

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

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Joanne M. Comerford***

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*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 strengthening transitional planning and increasing accountability for persons with disabilities and their families.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Joanne M. Comerford*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*

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

[Pin Slip]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act strengthening transitional planning and increasing accountability for persons with disabilities and their families.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 12C of chapter 71B, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is  
2 hereby amended by striking out, in line 74, the word “six” and inserting in place thereof the  
3 following figure:- 12

4 SECTION 2. Said section 12C of said chapter 71B, as so appearing, is hereby further  
5 amended by adding the following paragraph:-

6 The chair of the transitional advisory committee, in consultation with the members of  
7 said committee, shall submit an annual report to the house and senate committees on ways and  
8 means, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the clerks of  
9 the house and senate with the following aggregated data broken down by county:

10 (i) the number of disabled persons who have been receiving special education services  
11 under the provisions of this chapter who are anticipated to turn 22 or graduate from high school,

12 whichever occurs first, for each of the following 2 years and who are anticipated to require  
13 habilitative services in Massachusetts;

14 (ii) the number of such disabled persons who are anticipated to turn 22 for each of the  
15 following 2 years or graduate from high school, whichever occurs first, and who are anticipated  
16 to require residential placement through the department of developmental services; and

17 (iii) the number of such disabled persons who are anticipated to turn 22 or graduate from  
18 high school, whichever occurs first, for each of the following 2 years and who are anticipated to  
19 require services from one or more member agencies of the transitional advisory committee,  
20 further broken down by said member agencies.

21 SECTION 3. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there is  
22 hereby established a special commission to review current practices and gaps in services and  
23 prepare a comprehensive plan to address the complex and growing number and needs of disabled  
24 persons whose entitlement to services under special education programs has terminated or will  
25 terminate as a result of such person's graduation from high school or attainment of age 22,  
26 hereafter referred to as transition age youth, and to improve transition planning and outcomes for  
27 transition age youth and their families or guardians. The commission shall consist of: the  
28 secretary of health and human services, or a designee, and 1 representative of the transitional  
29 advisory committee within the bureau of transitional planning, who shall serve as co-chairs; 1  
30 member who shall be a member of the senate to be appointed by the senate president; 1 member  
31 who shall be a member of the house of representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the  
32 house of representatives; 1 member to be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 1  
33 member to be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; the chairs of the

34 joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities; the secretary of the executive  
35 office of education, or a designee; 1 member representing a program that serves transition age  
36 youth; 1 member representing The Arc of Massachusetts; and 1 member who is a transition age  
37 youth or their family member.

38 (b) The plan shall include, but not be limited to, strategies and solutions for: (i) ensuring  
39 more frequent and transparent agency communication with transition age youth and the families  
40 and guardians of transition age youth; (ii) increasing awareness of programs and services  
41 available both during the transition process and after the transition to adult service; (iii)  
42 enhancing the turning 22 service coordinator program within the department of developmental  
43 services to ensure that plans reflect the desires and needs of transition age youth and their  
44 families or guardians; (iv) improving the referral program established through chapter 688 of the  
45 acts of 1983 to increase transparency, advance planning and communication between all  
46 involved parties; (v) facilitating better information sharing between members of the bureau of  
47 transitional planning with the goal of better serving transition age youth and their families or  
48 guardians prior to, during and after their transition to adult services; (vi) limiting or eliminating  
49 the number of transition age youth who do not have a residential placement, if required by their  
50 transition plan, identified at least 6 months before their transition to adult services and ensuring  
51 that, when possible, if a residential placement is not immediately available at transition age, the  
52 transition age youth can remain in their current placement until a suitable alternative is secured;  
53 (vii) increasing options and opportunities for transition age youth in the adult residential system  
54 and their families or guardians to live reasonably near one another, provided that the transition  
55 age youth and the youth's family members or guardians want to live near each other; (viii)  
56 addressing any unique transition challenges for transition age youth who are leaving the care of

57 the department of children and families; (ix) promoting, when possible, geographic equity in  
58 services provided across the commonwealth including, but not limited to, habilitative services,  
59 residential living opportunities, employment and day program supports and family support; and  
60 (x) creating regular review processes within the members of the bureau of transitional planning  
61 regarding the efficacy and results of any transition age services provided by those same member  
62 organizations.

63 (c) The executive office of health and human services shall submit a copy of the plan,  
64 including any budgetary or statutory needs, to the executive office of labor and workforce  
65 development, the executive office of education, the clerks of the house and senate, the house and  
66 senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education and the joint committee  
67 on children, families and persons with disabilities not later than 1 year after the effective date of  
68 this act.