SENATE DOCKET, NO. 779 FILED ON: 1/14/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 458

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

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 expanding high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
John C. Velis	*Hampden and Hampshire*	
Kelly W. Pease	*4th Hampden*	*3/21/2025*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 458

By Mr. Velis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 458) of John C. Velis for legislation to expand high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *361* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act expanding high school student access to earn industry recognized credentials.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 69 of the General laws, as appearing in the 2022 official edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 37.

Section 1. (a) As used in this section, "Executive Office" shall mean the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

(b) As used in this section, "Department" shall mean the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(c) As used in this section, “employment value” is an assessment of the value of a particular occupation based on the entry wage, growth rate in employment for such occupation, and average annual openings for such occupation.

Section 2. (a) The Executive Office shall provide the Department annually with a list of occupations in high need of additional skilled employees that either requires an industry-recognized certification, or for which such a certification will materially enhance a job applicant’s chances for employment and/or compensation. The Executive Office shall rank the list based on employment value. The top 20% of the list shall be deemed occupations of high employment value, provided, however, that no occupation shall be included on the list if it leads to an occupation with wages less than 70% of the average annual wage in the commonwealth unless the certification for such an occupation is stackable to another industry certification and is required for the next level of occupation, which does meet the 70% wage criterion.

(b) The Department shall make the current list available to all school districts in the Commonwealth and to the public on the Department’s website.

Section 3. (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall pay each school district a certification award calculated as follows:

(i) $750 for each student in the district who earns an industry-recognized certification for an occupation that has high employment value or an industry recognized certification that is recognized by any public institution of higher learning in the commonwealth as a basis for academic credit in such institution.

(ii) $600 for each student in the district who earns an industry-recognized certification that does not meet the criteria of the previous paragraph but addresses regional demands identified by the local MassHire Workforce Board.

The school district receiving a certification award must allocate at least 80% of any certification award to the school whose students obtained the qualifying certification. The allocation may not be used to supplant funds otherwise provided for the basic operation of the school. The school receiving a certification award must use the award to support or maintain the program, including the payment of stipends for instructors and the subsidization of fees for low-income students to obtain the certification.

(b) Subject to appropriation, the Department may pay a certification development award to a school district to support the development of programs to assist students in obtaining industry-recognized certifications described in subsection 3(a)(i). School districts may use a certification development award to develop instructors able to prepare students to obtain certification, to obtain equipment and other instructional materials to be used for such preparation, or any other purpose directly related to developing programs to assist students in obtaining a qualifying certification.

Section 4. The Department shall each year prepare an annual report on the progress made under this section including:

(a) The number of public school students who are seeking certifications for high demand occupations, identifying the number of such students who are low-income, ELL and/or SPED.

(b) The certifications earned by such students, including the number of each such certifications earned.

(c) An analysis of the extent, if any, to which the funding provided for the program during the year was insufficient to make the awards under section 3.