

SENATE No. 1690

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Julian Cyr

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 relative to government efficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/24/2017</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

SENATE No. 1690

By Mr. Cyr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1690) of Julian Cyr, Jason M. Lewis and Denise C. Garlick for legislation to create a behavioral science insights policy directive. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)

An Act relative to government efficiency.

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

1 Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 4A the
2 following new section:-

3 Section 4B. Behavioral science insights policy directive.

4 (a) Administrative agencies, independent agencies, and judicial administration are
5 encouraged to do all of the following:

6 (1) identify policies, programs, and operations where applying behavioral science insights
7 may yield substantial improvements in public welfare, program outcomes, and program cost
8 effectiveness;

9 (2) develop strategies for applying behavioral science insights to programs and, where
10 possible, rigorously test and evaluate the impact of these insights; and

(3) strengthen governmental relationships with the research community to better use empirical findings from the behavioral sciences.

(b) In implementing the policy directives in subsection (a), agencies and administrators shall do all of the following:

(1) identify opportunities to help qualifying individuals, families, communities, and businesses access public programs and benefits by, as appropriate, streamlining processes that may otherwise limit or delay participation -- for example, removing administrative hurdles, shortening wait times, and simplifying forms;

(2) improve how information is presented to consumers, borrowers, program beneficiaries, and other individuals, whether as directly conveyed by the agency, or in setting standards for the presentation of information, by considering how the content, format, timing, and medium by which information is conveyed affects comprehension and action by individuals, as appropriate;

(3) identify programs that offer choices and carefully consider how the presentation and structure of those choices, including the order, number, and arrangement of options, can most effectively promote public welfare, as appropriate, giving particular consideration to the selection and setting of default options; and

(4) review elements of their policies and programs that are designed to encourage or make it easier for individuals to take specific actions, such as saving for retirement, resolving legal issues, or completing education programs. In doing so, agencies shall consider how the timing, frequency, presentation, and labeling of benefits, taxes, subsidies, and other incentives

can more effectively and efficiently promote those actions, as appropriate. Particular attention should be paid to opportunities to use nonfinancial incentives.

(c) For policies with a regulatory component, agencies are encouraged to combine this behavioral science insights policy directive with their ongoing review of existing significant regulations to identify and reduce regulatory burdens, as appropriate and consistent with Access to Justice Commission recommendations and the Best Practices for Administrative Agencies to Enhance Administrative Justice.

(d) Agencies shall engage outside researchers to provide advice and policy guidance to assist in developing policy objectives and rigorous evaluation of initiatives under this statute, as appropriate. Criteria for researchers shall include an emphasis on rigorous, evidence-based evaluation, including but not limited to randomized control trials, and expertise in behavioral science and related disciplines.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority granted by law to any government entity.