SENATE . . . . . No. 2631

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, July 25, 2018

Report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two branches, with reference to the House amendments to the Senate Bill to promote and enhance civic engagement (Senate, No. 2375) (amended by the House by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text of House document numbered 4545, amended),-- reports, in part, a "Bill to promote and enhance civic engagement" (Senate, No. 2631).

For the Committee:

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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:

SECTION 1. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 2YYYY the following section:-

Section 2CCCCC. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Civics Project Trust Fund. The fund shall be administered by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. The fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations to further civics and history education and professional development. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

(b) Amounts credited to the fund may focus on underserved communities across the commonwealth, including those school districts with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, and may be expended, without further appropriation, by the

commissioner for the following purposes: (i) to assist with the implementation of section 2 of chapter 71, including professional development training; (ii) for the development of the history and social science curriculum framework, including civics education; (iii) for the collaboration with institutions of higher education and other stakeholder organizations; and (iv) to establish a competitive evaluation of a student-led civics project, available to all eighth grade students.

(c) Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education and subject to review before being deposited in the fund to ensure that pledged funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on the implementation of civics education programming that may be detrimental to the neutral and rigorous teaching of civics or unduly influence the direction of civics education policy. The review shall be made publicly available.

(d) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on education and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund, including but not limited to, funds expended to assist school districts in meeting the requirements in section 2 of chapter 71; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher education and other stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the next year.

SECTION 2. Chapter 51 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 26 the following section:-

Section 26A.(a) The state secretary, in consultation with the commissioner of elementary and secondary education and the board of elementary and secondary education, shall establish a high school voter challenge program and shall promulgate regulations to implement the program in participating high schools in the commonwealth; provided, however, that the regulations shall identify registration time periods that allow eligible students to participate in all municipal and state elections, including primary elections.

(b) Superintendents of schools shall ensure that each voter challenge program implemented in their districts provide opportunities for outreach and for all eligible students to register or pre-register to vote on any participating high school campus. An enrolled high school student may apply to serve as a voter outreach coordinator or be selected to serve as a voter outreach coordinator by a peer nomination process.

SECTION 3. The eighth paragraph of section 1I of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:-

The plan shall also include a description of how the district implements the requirements of subsection (c) of section 2 of chapter 71 and shall be subject to review by the department not less than every 6 years, in accordance with section 55A of chapter 15.

SECTION 4. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 2, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 2. (a) In all public schools, history of the United States of America and social science, including civics, shall be taught as required subjects to promote civic service and a greater knowledge thereof and to prepare students, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship. Instruction within the history and social science academic standards required in

section 1D of chapter 69 shall include: (i) history of the United States of America; (ii) the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights; (iii) the Declaration of Independence; (iv) the constitution of the commonwealth; (v) local history and government; (vi) the function and composition of the branches of local, state and federal government; (vii) the roles and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy; (viii) the development of skills to access, analyze and evaluate written and digital media as it relates to history and civics; (ix) community diversity and historical trends in voter registration and civic participation relative to disenfranchised voter populations; (x) opportunities to identify and debate issues relative to power, economic status and the common good in democracy; and (xi) a program relating to the flag of the United States of America including, but not limited to, proper etiquette and the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the electoral process and the provisions of 4 U.S.C. sections 7 to 9, inclusive, and 36 U.S.C. section 301.

(b) The department of elementary and secondary education shall provide professional development opportunities for educators on the history and social science framework, and subject to sufficient resources in the Civics Project Trust Fund established under section 2CCCCC of chapter 29, create tools aligned with the framework to support districts in the implementation process. Additional support and outreach from the department may include statewide and regional trainings, meetings or conferences, including opportunities for districts and stakeholders to assess and share evidence-based best practices in support of civics education and provide feedback and recommendations to the department.

(c) Each public school serving students in the eighth grade and each public high school shall provide not less than 1 student-led civics project for each student; provided, however, that each such project shall be consistent with the history and social science curriculum frameworks

adopted by the board pursuant to section 1E of chapter 69 and with structured learning time requirements as required under regulations promulgated by the board of elementary and secondary education. Civics projects may be individual, small group or class wide, and designed to promote a student's ability to: (i) reason, make logical arguments and support claims using valid evidence; and (ii) demonstrate an understanding of the connections between federal, state and local policies, including issues that may impact the student's community.

(d) Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish the commonwealth civics challenge and shall establish guidelines for implementation. The challenge shall be available to all eighth grade public school students to showcase student-led civics projects that promote and demonstrate an understanding of civic engagement, citizenship and community service. The department may partner with a college, university, museum, library or other similar non-profit entity for the establishment of the challenge.

SECTION 5. Section 38M of said chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

A school committee may designate a student outreach coordinator for the purpose of ensuring the establishment of a student advisory committee and regularly informing the advisory committee of the school committee's agenda.

SECTION 6. The state secretary shall disseminate information to cities and towns to promote youth membership on municipal boards, committees and commissions as a means to promote civic engagement. The secretary shall disseminate information under this section not later than December 1, 2018.

SECTION 7. If the board of elementary and secondary education adopts an assessment, no later than the 2021-2022 academic year, under section 1I of chapter 69 of the General Laws that (i) aligns with the history and social science framework adopted by the board as of June 26, 2018 and (ii) includes a participatory component, it shall satisfy the requirements of subsection (c) of section 2 of chapter 72 of the General Laws.

SECTION 8. The department of elementary and secondary education shall begin implementing subsection (b) of section 2 of chapter 71 of the General Laws for the 2020-2021 academic year.

SECTION 9. The department of elementary and secondary education shall begin implementing the commonwealth civics challenge pursuant to subsection (d) of section 2 of chapter 71 of the General Laws for the 2022-2023 academic year.