

HOUSE No. 701

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Danillo A. Sena

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 providing for universal pre-k for 3- to 5-year-olds.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/16/2021</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/15/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 701

By Mr. Sena of Acton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 701) of Danilo A. Sena and others relative to universal access to pre-kindergarten programs. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act providing for universal pre-k for 3- to 5-year-olds.

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. Section 1 of chapter 15D of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding
2 the following paragraph:

3 Every young child in the commonwealth has diverse strengths rooted in their family's
4 culture, background, language and beliefs. Universal access to pre-k programs for young
5 children will provide a momentous start to achieve the purposes of this chapter by mandating
6 responsive and respectful learning environments that welcome children from diverse cultural and
7 linguistic backgrounds. Universal access to pre-k for all children will advance the state's goals of
8 equity, diversity and full inclusion by providing an opportunity to all children to experience
9 responsive interactions that nurture their full range of social, emotional, cognitive, physical and
10 linguistic abilities.

11 SECTION 2. Said chapter 15D is hereby further amended by adding the following
12 section:-

Section 19. (a) In addition to the program provided for in section 13, the department shall administer a universal pre-k program as provided by this section. The program shall expand pre-k options available to the children of this state.

(b) Each pre-k program shall provide an opportunity for enrollment in the program to any child residing in the geographic area served by the program who is from 2 years and 9 months of age to 5 years of age who is not enrolled in or has not attended kindergarten.

For the purposes of this section, the term “pre-k program” shall mean services designed to provide developmentally appropriate early development and learning experiences based on the department’s pre-k learning standards to children who are from 2 years and 9 months of age to 5 years of age who are not eligible for or enrolled in kindergarten. A pre-k program pursuant to this section shall be provided in a public school or a public charter school.

(c) The office shall adopt rules that provide for no fewer than 20 hours per week of publicly funded pre-k learning, which shall be available each week public school is in session to each child who is from 2 years and 9 months of age to 5 years of age who is not eligible for or enrolled in kindergarten operated by a public school.

(d) In developing rules for the pre-k program, the office shall consult with the advisory council established under this section and shall consider such factors as coordination with existing programs, the preparation necessary for instructors, qualifications of instructors, training of staff, adequate space and equipment and special transportation needs.

(e) There shall be within the department a pre-k advisory council. The purpose of the council shall be to assist the department in administering the pre-k program. The council shall:

(i) identify resources necessary for the office to develop, support and sustain the implementation of a high quality pre-k program, including evaluations, professional development opportunities, technical assistance, monitoring guidance and administrative assistance;

(ii) ensure that pathways and supports are available to teaching staff to increase culturally and linguistically diverse staff to teach and assist in pre-k classrooms and environments; and

(iii) establish minimum salary requirements and target salary requirements for pre-k program teachers.

The council shall consist of 11 members who are appointed by the governor from a list of 15 nominees provided by the department. The department must nominate at least 3 individuals representing gateway cities. The department must nominate at least 1 individual from each of the following professions or organizations: principal of a public elementary school, kindergarten teacher at a public elementary school, teacher of the first grade or above at a public elementary school, teacher at an early education program, member of a public school district, Head Start, preschool program and professor of early education at an institute of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Members shall serve for a term of 4 years and at the pleasure of the governor.

SECTION 3. The governor shall appoint the members of the advisory council established in this act not later than 90 days after the passage of this act.