

HOUSE No. 4351

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Brandy Fluker-Reid

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 a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Brandy Fluker-Reid</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>10/15/2025</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>10/15/2025</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>10/15/2025</i>
<i>Leigh Davis</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>10/15/2025</i>
<i>Marcus S. Vaughn</i>	<i>9th Norfolk</i>	<i>10/15/2025</i>
<i>Christopher J. Worrell</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>	<i>11/25/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 4351

By Representative Fluker-Reid of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4351) of Brandy Fluker-Reid and Samantha Montañó for legislation to establish the Massachusetts office of freedmen affairs. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith establish a Massachusetts Office of Freedmen Affairs, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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

1 The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 6E the following
2 chapter:-

3 CHAPTER 6F.

4 OFFICE OF FREEDMEN AFFAIRS.

5 Section 1. The commonwealth recognizes the unique needs of American Freedmen,
6 defined as descendants of persons emancipated from slavery in the United States. It
7 acknowledges their historical and ongoing marginalization, and cultural erasure. This chapter
8 establishes the office of freedmen Affairs, acknowledging the historical and ongoing
9 marginalization and cultural erasure of American Freedman, this office will preserve their

10 heritage, address ongoing inequities and improve social determinants of health through targeted
11 advocacy, policy recommendations and resource allocation.

12 Section 2. (a) The office of freedmen affairs is hereby established as a state agency to
13 provide resources, advocacy and oversight on matters affecting American Freedmen residing in
14 the commonwealth.

15 (b) The office shall be led by a director appointed by the governor. The director shall
16 serve a term of 5 years and may be reappointed for additional terms.

17 Section 3. The director of the office of freedmen affairs shall be responsible for the
18 supervision and management of the office of freedmen affairs work. This work includes, but is
19 not limited to:

20 (1) Providing guidance to the governor and legislature on policies and programs to
21 support American Freedmen residents.

22 (2) Advocating for the equitable allocation of state resources, funding, and opportunities
23 tailored to American Freedmen.

24 (3) Enhancing access to state programs, benefits and services for American Freedmen
25 through strategic outreach and education initiatives.

26 (4) Developing and implementing programs to expand economic opportunities and
27 workforce development tailored to the needs of American Freedmen.

28 (5) Establishing and managing pr genealogy research and historical documentation to
29 support individuals in identifying their American Freedmen heritage.

30 (6) Conducting policy analysis, program evaluations and progress reporting to ensure
31 state policies align with the needs of American Freedmen.

32 (7) Soliciting input from American Freedmen communities and other stakeholders to
33 shape the office's priorities and activities.

34 (8) Partnering with public and private organizations to amplify the office's impact and
35 ensure alignment with broader equity goals.

36 (9) Advising state agencies on challenges and barriers faced by American Freedmen
37 residents and recommend strategies to address them.

38 Section 4. (a) The office shall have adequate staff to perform its statutory duties,
39 including but not limited to experts in policy analysis, community outreach, genealogy and
40 financial planning.

41 (b) The office may contract with academic institutions, private consultants, organizations
42 dedicated to remedial justice or other professionals as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.

43 Section 5. Annually, the office of freedmen affairs shall submit an annual report to the
44 governor no later than December 31. This report shall include:

45 (1) A summary of the office's activities and accomplishments.

46 (2) An analysis of the status and well-being of American Freedmen residents in the
47 commonwealth.

48 (3) Recommendations for legislative or policy changes to address ongoing inequities.

49 Section 6. (a) The office shall be funded through annual appropriations by the general
50 court.

51 (b) The office may accept and solicit funds, including gifts, grants or donations, to
52 support its mission