

SENATE No. 2306

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—
In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)
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SENATE, Thursday, February 15, 2018

The committee on Education to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 215) of Harriette L. Chandler, Linda Dean Campbell, Marjorie C. Decker, Jason M. Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to involve youth in civic engagement; (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 244) of Kenneth J. Donnelly, Jay R. Kaufman and Sean Garballey for legislation to promote better citizenship civics education and civic engagement; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 248) of Eileen M. Donoghue, Kay Khan, Rady Mom, Mary S. Keefe and other members of the General Court for legislation to promote civics education; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 278) of Eric P. Lesser, Jason M. Lewis, Sal N. DiDomenico, Brian M. Ashe and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to civics and new media literacy education in schools; (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 307) of Michael F. Rush for legislation to involve youth in civic engagement; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 222) of F. Jay Barrows and others for legislation to direct the Department of Education to include a course in civics as a high school graduation requirement; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 237) of Shawn Dooley and others relative to requiring high school students to pass a civics test for prior to graduation; (accompanied by resolve, House, No. 280) of Jay R. Kaufman and others for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) to develop a proposal for the establishment of a program of civics education and public service for the youth of the Commonwealth; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 306) of Elizabeth A. Poirier and others relative to the awarding of diplomas for civics education by the Board of Education; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 315) of Jeffrey N. Roy and others for legislation to involve youth in civic engagement and the development of model curriculum units in the history and social science framework in the public schools;

(accompanied by bill, House, No. 2016) of Linda Dean Campbell and others for legislation to promote and enhance civic engagement for public school student; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2022) of Diana DiZoglio, Sean Garballey and others that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education develop a civic education curriculum to be included within the history and social science curriculum of public schools; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2039) of Sheila C. Harrington and others for legislation to require public school districts to include civics in their curriculum; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2043) of Bradley H. Jones, Jr., and others for legislation to make civics education a high school graduation requirement; (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2855) of Daniel J. Hunt, Linda Dorcena Forry and Michelle M. DuBois relative to requiring the teaching of civics in all public elementary and high schools in the Commonwealth; and (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3556) of David M. Rogers and others that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education be authorized to developing best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy,- reports the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2306).

For the committee,
Sonia Chang-Diaz

SENATE No. 2306

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An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement.

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 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting at striking out Section 2 and replacing it with the following
3 section:-

4 Section 2. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following
5 meanings:-

6 “student-led civics project” is a project-based approach that involves a student-led
7 inquiry process and use of interdisciplinary concepts, structured around complex questions and
8 engaging tasks and challenges.

9 “The Board” is the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

10 “The Framework” is the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework

11 “The Department” is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

12 (b) The Board shall ensure that in all public schools, American history and civics
13 education shall be taught as required subjects for the purpose of promoting civic service and a
14 greater knowledge thereof, and of preparing students, morally and intellectually, for the duties of
15 citizenship, provided that, in elementary and secondary schools, American history and civics,
16 including the constitution of the United States, the declaration of independence and the bill of
17 rights, the constitution of the commonwealth and local history and government, and a program
18 relating to the flag of the United States of America, including, but not limited to, proper
19 etiquette, the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the electoral
20 process and the provisions of 36 U.S.C. 170 to 177, inclusive shall be taught.

21 (c) The History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks shall include, but not be
22 limited to, the following topics: (i) the function and composition of the branches of local, state
23 and federal government; (ii) the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of
24 Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth; (iii) the electoral
25 process, (iv) the roles and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy; (v) media literacy skills
26 that equip students with the knowledge and skills for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and
27 creating all types of media, including print, online, television, and social media; (vi) the
28 diversity present in our communities and the role it plays in the democratic process; (vii)
29 knowledge of the ways in which civic participation has been restricted throughout history; and
30 (viii) opportunities to identify and debate issues relative to power, economic status, and the
31 common good in democracy.

32 (e) There shall be set upon the books of the Commonwealth a fund known as the Civics
33 Project Fund. The Fund shall be used by the Department to implement this section, including
34 offering professional development and developing model curriculum. The fund shall consist of

35 revenues collected by the commonwealth including: (1) appropriations authorized by the general
36 court to be credited to the fund; (2) interest earned on such revenues; and (3) funds donated from
37 other sources. Any balance in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert to the General
38 Fund, but shall remain available for expenditure in subsequent fiscal years.

39 (f) The Board shall adopt a policy that requires every student in the Massachusetts public
40 school system have the opportunity to participate in no less than 2 student-led civics projects, at
41 least one of which would be completed after 8th grade and may be a high school graduation
42 requirement. Said projects may be individual, or small group, or class wide, or as part of required
43 coursework. Projects may include but not be limited to, student-centered inquiry investigating
44 the connections among and/or between federal, state, or local policies and an issue that impacts
45 the student's community. Projects may be integrated into coursework in any of the subject areas
46 taught in district schools.

47 (g) The Department may establish, subject to sufficient resources in the fund, regional
48 civics councils to monitor and provide resources for civics education and the implementation of
49 student-led civics projects. Regional civics councils may consist of representatives from higher
50 education, nonprofits, the business community, elected officials, and K-12 institutions including
51 parents, principals or school administrators, teachers and school committee members. Regional
52 civics councils may include at least two voting high-school student members and shall solicit
53 student input from students in their service areas. The Department may establish an annual
54 convention and invite members of the regional civics councils to attend in order to assess the
55 current state of civic education, share evidence-based best practices, and make recommendations
56 to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Board shall promulgate regulations

57 consistent with this section specifying the size, membership, service area, selection process, and
58 responsibilities for regional civics councils, subject to available resources.

59 (h) Each student representative to a school committee shall be designated as the Student
60 Outreach Officer. That member shall be responsible to the extent possible for ensuring that a
61 Student Advisory Council for that school committee exists and is informed of the agenda of the
62 school committee. Said member shall meet with the school committee in accordance with
63 M.G.L. Ch 71 §38M.

64 (ii) The Department shall, subject to resources in the fund, create tools, aligned with the
65 History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, in order to support districts in the
66 implementation of this section. The Department may collaborate with institutions of higher
67 education and other research institutions to assist in the evaluation of the implementation of this
68 section and the evaluation of the achievement of objectives outlined in subsection (f).

69 (j) The Department shall, subject to resources in the fund, establish the Edward Moore
70 Kennedy and Edward William Brooke III Civics Challenge which shall be implemented no later
71 than the 2022-2023 academic year. The Challenge shall be available to all eighth-grade students
72 in the Massachusetts public school system. Participating students shall present civics projects to
73 be evaluated and recognized as determined by the Department.

74 (k) The Secretary of the Commonwealth shall establish the High School Voter Challenge
75 that shall be implemented no later than the 2018-2019 academic year. Every public high school
76 may name one or more currently enrolled pupils designated by the school administrator or
77 nominated by peers to serve as voter outreach coordinators. The first two full weeks in March
78 and the last two full weeks in September shall be known as “high school voter challenge weeks”

79 when voter outreach coordinators may hold voter registration drives and reach out to other
80 students who are eligible to register or pre-register to vote on any high school campus at
81 locations and times deemed appropriate by the school administrator, or his or her designee,
82 which are reasonably accessible to all students.

83 SECTION 2 1/4. The Board shall create an endorsement in Action Civics, for educators
84 that demonstrate competency in teaching civics to students. This section shall be implemented no
85 later than the 2020-2021 academic year.

86 SECTION 2 1/2 The department shall convene a commission to develop a proposal for the
87 establishment of a program of civic education and public service for the youth of Massachusetts.
88 The commission shall consist of 2 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be the senate
89 president or the senate president's designee, and 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority
90 leader; 2 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the speaker of the house
91 or the speaker's designee, and 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader; the secretary
92 of education or the secretary's designee; the commissioner of education or the commissioner's
93 designee, the commissioner of higher education or the commissioner's designee; the president of
94 the Massachusetts Teachers Association or her/his designee; the president of the American
95 Federation of Teachers Massachusetts or her/his designee; a representative from Facing History
96 and Ourselves; a representative from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies; a
97 representative from the Massachusetts Service Alliance; a representative from the National
98 Guard; and 4 members appointed by the governor who shall have demonstrated experience in
99 and commitment to public service and civic education.

100 The commission shall investigate and study communities, states and/or nations that have
101 public service requirements for youth, and organizations that promote service in the United
102 States and the Commonwealth, such as but not limited to AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps. The
103 study shall consider these questions: when and how in their schooling shall students be exposed
104 to civics education and expected to engage in public service; how and what agency shall
105 administer the program; how will the program be funded; how will quality of programming be
106 maintained; what, if any, incentives or rewards should be in place for participation and success;
107 if the service participation should be mandatory; and other questions that the commission
108 members deem fitting.

109 The commission shall report its findings, including any proposed legislation, to the chairs
110 of the senate and house committees on ways and means, the senate and house clerks, the joint
111 committee on education, the joint committee on higher education, the executive office of
112 education, and the office of the governor no later than January 1, 2019.