

SENATE No. 2355

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, Monday, March 19, 2018

The committee on Ways and Means to whom was referred the Senate Bill to promote and enhance civic engagement (Senate, No.2306),-- reports, recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment substituting a new draft with the same title (Senate, No. 2355).

For the committee,
Karen E. Spilka

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**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
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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 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
2 section 2YYYY the following section:

3 Section 2ZZZZ. There shall be a Civics Project Trust Fund. The commissioner of
4 elementary and secondary education shall administer the fund. Money deposited in the fund shall
5 be used to implement section 2 of chapter 71 and may include grants or other funding to support
6 professional development in relation to said section 2 of said chapter 71 and the development of
7 the history and social science curriculum framework.

8 Money deposited in the fund shall consist of: (i) revenue from appropriations or other
9 money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii)
10 interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from other sources. Amounts credited to the
11 fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end
12 of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

13 Annually not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the house and senate
14 committees on ways and means on the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be limited
15 to, revenue received by the fund, revenue and expenditure projections for the next fiscal year and
16 details of all expenditures from the fund.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section
18 2, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

19 Section 2. (a) For purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following
20 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

21 “Board”, the board of elementary and secondary education.

22 “Department”, the department of elementary and secondary education.

23 “Framework”, the history and social science curriculum framework.

24 “Student-led civics project”, a project-based approach that involves a student-led inquiry
25 process and use of interdisciplinary concepts structured around complex questions and engaging
26 tasks and challenges.

27 (b) The board shall ensure that all public schools provide instruction in American history
28 and civics as required subjects to promote civic service and a greater knowledge thereof and to
29 prepare students, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship. Such education shall
30 include instruction on the constitution of the United States, the bill of rights, the declaration of
31 independence, the constitution of the commonwealth, local history and government and a
32 program relating to the flag of the United States of America including, but not limited to, proper

33 etiquette and the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the
34 electoral process and the provisions of 4 U.S.C. 7 to 9, inclusive, and 36 U.S.C. 170 and 171.

35 (c) The department shall ensure that the framework includes: (i) American history; (ii)
36 local history; (iii) the function and composition of the branches of local, state and federal
37 government; (iv) the constitution of the United States, the bill of rights, the declaration of
38 independence and the constitution of the commonwealth; (v) the electoral process; (vi) the roles
39 and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy; (vii) the development of media literacy skills to
40 access, analyze and evaluate media as it relates to history and civic education; (viii) community
41 diversity and the role it plays in the democratic process; (ix) knowledge of the ways in which
42 civic participation has been restricted throughout history; and (x) opportunities to identify and
43 debate issues relative to power, economic status and the common good in democracy.

44 (d) The board shall adopt a policy that requires every public school student to have the
45 opportunity to participate in at least 2 student-led civics projects, at least 1 of which shall be
46 completed after the eighth grade and shall be a high school graduation requirement. Student-led
47 projects may be individual, small group, class wide or completed as part of required coursework.
48 Projects may include, but shall not be limited to including, student-centered exploration of the
49 connections between federal, state and local policies and an issue that impacts the student's
50 community.

51 (e) Subject to sufficient resources in the Civics Project Trust Fund established in section
52 2ZZZZ of chapter 29, the department may establish regional civics councils to monitor and
53 provide resources for civics education and the implementation of student-led civics projects to
54 public schools.

55 Regional civics councils shall consist of representatives from: (i) institutions of higher
56 education; (ii) nonprofits; (iii) the business community; (iv) government, which may include
57 elected officials; (v) elementary and secondary institutions, which may include parents,
58 principals, school administrators, teachers and school committee members; and (vi) at least 2
59 secondary school students who shall be voting members. Regional civics councils shall solicit
60 student input from students in their service areas.

61 The department may promulgate regulations or guidelines consistent with this subsection
62 to identify the size, membership, service area, selection process and responsibilities for regional
63 civics councils.

64 (f) The department may establish an annual convention to assess the current state of civic
65 education, to share evidence-based best practices and to make recommendations to the board.
66 The department shall provide outreach to regional civics councils to attend and participate in the
67 convention.

68 (g) A school committee may designate a student outreach officer who shall be
69 responsible, to the extent possible, for ensuring that a student advisory committee, established
70 under section 38M, for that school committee exists and that the student advisory committee is
71 informed of the agenda of the school committee.

72 (h) Subject to sufficient resources in the Civics Project Trust Fund, the department shall
73 create tools aligned with the framework to support districts in the implementation of this section.
74 The department may collaborate with institutions of higher education and other stakeholder
75 organizations to assist in evaluating the achievement of objectives outlined in this section.

76 (i) Subject to sufficient resources in the Civics Project Trust Fund, the department shall
77 establish the Edward Moore Kennedy and Edward William Brooke III civics challenge. The
78 challenge shall be available to all eighth grade students and may include a competitive evaluation
79 of a civics project, which may be a student-led civics project, through a process determined by
80 the department. The challenge may be also provided on a regional or statewide level.

81 (j) The state secretary shall establish the high school voter challenge. The first 2 full
82 weeks in March and the last 2 full weeks in September shall be high school voter challenge
83 weeks.

84 During voter challenge weeks, voter outreach coordinators may hold voter registration
85 drives and provide outreach to eligible students to register or preregister to vote on any
86 participating high school campus at locations and times deemed appropriate by the school
87 administrator which shall be reasonably accessible to eligible students. Enrolled student in a high
88 school may serve as voter outreach coordinators. Voter outreach coordinators may be selected by
89 either a school administrator or a peer nomination process.

90 (k) The board shall create a civics endorsement for educators that demonstrates
91 competency in teaching civics to students.

92 SECTION 3. There shall be within the department of elementary and secondary
93 education shall a special commission to develop a proposal for the establishment of a program of
94 civic education and public service for youths. The commission shall consist of: the commissioner
95 of elementary and secondary education or a designee, who shall serve as chair; 2 members of the
96 senate, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader; 2 members of the house of
97 representatives, 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader; the commissioner of higher

98 education or a designee; the president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association or a designee;
99 the president of the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts or a designee; and 9 persons
100 to be appointed by the governor 1 of whom shall be a representative from Facing History and
101 Ourselves National Foundation, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts
102 Council for the Social Studies, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts
103 Service Alliance, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts National
104 Guard; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Civics Learning Coalition; and
105 4 of whom shall have demonstrated experience in and a commitment to public service and civic
106 education.

107 The commission shall investigate and study communities, states and countries that have
108 public service requirements for youths and organizations that promote service in the
109 commonwealth and the United States including, but not limited to, AmeriCorps and the Peace
110 Corps.

111 The study shall consider: (i) preferred timing and delivery of civics education and
112 engagement in public service; (ii) the recommended agency to administer the program; (iii)
113 recommended funding mechanisms; (iv) ways to ensure quality programming; (v) recommended
114 incentives to encourage participation and success; (vi) whether the service participation should
115 be mandatory; and (vii) other topics deemed fitting by the commission.

116 The commission shall report its findings and recommendations, together with drafts of
117 legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the
118 chairs of the senate and house committees on ways and means, the clerks of the senate and house
119 of representatives, senate and house chairs of the joint committee on education, the senate and

120 house chairs of the joint committee on higher education, the secretary of education and the
121 governor not later than January 1, 2019.

122 SECTION 4. Subsection (h) and (k) of section 2 of chapter 71 of the General Laws shall
123 take effect for the 2020-2021 academic year.

124 SECTION 5. The requirement that all public high school students complete a student-led
125 civics project as a condition of graduation under subsection (d) of section 2 of chapter 71 of the
126 General Laws shall apply to all public high school students entering high school on or after
127 academic year 2018-2019.

128 SECTION 6. Subsection (i) of said section 2 of said chapter 71 shall take effect for the
129 2022-2023 academic year.