

SENATE No. 1602

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Walter F. Timilty

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 creating a behavioral health emergency response pilot program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Walter F. Timilty

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol

SENATE No. 1602

By Mr. Timilty, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1602) of Walter F. Timilty for legislation to create a behavioral health emergency response pilot program. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2970 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**
—————

An Act creating a behavioral health emergency response pilot program.

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

1 Chapter 6A of the General Laws shall be amended by inserting the following new
2 section:-

3 Section 18AA. (a) The executive office of public safety and security, in collaboration
4 with the department of public health and the department of mental health, shall establish and
5 provide regulatory and administrative oversight to the behavioral health emergency response
6 pilot program, a co-response pilot program to increase the availability of behavioral health
7 clinicians to assist municipal police, fire and emergency medical professionals in emergency
8 response of 911 calls.

9 (b)(1) The program shall establish an application process for seeking a grant and
10 participating in the pilot program, criteria for municipal applicants, criteria for behavioral health
11 clinician staff, a process for determining approval for a grant application, and a data collection
12 system to understand outcomes of the co-response pilot program, including but not limited to the
13 number of individuals served, the demographics including age, gender, race, and ethnicity of
14 individuals served, the number and types of emergency calls, the number of emergency calls
15 requiring behavioral health clinician intervention, and behavioral health resources provided to
16 individuals served.

17 (b)(2) The program shall collaborate with a board of community-based behavioral health
18 organizations. The board shall include the executive director of the national alliance on mental
19 illness Massachusetts or a designee, the president of the association for behavioral healthcare or
20 a designee, the executive director of the Massachusetts chapter of the national association of
21 social workers or a designee, the director of greater Boston association of black social workers or
22 a designee, the director of the Massachusetts peer support network or a designee, the director of
23 the western Massachusetts learning community or designee, and the president of the
24 Massachusetts league of community health centers or a designee.

25 (d) Behavioral health clinician staff shall not respond to an emergency call without a
26 municipal police, fire or emergency medical professional.

27 (e) The program shall establish an educational programming for municipal police, fire and
28 emergency medical professionals in the areas of behavioral health, community policing and
29 serving individuals with disabilities.

30 (f) The program shall report not later than 12 months after the effective date of this act
31 and annually thereafter to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint
32 committee on public health, and the joint committee on public safety and homeland security. The
33 report shall include but not be limited to an outline of grant allocation, the number of municipal
34 department participants, the number of behavioral health clinician staff, the data results of the
35 pilot program, identified barriers to establishing and maintaining the program, response measures
36 taken to promote public safety.