SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1749 FILED ON: 1/16/2015

SENATE . . . . . No. 266

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sal N. DiDomenico

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 improve educational outcomes for children in the Commonwealth from birth through school age.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*
Jason M. Lewis	*Fifth Middlesex*
F. Jay Barrows	*1st Bristol*
Joan B. Lovely	*Second Essex*
David M. Nangle	*17th Middlesex*
Angelo L. D'Emilia	*8th Plymouth*
Eileen M. Donoghue	*First Middlesex*
Edward F. Coppinger	*10th Suffolk*
Anne M. Gobi	*Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*
Susan Williams Gifford	*2nd Plymouth*
Brian A. Joyce	*Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth*
Jose F. Tosado	*9th Hampden*
Daniel J. Hunt	*13th Suffolk*
Daniel A. Wolf	*Cape and Islands*
John J. Lawn, Jr.	*10th Middlesex*

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By Mr. DiDomenico, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 266) of Sal N. DiDomenico, Jason M. Lewis, F. Jay Barrows, Joan B. Lovely and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve educational outcomes for children in the Commonwealth from birth through school age. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to improve educational outcomes for children in the Commonwealth from birth through school age.

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. Section 1 of Chapter 15D of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after the first paragraph the following new paragraph:-

In order to support families in promoting child development and school-readiness and in entering and remaining in the workforce it is hereby further declared to be the policy of the Commonwealth to provide quality early education and care programs and services to all families that meet the eligibility requirements established by the department.

SECTION 2.

(a) Within 120 days of the date of enactment of this legislation, the board of early education and care shall submit a plan to the governor, the secretary of administration and finance, the secretary of education, the joint committee on education, the senate and house

committees on ways and means, and the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, setting forth a plan for the implementation of the policy set forth in the second paragraph of Section 1 of Chapter 15D of the General Laws. The plan shall include a schedule for phasing in implementation of the policy over a period of not more than two years. Under the plan, all families on the department's waitlist shall be given access to a voucher or a contract slot not later than 90 days after the date that the report is submitted, and implementation of the policy shall be completed not later than two years after the date that the report is submitted, so as to ensure that all families that seek early education and care programs and services through the department and meet the eligibility requirements established by the department shall receive quality early education and care programs and services. The report shall state the level of appropriation necessary for implementation of the plan.

The plan shall also include an analysis of the cost of expanding eligibility to other categories of children, including but not limited to children whose parents are not currently working, and recommendations for narrowing the gap between early educators' wages and the average starting salary of public school teachers with similar credentials pursuant to the Special Commission's report of December 2013.

SECTION 3. Chapter 15D is hereby amended by inserting after section 2 the following sections:-

Section 2A. (a) The department shall ensure that eligibility requirements are in the best interest of all children, regardless of whether the child's parents are currently working.

(b) The department shall ensure that eligibility requirements are not more restrictive than those in place as of January 1, 2015.

Section 2B. (a) In establishing a rate structure for voucher and contracted payments to providers of subsidized early education and care programs and services on behalf of low-income and other at-risk children, the department shall consider the following factors:

(i) Whether the payment rates support families and providers of early education and care programs and services in promoting child development and school-readiness;

(ii) Whether the payment rates are sufficient to ensure that families that are eligible for subsidies for early education and care programs and services have the same access to these programs and services as families that are not eligible, as required by section 658E(c)(4)(A) of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. section 9858c;

(iii) Whether the payment rates reflect the actual cost of providing quality early education and care programs and services to children and families;

(iv) Variations in costs of providing quality early education and care programs and services in different settings and geographic regions and to children of different age groups; and

(v) The additional cost of providing quality early education and care programs and services to children with special needs or other risk factors.

(b) On an annual basis the department shall review and revise as necessary the rate structure for voucher and contracted payments. Rates shall be increased annually by a percentage equal to the greater of 3 per cent or the prior year's increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

(c) In allocating revenues resulting from any increase in contract and voucher reimbursement rates from year to year, a provider of subsidized early education and care

programs and services on behalf of low-income and other at-risk children shall give priority to increasing salaries paid to classroom staff and other staff working directly with children and families receiving early education and care services. The increases may also be allocated to other expenditures that support delivery of quality early education and care programs and services, including but not limited to expenditures to meet requirements established by the Legislature and the department, expenditures to promote staff retention and expenditures for professional development.