

HOUSE No. 247

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Adrian C. Madaro

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 establishing a stakeholders' committee on family first prevention services and racial equity.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 247

By Mr. Madaro of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 247) of Adrian C. Madaro relative to establishing a stakeholders’ committee (including members of the General Court) on family first prevention services and racial equity. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act establishing a stakeholders’ committee on family first prevention services and racial equity.

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

1 There shall be a Stakeholders’ Commission on Family First Prevention Services and
2 Racial Equity to ensure that key stakeholders and the public are informed about and able
3 meaningfully to participate in the development and implementation of a prevention services plan
4 which can both prevent child abuse and neglect and unnecessary entry into foster care for
5 vulnerable children in Massachusetts, and reduce racial disproportionality in the Massachusetts
6 child welfare system.

7 The Stakeholders’ Commission on Family First Prevention Services and Racial Equity
8 shall be co-led by the secretary of the executive office of health and human services and the
9 chairs of the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities. It shall consist of
10 the commissioner of the department of children and families or a designee, the commissioner of
11 the department of early education and care or a designee, the commissioner of the department of

12 public health or a designee, the commissioner of the department of mental health or a designee, a
13 designee from the office of MassHealth, a designee of the bureau of substance abuse services,
14 the child advocate or a designee, a designee of the committee for public counsel services, a
15 designee of the Children’s Trust Fund, a designee of the Judge Baker Children’s Center, a
16 designee of the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, a designee of the Children’s League of
17 Massachusetts, 1 parent of children currently or formerly in the department of children and
18 families’ caseload, 1 current or former foster youth in the department of children and families’
19 foster care system, 1 kinship caregiver for children currently or formerly in the department of
20 children and families’ caseload, 1 department of children and families’ front line social worker, 1
21 residential substance use treatment provider, 1 outpatient provider for families with substance
22 use disorders, 1 domestic violence service provider or representative of domestic violence
23 service providers, 1 community based mental health service provider. At least two of the
24 individuals representing directly impacted persons and three of the individuals representing
25 services providers shall represent the diversity of the communities that are most impacted by
26 inequities in the Massachusetts child welfare system and shall be reflective of the constituency
27 the committee is intended to serve. The advisory committee shall consult with other individuals
28 with relevant expertise, including academics, researchers, directly impacted persons, and service
29 providers, as needed.

30 The purpose of the advisory committee is to ensure that the public, including policy
31 makers, persons who will be directly affected, the advocacy community, agencies and
32 community-based providers of services and others with an interest or stake in prevention services
33 and ensuring racial equity for Massachusetts children and families 1) are informed about the
34 Family First Prevention Services Act and the current status of its implementation in

35 Massachusetts; 2) are informed through best available data about the current status of prevention
36 services for children and families involved in or at risk of involvement in the Massachusetts
37 child welfare system, children at risk of entering foster care, and children in foster care requiring
38 prevention services to safely return home; 3) are informed of the status of racial
39 disproportionality in the Massachusetts child welfare system, the causes for racial
40 disproportionality, and the role that prevention services can play in reducing such
41 disproportionality; 4) are presented with and discuss the fiscal analyses of prevention plan
42 implementation; 5) are regularly informed of the department of children and families' progress,
43 thinking, planning and any actions taken with respect to implementing the Family First
44 Prevention Services Act and for improving racial equity in the child welfare system; 6) work
45 together with the department of children and families to set goals, objectives, measures of
46 progress and timetables for development of a family first prevention plan, together with any
47 broader prevention services plan, and for implementation of that plan in Massachusetts and; 7)
48 work together with the department of children and families to review and assess implementation
49 challenges and outcomes, and to adjust implementation of the prevention plan to best achieve the
50 plan's goals.

51 The advisory committee shall begin meeting within 45 days of passage of this act. It shall
52 meet at least monthly until one year after the Commonwealth submits its family first prevention
53 services plan to the federal government, and then at least quarterly thereafter. It shall remain in
54 existence for five years from passage of this act. All meetings, including any meetings of sub-
55 groups of this committee, shall be open to the public, and all meeting materials shall be shared
56 with the public in advance of meetings. Public input as well as dialog with the public shall be
57 regularly solicited and considered by the advisory committee.

58 The committee shall issue an interim report within six months of its initial meeting on
59 progress made to date, and its recommendations, on the development and/or implementation of a
60 Massachusetts family first prevention services plan and any broader prevention plan including:
61 1) the goals of the Massachusetts prevention services plan including how the plan will improve
62 racial equity in the child welfare system; 2) the specific steps by which the Commonwealth will
63 accomplish those goals; 3) the timeline for submission to the federal government of the
64 Massachusetts family first prevention services plan; 4) the array of services to be included in the
65 plan and; 5) a system for monitoring and evaluating the prevention services plan. The committee
66 shall issue updates annually thereafter reporting on progress on each of the above five items, and
67 also summarizing progress made and its recommendations for next steps beyond initial filing and
68 implementation of the plan.