

**SENATE . . . . . No. 434**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Pavel M. Payano*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the enforcement of anti-bullying policies in our schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Pavel M. Payano*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*First Essex*

**SENATE . . . . . No. 434**

---

---

By Mr. Payano, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 434) of Pavel M. Payano for legislation to establish an anti-bullying officer pilot program to assist schools experiencing significant bullying incidents. Education.

---

---

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3853 OF 2023-2024.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act relative to the enforcement of anti-bullying policies in our schools.

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

1           SECTION 1. Subsection (b) of section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as  
2 appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the second paragraph  
3 and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

4           Retaliation against a person who: (i) reports any instance of bullying, (ii) provides  
5 information during an investigation of bullying, (iii) witnesses or has reliable information about  
6 bullying or (iv) provides bullying incident data in a quarterly report to the department under  
7 subsection (k) shall be prohibited.

8 SECTION 2. Paragraph (2) of subsection (d) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so  
9 appearing, is hereby amended by striking out clause (x) and inserting in place thereof the  
10 following clause:-

11 (x) mandatory counseling to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims.

12 SECTION 3. Said subsection (d) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing,  
13 is hereby further amended by striking out the (5) paragraph and inserting in place thereof the  
14 following paragraph:-

15 (5) The plan shall include provisions for informing parents and guardians about the  
16 bullying prevention curriculum of the school district or school and shall include, but not be  
17 limited to: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the  
18 school district or school plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; (iii) online safety and cyber-  
19 bullying; and (iv) how parents and guardians can report instances of bullying to the school.

20 SECTION 4. Said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby further  
21 amended by striking out subsection (f) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

22 (f) Each school principal or the person who holds a comparable position shall be  
23 responsible for: (i) the implementation and oversight of the plan at their school; and (ii) filing the  
24 bullying incident data quarterly report, under subsection (k), to the department.

25 SECTION 5. Subsection (g) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is  
26 hereby amended by inserting after the word “investigation” in line 221, the following words:-  
27 and report the instance of bullying or retaliation in the quarterly report to the department under  
28 subsection (k).

29 SECTION 6. Clause (ii) of said subsection (g) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as  
30 so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “action” in line 225, the following  
31 words:- and report in the quarterly report to the department under subsection (k).

32 SECTION 7. Subsection (h) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is  
33 hereby amended by inserting after the word “action” in line 239, the following words:- and  
34 report the instance of bullying or retaliation in the quarterly report to the department under  
35 subsection (k).

36 SECTION 8. Subsection (k) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is  
37 hereby amended by striking out, in line 267, the word “annually” and inserting in place thereof  
38 the following word:- quarterly.

39 SECTION 9. Said subsection (k) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing,  
40 is hereby further amended by striking out, in line 270, the word “substantiated” and inserting in  
41 place thereof the following word:- any.

42 SECTION 10. Said subsection (k) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing,  
43 is hereby further amended by inserting after the word “reported” in line 273, the following  
44 words:- by the school principal or the person who holds a comparable position,

45 SECTION 11. Said subsection (k) of said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing,  
46 is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 280 and 282, the word “annual” and inserting  
47 in place thereof, in each instance, the following word:- quarterly.

48 SECTION 12. Said section 37O of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby further  
49 amended by adding the following subsection:-

50           (o) The department shall establish an anti-bullying officer pilot program to help schools  
51 experiencing significant bullying incidents. The program shall assess bullying in schools based  
52 on the quarterly reporting of bullying incident data required under subsection (k) and assign anti-  
53 bullying officers to the 5 schools experiencing the most incidents of bullying, based on the  
54 quarterly reporting, to help with the schools significant bullying problems. Anti-bullying officers  
55 duties at the school they are assigned to shall include, but not be limited to: responding,  
56 investigating and reporting incidents of bullying at the school.