services organizations in each city, so as to optimize the allocation of resources.

SECTION 2. Programs and activities shall be provided outside of school hours, year-round, including weekends for individuals who are enrolled in school, with programs and activities for individuals not enrolled in school available on a daily basis.

SECTION 3. Programs and activities shall be designed based on youth development research findings, with emphasis directed toward the development and enhancement of social decorum, anti-violent and anti-gang behaviors, positive social behaviors, local and statewide labor pools, job opportunities and career and employment options, citizenship and positive future outlook, community-building, the performing and creative arts, avoiding teen-age pregnancies. With some components modeled after the pre-World War II Work Project Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) the system shall provide practical skill building beyond the theoretical approach used in public schools.

SECTION 4. Programs and activities shall be implemented through contracts with federally qualified, Community Health Centers. Policy-makers and staff of contracting organizations shall reflect the participant population of the program.

SECTION 5. The programs and activities shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) a research component to address issues pertaining to replication of successful strategies identified; (2) a community coordination function to assure that service delivery are coordinated in order to limit any unwanted duplication and/or overlapping; (3) to document and analyze resources and services targeted for the participant population; (4) identification of the services needed to advance the goals of the program; (5) develop and/or join-in with a community youth worker certification program, in order to utilize “best practices” in the field of youth development, this component will further enhance skill development and standards for youth development as a discipline; (6) an enhanced management information system support procedure to develop a common intake and referral system to increase the use of preventive services, share resource information, avoid duplication and to allow participants to engage in, hands-on applications and learn state-of-the-art computer use; (7) court diversion; (8) coordinate mini-grants to various community agencies; (9) coordinate with already established organizations and agencies; and (10) develop needed services as required for the success of the program.

SECTION 6. There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Office of Youth Development Fund. There

shall be credited to say fund an amount sufficient to sustain such an initiative in the immediate fiscal year commonwealth's budget, and thereafter for a period of five (5) years, of which the amount of $1.8 million shall be expended for Springfield.