SENATE DOCKET, NO. 860 FILED ON: 2/9/2021

SENATE . . . . . No. 377

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Patrick M. O'Connor

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 improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Patrick M. O'Connor	*Plymouth and Norfolk*	
Jack Patrick Lewis	*7th Middlesex*	*3/3/2021*
Bruce E. Tarr	*First Essex and Middlesex*	*3/3/2021*
Thomas M. Stanley	*9th Middlesex*	*3/8/2021*
Michael O. Moore	*Second Worcester*	*3/10/2021*
Carmine Lawrence Gentile	*13th Middlesex*	*3/10/2021*
Brian M. Ashe	*2nd Hampden*	*3/10/2021*
Elizabeth A. Malia	*11th Suffolk*	*3/17/2021*
Joan B. Lovely	*Second Essex*	*4/1/2021*
Kay Khan	*11th Middlesex*	*4/9/2021*

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By Mr. O'Connor, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 377) of Patrick M. O'Connor, Jack Patrick Lewis, Bruce E. Tarr, Thomas M. Stanley and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *318* OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

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 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraph:-

All teachers who apply for an initial Massachusetts educator license on or after December 31, 2022 shall receive training and preparation in the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students who are nonverbal or who have limited speech, as a requirement for such licensure. Such training and preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and practical experience in the classroom with children who use augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other disabilities that result in

limited or no verbal abilities; provided that practical experience for regular education teachers shall include experience in the classroom with students who use augmentative and alternative communication, and if classroom settings are unavailable practical experience may include other types of interactions with and observations of individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication. Teacher and specialist teacher licensure requirements, subject matter knowledge requirements, professional standards for teachers, and educator preparation program approval requirements shall adequately address augmentative and alternative communication competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have limited verbal abilities; provided that a teacher shall not be subject to such requirements if they are applying for a second or subsequent licenses. The board shall require that the individual professional development plans required under section 38G of Chapter 71 address the learning needs of students who are nonverbal or have limited speech.