

# SENATE . . . . . No. 3121

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Senate, June 11, 2026 -- Text of the Senate amendment to the House Bill enhancing child welfare protections (House, No. 4646) (being the text of Senate document numbered 3111, printed as amended)

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 172 of chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 133, the words “2A of chapter 38”  
3 and inserting in place thereof the following words:- 16 of chapter 18C.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section  
5 16U, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

6 Section 16U. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following  
7 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

8 “Child requiring assistance”, as defined in section 21 of chapter 119.

9 “Chronic absenteeism”, missing not less than 10 per cent of days enrolled regardless of  
10 whether the absences are considered excused, unexcused or for disciplinary reasons.

11 “Community-based services”, services, including coordination of services, designed to  
12 assist families requiring assistance so that, if appropriate, families may avoid entry or re-entry to  
13 the child protective service and child requiring assistance legal systems; and children of the

14 family may continue to reside with their family and attend their community school while  
15 enjoying a strengthened relationship with their family.

16 “Family requiring assistance”, a parent, guardian, custodian, sibling and any relative or  
17 caretaker who (i) is at elevated risk of being the subject of a petition under section 24 of chapter  
18 119; or (ii) is responsible for a child at risk of being the subject of a petition under section 39E of  
19 said chapter 119.

20 “Habitually absent without permission”, as defined in section 21 of chapter 119.

21 “Secretary”, the secretary of health and human services.

22 (b) Subject to appropriation or third party reimbursement, the secretary shall:

23 (i) establish a network of child and family service programs and family resource centers  
24 throughout the commonwealth to provide community-based services to families requiring  
25 assistance under subsection (c);

26 (ii) develop guidelines and standards necessary to achieve and maintain, on a statewide  
27 basis, a comprehensive and integrated network of community-based services and family resource  
28 centers for children and families;

29 (iii) promote efficiency by including in the network of community-based services and  
30 family resource centers access to the following services: (A) organizations that are part of the  
31 comprehensive community-based behavioral health delivery system coordinated by the secretary  
32 under section 16S; (B) organizations that provide services or have experience in coordinating  
33 access to community-based services such as local schools; (C) other local public agencies and  
34 private organizations; (D) local medical, behavioral or mental health care providers; and (E)

35 state-funded services the child or family may be eligible for, including services provided by  
36 agencies within the executive office of health and human services, the executive office of  
37 education, and the executive office of housing and livable communities.

38 (iv) coordinate the services provided by the network and in the family resource centers  
39 including, but not limited to, outreach, intake, screening, assessment and referral to services;

40 (v) encourage cooperation among local providers and state agencies as needed to provide  
41 the full complement of services required under this section;

42 (vi) monitor and provide technical assistance to family resource centers and providers of  
43 community-based services;

44 (vii) require the use of standard intake screening and assessment tools to evaluate  
45 families and children seeking community-based services that shall identify the family's  
46 strengths, resources and service needs including, but not limited to, mental health, behavioral  
47 health or substance abuse treatment, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities,  
48 basic family shelter, clothing and food needs, child care needs, health insurance status, legal  
49 issues, education services and placement and child protection; and

50 (viii) create a data collection system for use by programs within the community-based  
51 services network and family resource centers that shall: (A) maintain the privacy of clients  
52 served, (B) assist programs and the secretary in identifying and addressing the needs of the  
53 population to be served, including gaps in service availability and how long clients are waiting to  
54 receive services; (C) collect information including, but not limited to, insurance status and  
55 benefit coverage of clients served, income documentation as needed to apply a sliding fee scale  
56 for payment or waiver of payment for services; (D) collect data regarding the needs identified

57 and services received by a family; and (E) collect such other information deemed necessary to  
58 assist the program and the secretary in providing services, identifying service needs and gaps and  
59 evaluating the effectiveness of family resource centers and the community-based services  
60 network.

61           Annually, the secretary shall submit a report to the senate and house committees on ways  
62 and means, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the child  
63 advocate detailing: (i) the number of children and families served at each family resource center;  
64 (ii) identified service needs; (iii) the types of services offered in-house and those offered by  
65 referral; (iv) service outcomes; (v) service gaps, including unavailable services and services with  
66 long wait times; (vi) client feedback; (vii) the number of families served by a multidisciplinary  
67 team pursuant to subsection (c); and (viii) the number of children referred to a juvenile court for  
68 a child requiring assistance petition following a multidisciplinary team process. All data shall be  
69 delineated by the child's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, disability,  
70 primary language, and age.

71           (c) The network of community-based services and family resource centers shall: (i) assist  
72 families so that, whenever possible, families may avoid entry or re-entry to the child protective  
73 service system and children may continue residing with their families in their home  
74 communities; (ii) assist families to enable children to continue as students in their community  
75 schools; (iii) strengthen the relationships between children and their families; (iv) assist families  
76 in connecting with local, state, and federal services to help meet basic family shelter, clothing,  
77 food and health needs; (v) provide coordinated, comprehensive, community-based services for  
78 children at risk of chronic absenteeism, dropping out of school, committing delinquent acts or  
79 engaging in behaviors that impede the likelihood of leading healthy, productive lives, or for

80 children who have been referred by a school or from the juvenile court pursuant to section 39E  
81 of chapter 119.

82 Services offered through the network shall include, but not be limited to, treatment for or  
83 assistance with: (i) eligibility determinations; (ii) applying for state services including  
84 MassHealth; (iii) financial assistance programs including Supplemental Security Income and  
85 services provided or funded by executive branch agencies; (iv) behavioral, medical and mental  
86 health needs; (v) substance use treatment; (vi) special education evaluation; (vii) remedial  
87 education services; (viii) assistance with insurance issues; (ix) mentoring; (x) family and parent  
88 support; (xi) civic engagement and community service; (xii) after school and out-of-school  
89 opportunities; (xiii) residential programs; (xiv) crisis management; and (xv) case management.

90 Each family resource center shall identify the service needs of each family in accordance  
91 with the requirements of subsection (b)(vii). Subject to appropriation, each family resource  
92 center shall assign a case manager to any high-needs families who voluntarily accept service.  
93 Said case manager shall assist the family in identifying and navigating appropriate services in the  
94 network. If a case meets the eligibility criteria for an interagency review of complex cases under  
95 section 16R, the family resource center shall refer the child to the interagency review team. For  
96 cases that do not meet the eligibility requirements under said section 16R, the family resource  
97 center may convene a multidisciplinary team to fulfill the functions listed in this subsection.  
98 Multidisciplinary teams shall consist of, but not be limited to the child, the child's parents or  
99 caregivers and family resource center staff, and when appropriate may include family partners,  
100 advocates, community-based service providers, educational advocates, representatives from state  
101 agencies or school district representatives. Multidisciplinary teams shall work to identify any

102 needs of the child or family with the goal of providing supports to the child and their family  
103 outside of the juvenile court process to the extent possible.

104 A case manager shall not refer a family to the juvenile court for the purpose of filing a  
105 child requiring assistance petition unless the family has exhausted all relevant community-based  
106 service options that are reasonably available to them. Family resource center staff shall be  
107 authorized to report to a probation officer upon request if a child that is the subject of an  
108 attempted child requiring assistance petition has met with a case manager pursuant to this section  
109 and if all relevant community-based service options reasonably available to them have been  
110 exhausted. Any other information about the child or family shall be kept confidential pursuant to  
111 subsection (d).

112 The secretary of health and human services shall issue guidance to effectuate this section.  
113 The guidance shall include, but not be limited to: (i) a description of situations in which  
114 convening a multidisciplinary team may be appropriate; (ii) the role of family resource center  
115 staff in facilitating the work of the multidisciplinary team; (iii) the circumstances under which  
116 staff from state health and human service agencies are required to participate and what that  
117 participation shall entail; (iv) the process by which disagreements about the case plan shall be  
118 resolved; (v) requirements for obtaining client or parental consent; (vi) processes for providing  
119 information to the juvenile court about a family's participation in services when the family or a  
120 school has filed a child requiring assistance petition; (vii) data gathering and reporting  
121 requirements; and (viii) protocols for when and how a family shall be referred to the juvenile  
122 court for a child requiring assistance petition.

123 (d) Any documentation of services provided to the child and family through the network  
124 of community-based services or in the family resource centers shall not be public records under  
125 clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4. Except as otherwise required by law, including  
126 laws related to the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect under section 51A of chapter 119,  
127 statements made by the child and family while receiving services from the network of  
128 community-based services shall be treated as confidential and shall not be used in any  
129 proceedings without the written consent of the person making the statement. Information about  
130 the child and family requiring assistance, including interactions with service providers and  
131 protected health information, may be shared among the case team, other providers of community  
132 services for families and any agency within the executive office of health and human services  
133 providing such services to the child as needed to coordinate treatment and provide appropriate  
134 case management, to the extent permitted under applicable federal law, unless the child or family  
135 declines in writing to permit such information sharing.

136 (e) Participation in community-based services and use of the family resource centers shall  
137 be under a voluntary agreement of the parent, legal guardian or custodian and the child;  
138 provided, however, that provision of community-based services may be contingent upon such  
139 parent, legal guardian or custodian agreeing to pay for such services or consenting to allow  
140 covered services to be billed to applicable third party payers, including insurance providers.

141 (f) A school administrator shall refer a student and their caregivers to a family resource  
142 center at the same time as the administrator notifies a student and the parent, legal guardian or  
143 custodian of the student that the student is at risk of expulsion for failure to comply with the  
144 lawful and reasonable rules of the school. After providing the process that is due to the student,  
145 including an expulsion hearing if requested under sections 37H and 37H1/2 of chapter 71, the

146 school administrator shall consider the outcome of the community-based services if the student  
147 provides such outcome information to the school. After an expulsion is imposed, the student may  
148 continue to provide information relative to the outcome of any community-based services  
149 rendered, and the school administrator shall consider the outcome of any community-based  
150 services rendered when such information is provided. Notwithstanding the outcome of any  
151 community-based services, school districts shall make available to expelled students educational  
152 services designed to lead to re-entry to a regular education program or to a high school diploma.

153 A school administrator shall refer a student's caregivers to a family resource center prior  
154 to filing a child requiring assistance petition pursuant to section 39E of chapter 119. A school  
155 shall make and document efforts to identify and address potential causes of chronic absenteeism,  
156 including but not limited to previously unidentified or inadequately addressed special  
157 educational needs, behavioral health needs, bullying, and harassment, before referring the child  
158 and family to a family resource center for chronic absenteeism or filing a child requiring  
159 assistance petition with the juvenile court.

160 (g) Nothing in this section shall diminish or interfere with the rights and protections  
161 afforded to students with disabilities under federal and state special education laws.

162 SECTION 3. Section 6A of chapter 18B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
163 amended by striking out the fifth paragraph.

164 SECTION 4. Said chapter 18B is hereby further amended by inserting after section 6A  
165 the following section:-

166 Section 6B. (a) The commissioner shall establish and maintain an education unit, which  
167 shall: (i) implement and oversee the work of the regional offices and area directors on education

168 for children receiving services from the department, consistent with policies created by the  
169 department's education director; (ii) monitor student academic progress of children under the  
170 care and custody of the regional office not less than once per academic quarter; (iii) provide  
171 support and assistance to department social workers regarding educational needs of children; (iv)  
172 provide detailed training to department social workers on the best practices to monitor a child's  
173 education experiences, recognizing any unavailability of resources preventing a child from  
174 participating in school courses and developing individualized education programs and section  
175 504 plans; (v) ensure the timeliness and accuracy of the transfer of education records detailing a  
176 child's educational background and needs; and (vi) maintain contact with appropriate local  
177 school districts and education organizations to facilitate the enrollment, information sharing and  
178 placement of children into school districts served by the area office.

179 (b) The commissioner shall appoint an education director. The education director's duties  
180 shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) developing, implementing and overseeing the  
181 department's policies on education for children under the care and custody of the department,  
182 including policy development and practice guidance; (ii) monitoring state and federal laws,  
183 programs and resources that may impact the education of children under the care and custody of  
184 the department; (iii) advising the commissioner and all education specialists on all matters  
185 relating to education, strategic education initiatives, policy and practice management matters;  
186 (iv) coordinating efforts of the education specialists to identify and address systemic barriers to  
187 accessing educational services for children under the care and custody of the department,  
188 including issues related to transportation for children in department care or custody to attend  
189 their school of origin; (v) coordinating with area directors and regional offices on education  
190 related issues; and (vi) facilitating best practice training for education specialists. The education

191 director shall perform duties pursuant to this section and such other duties as may be assigned by  
192 the commissioner.

193 (c) The director shall, subject to the approval of the commissioner, appoint education  
194 specialists who shall be employees of the department and who shall devote their full time and  
195 attention to supporting the department's goal of educational stability and success for all  
196 elementary and secondary school students under the care and custody of the department.

197 (d) An education specialist may, to the extent permitted by federal law, accompany social  
198 workers to meetings with school personnel, including, but not limited to, meetings relative to a  
199 child's individualized education program or 504 plan.

200 SECTION 5. Section 7 of said chapter 18B, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, is  
201 hereby amended by striking out subsections (e) to (o), inclusive, and inserting in place thereof  
202 the following 11 subsections:-

203 (e) The commissioner shall develop and implement a plan for the orientation and training  
204 of area-based and other staff. The plan shall require all employees to be issued photo  
205 identification to be used in the performance of their duties, including for display upon  
206 introduction.

207 (f) The commissioner shall coordinate the overall service planning of the department with  
208 planning under Title XX of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1397 et seq.

209 (g) The commissioner may apply for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth federal,  
210 local or private grants, bequests, gifts or contributions.

211 (h) The commissioner shall, subject to chapter 30A, adopt rules and regulations necessary  
212 to carry out this chapter and chapter 119.

213 (i) The commissioner shall include in the budget estimates of the department funds for  
214 the development and implementation of said management information system, monitoring and  
215 evaluation system, annual needs assessment and staff training plan.

216 (j) The commissioner shall, subject to appropriation, enter into contracts with nonprofit  
217 organizations to provide services for families and individuals in emergency and transitional  
218 housing; provided, however, that the department shall, in entering into such contracts, provide \$3  
219 for each dollar of donated funds that have been committed to such nonprofit organizations from  
220 any non-state source; and provided further, that for the purposes of this subsection, a non-state  
221 source may include private donations or monies from city, town or county governments but shall  
222 not include funds from other state agencies.

223 (k) Prior to undertaking any activity or implementing any policy that would affect  
224 expenditures for medical assistance under chapter 118E, including, but not limited to, identifying  
225 individuals eligible for such assistance under said chapter 118E, the commissioner shall ensure  
226 that such activity or policy is reviewed by the director of Medicaid.

227 (l) Not more than 3 per cent of the department's annual budget shall be appropriated in a  
228 separate account and expended for the purposes of subsections (b), (c) and (d).

229 (m) The commissioner shall consult with the commissioner of mental health prior to  
230 taking any action substantially affecting the design and implementation of behavioral health  
231 services for children under guidelines established by the secretary of health and human services  
232 under section 16S of chapter 6A.

233 (n) Upon receipt of a completed review of multiple 51A reports required under  
234 subsection (r) of section 51B of chapter 119, the commissioner shall immediately notify: (i) the  
235 district attorney for the county in which the child resides and for the county in which the event  
236 giving rise to a report occurred; (ii) local law enforcement authorities in the city or town in  
237 which the child resides and in the city or town in which the event giving rise to a report occurred;  
238 and (iii) the office of the child advocate.

239 (o) The commissioner shall require social workers employed by the department to obtain  
240 a license as a social worker pursuant to section 131 of chapter 112 within the first 9 months of  
241 employment. The commissioner shall require social workers employed by the department to  
242 participate in not less than 30 hours per year of paid professional development training;  
243 provided, however, that such training shall be consistent with applicable collective bargaining  
244 agreements. The commissioner may grant a social worker employed by the department a 1-time  
245 6-month hardship waiver from the licensing requirement under this subsection to ensure access  
246 for underserved populations.

247 SECTION 6. Section 20 of said chapter 18B, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
248 striking out the second sentence.

249 SECTION 7. Said chapter 18B is hereby further amended by striking out section 23, as  
250 inserted by section 45 of chapter 176 of the acts of 2008.

251 SECTION 8. Said chapter 18B is hereby further amended by striking out section 23,  
252 inserted by section 8 of chapter 321 of the acts of 2008, and inserting in place thereof the  
253 following section:-

254 Section 23. If the department has care and custody of a child receiving inpatient  
255 psychiatric services, the department shall: (i) contact the child's parents or guardians, as  
256 appropriate, and a member of the child's treatment team within 3 business days of the  
257 hospitalization; (ii) maintain weekly contact with them until the child is discharged; and (iii)  
258 immediately begin discharge planning, with the priority of returning the child to their home or to  
259 a community placement. Not later than 5 business days after being notified that continued  
260 hospitalization is no longer clinically appropriate, the department shall determine the appropriate  
261 type of placement for the child and immediately initiate the placement referrals. The department  
262 shall document its activities in assisting with discharge placement, including identification of  
263 available resources for home-based, community or alternative residential placements, and the  
264 barriers, if any, to discharge the child to the most clinically appropriate setting. If the initial  
265 placement is not deemed to be the most clinically appropriate setting, the department shall  
266 continue to seek an appropriate placement. Not later than 30 days after being notified that  
267 continued hospitalization is no longer clinically appropriate, the department shall refer the child  
268 to the interagency review team established pursuant to section 16R of chapter 6A.

269 SECTION 9. Sections 24 and 25 of said chapter 18B are hereby repealed.

270 SECTION 10. Said chapter 18B is hereby further amended by adding the following 3  
271 sections:-

272 Section 26. (a)(1) Annually, not later than October 31, the department shall issue a report  
273 that provides an overview of the department's performance during the previous fiscal year. The  
274 report shall include comparative departmental information from prior fiscal years. The  
275 commissioner shall file the report with the governor, the child advocate, the clerks of the senate

276 and the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the  
277 joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities. The commissioner shall  
278 provide the recipients of the report with an opportunity to discuss its contents with the  
279 department. The report shall be made publicly available on the department's website in  
280 accordance with section 19 of chapter 66; provided, however, that any personally identifiable  
281 information in the report shall be deidentified or removed prior to the report's publication on the  
282 department's website.

283 (2) The report required pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include, but shall not be limited to,  
284 narratives, information, data and analysis on the department's:

285 (i) counts, including, but not limited to: (A) case counts; (B) the number of children  
286 served by the department; (C) child demographic information, including age, race, ethnicity,  
287 primary language, birth sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability; (D) intersectional  
288 data; (E) rates of racial disproportionality and disparity at various decision points throughout the  
289 life of a case, including, but not limited to: (1) protective intakes and responses; (2) children ages  
290 0 through 17 years, inclusive, with an open case as compared to the proportion of the child  
291 population in the commonwealth; (3) the number of children and youth in placement by  
292 placement type; (4) permanency plans for children and youth in placement, including plans  
293 meeting the federal permanency standard; (5) permanency outcomes as compared to children in  
294 placement; (6) the median placement length of stay, in days, for children who exited care as well  
295 as for children who were in out-of-home care; (7) placement moves per 1,000 placement days for  
296 children who entered care during the specified fiscal year; (8) exits from care to reunification,  
297 adoption and guardianship as a rate of all exits from placement; and (9) youth aging out as a rate  
298 of all exits from placement; (F) the number of requests for reasonable accommodations, broken

299 down by accommodation type; (G) the total number of disability related complaints filed with  
300 the department, broken down by complaint type and region; (H) reports filed pursuant to section  
301 51A of chapter 119; (I) placement metrics, including, but not limited to: (1) placement moves per  
302 1,000 placement days for children who entered care during the specified fiscal year; (2) initial  
303 placement with kin; and (3) the median number of placements between a home removal episode  
304 and an initial placement review; (J) infants brought into the department's care pursuant to section  
305 39½ of chapter 119; and (K) siblings in placement;

306 (ii) processes and outcomes, including, but not limited to: (A) protective responses and  
307 safety outcomes including, but not limited to, maltreatment in foster care and supported  
308 allegations of abuse and neglect for children in foster care by placement type; (B) the number of  
309 fatalities, including the manner of death, of children with a family history with the department;  
310 (C) permanency processes and outcomes, including, but not limited to, reunification, adoption,  
311 guardianship, kinship adoption, kinship guardianship and aging out; (D) well-being outcomes,  
312 including the rates and timeliness of the delivery of medical services; and (E) educational well-  
313 being outcomes, including, but not limited to, school placement information, the number of  
314 individualized education programs, attendance rates, high school graduation rates and school  
315 disciplinary actions;

316 (iii) operations, including, but not limited to: (A) staffing trends; (B) caseloads; (C) the  
317 department's budget, including funding levels; (D) service costs, including, but not limited to,  
318 departmental foster care, contracted foster care, complex medical foster care, congregate care,  
319 adoption and guardianship subsidies, foster care support services, respite and support and  
320 stabilization; (E) medical services and advancements in providing medical services to children  
321 and young adults in the department's care; (F) the number of children and young adults in the

322 department's care in emergency departments, inpatient units, psychiatric hospitals or  
323 community-based acute treatment programs who are awaiting alternate placements and the  
324 average duration of days waiting; (G) any new or ongoing initiatives to improve practices,  
325 procedures and policy of the department; and (H) the number and types of complaints received  
326 pursuant to section 23E of chapter 119; and (iv) support and stabilization services, including, but  
327 not limited to: (A) the total number of families who receive support and stabilization services;  
328 (B) the total number of service referrals for support and stabilization services; (C) the total  
329 number of families who receive more than 1 type of support and stabilization service; (D) the  
330 total number of referrals for intact families; (E) the total number of referrals for children in out-  
331 of-home placements; (F) the average length of time that support and stabilization services are  
332 provided; (G) the total number of provider agencies with support and stabilization services  
333 contracts; and (H) the total dollars expended on an annual basis for support and stabilization  
334 services, broken down by region.

335 (b) Not later than 45 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the department shall issue a  
336 quarterly profile that shall be posted on its website in accordance with section 19 of chapter 66  
337 that shall include, but not be limited to, departmental, regional office and area office data on: (i)  
338 the number of children served by the department; (ii) the number of reports filed pursuant to  
339 section 51A of chapter 119, including, but not limited to, the total number of reports received,  
340 screened-in and screened-out in total and by reporter role; (iii) rates and recurrence of  
341 maltreatment of children; (iv) department case counts, including the number of clinical and  
342 adoption cases; (v) child demographic information, including age, race, ethnicity, primary  
343 language, birth sex, gender identity and sexual orientation and disability; (vi) the number of

344 children and youth in placement by type of placement; and (vii) the number of children and  
345 youth not in placement.

346 (c) Annually, not later than October 31, the department shall file a report on services  
347 provided to young adults over the age of 18 with the child advocate, the clerks of the senate and  
348 the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint  
349 committee on children, families and persons with disabilities. The report shall include, but shall  
350 not be limited to: (i) a summary of the process by which a young adult may continue to receive  
351 services from the department upon reaching the age of 18; (ii) demographic information on  
352 young adults detailing age, race, ethnicity, primary language, gender identity, sexual orientation,  
353 disability and rates of racial disproportionality and disparity; (iii) the number of young adults  
354 who have elected to sustain or reestablish a connection with the department in the previous fiscal  
355 year; (iv) the number of young adults who have elected not to remain with the department and  
356 have transitioned out of the child welfare system in the previous fiscal year, including young  
357 adults who had previously elected to sustain a connection with the department, if such numbers  
358 are available; and (v) the number of transition-age young adults aging out of the child welfare  
359 system with: (A) stable and permanent housing; (B) full- or part-time employment or military  
360 enlistment; (C) health insurance; or (D) if sought, post-secondary education such as college, job  
361 training or a certificate program within 6 months of transition.

362 (d)(1) Annually, not later than October 31, the department shall file a report on its fair  
363 hearing processes and cases with the child advocate, the clerks of the house of representatives  
364 and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on  
365 children, families and persons with disabilities. The report shall be made available to the public  
366 electronically in accordance with section 19 of chapter 66. The report shall include, but shall not

367 be limited to, information in a form that shall not include personally identifiable information on  
368 the fair hearing requests open at any time during the previous fiscal year. For each fair hearing  
369 request, the report shall provide: (i) the subject matter of the appeal; (ii) the outcomes of cases  
370 resolved prior to a fair hearing decision; (iii) the number of days between the hearing request and  
371 the first day of the hearing; (iv) the number of days between the close of the evidence and the  
372 hearing officer's decision; (v) the number of days of continuance granted at the appellant's  
373 request; (vi) the number of days of continuance granted at the request of the department; (vii) the  
374 number of days of continuance granted at the request of the hearing officer; and (viii) whether  
375 the department's decision that was the subject of the appeal was affirmed or reversed.

376 (2) The department shall maintain and make available to the public, during regular  
377 business hours, a record of its fair hearings in a form that shall not include personally identifiable  
378 information but shall include, for each hearing request: (i) the date of the request; (ii) the date of  
379 the hearing decision; (iii) the decision rendered by the hearing officer; and (iv) the final decision  
380 rendered upon the commissioner's review. For fair hearing requests that are pending for more  
381 than 180 days at any time during the fiscal year, except for those requests which have been  
382 stayed at the request of the district attorney, the report shall provide the number of such cases,  
383 the number of those cases that have been heard but not decided and the number of cases that  
384 have been decided by the hearing officer but for which a final agency decision has not yet been  
385 issued.

386 (e) Annually, not later than October 31, the department shall file with the child advocate,  
387 the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate and the joint committee on children,  
388 families and persons with disabilities a report on the foster care review system and any  
389 recommendations for its improvement, including, but not limited to: (i) the population served by

390 the department, including, but not limited to, case counts, child, youth and young adult and  
391 parent or caregiver counts and children, youth and young adults in placement; (ii) a foster care  
392 review overview, including, but not limited to, foster care review policy, the number of children,  
393 youth and young adults in placement with a convened foster care review and the foster care  
394 review considerations; (iii) scheduling, including, but not limited to, scheduled and convened  
395 foster care review meetings, children, youth and young adults reviewed, duration of meetings  
396 and timeliness of foster care review report completion; (iv) attendance, including, but not limited  
397 to, foster care review meeting panel composition and mandated participants invited and attended;  
398 (v) the review process, including, but not limited to, the department action plan, placement  
399 activities, social worker contact, parent-child visitation, health, education and well-being needs,  
400 information on youth and young adults and systemic barriers for children, youth and young  
401 adults and parents or caregivers; (vi) foster care review determinations; (vii) minority opinions,  
402 including, but not limited to, minority opinions by a panel member; and (viii) foster care review  
403 follow-up activities.

404 (f) If the department is unable to submit the report under subsection (a), issue the profile  
405 under subsection (b) or submit any other reports required pursuant to subsections (c), (d) and (e)  
406 by the respective deadlines, the commissioner shall notify in writing the governor, the child  
407 advocate, the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate  
408 committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children, families and persons with  
409 disabilities of the delay and provide an explanation for the delay.

410 (g) The department may satisfy the reporting requirements of subsections (c) through (e)  
411 by providing the requested information in the annual report filed pursuant to subsection (a). The  
412 department may substitute reports required by this section with data visualization tools that are

413 accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq., as  
414 amended.

415 Section 27. (a)(1) The commissioner shall notify the joint committee on children, families  
416 and persons with disabilities when draft regulations are available for public comment. Such  
417 notice shall be provided not later than the day that draft regulations are made public.

418 (2) Not later than 30 days after the promulgation of regulations or the effective date of  
419 adopted or revised departmental policies related to services provided to children and families, the  
420 department shall provide copies of such regulations or departmental policies to the joint  
421 committee on children, families and persons with disabilities.

422 (b) Not later than 5 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the commissioner shall  
423 notify the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children,  
424 families and persons with disabilities when data from a profile issued pursuant to subsection (b)  
425 of section 26 significantly departs from data reported in a previous profile.

426 Section 28. (a) The department shall establish a 5-year plan, on a fiscal year basis, that  
427 shall include, but not be limited to, numeric targets for the department's performance in each  
428 fiscal year and by region in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being. The plan shall  
429 include a description of how the department will measure its progress toward meeting the  
430 numeric performance targets and may include different performance targets by region. In  
431 developing the plan, the department may consult with governmental and non-governmental  
432 partners, as necessary. The department shall update the plan annually.

433 (b) Annually, the department shall measure its performance in meeting the numeric  
434 performance targets established in the 5-year plan for the commonwealth as a whole and by

435 region. The department shall publish and maintain on its website a copy of the current 5-year  
436 plan, the numeric and performance targets for previous years and the department’s progress in  
437 meeting those performance targets.

438 (c) If, in any fiscal year, the department is unable to comply with the requirements of  
439 subsections (a) and (b), the department shall notify, as soon as practicable, the clerks of the  
440 house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the  
441 joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the child advocate.

442 SECTION 11. Section 1 of chapter 18C of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024  
443 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the definition of “Child advocate” the  
444 following 2 definitions:-

445 “Child-serving individual”, an individual who, in their professional role, has consistent  
446 access to children and is often alone with children under the age of 18 or responsible for their  
447 care; provided, however, that “child-serving individual” may be an employee, a contractor or  
448 temporary employee at a public or private organization.

449 “Child-serving volunteer”, a person who, without compensation or expectation of  
450 compensation, provides services or supports in a capacity that involves direct contact with,  
451 supervision of or responsibility for the care, education, treatment or welfare of children under the  
452 age of 18 at a public or private organization, including, but not limited to, volunteers in schools,  
453 childcare programs, youth-serving organizations, recreational or athletic programs, faith-based  
454 programs, mentoring or tutoring services and residential or congregate care settings.

455 SECTION 12. Section 1 of chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by  
456 striking out the definition of “critical incident” and inserting in place thereof the following  
457 definition:-

458 “Critical incident”, (i) a fatality, near fatality or serious bodily injury or emotional injury  
459 of a child or the indecent assault and battery of a child under sections 13B to 13B<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of chapter  
460 265, inclusive, or the kidnapping or enticement of a child under sections 26 to 26D, inclusive, of  
461 said chapter 265, or the rape and abuse of a child under sections 23 to 23B, inclusive, of said  
462 chapter 265, who is in the custody of, or receiving services from, an executive agency or a  
463 constituent agency; or (ii) circumstances that result in a reasonable belief that an executive  
464 agency or a constituent agency failed in its duty to protect or adequately serve a child and, as a  
465 result, the child suffered or was at imminent risk of suffering serious bodily injury or emotional  
466 injury or death.

467 SECTION 13. Said section 1 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
468 amended by inserting after the definition of “Department” the following definition:-

469 “Emotional injury”, an injury or harm that occurs when a child of any age witnesses the  
470 fatality or life-threatening incident of an individual as a result of an unexpected medical event,  
471 overdose, violent act or accident, suicide or attempted suicide.

472 SECTION 14. Said section 1 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
473 amended by striking out the definition of “Executive agency” and inserting in place thereof the  
474 following 2 definitions:-

475 “Executive agency”, a state agency within the office of the governor that provides  
476 services to children, through direct services, guidance, oversight, contracted services and

477 licensing functions; provided, however, that executive agencies shall include the executive office  
478 of education, the executive office of public safety and security, the executive office of health and  
479 human services, and their constituent agencies, the Massachusetts interagency council on  
480 housing and homelessness and the executive office of housing and livable communities; and  
481 provided further, that constituent agencies shall include, but not be limited to, the department of  
482 children and families, the department of youth services, the department of public health, the  
483 department of mental health, the department of developmental services, the department of early  
484 education and care and the department of elementary and secondary education.

485 “Near fatality”, an injury that is: (i) accidental or the result of a medical condition,  
486 attempted suicide or abuse or neglect; and (ii) certified by a physician to be life threatening.

487 SECTION 15. Said section 1 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
488 amended by striking out the definition of “serious bodily or emotional injury” and inserting in  
489 place thereof the following 2 definitions:-

490 “Serious bodily injury”, an injury which involves: (i) a substantial risk of death; (ii)  
491 extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (iii) protracted loss or  
492 impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty.

493 “Sudden unexplained pediatric death”, the sudden and unexpected death of an child under  
494 the age of 3 where the cause of death cannot be determined before an investigation.

495 SECTION 16. Section 2 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
496 striking out, in lines 2 and 3, the words “independent of any supervision or control by any  
497 executive agency.” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- an independent state  
498 agency that shall not be subject to the supervision or control of any other executive office,

499 executive agency or constituent agency, commission, board, bureau or political subdivision of  
500 the commonwealth. The office shall oversee the services that executive agencies or constituent  
501 agencies provide to children in the commonwealth.

502 SECTION 17. The first paragraph of said section 2 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing,  
503 is hereby amended by striking out clauses (c) to (e), inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the  
504 following 6 clauses:-

505 (c) examine, on a systemwide and individual case basis, the care and services that  
506 executive agencies or constituent agencies provide to children through direct services, guidance,  
507 oversight, contracted services and licensing functions.

508 (d) advise the public and those at the highest levels of state government about how the  
509 commonwealth may improve its services to and for children and their families;

510 (e) examine disproportionalities in the provision of services to children related to race,  
511 ethnicity, disability status, transgender status, sexual orientation or gender identity; provided,  
512 that the office shall use data provided by executive agencies or constituent agencies related to the  
513 provision of services provided by the executive agencies or constituent agencies;

514 (f) subject to appropriation, partner with executive agencies, constituent agencies or other  
515 entities if it is in the best interest of the children of the commonwealth to: (i) support programs,  
516 including establishing pilot programs; and (ii) expand or improve current programs; provided,  
517 however, that the child advocate shall not enter into any partnership that may jeopardize the  
518 office's oversight functions;

519 (g) provide training and technical assistance to executive agencies and constituent  
520 agencies to improve services to children if it is in the best interest of the children of the  
521 commonwealth; provided, however, that the child advocate shall not provide training or technical  
522 assistance that may jeopardize the office's oversight functions;

523 (h) maintain a publicly available website that shall make materials available for mandated  
524 reporters, child-serving individuals and child-serving volunteers, including, but not limited to,  
525 trainings and online certification of completion of said trainings, guidance, statutory references,  
526 resources for individuals and families and best practices; provided, however, that such materials  
527 shall include information about: (i) recognizing the signs of child neglect or abuse; (ii)  
528 preventing, identifying and reporting child sexual abuse and problematic sexual behaviors  
529 between minors; (iii) the ways in which the behavioral and verbal cues for sexual abuse differ  
530 from those of other forms of abuse and neglect; (iv) bias and cultural considerations; (v) how to  
531 address concerns with families and children when concerns do not rise to the level of  
532 maltreatment; (vi) connecting families with needed supports and resources; (vii) how to  
533 understand what may qualify as neglect; and (viii) options for voluntary or mandatory reporting.;;  
534 and

535 (i) create and maintain information and a list of publicly available resources for parents  
536 who have experienced a sudden unexplained pediatric death; provided, however, that such  
537 information shall include, but not be limited to, resources to obtain genetic testing, ongoing  
538 bereavement support, counseling and grief support

539 SECTION 18. Section 3 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
540 adding the following new paragraph:-

541           The child advocate’s annual salary shall be 90 per cent of the salary of the chief justice of  
542 the supreme judicial court.

543           SECTION 19. Section 4 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
544 striking out the last paragraph.

545           SECTION 20. Subsection (a) of section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby  
546 amended by inserting after the first sentence the following sentence:- Notification shall include  
547 demographic information of the child involved in the critical incident, if known.

548           SECTION 21. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
549 amended by striking out, in lines 5, 8, 16, 19 and 21, the word “his”, each time it appears, and  
550 inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- their.

551           SECTION 22. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
552 amended by striking out, in lines 6 and 18, the word “he”, each time it appears, and inserting in  
553 place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- they.

554           SECTION 23. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
555 amended by striking out, in line 25, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
556 words:- the office’s.

557           SECTION 24. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
558 amended by striking out, in line 28, the word “him” and inserting in place thereof the following  
559 words:- the child advocate.

560 SECTION 25. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
561 amended by inserting after the word “services”, in lines 43 and 44, the following words:- , access  
562 to support for parents of a child who have experienced a sudden unexplained pediatric death.

563 SECTION 26. Said section 5 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
564 amended by adding the following 2 subsections:-

565 (i) Prior to publicly releasing a final report related to an investigation where the child  
566 advocate makes a determination that there is a reasonable belief that an executive agency or a  
567 constituent agency failed in its duty to protect or adequately serve a child, the child advocate  
568 shall submit a copy of the final report to the governor, the attorney general, the auditor, the  
569 speaker of the house of representatives and the senate president.

570 (j) The department shall inform the child advocate as soon as practicable when a foster  
571 care review safety alert has been issued. The office shall review the circumstances of the foster  
572 care review safety alert and provide feedback to the department on individual cases and trends in  
573 services.

574 SECTION 27. Section 6 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
575 striking out, in line 1, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- their.

576 SECTION 28. Section 9 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
577 striking out, in line 2, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- their.

578 SECTION 29. Section 10 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
579 inserting after the figure “5”, in line 7, the following words:- , data related to the mandated

580 reporter training and website pursuant to subsection (h) of section 2, any examination of  
581 systemwide challenges pursuant to section 11.

582 SECTION 30. Said chapter 18C is hereby further amended by striking out section 11, as  
583 so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

584 Section 11. The child advocate may examine systemwide challenges to providing  
585 adequate services to children. The child advocate may prioritize the examination of challenges  
586 that: (i) include multiple executive agencies or constituent agencies; and (ii) affect the most  
587 vulnerable children. Systemwide examinations shall include recommendations for improvements  
588 to the services provided to children by executive agencies or constituent agencies. The child  
589 advocate may utilize any source of information available to the office to make recommendations  
590 and may seek advice from individuals with expertise in relevant fields of work or study. The  
591 child advocate shall file a report on any examination with the governor, the clerks of the senate  
592 and the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the  
593 joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities.

594 SECTION 31. Section 12 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
595 striking out, in line 12, the word “his”.

596 SECTION 32. Said section 12 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
597 amended by striking out, in line 21, the words “chapter 66” and inserting in place thereof the  
598 following words:- chapters 66 and 66A.

599 SECTION 33. Said section 12 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby further  
600 amended by striking out, in line 23, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof the following  
601 word:- the.

602 SECTION 34. Subsection (e) of said section 12 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is  
603 hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following  
604 sentence:- The restrictions of this section shall not preclude the child advocate from: (i) sharing  
605 the report of, or the results of, a critical incident investigation involving an executive agency or  
606 constituent agency with the governor, the attorney general, a district attorney, a secretary or  
607 commissioner or other agency personnel involved in the critical incident investigation, the senate  
608 president, the speaker of the house of representatives or the chairs of the joint committee on  
609 children, families and persons with disabilities; (ii) sharing information with an executive agency  
610 or constituent agency when the child advocate deems, in their sole discretion, that such  
611 information sharing is necessary for the child advocate to perform the child advocate's duties; or  
612 (iii) issuing a public report when such report, in the sole discretion of the child advocate, is  
613 necessary for the child advocate to perform their duties.

614 SECTION 35. Said section 12 of chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
615 adding the following subsection:-

616 (f) If the child advocate, or the office of the child advocate, elects to withhold a report or  
617 components of a report, it shall provide any requesting party with the reasons therefore in  
618 writing, which reasons shall also be recorded and available for public inspection; provided,  
619 however, that nothing in this subsection shall require any action by office which would  
620 compromise any investigation or protective measures that could be, or are being, undertaken by  
621 the office of the child advocate or the department of children and families.

622 SECTION 36. Section 13 of said chapter 18C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
623 striking out, in lines 5 and 6, the word “his” and inserting in place thereof, in each instance, the  
624 following word:- their.

625 SECTION 37. Said chapter 18C is hereby further amended by adding the following 4  
626 sections:-

627 Section 15. The office shall prepare and update from time to time online resources which  
628 the juvenile court shall publish on its official website, including: (i) a video clearly defining a  
629 child requiring assistance petition, how to file such a petition, the potential outcomes of filing,  
630 and a brief overview of community-based resources that may be utilized before filing a petition,  
631 including but not limited to family resource centers and the behavioral health helpline; and (ii) a  
632 corresponding written overview that contains information about community-based resources.

633 Section 16. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following  
634 meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

635 “Child”, a person under the age of 18.

636 “Fatality”, a death of a child.

637 “Local team”, a local child fatality review team established in subsection (c).

638 “Near fatality”, an act that, as certified by a physician, places a child in serious or critical  
639 condition.

640 “State team”, the state child fatality review team established in subsection (b).

641 “Team”, the state or a local team.

642 (b)(1) There shall be a state child fatality review team within the office. Notwithstanding  
643 section 172 of chapter 6, members of the state team shall be subject to criminal offender record  
644 checks to be conducted by the colonel of state police on behalf of the child advocate. All  
645 members shall serve without compensation for their duties associated with membership on the  
646 state team. The state team shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) the child advocate or a  
647 designee, who shall serve as co-chair; (ii) the commissioner of public health or a designee, who  
648 shall serve as co-chair; (iii) the chief medical examiner or a designee; (iv) the attorney general or  
649 a designee; (v) the commissioner of children and families or a designee; (vi) the commissioner of  
650 elementary and secondary education or a designee; (vii) a representative selected by the  
651 Massachusetts District Attorneys Association; (viii) the colonel of state police or a designee; (ix)  
652 the commissioner of mental health or a designee; (x) the commissioner of developmental  
653 services or a designee; (xi) the director of the Massachusetts Center for Unexpected Infant and  
654 Child Death at Boston Medical Center or a designee; (xii) the commissioner of youth services or  
655 a designee; (xiii) the commissioner of early education and care or a designee; (xiv) a  
656 representative selected by the Massachusetts chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
657 who has experience in diagnosing or treating child abuse and neglect; (xv) a representative  
658 selected by the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association, Inc.; (xvi) the president of the  
659 Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association Incorporated or a designee; and (xvii) any other  
660 person, selected by the co-chairs or by majority vote of the members of the state team, with  
661 expertise or information relevant to an individual case.

662 (2) The purpose of the state team shall be to decrease the incidence of preventable child  
663 fatalities and near fatalities by: (i) developing an understanding of the causes and incidence of  
664 child fatalities and near fatalities; and (ii) advising the governor, the general court and the public

665 by recommending changes in law, policy and practice to prevent child fatalities and near  
666 fatalities. The state team may consult with the chief justice of the juvenile court department of  
667 the trial court on issues with a direct bearing upon the business of the courts of the  
668 commonwealth.

669 (3) To achieve its purpose, the state team shall: (i) develop model investigative and data  
670 collection protocols for local teams; (ii) provide information to local teams and law enforcement  
671 agencies for the purpose of protecting children; (iii) provide training and written materials to  
672 local teams to assist them in carrying out their duties; (iv) review reports from local teams; (v)  
673 study the incidence and causes of child fatalities and near fatalities in the commonwealth; (vi)  
674 analyze community, public and private agency involvement with the children and their families  
675 prior to and subsequent to fatalities or near fatalities; (vii) develop a protocol for the collection of  
676 data regarding fatalities and near fatalities and provide training to local teams on the protocol;  
677 (viii) develop and implement rules and procedures necessary for its own operation; and (ix)  
678 provide the governor, the general court and the public with annual written reports, subject to  
679 confidentiality restrictions, that shall include, but shall not be limited to, the state team's findings  
680 and recommendations.

681 (c)(1) There shall be a local child fatality review team in each district established under  
682 section 13 of chapter 12. Notwithstanding section 172 of chapter 6, members of a local team  
683 shall be subject to criminal offender record checks to be conducted by the district attorney in  
684 each such district. All members shall serve without compensation for their duties associated with  
685 membership on a local team. Each local team shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) the  
686 district attorney of the county, who shall serve as chair; (ii) the chief medical examiner or a  
687 designee; (iii) the commissioner of children and families or a designee; (iv) a pediatrician with

688 experience in diagnosing or treating child abuse and neglect, appointed by the state team; (v) a  
689 local police officer from a municipality where a child fatality or near fatality occurred, appointed  
690 by the chief of police of the municipality; (vi) a state law enforcement officer, appointed by the  
691 colonel of state police; (vii) the director of the Massachusetts Center for Unexpected Infant and  
692 Child Death located at Boston Medical Center or a designee; (viii) at least 1 representative from  
693 the department of public health; (ix) at least 1 representative from the office; and (x) any other  
694 person, selected by the co-chairs or by majority vote of the members of the state team, with  
695 expertise or information relevant to an individual case; provided, that such person may include,  
696 but shall not be limited to, a local or state law enforcement officer, a hospital representative, a  
697 medical specialist or subspecialist or a designee of the commissioners of developmental services,  
698 mental health, youth services, education and early education and care.

699 (2) The purpose of each local team shall be to decrease the incidence of preventable child  
700 fatalities and near fatalities by: (i) coordinating the collection of information on fatalities and  
701 near fatalities; (ii) promoting cooperation and coordination between agencies responding to  
702 fatalities and near fatalities and in providing services to family members; (iii) developing an  
703 understanding of the causes and incidence of child fatalities and near fatalities in the county; and  
704 (iv) advising the state team on changes in law, policy or practice that may affect child fatalities  
705 and near fatalities.

706 (3) To achieve its purpose, each local team shall: (i) review, establish and implement  
707 model protocols from the state team; (ii) review, subject to the approval of the local district  
708 attorney, all individual fatalities and near fatalities in accordance with the established protocols;  
709 (iii) meet periodically, not less than 2 times per calendar year, to review the status of fatality and  
710 near fatality cases and recommend methods of improving coordination of services between

711 member agencies; (iv) collect, maintain and provide confidential data as required by the state  
712 team; and (v) provide law enforcement or other agencies with information to protect children.

713 (4) At the request of the local district attorney, the local team shall immediately be  
714 provided with: (i) information and records relevant to the cause of the fatality or near fatality  
715 maintained by providers of medical or other care, treatment or services, including dental and  
716 mental health care; (ii) information and records relevant to the cause of the fatality or near  
717 fatality maintained by any state, county or local government agency, including, but not limited  
718 to, birth certificates, medical examiner investigative data, parole and probation information  
719 records and law enforcement data post-disposition; provided, however, that certain law  
720 enforcement records may be exempted by the local district attorney; (iii) information and records  
721 of any provider of social services, including the department, relevant to the child or the child's  
722 family, that the local team deems relevant to the review; and (iv) demographic information  
723 relevant to the child and the child's immediate family, including, but not limited to, address, age,  
724 race, gender and economic status. The district attorney may enforce this paragraph by seeking an  
725 order of the superior court.

726 (d) Any privilege or restriction on disclosure established pursuant to chapter 66A, section  
727 70 of chapter 111, section 11 of chapter 111B, section 18 of chapter 111E, chapter 112, chapter  
728 123, section 20B, 20J or 20K of chapter 233 or any other law relating to confidential  
729 communications shall not prohibit the disclosure of this information to the chair of the state team  
730 or a local team. Any information considered to be confidential pursuant to the aforementioned  
731 statutes may be submitted for a team's review upon the determination of that team's chair that  
732 the review of this information is necessary. The chair shall ensure that no information submitted  
733 for a team's review is disseminated to parties outside the team. No member of a team shall

734 violate the confidentiality provisions set forth in the aforementioned statutes. Except as  
735 necessary to carry out a team's purpose and duties, members of a team and persons attending a  
736 team meeting shall not disclose any information relating to the team's business. Team meetings  
737 shall be closed to the public. Information and records acquired by the state team or by a local  
738 team pursuant to this chapter shall be confidential, exempt from disclosure under chapter 66 and  
739 may only be disclosed as necessary to carry out a team's duties and purposes. Statistical  
740 compilations of data that do not contain any information that would permit the identification of  
741 any person may be disclosed to the public.

742 (e) Members of a team, persons attending a team meeting and persons who present  
743 information to a team shall not be questioned in any civil or criminal proceeding regarding  
744 information presented in or opinions formed as a result of a team meeting.

745 (f) Information, documents and records of the state team or of a local team shall not be  
746 subject to subpoena, discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding;  
747 provided, however, that information, documents and records otherwise available from any other  
748 source shall not be immune from subpoena, discovery or introduction into evidence through  
749 these sources solely because they were presented during proceedings of a team or are maintained  
750 by a team.

751 (g) Nothing in this section shall limit the powers or duties of the child advocate or district  
752 attorneys.

753 Section 17. The office shall, every 3 years, oversee the review of child welfare data  
754 reporting and make recommendations for improvements to the report and profile pursuant to  
755 subsections (a) and (b) of section 26 of chapter 18B and other reports required pursuant to

756 subsections (c), (d) and (e) of said section 26 of said chapter 18B. Following the release of the  
757 department's annual report, the office shall seek input from the public, advocates and diverse  
758 stakeholders from across the commonwealth. The office shall consult with other individuals with  
759 relevant expertise, including academics, researchers and service providers. Following such  
760 review, the office shall post a report on the office's website on its recommendations, together  
761 with drafts of any legislation necessary to carry out its recommendations and an aggregate  
762 response to the comments.

763           Section 18. (a) There shall be within the office of the child advocate a youth engagement  
764 program, to ensure that the voices and experiences of youth in congregate care and other  
765 out-of-home placements inform statewide policy, oversight, and program improvement.

766           (b) The youth engagement program shall conduct not less than 4 youth listening sessions  
767 annually in congregate care settings, including but not limited to group homes, residential  
768 schools, community-based acute treatment programs and other placements serving children in  
769 the care or custody of the commonwealth. Sessions shall be facilitated in a trauma-informed,  
770 developmentally appropriate manner and shall ensure confidentiality consistent with applicable  
771 law.

772           (c) The office of the child advocate shall annually compile and publish a youth  
773 engagement report summarizing any findings and recommendations. The report shall be  
774 submitted to the clerks of the senate and house, the senate and house committees on ways and  
775 means, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the department  
776 of children and families and shall be posted publicly in accordance with section 19 of chapter 66.

777 (d) The office may consult with youth-serving agencies, including the department of  
778 children and families, the department of mental health, the department of youth services, the  
779 department of elementary and secondary education and the department of early education and  
780 care, to facilitate participation and ensure that youth feedback is incorporated into agency  
781 oversight and improvement efforts.

782 SECTION 38. Section 2A of chapter 38 of the General Laws is hereby repealed.

783 SECTION 39. Said chapter 38 is hereby further amended by adding the following  
784 section:-

785 Section 17. (a) In all cases of sudden unexpected pediatric death, the office shall provide  
786 the caregivers of the deceased with information from the office of the child advocate, including a  
787 list of publicly available services for sudden unexpected pediatric death and information about  
788 how to receive support from the office of the child advocate in accordance with clause (i) of the  
789 first paragraph of section 2 of chapter 18C. The office of the chief medical examiner shall  
790 provide such list to the caregivers of the deceased not more than 3 days after receipt of the  
791 decedent.

792 (b) The office, in coordination with the department of public health, shall provide, as  
793 close to the time of a sudden unexpected pediatric death as practicable, information provided by  
794 the office of the child advocate, including a list of publicly available services and information  
795 about accessing support from the office of the child advocate pursuant to subsection (d) of  
796 section 5 of chapter 18C.

797 SECTION 40. Chapter 71 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
798 following new section:-

799           Section 34I. (a) Each public elementary and secondary school shall provide the education  
800 records of a student in the custody of the department of children and families in a timely and  
801 appropriate manner to a case worker or other authorized representative from the department of  
802 children and families upon request.

803           (b) Upon receipt of notification from the department of children and families, as required  
804 by subsection (k) of section 23 of chapter 119, that it has been determined it is not in the best  
805 interest of a student to remain at their school district of origin, the new school district of  
806 enrollment shall immediately enroll the student even if the student is unable to produce records  
807 normally required for enrollment, including, but not limited to: (i) proof of residency; (ii)  
808 academic records; (iii) individualized education programs; (iv) discipline records; (v) documents  
809 evidencing proof of custody; (vi) identification documents; and (vii) medical, health, and  
810 immunization records; provided, however, that schools may require emergency contact  
811 information for a student. Immediate enrollment shall not preclude the new school district from  
812 requiring or working to obtain outstanding records normally required for enrollment or from  
813 requiring records normally required for ongoing enrollment.

814           (c) The new school district of enrollment shall immediately request, from the school  
815 district of origin, the regularly required enrollment forms and a transfer of any additional  
816 education records of the student, including but not limited to: (i) immunization records and other  
817 health records possessed by the school; (ii) academic transcripts; (iii) class enrollment history,  
818 including any advanced or remedial courses; (iv) attendance records; (v) individualized  
819 education program or section 504 plan, as applicable; and (vi) disciplinary records and other  
820 records contained in the student's temporary education record maintained centrally by the  
821 school, to the new school district of enrollment. The school district of origin shall transfer such

822 student records immediately and without the prior consent of a parent or guardian, consistent  
823 with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

824 (d) The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate regulations to  
825 implement the provisions of this section, including specific timelines for the transfer of education  
826 records for students in the custody of the department of children and families. When  
827 promulgating regulations under this section, the board shall consider the use of electronic  
828 repositories to facilitate the transfer of students' educational records.

829 SECTION 41. Section 57 of said chapter 71, as appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, is  
830 hereby amended by inserting after the word "personnel", in line 52, the following words:- and  
831 the children's vision registry established in section 250 of chapter 111.

832 SECTION 42. Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
833 section 249 the following section:-

834 Section 250. (a) The department shall establish, maintain and operate a computerized  
835 registry of children's vision screening and eye care to support the early identification of vision  
836 and eye health conditions in children, promote referrals and follow-up care and monitor access to  
837 and equity in children's vision care in the commonwealth. The registry shall collect and maintain  
838 information concerning children's vision and eye health screenings, referrals, eye examinations  
839 and follow-up eye care, including information reported pursuant to section 57.

840 (b) The department, in consultation with the board of elementary and secondary  
841 education, shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement this section. The regulations shall  
842 establish: (i) the persons and entities required or permitted to report information to the registry;  
843 (ii) the data to be reported; (iii) the form, manner and frequency of reporting; (iv) standards for

844 security, confidentiality, user authentication and access control; (v) procedures by which an  
845 individual or, if the individual is a minor, the individual's parent or guardian, may object to the  
846 disclosure of personally identifiable information; (vi) procedures to correct inaccurate  
847 information; and (vii) any other requirements necessary to implement this section.

848 (c) Licensed healthcare providers who administer children's vision or eye health  
849 screenings, conduct children's eye examinations or provide follow-up eye care to children and  
850 any other person or entity designated by the department by regulation shall report to the registry  
851 such information as the department determines is necessary for the purposes of this section in  
852 accordance with the department's regulations.

853 (d) The department shall develop appropriate safeguards to protect the security of the  
854 registry and the privacy of information contained within the registry. Personally identifiable  
855 information in the registry shall not be disclosed except as provided in this section or in  
856 regulations promulgated pursuant to this section. Unless the individual or, if the individual is a  
857 minor, the individual's parent or guardian, objects in the form and manner prescribed by the  
858 department, personally identifiable information may be released to: (i) licensed healthcare  
859 providers providing direct care to the child; (ii) school nurses and other school personnel  
860 responsible for screening, referral or follow-up for the child; (iii) employees or contractors of the  
861 department or staff of state agencies or state programs whose duties include case management,  
862 outreach, quality improvement or program evaluation related to children's vision care; and (iv)  
863 the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the individual's parent or guardian.

864 (e) Persons authorized by the commissioner may conduct research studies using  
865 information in the registry; provided, however, that the researcher submits a written request for

866 information and executes a data use or research agreement that protects the confidentiality of the  
867 information provided.

868 (f) Information contained in the children’s vision registry shall be confidential, shall not  
869 constitute a public record and shall not otherwise be disclosed, except in accordance with this  
870 section.

871 SECTION 43. Section 21 of chapter 119 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024  
872 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definition of “Child requiring assistance”  
873 and inserting in place thereof the following definition:-

874 "Child requiring assistance", a child between the ages of 12 and 18 who is not currently in  
875 the custody of the department of children and families or the department of youth services who:  
876 (i) repeatedly runs away from the home of the child's parent, legal guardian or custodian; (ii)  
877 repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of the child's parent, legal guardian  
878 or custodian, thereby interfering with their ability to adequately care for and protect the child;  
879 (iii) repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of the child's school; (iv) is  
880 habitually absent without permission; or (v) is a sexually exploited child.

881 SECTION 44. Said section 21 of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is hereby further  
882 amended by striking out the definition of “habitually truant” and inserting in place thereof the  
883 following definition:-

884 “Habitually absent without permission”, a child, not excused from attendance under the  
885 lawful and reasonable regulations of such child’s school, who willfully fails to attend school for  
886 more than 8 school days in a quarter.

887 SECTION 45. Subsection (f) of section 23 of chapter 119 of the General Laws, as so  
888 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the last sentence.

889 SECTION 46. Subsection (h) of said section 23 of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is  
890 hereby amended by striking out the second paragraph.

891 SECTION 47. Said section 23 of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is hereby further  
892 amended by adding the following subsection:-

893 (k) When a school-aged child who is in the custody of the department is placed in or  
894 transferred to an out-of-home placement, the department shall timely notify the school-aged  
895 child's current school district of enrollment of such placement or transfer; provided further, that  
896 if it is determined it is not in the school-aged child's best interest to remain at their school district  
897 of origin, the department shall timely notify the new school district of enrollment of the school-  
898 aged child's transfer in enrollment.

899 SECTION 48. Said chapter 119 is hereby amended by inserting after section 23D the  
900 following section:-

901 Section 23E. (a) Each child in the custody or care of the department has the following  
902 rights:

903 (1) Safety and Security:

904 (i) Each child shall be treated with dignity, respect and consideration, and shall have the  
905 right to have their privacy respected.

906 (ii) Each child has the right not to be harmed by department staff, foster parents or  
907 service providers.

908 (iii) Each child has the right not to be discriminated against or harassed by department  
909 staff, foster parents, the child's attorney or service providers on the basis of religion, race, color,  
910 creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, age,  
911 disability, culture, language or ethnicity.

912 (iv) Each child has the right to a placement that is free from physical, psychological,  
913 sexual, emotional or other abuse, neglect or exploitation.

914 (v) Each child has the right to access personal possessions, personal space and privacy  
915 with allowance for safety.

916 (vi) Each child has the right to control the taking, use and disclosure of all pictures of  
917 themselves; provided, however, that the exercise of the right may be subject to limitations  
918 necessary to protect the wellbeing, health or safety of the child.

919 (vii) Each child has the right to access sufficient healthy food, clothing, personal care  
920 products, appropriate self-care needs for their hair and body, as well as items that preserve and  
921 promote the child's religion, culture and gender identity.

922 (viii) Each child has the right to be placed in a safe and nurturing environment and  
923 receive appropriate care and treatment in the least restrictive setting available that can meet the  
924 child's needs and address their trauma history.

925 (ix) Each child has the right not to be placed, housed or detained in a secure department  
926 of youth services placement based on the department's inability to provide an available and  
927 appropriate foster placement. The department shall not advocate for bail of any amount for  
928 children in its care or custody.

929 (x) Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate information about a foster  
930 family or program prior to being placed whenever possible and, whenever possible and  
931 appropriate, shall have an opportunity to meet the foster parent or program staff before  
932 placement occurs. If the foster placement is only able to accommodate the child for a limited  
933 time, the child shall be notified of the anticipated duration of the child's stay with that foster  
934 placement. The child shall be informed of a placement change and any reason for the change at  
935 least 5 days in advance whenever possible. When a change is made in an emergency  
936 circumstance, the child shall be given as much notice as possible. The child's belongings shall be  
937 packed with care and the child shall be allowed to bring their essential belongings and comfort  
938 items with them.

939 (2) Connections to Family, Community and Identity:

940 (i) Each child has the right to know, understand, learn about and develop the child's  
941 racial, cultural, linguistic, gender, religious and ethnic identity, including but not limited to  
942 clothing, hair, other cultural expressions of identity and body care and to a placement that will  
943 provide or maintain the connections necessary to preserve and promote the child's identities.

944 (ii) To the best of the department's ability, each child has the right to preserve and  
945 maintain all languages the child entered care speaking and to reside in a placement that provides  
946 or facilitates appropriate language access.

947 (iii) Each child has the right to a placement that supports and affirms their identity,  
948 including on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression,  
949 sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, culture, language or ethnicity.

950 (iv) Each child has the right to choose whether or not and to whom to disclose  
951 information about their sexual orientation and gender identity, and the right to have that  
952 information not further disclosed without their consent, unless required to protect the child's  
953 health and safety, or where compelled by law or court order.

954 (v) Each child has the right to timely permanency which includes stabilization of family,  
955 reunification, adoption, guardianship, care with kin or another planned permanent living  
956 arrangement.

957 (vi) Each child has the right to a placement identified and located through due diligence  
958 that prioritizes the child's relatives and kinship, using full and fair consideration, as potential  
959 placement providers, when the child cannot remain safely at home with their parent or parents.

960 (vii) Each child has the right to frequent and meaningful contact with the child's siblings  
961 or half-siblings, facilitated by the department pursuant to section 26B of chapter 119. The  
962 department shall prioritize placement with the child's siblings or half-siblings in all settings and  
963 permanency plans, including but not limited to foster care, congregate care, and adoption, unless  
964 the joint placement is contrary to the safety, well-being, or permanency of any of the siblings.

965 (viii) Each child has the right to family time of a duration and frequency and in a setting  
966 that (A) is consistent with the developmental or clinical needs of the child and (B) promotes and  
967 preserves their connections with their family. Family time shall take place in person and outside  
968 of a department office whenever possible.

969 (ix) Each child has the right to other forms of parental contact, including but not limited  
970 to mail, phone calls, videoconferences, email and texts if they have their own phone and if not

971 harmful to the safety or well-being of the child. All placements shall facilitate access to virtual  
972 forms of contact if safe and appropriate.

973 (x) Each child has the right to assistance to maintain positive contact with other family  
974 members and significant other positive relationships in the child's life, including but not limited  
975 to extended family, family friends, teachers, friends and community individuals.

976 (xi) Each child has the right to be treated as a family member in a foster family and,  
977 whenever possible, be included in a foster family's activities, holidays and traditions while  
978 taking into consideration factors that include but are not limited to the child's age and trauma  
979 history. Each child shall have the opportunity to be included in the daily activities of the family  
980 and to maintain the most normal daily routine and environment as possible. If choosing not to  
981 take part, each child or young adult shall have the opportunity to discuss their reasons with the  
982 social worker and foster family.

983 (3) Health Care and Accessibility:

984 (i) Each child has the right to access appropriate, timely and gender-affirming medical,  
985 reproductive, dental, vision, mental and behavioral health services regularly and more often as  
986 needed.

987 (ii) Each child has the right to discuss any questions or concerns the child has relating to  
988 medication or other physical, mental or behavioral health treatment with a healthcare provider  
989 and to understand the medications or treatment provided, its purposes and side effects in a  
990 developmentally appropriate way.

991 (iii) Each child has the right to out-of-home placements with reasonable accommodations  
992 for any disabilities the child may have, consistent with state and federal law. Reasonable  
993 accommodations shall be provided in a timely manner and in such a way as to protect the privacy  
994 of the child. Each child also has a right to discuss any disabilities with the department and  
995 request adaptive equipment, auxiliary aids or services.

996 (4) Education, Employment and Social Connections:

997 (i) Each child has the right to attend school regularly, to educational stability, to  
998 educational supports and to an education that meets their needs under federal and state law.

999 (ii) Each child has the right for the department to prioritize school stability by  
1000 maintaining the child at their school of origin unless it is found, in a Best Interest Determination  
1001 meeting pursuant to federal law, not to be in their best interest to do so.

1002 (iii) Each child has the right to participate in developmentally appropriate school,  
1003 extracurricular, enrichment, religious, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and social activities and to have  
1004 any placement provider use the reasonable and prudent parenting standard when making  
1005 decisions regarding participation in such activities.

1006 (iv) Each child has the right to achieve developmentally and religiously appropriate, age-  
1007 related milestones, including but not limited to obtaining a driver's license, opening bank  
1008 accounts, birthday celebrations, religious ceremonies or graduations.

1009 (v) Each child has the right to be informed of and supported in accessing all available  
1010 services through the department, including but not limited to educational, vocational and  
1011 employment services, assistance in acquiring life skills, educational assistance including but not

1012 limited to tuition and fee waivers for post-secondary education, financial support, housing  
1013 support, assistance with credit reports and resolving inaccuracies, training and career guidance to  
1014 accomplish personal goals and prepare for the future, employment supports available to children  
1015 in care and adaptive equipment or auxiliary aids and supports.

1016 (vi) Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate education on financial  
1017 preparedness, job readiness, appropriate use of social media, education options, healthy  
1018 relationships, physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health.

1019 (5) Resources and Supports:

1020 (i) Each child has the right to reasonable access to a social worker who can make action  
1021 plan decisions. Each child shall have opportunities for the child to have private conversations  
1022 with a social worker regarding any questions, grievances or concerns. Reasonable access shall  
1023 include providing the child with the department's social worker and supervisor's office telephone  
1024 numbers and email addresses as well as, at a minimum, monthly visits by the department. The  
1025 department shall also provide the child an emergency contact number for the department during  
1026 non-business hours for emergency and safety issues.

1027 (ii) Each child has the right to participate as developmentally appropriate in the  
1028 development and review of the action plans and family time and visitation plans, their  
1029 individualized education program and best interest determination and shall be consulted as the  
1030 department formulates or updates said items. Children aged 14 and older shall also be presented  
1031 with the action or service plan for their review, written feedback and signature.

1032 (iii) Each child has the right to be informed, in a developmentally appropriate way, of the  
1033 meaning of all documents that they are asked to sign by the department or its agents, contractors

1034 or providers including the voluntary agreement for placement and documents of similar  
1035 importance. A child shall have their attorney present whenever asked to sign any documents by  
1036 the department or its agents, contractors or providers, or the document shall be provided in a  
1037 timely fashion to the child's attorney to give an opportunity for review in advance of presenting  
1038 it for signature.

1039 (iv) Each child has the right to be informed in a developmentally appropriate way of the  
1040 reasons the department became involved with the child's family, why the child came into care  
1041 and why the child is still in care. The department shall offer support through the review process  
1042 to address any possible trauma caused by a child's access to their case files. Upon turning 18, the  
1043 young adult shall have the right to access their individual information from their case files,  
1044 barring any state or federal law that would prohibit the department from allowing the release of  
1045 information.

1046 (v) Each child aged 14 or older has the right to be included in foster care review  
1047 meetings, permanency hearings and lead agency team meetings except for those parts that  
1048 involve information that is confidential regarding their parents or a previous or future adoptive,  
1049 kinship or foster parent under federal or state law, and unless documented by court order that  
1050 participation would be detrimental to the child. The department shall provide the child the ability  
1051 to offer confidential input to the department before a final decision is made with respect to  
1052 determining or changing placement or permanency. If the child is unable to attend in person, by  
1053 phone or video, the child shall have the right to submit a written statement to be considered at the  
1054 meeting or hearing.

1055 (vi) Each child and young adult has the right to adequate notice of all court hearings by  
1056 their attorney. To the extent possible, the notice shall include the date, time and location of the  
1057 hearing. If developmentally appropriate, the child’s social worker and the child’s attorney shall  
1058 inform them of actions or decisions made by the court. In a developmentally appropriate manner,  
1059 the child’s attorney shall ensure the child understands the child’s right to attend their annual  
1060 permanency hearings and speak to the judge regarding any decision that may have an impact on  
1061 the child’s life.

1062 (vii) Each child and young adult has the right to access their medical, dental and  
1063 educational records held by the department as well as their personal documents, including but  
1064 not limited to social security card, birth certificate, health insurance information, state  
1065 identification card, driver’s license, passport and documentation related to their immigration  
1066 status, including work authorization, in a developmentally appropriate way. When a child or  
1067 young adult leaves the care of the department, they shall be given copies of medical, dental and  
1068 educational records held by the department and original copies of all personal documents. The  
1069 department shall further provide contact information for providers who are currently providing  
1070 care for the young adult. The department shall begin planning to return the documents to the  
1071 child at least 30 days before the young adult leaves care.

1072 (viii) Each child and young adult has the right to change their name and the right to  
1073 change their gender marker on official documents with assistance from the child or young adult’s  
1074 attorney and the department, and to have all relevant legal documents updated accordingly.

1075 (ix) Each eligible child and young adult has the right to obtain a state identification card  
1076 with the department’s assistance.

1077 (x) Each child and young adult has the right to an attorney pursuant to section 29 of  
1078 chapter 119 and to meaningful contact with said attorney, including at foster care reviews. Each  
1079 child shall be informed, when appropriate, of the name and phone numbers of the assigned  
1080 attorney. Each child, child's parent, and foster parent shall be informed, when appropriate, that  
1081 the child can contact the child's attorney, and of the processes to file a complaint regarding the  
1082 child's attorney and to request a change of attorney for the child.

1083 (xi) Each child, and their attorney, has the right to be informed if the department applies  
1084 for any benefits on behalf of the child, including but not limited to benefits under Title XVI of  
1085 the Social Security Act, also referred to as supplemental security income; benefits under Title II  
1086 of the Social Security Act, also referred to as retirement, survivors or disability benefits, and if  
1087 the department applies to be the representative payee for such benefits. The department shall  
1088 preserve all of such funds received in an interest-bearing account belonging to the child so the  
1089 funds are available for the child's benefit and use while they are in care, and the child's use when  
1090 they turn 18. The department shall not use such funds for the customary costs of foster care, nor  
1091 shall it use such funds to pay the costs of items which would ordinarily be funded by another  
1092 source. If necessary, the department shall preserve said funds in an achieving a better life  
1093 experience account authorized by 26 U.S.C. § 529A, or another trust account for the child  
1094 determined not to interfere with supplemental security income or asset limitations for any other  
1095 benefit program.

1096 (6) Transition Age Youth:

1097 (i) Each child and young adult, age 14 or older, has the right to collaborate with the  
1098 department to plan their transition from foster care to adulthood. Transition planning should

1099 cover all areas needed for a youth to be stable and successful as an adult, including but not  
1100 limited to, planning for visits or contact with parents and siblings; building relationships with  
1101 other caring adults, particularly with life-long connections; making an education plan including  
1102 post-secondary education; finding vocational, employment and career counseling and placement;  
1103 securing stable housing; developing expertise in daily living skills; maintaining physical,  
1104 reproductive and mental health care and health insurance; learning how to access community  
1105 resources and public benefits and services; connecting with other state agencies; developing  
1106 financial skills including, but not limited to, understanding budgeting and money management as  
1107 well as checking and savings accounts; and receiving, understanding and correcting, if  
1108 applicable, the child's consumer credit report.

1109 (ii) Each young adult who turns 18 while in the custody of the department, has the right  
1110 to continue under the responsibility of the department and receive young adult services until  
1111 turning 22 years of age, pursuant to federal and state requirements, unless completing an  
1112 educational program until age 23. Each young adult has the right to be offered a voluntary  
1113 placement agreement by the department in the month prior to their turning 18 years old. The  
1114 voluntary placement agreement shall be developed together with the child or young adult during  
1115 permanency and transition planning. Each child or young adult has the right to be made aware of  
1116 this right and any federal requirements governing services for transition age youth throughout the  
1117 transition planning process.

1118 (iii) Each child has the right to a timely transition plan prior to turning 18 years old,  
1119 crafted by the department at the direction of the transition age youth, regardless of whether they  
1120 will continue under the responsibility of the department upon turning 18, that includes  
1121 personalized, detailed, tangible, available and clear options for resources for meeting their basic

1122 needs including, but not limited to, housing, education and vocational supports which fulfill the  
1123 requirements of 42 U.S.C. § 675(5)(H), as amended.

1124 (iv) Each young adult who has chosen to remain under the responsibility of the  
1125 department has the right to engage and re-engage with the department under a voluntary  
1126 placement agreement at any time for any reason.

1127 (v) Each young adult who has chosen to remain under the responsibility of the  
1128 department, who is leaving care at age 18 or who is re-entering care has the right to be housed  
1129 and provided information about and assistance with securing all department-identified,  
1130 appropriate housing opportunities.

1131 (7) Remedies.

1132 (i) Each child has the right to have these rights enforced. The department shall not  
1133 retaliate against or punish a child for asserting their rights. Nothing in this section shall be  
1134 construed to diminish the rights, privileges or remedies of any person under any other federal or  
1135 state law.

1136 (ii) Each child has the right to department-provided contact information for the  
1137 ombudsperson and the office of the child advocate when they enter the care and custody of the  
1138 department and upon request. If it is developmentally inappropriate to provide the child with  
1139 such information, a child's attorney shall be provided with this contact information.

1140 (iii) Each child has the right, if the child and the child's attorney, believes any of the  
1141 above rights have been violated, to discuss the alleged violation with the department's  
1142 ombudsman, file a grievance with the department or file a complaint with the office of the child

1143 advocate. The department shall not retaliate against or punish a child, a child's parent, an  
1144 attorney, a social worker, a foster parent or placement provider for asserting this right. If the  
1145 department or the office of the child advocate determines the child's rights have been violated,  
1146 the department shall resolve the violation as soon as practicable and make corrections so that the  
1147 violation does not reoccur.

1148 (b) The rights enumerated in subsection (a) shall be obligations of the department. The  
1149 department shall amend any regulations or policies that may conflict with this section in a timely  
1150 fashion.

1151 (c) The rights enumerated in subsection (a) are not an exhaustive list of rights to which  
1152 children under the custody, care or responsibility of the department are entitled and should not be  
1153 read to limit the rights of children, or the responsibilities of the department, in any way.

1154 (d) The department shall create, in consultation with community members and young  
1155 people with lived experience in the child welfare system, a simple and plain language version of  
1156 these rights as enumerated in subsection (a) so that they are accessible and easily understood by  
1157 children and young adults in the department's care. The department shall present the document  
1158 to each child in its care, or when developmentally appropriate to the child's attorney, the parents  
1159 of each child in its care and the foster parent or placement provider of each child in its care. The  
1160 department and the child's attorney shall explain these rights to the child in a developmentally  
1161 appropriate way when the child enters the department's care. The department shall ensure the  
1162 document is translated into the preferred language of the child or young adult in care, the child's  
1163 parents and the foster parents. The document shall be posted in all congregate care facilities in a

1164 public space where all residents have access, prominently on the department's website and in all  
1165 area offices.

1166 SECTION 49. Said chapter 119 is hereby further amended by inserting after section 29D  
1167 the following section:-

1168 Section 29E. (a) Not later than 5 business days after a non-emergency change in the  
1169 placement of a child or a young adult or after any non-emergency hospitalization, the department  
1170 shall provide notice of the change in placement or hospitalization to counsel for the child or  
1171 young adult appointed pursuant to section 29.

1172 (b) Not later than 5 business days after an emergency change in a child's or a young  
1173 adult's placement or after an emergency hospitalization, the department shall provide notice of  
1174 the change in placement or hospitalization to counsel for the child or the young adult appointed  
1175 pursuant to section 29.

1176 (c) Not later than 3 business days after receipt of a report under section 51A, the  
1177 department shall provide notice to a child's counsel if it receives a report under said section 51A  
1178 and the child is the subject of the report.

1179 (d) The department shall provide notice to a child's or young adult's counsel within 3  
1180 business days whenever the department becomes aware of: (i) the child or young adult being  
1181 arrested; (ii) the child's or young adult's involvement in any proceeding under this chapter or  
1182 any criminal investigation or proceeding; (iii) the child or young adult being suspended or  
1183 expelled from school; or (iv) the child or young adult being the subject of any proceeding  
1184 regarding their suspension or expulsion from school.

1185 (e) The department's attorney portal shall provide timely automated notifications for all  
1186 events described in this section to counsel appointed pursuant to section 29.

1187 SECTION 50. Said chapter 119 is hereby further amended by striking out section 39E, as  
1188 appearing in the 2024 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

1189 Section 39E. (a) Any division of the juvenile court department may receive and hear  
1190 requests for assistance stating that there is a child requiring assistance or a family requiring  
1191 assistance as defined in section 21, pursuant to this section or sections 39F to 39I, inclusive.  
1192 Proceedings pursuant to this section and said sections 39F to 39I, inclusive, shall not be deemed  
1193 criminal proceedings and any record of such proceedings, including the filing of an application  
1194 for assistance and creation of a docket, shall not be entered in the criminal offender record  
1195 information system. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, no record  
1196 pertaining to the child involved in the proceedings shall be maintained or remain active after the  
1197 application for assistance has been dismissed; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be  
1198 construed to prohibit the maintenance or reporting of information after records pertaining to the  
1199 matter have been expunged, provided that the information is kept in a manner that does not  
1200 enable identification of the child or petitioner and is used solely for statistical or bona fide  
1201 research purposes. The identity and record of any child for whom an application for assistance is  
1202 filed shall not be submitted to the department of criminal justice information services, criminal  
1203 offender record information system, court activity record index or any other criminal record  
1204 information system. Proceedings under this section and sections 39F to 39I, inclusive, shall be  
1205 confidential and not open to the public. Subject matter jurisdiction of the Boston juvenile court  
1206 under this section shall extend to the territorial limits of Suffolk county.

1207 (b) A parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child having custody of such child, may  
1208 initiate an application for assistance in any of the juvenile courts stating that said child repeatedly  
1209 runs away from the home of said parent or guardian or repeatedly refuses to obey the lawful and  
1210 reasonable commands of said parent, guardian or custodian resulting in said parent, guardian or  
1211 custodian's inability to adequately care for and protect said child. The application shall state  
1212 whether the child or the child's family has visited or received services from a family resource  
1213 center within 180 days of submitting the application. Before scheduling a hearing on an  
1214 application for assistance, the clerk shall provide to the petitioner: (i) informational materials  
1215 prepared by the court that: (A) explain the court process; (B) include the types of orders that the  
1216 court may issue and the possibility of changes in the custody of the child; (C) include an  
1217 explanation of the services that may be available through the court process, including language  
1218 translation services and reasonable accommodations, and the manner in which those services  
1219 may be delivered; and (ii) informational materials developed by the child advocate under section  
1220 15 of chapter 18C. If the child or the child's family indicates on the application that they have  
1221 not visited or received services from a family resource center within the last 180 days, the clerk  
1222 shall refer the child and the child's family to a family resource center before scheduling a hearing  
1223 on the application. If the petitioner has visited or received services from a family resource center  
1224 within the last 180 days and decides to proceed after receiving the required informational  
1225 materials, the clerk shall set a hearing date forthwith, but not later than 15 days after the request  
1226 is presented to the clerk for filing, to determine whether assistance is needed, and shall notify the  
1227 child of such hearing.

1228 (c) A school district may initiate an application for assistance stating that a child is not  
1229 excused from attendance in accordance with the lawful and reasonable regulations of such child's

1230 school, has willfully failed to attend school for more than 8 school days in a quarter or repeatedly  
1231 fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of the child's school. The application for  
1232 assistance shall set forth: (i) whether and when the child and the child's caregivers have been  
1233 referred to a family resource center; (ii) the specific steps taken by the school district to support  
1234 the child's attendance, if applicable; (iii) the specific court intervention that the school district is  
1235 seeking to support the child in returning to school or improving the child's conduct; and (iv) if  
1236 the application for assistance states that a child has repeatedly failed to obey the lawful and  
1237 reasonable regulations of the school and a statement of the specific steps taken by the school to  
1238 attempt to improve the child's conduct. An application that indicates that the school district has  
1239 not made the caregiver referral to a family resource center required under subsection (f) of  
1240 section 16U of chapter 6A shall not be scheduled for a hearing The school district shall not  
1241 initiate an application for assistance to address matters that fall within the school's legal  
1242 responsibility under federal and state law including, but not limited to, the creation or  
1243 amendment of an individualized education program, decisions regarding the educational  
1244 placement of a student pursuant to an individualized education program or the creation or  
1245 amendment of a section 504 plan to provide the student with accommodations that allow the  
1246 student to have equal access to education.

1247           Before an application for assistance initiated by a school district is scheduled for a  
1248 hearing, a probation officer shall consult with the family resource center to which the child and  
1249 the child's family was referred. Staff at a family resource center shall be authorized to report to a  
1250 probation officer if the child has met with a case manager pursuant to subsection (c) of section  
1251 16U of chapter 6A. The family resource center shall, in writing, indicate to the probation officer  
1252 whether, in its opinion, it believes the child and the child's family have exhausted all relevant

1253 community-based service options that are reasonably available to them. The family resource  
1254 center shall report in writing if the child's family has failed to contact the family resource center  
1255 following referral or if the family has declined to engage with offered services. Any other  
1256 information about the child or family shall be kept confidential as required by section 16U of  
1257 chapter 6A. If the family resource center indicates to the probation officer that community-based  
1258 options reasonably available to the family have not been exhausted, that the family has engaged  
1259 with the family resource center and with offered services and the supports requested in the filing  
1260 can be obtained from the family resource center or through a community-based service provider  
1261 or state agency to which the family resource center is able to connect the child and the child's  
1262 family, the application for assistance shall be dismissed. The probation officer may refer the  
1263 child to an appropriate public or private organization or person for psychiatric, psychological,  
1264 educational, occupational, medical, dental, social or substance use treatment services.

1265         If the family resource center indicates that the family has not engaged with the family  
1266 resource center or with offered services or that all community-based service options relevant to  
1267 the child's needs and reasonably accessible to the petitioner have been exhausted, and the  
1268 petitioner decides to proceed, the clerk shall set a date for a hearing forthwith, but not later than  
1269 15 days after the request is presented to the clerk for filing, to determine whether assistance is  
1270 needed, and shall notify the child of such hearing.

1271         (d) With respect to applications for assistance initiated pursuant to subsections (b) or (c)  
1272 and for which the clerk has scheduled a hearing, the court shall hold a hearing in which it shall  
1273 receive the recommendation of the probation officer and shall either: (i) decline to accept the  
1274 application for assistance because there is no probable cause to believe that the child and the  
1275 child's family are in need of assistance; (ii) decline to accept the application for assistance

1276 because it finds that the interests of the child would best be served by informal assistance, in  
1277 which case the court shall, with the consent of the child and the child's parents or guardian, refer  
1278 the child to a probation officer for assistance; or (iii) accept the application for assistance and  
1279 schedule a fact-finding hearing. If the child is brought in on custodial protection, the court shall  
1280 accept an application for assistance unless one has already been filed, and the court shall  
1281 immediately request the probation officer promptly to make like inquiry and thereafter report to  
1282 the court the probation officer's recommendation as to whether the interests of the child can best  
1283 be served through referral to community-based services or informal assistance without a fact-  
1284 finding hearing. Upon receiving such recommendation, the court may hold a hearing and shall  
1285 decide whether to proceed with a fact-finding hearing or to refer the child to the care of a  
1286 probation officer for assistance.

1287         When an application for assistance is dismissed under this section, the court shall enter an  
1288 order directing expungement of any records of the request and related proceedings maintained by  
1289 the clerk, the court, the department of criminal justice information services, the court activity  
1290 record index and the probation department that directly pertain to the application for assistance.  
1291 Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the maintenance or reporting of information  
1292 relating to any petition filed under this section and sections 39F to 39I, inclusive, after records  
1293 pertaining to the matter have been expunged, provided that the information is kept in a manner  
1294 that does not enable identification of the child or petitioner and is used solely for statistical or  
1295 bona fide research purposes.

1296         Whenever a child is referred to a probation officer for assistance, such officer may  
1297 conduct conferences with the child and the child's family to effect adjustments or agreements  
1298 which are calculated to resolve the situation which formed the basis of the application for

1299 assistance and which will eliminate the need for a fact-finding hearing. During the pendency of  
1300 such referrals or conferences, neither the child nor the child's parents shall be compelled to  
1301 appear at any conferences, produce any papers or visit any place; provided, however, that if the  
1302 child or the child's parents fail to participate in good faith in the referrals or conferences  
1303 arranged by the probation officer, the probation officer shall so certify in writing, and the clerk  
1304 shall accept the application for assistance if one has not already been accepted and shall set a  
1305 date for a fact-finding hearing. The judge who conducted the hearing on the acceptance of the  
1306 application for assistance shall not preside at any subsequent hearing. Conferences and referrals  
1307 arranged under this section may extend for a period not to exceed 90 days from the date that the  
1308 application for assistance was initially filed, unless the parent and child voluntarily agree in  
1309 writing to a continuation of such conferences or referrals for an additional period not to exceed  
1310 90 days from the expiration of the initial period. Upon the expiration of the initial 90-day period,  
1311 or of such additional 90-day period, the application for assistance, if any, shall be dismissed and  
1312 the child and the child's parents discharged from any further obligation to participate in such  
1313 conferences and referrals, or an application for assistance shall, if not already accepted, be  
1314 accepted and a date set for a fact-finding hearing. No statements made by a child or by any other  
1315 person during the period of inquiries, conferences or referrals may be used against the child at  
1316 any subsequent hearing to determine that the child requires assistance, but such statements may  
1317 be received by the court after the fact-finding hearing for the purpose of disposition.

1318         The commissioner of probation shall establish a system to collect data on all requests for  
1319 assistance made and how they are resolved under this section and sections 39F to 39I, inclusive.  
1320 Such system shall maintain the privacy of clients served, assist the court in identifying and  
1321 addressing the needs of the population to be served and collect information related to: (i)

1322 demographics of the child, including but not limited to the racial and ethnic identity of the child,  
1323 age, primary language, disability status and gender; (ii) the insurance status and coverage of  
1324 clients served; (iii) whether the child had received support from a family resource center  
1325 pursuant to section 16U of chapter 6A or another community-based organization prior to filing,  
1326 the supports requested as detailed in the application, the needs identified by the probation officer,  
1327 the length of time a child has been receiving assistance from a probation officer, including the  
1328 time prior to and subsequent to the filing of an application for assistance; (iv) whether a school-  
1329 initiated filing involves a need for services or placement decisions that fall within the legal  
1330 responsibility of the school district under federal or state law; (v) the identity of any public or  
1331 private organization to whom a probation officer has referred a child or family for services; and  
1332 (vi) any other information that may assist the commissioner and the court in evaluating the  
1333 availability and effectiveness of services for children who are the subjects of requests for  
1334 assistance under this section. The probation officer shall gather information concerning each  
1335 child and family referred to the officer including, but not limited to, (A) insurance status and  
1336 coverage; (B) the child's school district; (C) whether the child or family received support from a  
1337 family resource center pursuant to said section 16U of said chapter 6A; (D) the supports  
1338 requested as detailed in the child requiring assistance application; (E) the needs identified by the  
1339 probation officer; and (F) other information that may assist the commissioner of probation and  
1340 the court in evaluating the availability and effectiveness of services for children who are the  
1341 subjects of requests for assistance under this section.

1342           Upon the filing of an application for assistance under this section, the court may issue a  
1343 summons, to which a copy of the application for assistance shall be attached, requiring the child  
1344 named in such application to appear before the court at the time set forth in the summons. If such

1345 child fails to obey the summons, the court may issue a warrant reciting the substance of the  
1346 petition and requiring the officer to whom it is directed forthwith to take and bring such child  
1347 before the court. Notice of the hearing shall be given to the department of children and families.

1348           If the court summons a child to appear, the court shall in addition issue a summons to  
1349 both parents of the child, if both parents are known to reside in the commonwealth, or to 1 parent  
1350 if only 1 is known to reside within the commonwealth, or, if there is no parent residing in the  
1351 commonwealth, then to the parent having custody or to the lawful guardian of such child. The  
1352 summons shall require the person served to appear at a time and place stated therein at a hearing  
1353 to determine whether or not the child is in need of assistance.

1354           Unless service of the summons required by this section is waived in writing, such  
1355 summons shall be served by the constable or police officer, either by delivering it personally to  
1356 the person to whom addressed, or by leaving it with a person of proper age to receive the same,  
1357 at the place of residence or business of such person, and said constable or police officer shall  
1358 immediately make return to the court of the time and manner of service.

1359           SECTION 51. Said chapter 119 is hereby further amended by striking out section 39G, as  
1360 so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

1361           Section 39G. At a hearing to determine whether a child and family require assistance, the  
1362 child and the child's attorney shall be present and the parents, legal guardian or custodian shall  
1363 be given an opportunity to be heard. The petitioner and any party may file a motion to dismiss  
1364 the request for assistance at any time prior to a hearing to determine the disposition of a request  
1365 for assistance. Upon a filing of a motion to dismiss, the judge shall order that the request for  
1366 assistance be dismissed upon a showing that the dismissal is in the best interests of the child or if

1367 all parties agree to the dismissal. A probation officer may at any time recommend to the court  
1368 that the request for assistance be dismissed upon a showing that dismissal is in the best interests  
1369 of the child.

1370       Upon a finding that a child requires assistance after a fact-finding hearing, the court shall  
1371 convene and may participate in a conference of the probation officer who conducted the  
1372 preliminary inquiry, a representative from a family resource center or other community-based  
1373 services program, if involved with the family, the petitioner, a representative from the child's  
1374 school, the child's parent, legal guardian or custodian, the child and the child's attorney, a  
1375 representative of the department of children and families, if involved with the family, and any  
1376 other person who may be helpful in determining the most effective assistance available to be  
1377 offered to the child and family, including representatives from MassHealth, the juvenile court  
1378 clinic and other state entities depending on the supports requested. The probation officer shall  
1379 present written recommendations and other persons at the conference may present written  
1380 recommendations to the court to advise the court on appropriate treatment and services for the  
1381 child and family, appropriate placement of the child, and appropriate conditions and limitations  
1382 on any such placement.

1383       At the conference and subsequent hearing on disposition, the child and the child's  
1384 attorney shall be present and the parents, legal guardian or custodian, and the child and petitioner  
1385 shall be given an opportunity to be heard. The court may receive evidence as to the best  
1386 disposition of the petition from all persons who participate in the conference and any other  
1387 person who may be helpful in determining an appropriate disposition. The department of  
1388 children and families shall be provided with advance notice of the hearing and an opportunity to

1389 participate prior to the court recommending placement of the child in the department's custody  
1390 pursuant to clause (iii) of the following paragraph.

1391           If the court finds the statements in the application for assistance have been proved at the  
1392 hearing, it may determine the child to be in need of assistance. Upon making such determination,  
1393 the court, taking into consideration the physical and emotional welfare of the child, may make  
1394 any of the following orders of disposition:

1395           (i) subject to any conditions and limitations the court may prescribe, including provision  
1396 for medical, psychological, psychiatric, educational, occupational and social services, and for  
1397 supervision by a court clinic or by any public or private organization providing counseling or  
1398 guidance services, permit the child to remain with their parents, legal guardian or custodian;

1399           (ii) subject to such conditions and limitations as the court may prescribe, including, but  
1400 not limited to provisions for those services described in clause (i), place the child in the care of a  
1401 relative or other adult individual who, after inquiry by the probation officer or other person or  
1402 agency designated by the court, is found to be qualified to receive and care for the child;

1403           (iii) subject to the provisions of sections 32 and 33 and with such conditions and  
1404 limitations as the court may recommend, place the child in the custody of the department of  
1405 children and families; provided, however, that at the same time, the court shall consider the  
1406 provisions of section 29C and shall make the written certification and determinations required by  
1407 said section 29C; provided further, that the department shall give due consideration to the  
1408 recommendations of the court; provided further, that the department may not refuse out-of-home  
1409 placement of a child if the placement is recommended by the court, provided that the court has  
1410 made the written certification and determinations required by said section 29C and has provided

1411 the department advance notice and an opportunity to participate in the hearing; provided further,  
1412 that the department shall direct the type and length of such out-of-home placement; and provided  
1413 further, that the department shall give due consideration to the requests of the child that the child  
1414 be placed outside the home of a parent or guardian where there is a history of abuse and neglect  
1415 in the home by the parent or guardian.

1416           If the family or child is directed by the court to participate in treatment or services which  
1417 are eligible for coverage by an insurance plan or other third-party payer, payment for such  
1418 services shall not be denied if the treatment or services otherwise meet the criteria for coverage.

1419           A child who is the subject of an application for assistance shall not be confined in  
1420 shackles or similar restraints or in a court lockup facility in connection with any proceedings  
1421 under sections 39E to 39I, inclusive. A child who is the subject of an application for assistance  
1422 shall not be placed in a locked facility or any facility designated or operated for juveniles who  
1423 are alleged to be delinquent or who have been adjudicated delinquent; provided, however, that  
1424 such child may be placed in a facility which operates as a group home to provide therapeutic care  
1425 for juveniles, notwithstanding that juveniles adjudicated delinquent are also provided care in  
1426 such facility.

1427           Any order of disposition pursuant to this section shall continue in force for not more than  
1428 120 days; provided, however, that the court which entered the order may, after a hearing, extend  
1429 its duration for up to 3 additional 90-day periods, if the court finds that the purposes of the order  
1430 have not been accomplished and that any such extension would be reasonably likely to further  
1431 those purposes.

1432 No order shall continue in effect after the eighteenth birthday of a child named in an  
1433 application for assistance authorized to be filed by a parent, a legal guardian or custodian or a  
1434 police officer or after the sixteenth birthday of a child named in a petition authorized to be filed  
1435 by a school district.

1436 SECTION 52. Section 39½ of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
1437 striking out the last paragraph.

1438 SECTION 53. Section 51D of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
1439 striking out the last paragraph.

1440 SECTION 54. Section 51E of said chapter 119, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
1441 striking out, in line 2, the figure “51D” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 51C.

1442 SECTION 55. Chapter 209A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
1443 section 9 the following section:-

1444 Section 9A. Any on-behalf-of order shall remain in effect after the minor reaches the age  
1445 of majority unless otherwise ordered by the court. Upon the minor reaching the age of majority,  
1446 the former minor may appear at court on the date and time the order is to expire, and the court  
1447 shall determine whether to extend the order for any additional time reasonably necessary to  
1448 protect them or to enter a permanent order.

1449 SECTION 56. Section 25 of chapter 209C of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2024  
1450 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out subsection (d) and inserting in place thereof  
1451 the following subsection:-

1452 (d) Proceedings commenced under this section in the probate and family court shall be  
1453 governed by the Massachusetts Rules of Domestic Relations Procedure. Proceedings commenced  
1454 under this section in the juvenile court shall be governed by the Massachusetts Juvenile Court  
1455 Rules for the Care and Protection of Children.

1456 SECTION 57. Section 5E of chapter 210 of the General Laws is hereby repealed.

1457 SECTION 58. Chapter 258E of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
1458 section 11 the following section:-

1459 Section 11A. Any on-behalf-of order shall remain in effect after the minor reaches the  
1460 age of majority unless otherwise ordered by the court. Upon the minor reaching the age of  
1461 majority, the former minor may appear at court on the date and time the order is to expire, and  
1462 the court shall determine whether to: (i) extend the order for any additional time that the court  
1463 deems reasonably necessary to protect such person; or (ii) enter a permanent order.

1464 SECTION 59. Sections 2, 43, 44, 49, 50 and 51 shall take effect 1 year after the effective  
1465 date of this act.