

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michael P. Kushmerek

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 higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities.

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 1 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “opportunities,” in line 10, the
3 following:- , including individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum
4 disorders, and other developmental disabilities.

5 SECTION 2. Said section 1 of said Chapter 15A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
6 striking out after the word “beyond,” in line 19, the following:- and

7 SECTION 3. Said section 1 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
8 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 19, the word “and.”

9 SECTION 4. Said section 1 of said chapter 15A, as so appearing, is hereby further
10 amended by striking out, in line 23, the word “levels” and inserting in place thereof the following
11 words:- levels; and

12 (d) to provide inclusive opportunities for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities,
13 autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities in order to improve academic
14 achievement, employment, and independent living, and to enhance the learning environment for
15 all students.

16 SECTION 5. The fourth paragraph of Section 7 of said Chapter 15A, as so appearing, is
17 hereby amended by inserting after the word “students,” in line 33, the following:- , and students
18 with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental
19 disabilities.

20 SECTION 6. The second paragraph of Section 7A of said Chapter 15A, as so appearing,
21 is hereby amended by striking out the word “and,” in lines 24 and 82; and by inserting after the
22 word “sources,” in lines 25 and 83, the following:- ; and (10) improving access for students with
23 severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities.

24 SECTION 7. Section 19 of said Chapter 15A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
25 inserting after the third paragraph, the following paragraph:- Such guidelines shall provide
26 tuition and fee waivers for students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum
27 disorders, and other developmental disabilities participating in courses and campus activities
28 pursuant to section 39A. The commonwealth, not the institutions of public higher education,
29 shall bear the cost of such tuition and fee waivers.

30 SECTION 8. Said Chapter 15A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after
31 section 39 the following section:-

32 Section 39A. Students with severe intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and
33 other developmental disabilities enrolled in public secondary schools shall be allowed to enroll

34 in credit-bearing and noncredit courses in public higher education institutions in the
35 commonwealth that include nondisabled students, including enrollment in credit-bearing courses
36 in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites or requirements, with
37 necessary supports, services, and accommodations provided by the student's school committee,
38 to facilitate the student's enrollment and to support inclusion in academic courses,
39 extracurricular activities, internships, work experiences, and other aspects of the institution of
40 higher education's regular postsecondary program and provide a free and appropriate public
41 education. Such students shall not be required to: take any standardized college entrance aptitude
42 test; have a high school diploma or its equivalent; meet minimum academic course requirements;
43 meet minimum grade point average requirements; or obtain a passing score on the statewide
44 assessment tests , utilized as a basis for competency determinations pursuant to section 1D of
45 Chapter 69 of the General Laws.

46 SECTION 9. Said Chapter 15A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after
47 section 27 the following section: 27A:-

48 Section 27A. The board of higher education, in consultation with the executive office of
49 education, the department of elementary and secondary education, and the executive office of
50 health and human services shall take steps necessary to include students with intellectual
51 disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities in the residence life
52 of all public institutions of higher education, with accommodations, supports, and services
53 necessary to enable inclusive dormitory living.

54 SECTION 10. The executive office of education shall promulgate guidelines pursuant to
55 section 17 of chapter 71B of the General Laws on or before January 1, 2027.

56 SECTION 11. Section 2 of Chapter 71B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
57 amended by inserting the following phrase after the tenth item of the third paragraph:-
58 ; and (12) For older students ages 18-22, options including continuing education,
59 enrollment in credit and noncredit courses that include students without disabilities in an
60 institution of higher education, development of independent living skills, development of skills
61 necessary for seeking, obtaining, and maintaining jobs, development of skills to access
62 community services, and development of skills for self-management of medical needs.