

HOUSE No. 1980

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Daniel J. Hunt

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 a vision care registry.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Daniel J. Hunt

13th Suffolk

James M. Murphy

4th Norfolk

HOUSE No. 1980

By Mr. Hunt of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1980) of Daniel J. Hunt and James M. Murphy for legislation to to establish a vision care registry. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act to establish a vision care registry.

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 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 111C, the following new section:-

3 Section 111D. The department shall, subject to appropriation, establish a registry to
4 record reports of failure to receive or pass the vision test required by section 57 of chapter 71 of
5 the General Laws, and such information concerning these cases as it shall deem necessary and
6 appropriate in order to monitor the results of eye examinations and to apply appropriate
7 preventative and control measures, including monitoring treatment for vision impairment
8 identified by such tests.

9 The commissioner shall require the reporting of any child who fails to receive or pass the
10 vision test required in said section 57, and the submission of such specified additional
11 information on reported case or control populations as he deems necessary and appropriate for

12 the recognition, prevention, or control of eye diseases or conditions, as well as the treatment
13 received in each case.

14 The department shall, subject to appropriation, maintain comprehensive records of all
15 reports submitted pursuant to this section. Such reports shall be confidential in accordance with
16 section seventy of chapter 111, and shall be released by the department only upon written request
17 of the patient, his guardian, executor, attorney, or other person designated in writing by said
18 patient. Such reports and records or information contained therein, may also be released by the
19 department to persons authorized by the commissioner to conduct research studies or to other
20 persons, but no such studies shall identify the subjects of said reports or records.

21 Nothing in this section shall be construed to compel any individual to submit to medical
22 or department examination or supervision.

23 The department shall make such rules and regulations as are necessary to implement the
24 provisions of this section pursuant to chapter thirty A.

25 SECTION 2. (a) The department shall establish a special commission on childhood
26 vision screening and treatment to work in conjunction with the vision care registry to study the
27 success of the vision test required by section 57 of chapter 71 in ensuring that all children receive
28 eye examinations and appropriate preventative and control measures, including monitoring
29 treatment for vision impairment identified by such tests. The commission shall consist of the
30 commissioner of the department of public health or his designee, the commissioner of the
31 department of elementary and secondary education or his designee, a member of the
32 Massachusetts Vision Coalition, a member of the Massachusetts School Nurses Organization, a
33 member of the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists, and a member of the Massachusetts

34 Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, a member of the Massachusetts Association of
35 Nonprofit Schools and Colleges. The commissioner of the department of public health or his
36 designee shall chair the commission.

37 (b) The Commission on Childhood Vision Screening and Treatment shall review the
38 commonwealth's success at screening and treating all of its school aged children for vision
39 impairments and eye disease, identify populations that do not receive screening, and explore the
40 impacts of vision screening and treatment on commonwealth education outcomes. The
41 commission shall:

42 (1) Review the success of public schools in meeting the vision screenings
43 requirements in section 57 of chapter 71;

44 (2) The rate at which children diagnosed with vision impairments under section 57 of
45 chapter 71 receive treatment for such impairments;

46 (3) The rate at which those schools that do not fall under the vision screening
47 requirements in section 57 of chapter 71 receive testing and treatment;

48 (4) Identify childhood populations that do not receive vision screenings, either under
49 chapter 71 or through some other health care provider; and

50 (5) Explore the impact of failing to receive vision screening and treatment with
51 educational outcomes.

52 (c) The Commission on Childhood Vision Screening and Treatment shall submit a report
53 to the secretary of health and human services, the commissioner of the department of public
54 health, the commissioner of the department of education, the clerks of the senate and house of

55 representatives, the joint committee on health care financing, and the joint committee on public
56 health no later than six months after its establishment that includes findings under subsection (b),
57 recommendations and any suggested legislation. The report must include recommendations for:

58 (1) Ways to enhance the school-aged vision screening program in the commonwealth
59 to ensure that all children receive vision screening; and

60 (2) Ways of coordinating school-based vision screening with the public and private
61 health sectors so that children diagnosed with a vision impairment or potential vision impairment
62 can receive treatment for these impairments.

63 This Commission shall dissolve after submission of its report.

64 SECTION 3. Section 57 of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
65 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the first paragraph the following:-

66 The committee, or the board of health in those municipalities where school health
67 services are the responsibility of the board of health, shall submit an annual report to the Vision
68 Registry in the Department of Public Health outlining the results of its vision screening
69 performed under this chapter. The report shall include:

70 (a) The number of students needing vision screening;

71 (b) The number of these eligible students who received screening;

72 (c) The number of eligible students who did not receive screening; and

73 (d) The number of screened students found to have potential vision impairments.

74 SECTION 4. Section 57 of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
75 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting in the first sentence of the second paragraph,
76 after the word “written,” the words “or electronic,” and by inserting at the end of the sentence,
77 the phrase, “and to the Vision Care Registry established pursuant to this act.”