

SENATE No. 297

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Patricia D. Jehlen

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 further defining the role of school resource officers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>William N. Brownsberger</i>	<i>Second Suffolk and Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>James M. Cantwell</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>Gloria L. Fox</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>Byron Rushing</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Tom Sannicandro</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>

SENATE No. 297

By Ms. Jehlen, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 297) of Patricia D. Jehlen, Marjorie C. Decker, Ruth B. Balsler, William N. Brownsberger and other members of the General Court for legislation to further defining the role of school resource officers. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act further defining the role of school resource officers.

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. Section 37P of chapter 71, as appearing in chapter 284 of the Acts of 2014,
2 is hereby amended by striking, in subsection (b), the second paragraph and inserting in place
3 thereof the following:-

4 In selecting a school resource officer (SRO), the chief of police shall assign candidates
5 that the chief believes would strive to foster an optimal learning environment and educational
6 community; provided further, that the chief of police shall give preference to candidates who
7 have received specialized training in child and adolescent development, de-escalation and
8 conflict resolution techniques with children and adolescents, behavioral health disorders in
9 children and adolescents, alternatives to arrest and other juvenile justice diversion strategies and
10 behavioral threat assessment methods. The appointment shall not be based solely on seniority.
11 The performance of school resource officers shall be reviewed annually by the superintendent
12 and the chief of police. The superintendent and the chief of police shall enter into a written

13 memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clearly define the role and duties of the school
14 resource officer which shall be placed on file in the office of the school superintendent and
15 police chief. The MOU shall: (1) state that SROs may use traditional policing techniques such as
16 arrest, citation, and court referral only when necessary to address and prevent serious, real and
17 immediate threats to the physical safety of the school and the wider community; (2) state that
18 SROs should not become involved in routine discipline in response to non-violent school
19 infractions such as tardiness, loitering, use of profanity, dress code violations and disruptive or
20 disrespectful behaviors; (3) set forth protocols for utilizing the expertise of mental health
21 professionals in addressing the needs of students with behavioral and emotional difficulties in
22 crisis situations and otherwise; (4) require SROs to devote any professional development time to
23 school-based or other training activities that promote heightened awareness of the various
24 challenges faced by students in the school to which they are assigned, with an emphasis on those
25 that impart information regarding child development, including the incidence and impact of
26 adverse childhood experiences, de-escalation techniques, and implicit or unconscious bias; (5)
27 specify how the school and police departments will regularly monitor and assure that SROs are
28 complying with the terms of the MOU and avoiding inappropriate arrest, citation, or court
29 referral; and (6) specify the manner of and division of responsibility for collecting and reporting
30 all school-based arrests, citations, and court referrals of students to the Department of
31 Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with regulations promulgated by DESE,
32 which shall collect and publish disaggregated data in a like manner as school discipline data
33 made available for public review.