HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 2288 FILED ON: 1/16/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 2000

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida

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 establishing statewide standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida	*7th Plymouth*	*1/16/2025*
Steven George Xiarhos	*5th Barnstable*	*4/30/2025*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 2000

By Representative Sullivan-Almeida of Abington, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2000) of Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to statewide standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *1780* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act establishing statewide standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers.

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 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 76. (a) There shall be a permanent commission on sexual assault and domestic violence service providers, which shall consist of 19 members as follows: 1 of whom shall be the secretary of health and human services or their designee, who shall serve as chair; 1 of whom shall be the director of the department of public health division of sexual and domestic violence prevention and services; 2 of whom shall be members of the house of representatives, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; 1 of whom shall be a member of the house of representatives, to be appointed by the minority leader; 2 of whom shall be members of the

10 senate, to be appointed by the president of the senate; 1 of whom shall be a member of the
11 senate, to be appointed by the minority leader; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the
12 governor's council to address sexual assault and domestic violence; 1 of whom shall be the
13 attorney general or their designee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the
14 Massachusetts office for victim assistance; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of Jane Doe
15 Inc.: the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence; 1 of whom
16 shall be the executive director of the Victim Rights Law Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the
17 executive director of the New Bedford Women's Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the executive
18 director of the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of
19 Pathways for Change, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be an advocate specialized in working with
20 survivors with disabilities, to be appointed by the governor; 1 of whom shall be an advocate
21 specialized in working with children who experienced trauma, to be appointed by the governor; 3
22 of whom shall be survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence, to be appointed by the
23 governor. Members of the commission shall be citizens of the commonwealth who have
24 demonstrated commitment to supporting survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

25 Biennially, every legislative session, the general court shall review the membership of the
26 commission to ensure its makeup is tailored to its purpose and improved when necessary.

27 (b) Appointed members shall serve terms of 2 years and until their successors are
28 appointed, or the member is reappointed by their appointing or nominating authority. Vacancies
29 in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority for the
30 balance of the unexpired term.

31 (c) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but
32 shall be reimbursed by the general court for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the
33 performance of their duties.

34 (d) The commission shall be a resource to the commonwealth on issues affecting
35 survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. It shall be a primary responsibility of the
36 commission to study the practices and service standards currently in place for sexual assault and
37 domestic violence service providers, including any organization, board or program that provides
38 specialized programs, support, residential programs or intervention services for victims of sexual
39 assault or domestic violence. The commission shall meet to put forth recommendations for
40 uniform minimum service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence programs
41 throughout the commonwealth. The commission shall perform an ongoing review of its
42 recommendations and their results to ensure its recommendations are narrowly tailored and
43 improved when necessary.

44 (e) The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1)
45 to use such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and
46 organizations as may from time to time be offered and required, including provision of meeting
47 places and refreshments; (2) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings
48 and other public events as the commission deems necessary; (3) to establish and maintain such
49 offices as the commission deems necessary, subject to appropriation; (4) to acquire and direct a
50 staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation; (5) to enact by-laws for its own governance
51 but not inconsistent with any general or special law; and (6) to recommend policies and make
52 recommendations to agencies and officers of the commonwealth and local subdivisions of
53 government to effectuate the purposes of this commission.

54 (f) (1) The commission may request information and assistance from state agencies as the
55 commission requires.

56 (2) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants
57 or bequests or any federal funds, for any of the purposes of this section. These funds shall be
58 deposited in a separate account with the state treasurer, be received by the treasurer on behalf of
59 the commonwealth, and be expended by the commission in accordance with law.

60 (g) (1) The commission shall report their recommendations relative to uniform minimum
61 service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service programs to the executive
62 office of health and human services no later than 180 days following the passage of this act.

63 (2) Biennially, not later than June 30, the commission shall reassess and report on the
64 uniform service standards for sexual assault on domestic violence service programs and any
65 policy recommendations to the governor, secretary of health and human services and the clerks
66 of the house of representatives and the senate.

67 SECTION 2. Chapter 6A is hereby amended by inserting after section 18Z the following
68 section:-

69 Section 18AA. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context
70 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

71

72 "Commission", the permanent commission on sexual assault and domestic violence
73 service providers established pursuant to section 76 of chapter 3.

74 “Sexual assault and domestic violence service provider”, any organization, board or
75 program that provides specialized programs, support, residential programs or interventions for
76 victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

77

78 (b) The executive office of health and human services, in collaboration with the
79 commission, shall promulgate uniform minimum service standards for sexual assault and
80 domestic violence providers, which shall include, but not limited to: (i) initial and annual training
81 requirements; (ii) minimum policies and procedures; and (iii) continuous quality improvements.

82 (2) To be eligible to receive state funds, a sexual assault and domestic violence service
83 provider shall adhere to the uniform minimum service standards; provided, however, that sexual
84 assault and domestic violence service providers completing a program improvement plan or
85 corrective action plan pursuant to paragraph 2 of subsection (c) shall be eligible to receive state
86 funds.

87 (c)(1) The executive office of health and human services shall annually file a report with
88 the commission. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) a list of sexual assault and
89 domestic violence service providers in compliance with the uniform service standards; and (ii) a
90 list of sexual assault and domestic violence service providers that have violated the uniform
91 service standards and what violation has occurred.

92 (2) Sexual assault and domestic violence service providers shall complete a program
93 improvement plan, developed by the commission, after the first violation of the uniform
94 standards. Sexual assault and domestic violence service providers shall complete a corrective

95 action plan, developed by the commission, after a second or subsequent violation of the uniform
96 service standards.

97 (3) The commission shall annually file a report with the executive office of health and
98 human services regarding sexual assault and domestic violence service providers compliance
99 with the uniform service standards. The report shall include:

100 (i) the number of sexual assault and domestic violence service providers in compliance
101 with the uniform service standards;

102 (ii) the number of sexual assault and domestic violence service providers under a
103 program improvement plan; and

104 (iii) the number of sexual assault and domestic violence service providers enrolled in a
105 corrective action plan.

106 The executive office of health and human services shall publish the report on its website
107 within 30 days of receipt.

108 (d) A sexual assault and domestic violence service provider shall not qualify for state
109 funds if it discriminates in its admissions or provision of services on the basis of race, religion,
110 color, age, disability, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or
111 ancestry.