FILED ON: 7/19/2021

HOUSE . . . . . No. 4016

Section 128 contained in the engrossed Bill making appropriations for the fiscal year 2022 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions and certain activities of the Commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements (see House, No. 4002), which had been returned by His Excellency the Governor with recommendation of amendment (for message see Attachment P of House, No. 4019). July 22, 2021.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing a special legislative commission to study poverty in the Commonwealth.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith establish a special legislative commission to study poverty in the commonwealth, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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

(a) There shall be a special commission established pursuant to section 2A of chapter 4 of the General Laws to study poverty in the commonwealth. The commission shall investigate, develop and recommend methods and strategies for reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for people with low incomes. The commission shall consist of: 1 member of the senate appointed by the senate president, who shall serve as co-chair; 1 member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, who shall serve as co-chair; the chairs of the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities; the secretary of administration and finance or a designee; the secretary of health and human services or a

designee; the secretary of elder affairs or a designee; the commissioner of public health or a designee; the undersecretary for housing and community development or a designee; the commissioner of transitional assistance or a designee; the secretary of labor and workforce development or a designee; the secretary of education or a designee; the secretary of transportation or a designee; the commissioner of early education and care or a designee; 2 members appointed by the co-chairs who shall have expertise in economics and socio-economic policy; 1 member appointed by the Massachusetts Association for Community Action, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Municipal Association, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Association for Early Education & Care, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.; 1 member appointed by Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Inc.; 1 member appointed by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Inc.; 1 member appointed by the Alliance for Business Leadership, Inc.; 1 member appointed by the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, Inc.; 1 member appointed by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston; 1 member appointed by Project Bread – The Walk for Hunger, Inc.; and 2 members who are not currently serving in public office to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be from a community foundation and 1 of whom shall be from a community-based organization. All appointments shall be made not later than 30 days after the effective date of this section. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation.

(b) The commission shall study ways to promote opportunity, address inequality and reduce poverty in the commonwealth. The commission shall make recommendations that, if

implemented, would significantly reduce poverty in the commonwealth over the next 10 years. The study shall include, but not be limited to: (i) a historical analysis of poverty rates in the commonwealth; (ii) an analysis of demographic disparities in poverty rates including, but not limited to, any racial or ethnic disparities; (iii) an assessment of the underlying causes of poverty, including any specific issues that contribute to the disparities identified in clause (ii); (iv) an analysis of regional disparities in poverty rates in the commonwealth; and (v) a survey of existing public programs and services that most effectively reduce poverty both in the commonwealth and in other states. The commission's recommendations may include proposed legislative and regulatory changes. Any such recommendations shall include, if feasible, the estimated costs to the commonwealth of implementing the recommendations; provided, however, that such estimated costs shall take into account any reductions in the utilization and costs of other programs and services provided or supported by the commonwealth.

(c) The commission shall meet not less than quarterly. The commission may consult and collaborate with relevant experts, community-based organizations, research institutes and state agencies. The commission shall conduct not fewer than 2 public hearings in geographically diverse areas of the commonwealth.

(d) Not later than December 31, 2022, the commission shall file a report of its findings, including any legislative or regulatory recommendations, with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on housing, the joint committee on education, the joint committee on community development and small businesses, the joint committee on economic development and emerging technologies, the joint committee on public health, the joint committee on racial

equity, civil rights, and inclusion and the senate and house committees on ways and means. The commission may make interim reports as appropriate.