

HOUSE No. 3777

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act permanently establishing a state autism commission.

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 is hereby amended by adding the following
2 section:-

3 Section 216 (a) There shall be a permanent commission on autism which shall be
4 independent of any supervision or control by any executive agency. The autism commission shall
5 consist of 34 members, 2 of whom shall be members of the Senate, 1 of whom shall be appointed
6 by the Minority Leader; 2 members of the House of Representatives, 1 of whom shall be
7 appointed by the Minority Leader; the Secretary of Health and Human Services or a designee;
8 the Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services or a designee; the
9 Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health or a designee; the Secretary of Education or a
10 designee; The Director of Housing and Community Development or a designee; the Secretary of
11 Labor and Workforce Development or a designee; the Commissioner of the Massachusetts
12 Rehabilitation Commission or a designee; the Commissioner of Early Education and Care or a
13 designee; the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary education or a designee; the
14 Commissioner of Higher Education or a designee; the Secretary of Elder Affairs or a designee;
15 the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families or a designee; the Commissioner
16 of the Department of Public Health or a designee; the Director of the Office of MassHealth or a
17 designee; 1 person appointed by the Secretary of Education from the Community College
18 system; the Director of the Division of Autism or a designee; and 14 persons to be appointed by
19 the governor 7 of whom shall be representatives of Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts, the
20 Autism Insurance Resource Center, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, the Arc of
21 Massachusetts, Autism Speaks, the Lurie Center and the Asperger Association of New England
22 s. Members shall be persons with demonstrated interest, experience and expertise in autism.
23 Citizen membership shall first be offered to those who served from 2010-2013 as members of the
24 Autism Commission which expired upon release of the March 2013 report, subject to their

25 approval. All legislators and agency members shall serve as non-voting members of the
26 commission. Citizen members shall be special state employees subject to sections 18 to 25,
27 inclusive, of chapter 30A.

28 (b) The commission shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the
29 recommendations in the March 2013 report issued by the Governor's Special Commission
30 Relative to Autism (the "Autism Commission"). The commission shall monitor the
31 implementation of the autism commission's recommendations and update recommendations to
32 reflect current research and the commission's discussions when applicable. The commission shall
33 meet at least quarterly, but may meet more often as the commission deems necessary.

34 (c) The commission shall be administered by an Executive Director, who shall devote full
35 time to the duties of this office. The Executive Director shall serve at the pleasure of the
36 governor and report directly to the governor. The Executive Director may, subject to
37 appropriation, appoint such other personnel as is deemed necessary for the efficient management
38 of the office. The Governor shall appoint the Executive Director to a term coterminous with that
39 of the governor, except that the Executive Director shall continue to serve following the end of a
40 Governor's term until a successor is appointed. The administrator shall have a working
41 knowledge of the autism service delivery system and agencies providing these services,
42 legislative advocacy experience and a personal connection to autism. A nominating Committee
43 comprised of Autism Commission members who served prior to March 2013 shall submit to the
44 Governor the names of three candidates for consideration as Executive Director. The Governor
45 shall appoint one of these candidates to serve as Executive Director. (d) The duties of the
46 Executive Director shall include, but not be limited to: legislative and budgetary advocacy of the
47 thirteen recommendations of the March 2013 report by the Governor's Special Commission
48 Relative to Autism with periodic benchmarks and cost estimates to a coordinated, system-wide
49 response supporting people of all ages on the Autism Spectrum; coordination of Commission
50 meetings; coordination with relevant state agencies; completion of an annual report to be filed
51 with the Governor, the House Speaker and Senate President, the Senate and House Minority
52 leaders, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, and the Joint Committee on
53 Children, Families, and People with Disabilities, and the Joint Committees on Education and
54 Higher Education. The Annual Report shall outline the progress made on the thirteen
55 recommendations of the March 2013 Autism Commission report and a reporting on unmet needs
56 and trends in autism services, supports and treatments for the Autism population.

57 (e) The commission shall adopt internal procedures appropriate for the effective
58 performance of its duties.