

HOUSE No. 341

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Marjorie C. Decker

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 pilot programs and subsequent study for universal pre-kindergarten.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Aaron Vega</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Timothy R. Madden</i>	<i>Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>
<i>Chris Walsh</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 341

By Ms. Decker of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 341) of Marjorie C. Decker and others for legislation to establish pilot programs for universal pre-kindergarten in gateway municipalities and other low-income neighborhoods and communities. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to establish pilot programs and subsequent study for universal pre-kindergarten.

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

1 The Department of Early Education and Care shall establish a process to assure that
2 children in gateway cities and other low-income neighborhoods or communities have access to
3 the Massachusetts universal pre-kindergarten program. This program provides high quality pre-
4 school programs that promote school readiness and positive outcomes for children and is
5 designed to be universally accessible to children from the age of 2 years and 9 months until they
6 are kindergarten eligible.

7 In working to implement this process, the Department shall prioritize areas that serve the
8 most children at risk and/or are likely to attend elementary schools that have been targeted for
9 improvement by either the state or the local community. The Department shall work with the
10 local communities and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to move this
11 process forward.

12 Within municipalities and school districts targeted herein to expand the Massachusetts
13 universal pre-school program, a community committee shall be created, if there is none existing,
14 representative of all the stakeholders in the early education process, including but not limited to
15 early education providers (public, private, non-profit) and staff, parents, community, labor and
16 business leaders, public officials, public schools, and human service agencies serving children
17 and families. The Committee shall be co-chaired by the chief executive of the municipality and
18 the Superintendent of schools, or their designees. The purpose of this committee shall be to
19 enhance community-wide capacity building efforts within statewide parameters established by
20 the board of early education and care and to facilitate interaction with other communities
21 participating in this. The Department shall convene representatives of these community
22 committees so that as a group, they are able to learn from each other, promote best practices, and
23 build a base of knowledge to assist each other, other communities, and the Department to move
24 forward with the provision of high quality, universally accessible pre-K programs throughout the
25 Commonwealth.

26 The Massachusetts universal pre-kindergarten program development process shall assure
27 that all programs fall within the quality standards established by the Massachusetts quality rating
28 and improvement system

29 The Department shall utilize the federal funds for pre-K grants received in 2015 as
30 designated in the federal grant for the designated purposes. For communities not covered in the
31 Federal grant, the Department shall utilize state funds, subject to appropriation, or private funds
32 to convene the community committees; to provide grants to enhance teacher quality; enhance
33 compensation of early education teachers, moving it on a par or equal to that of public school
34 teachers; enhance program quality through participation in the Massachusetts quality rating and

35 improvement system; enhance program ability to interpret and use assessment data effectively;
36 enhance developmentally appropriate practices; incorporate ancillary services into the program;
37 facilitate or provide access to wrap-around services for low-income working families.

38 Consistent with commitments under the federal grant, the Department shall, with an
39 appropriate research partner, establish a process to evaluate the outcomes of the Massachusetts
40 universal pre-kindergarten as described herein and shall utilize this data to inform its
41 recommendations for future policies and actions.

42 The Department of Early Education and Care shall report yearly, by December 31, the
43 progress made on implementing this program to the House Ways and Means Committee, to the
44 Senate Ways and Means Committee, and to the Joint Committee on Education.