

SENATE No.

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:

John C. Velis

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Hampden and Hampshire

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

[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:

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

3 Section 37.

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

6 (b) As used in this section, “Department” shall mean the Department of Elementary and
7 Secondary Education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 The school district receiving a certification award must allocate at least 80% of any
32 certification award to the school whose students obtained the qualifying certification. The

33 allocation may not be used to supplant funds otherwise provided for the basic operation of the
34 school. The school receiving a certification award must use the award to support or maintain the
35 program, including the payment of stipends for instructors and the subsidization of fees for low-
36 income students to obtain the certification.

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

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

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

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

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