

SENATE No. 2881

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, December 24, 2025.

The committee on Higher Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 926) of Sal N. DiDomenico for legislation to protect students abroad, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2881).

For the committee,
Joanne M. Comerford

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An Act protecting students abroad.

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 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, shall be
2 amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 47. (a) As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following
4 meanings:-

5 “Institutions”, Secondary and postsecondary institutions which (i) have a physical
6 location in the commonwealth; (ii) host or sponsor 1 or more study abroad programs; and (iii)
7 require waivers for students participating in these programs.

8 “Primary program host”, an institution or organization responsible for or in control of the
9 majority of decisions being made on a study abroad program including, but not limited to,
10 student housing, local transportation, organized trips and emergency response and support.

11 (b) (1) Institutions shall prioritize student and faculty health, safety and security in
12 program development, implementation and management of study abroad programs.

(2) On a regular basis, but no less frequently than every 5 years, institutions shall: (i) conduct risk assessments for study abroad program sites and activities including, but not limited to, lodging locations; (ii) maintain written emergency plans and protocols specific to the destination and base of travel; and (iii) identify and leverage relevant authorities, networks and resources to establish statistical reporting of any student injured, assaulted or subjected to a criminal act while participating in the study abroad program. Said assessments, plans, protocols and statistics shall be available for review upon request and prior to travel by any participant or parent or guardian of a participant in the sponsored program.

(2) Institutions shall ensure that staff on study abroad trips are trained to anticipate and respond responsibly to student health, safety and security issues, including, but not limited to, basic first aid and familiarization with established emergency action plans. Prior to study abroad trips, institutions shall also ensure that students receive training to mitigate the risk of injury and other harm and updates on activities involving potential health, safety and security issues occurring at the intended destination.

(c) (1) Annually, but not later than November 1, each institution shall publish a report on its study abroad programs on its public website and file said report with the secretary of the commonwealth. The department shall provide institutions with an electronic written form that institutions shall use to report the following information from the previous academic year, including summer terms: (i) deaths of program participants that occurred during program participation as a result of program participation; (ii) accidents and illnesses that occurred during program participation as a result of program participation and that required hospitalization; (iii) sexual assaults and crimes against program participants, details of said incidents and whether the crime was committed during participation in the program; and (iv) country, primary program

host and program type. The report shall include a disclaimer stating that accidents, incidents, sexual assaults and crimes may be underreported or misrepresented due to the use of self-reported data. Personal identifying information shall not be included in said reports and any possible identifying information shall be deidentified or aggregated to ensure students' privacy.

(2) Information reported under paragraph (1) may be supplemented by a brief explanatory statement.

(3) Institutions shall request hospitalization and incident disclosure from students upon completion of the program.

(d) (1) The office of the secretary of the commonwealth shall annually publish on its website: (i) the reports required by subsection (c); (ii) links to the United States Department of State's Consular Information Program informing the public of conditions abroad that may affect their safety and security; and (iii) additional links to safety information and resources. This information shall not be limited to programs subject to this section.

(2) The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide the information posted on its website pursuant to paragraph (1) to the department, in electronic format, at the same time it posts the information. The department shall post the information on its website and may otherwise distribute the information.

(3) An institution shall include in its written materials provided to prospective program participants a link to its website where the report required by subsection (c) is posted and a statement that additional program health and safety information is available on the secretary of the commonwealth's website, along with the website link.