

HOUSE No. 273

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Chynah Tyler

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 to establish an Office of Youth Development.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Chynah Tyler</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/8/2021</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 273

By Ms. Tyler of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 273) of Chynah Tyler and others for legislation to establish a state-wide office of youth development within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 170 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to establish an Office of Youth Development.

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. Whereas, analysis of current social and health status indicators indicate that
2 an unacceptable number of urban youth are becoming involved in the criminal justice system,
3 experiencing high rates of homicide and suicide, engaged in violence and antisocial behaviors,
4 becoming abusers of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, experiencing a high rate of
5 pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, and leaving school without marketable skills.
6 There is clear and present danger that the current socio-economic status of this generation of
7 urban youth will have a negative impact on the general well-being of the entire society of the
8 Commonwealth; and

9 Whereas, public schools have historically been a place where the above stated
10 phenomenon developed, and in spite of the many changes implemented and proposed, do not

11 present the model nor infrastructure needed to provide an appropriate model to improve the
12 situation with urban youth; and Whereas, the current negative social, economic and health status
13 indicators for urban youth may be defined as predictors for negative future social and economic
14 outcomes; and

15 Whereas, violent behaviors, both as victim and perpetrators, trauma, substance abuse,
16 homelessness, teen pregnancy and infant mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, delinquent
17 behaviors, and suicide are clearly identified as public health concerns,

18 Therefore, Notwithstanding any act to the contrary, this act provides that there shall be
19 established within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, a state-wide office of
20 youth development within the Department of Public Health which shall organize and implement
21 pilot programs in Boston, Springfield, New Bedford, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke,
22 and Worcester to demonstrate a coordinated-comprehensive youth development services delivery
23 system to improve and promote good citizenship among youth, between the ages of seven and
24 eighteen. All programs and activities shall be coordinated with the Executive Office of Health
25 and Human Services organizations in each city, so as to optimize the allocation of resources.

26 SECTION 2. Programs and activities shall be provided outside of school hours, year-
27 round, including weekends for individuals who are enrolled in school, with programs and
28 activities for individuals not enrolled in school available on a daily basis.

29 SECTION 3. Programs and activities shall be designed based on youth development
30 research findings, with an emphasis directed toward the development and enhancement of social
31 decorum, anti-violent and anti-gang behaviors, positive social behaviors, local and statewide
32 labor pools, improving education results, job opportunities and career and employment options,

33 citizenship and positive future outlook, community-building, the performing and creative arts,
34 and avoiding teenage pregnancies. With some components modeled after the pre-World War II
35 Work Project Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) the system shall
36 provide practical skill building beyond the theoretical approach used in public schools.

37 SECTION 4. Programs and activities shall be implemented through contracts with
38 federally qualified, Community Health Centers. Policy-makers and staff of contracting
39 organizations shall reflect the participant population of the program.

40 SECTION 5. The programs and activities shall include but not be limited to the
41 following: (1) a research component to address issues pertaining to replication of successful
42 strategies identified; (2) a community coordination function to assure that service delivery is
43 coordinated in order to limit any unwanted duplication and/or overlapping; (3) to document and
44 analyze resources and services targeted for the participant population; (4) identification of the
45 services needed to advance the goals of the program; (5) develop and/or partner with a
46 community youth worker certification program, in order to utilize “best practices” in the field of
47 youth development, this component will further enhance skill development and standards for
48 youth development as a discipline; (6) an enhanced management information system support
49 procedure to develop a common intake and referral system to increase the use of preventive
50 services, share resource information, avoid duplication and to allow participants to engage in,
51 hands-on applications and learn state-of-the-art computer use; (7) court diversion; (8) coordinate
52 grants to various community agencies; (9) coordinate with already established organizations and
53 agencies; and (10) develop needed services as required for the success of the program.

54 SECTION 6. There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a
55 separate fund to be known as the Office of Youth Development Fund. There shall be credited to
56 said fund an amount sufficient to sustain such an initiative in the immediate fiscal year
57 commonwealth's budget, and thereafter for a period of five (5) years. The City of Boston shall be
58 among the first communities within the Commonwealth which the office shall be established.