

**SENATE . . . . . No. 946**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Sonia Chang-Diaz*

*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 secure civil rights through the courts of the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Sonia Chang-Diaz</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	
<i>Adam Gomez</i>	<i>Hampden</i>	
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>

**SENATE . . . . . No. 946**

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By Ms. Chang-Diaz, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 946) of Sonia Chang-Diaz, Adam Gomez and Jack Patrick Lewis for legislation to secure civil rights through the courts of the Commonwealth. The Judiciary.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act to secure civil rights through the courts of the Commonwealth.

*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 11I of chapter 12 of the General Laws is hereby amended by  
2 inserting before the existing paragraph the letter (a) and further amended by adding the following  
3 new paragraph:-

4           (b) Any person whose exercise or enjoyment of rights secured by the constitution or laws  
5 of the United States, or of rights secured by the constitution or laws of the commonwealth, has  
6 been interfered with by a person or entity acting under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation,  
7 custom or usage of the commonwealth or its subdivisions, may institute and prosecute in his or  
8 her own name and on his or her own behalf a civil action for injunctive and other appropriate  
9 relief, including the award of compensatory monetary damages. Said action shall be brought  
10 either in the superior court for the county in which the conduct complained of occurred or in the  
11 superior court for the county in which the person or entity whose conduct complained of resides  
12 or has a principal place of business. A plaintiff who prevails by obtaining significant relief after

13 the filing of an action under this paragraph shall be entitled to an award of the costs of litigation  
14 and reasonable attorneys' fees in an amount to be fixed by the court.

15 SECTION 2. The provisions of this act will take effect immediately upon enactment.