

SENATE No. 66

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Karen E. Spilka

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 regarding families and children engaged in services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Karen E. Spilka</i>	
<i>Paul J. Donato</i>	<i>35th Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Mark C. Montigny</i>	
<i>Susan C. Fargo</i>	
<i>Jennifer L. Flanagan</i>	
<i>Carolyn C. Dykema</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Chris Walsh</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>
<i>David B. Sullivan</i>	<i>6th Bristol</i>

SENATE No. 66

By Ms. Spilka, petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 66) of Karen E. Spilka, Paul J. Donato, James B. Eldridge, Patricia D. Jehlen and other members of the General Court for legislation regarding families and children engaged in services [Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities].

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2329 OF 2009-2010.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
In the Year Two Thousand Eleven
—————

An Act regarding families and children engaged in services.

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

1 AN ACT REGARDING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN ENGAGED IN SERVICES

2 SECTION 1.

3 Whereas families in the Commonwealth whose children are truant, runaway or
4 acting in a fashion that interferes with their parent’s ability to adequately care for and protect
5 said children are families in crisis and often require the assistance of government agencies,
6 including schools, human service agencies and the courts, as well as non-governmental service
7 providers; and;

8 Whereas the issues facing said children and families are complex and the
9 services which would best assist such families are not always available from a single agency or
10 department of the Commonwealth; and

11 Whereas the collaboration among multiple public and private agencies and
12 offices is required to ensure that all children and families receive the services they need to
13 succeed; and

14 Whereas services are not consistently available in all communities;

15 Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to develop a flexible, consistent,
16 and accountable system of community based programs to assist said children and families.

17 SECTION 2. The General Laws as appearing in the 2008 Official Edition are
18 hereby amended by adding after section 16S of chapter 6A the following new section:

19 Section 16T. Community based services for families and children

20 Intent

21 (a) It is the intent of the General Court to create an accountable, community-based
22 services network that provides consistent services throughout the Commonwealth to address the
23 needs of children requiring assistance and their families by providing them with an array of
24 resources. The goal of said system is to preserve and strengthen families while ensuring the
25 healthy behavioral, social and educational development of the child and to provide opportunities
26 to divert children from the juvenile justice and child protection systems. These services shall
27 focus on creating a stable environment and strengthening the family as a whole while

28 emphasizing parental responsibility. These services shall also focus on assisting children who are
29 at risk of dropping out of school.

30 Said community-based services network shall consist of a network of public and private
31 providers that will provide service coordination, referrals and services in the community as a
32 timely response to children and families requiring assistance. The system shall include a
33 mechanism for the collection and analysis of information which will enable the Commonwealth
34 to evaluate the effectiveness of the network and to identify gaps in services. It is the intent of the
35 General Court to reserve judicial intervention for those children and families who require
36 services not available through the community based services network in order to stabilize the
37 child and family and to achieve resolution of the crisis.

38 Nothing in this act is intended to diminish or interfere with the responsibility of the
39 commonwealth or municipalities to provide educational services as required by state and federal
40 law. The creation of said community based service network is subject to appropriation and
41 services provided shall be limited by the availability of funds and third party reimbursement.

42 Definitions

43 (b) For the purpose of this Section the following words shall have the following
44 meanings:

45 “Child requiring assistance”, a child between the ages of 6 and 18 who (a) repeatedly
46 runs away from the home of his parents, legal guardian, or custodian; (b) repeatedly fails to obey
47 the lawful and reasonable commands of his parents, legal guardian, or custodian, thereby
48 interfering with said parent’s, legal guardian’s, or custodian’s ability to adequately care for and

49 protect said child; (c) repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school;
50 or (d) who is habitually truant;

51 “Community-based services”, services, including coordination of services, that are
52 designed to assist families with children requiring assistance so that, where appropriate, such
53 children will be able to: (a) continue residing with their families in their home communities; (b)
54 continue as students in their community schools; and (c) enjoy strengthened relationships with
55 their families.

56 “Community Service Agency”, a community-based organization providing services
57 under contract with the Commonwealth, whose function is to facilitate access to and ensure
58 coordination of services for families with children with serious emotional disturbance who
59 require or are already utilizing multiple services, or are involved with multiple child-serving
60 systems including, but not limited to, the juvenile justice system, department of mental health,
61 and special education, as agreed upon under the settlement dated August 29, 2006 entered into
62 by the parties of Rosie D. et al v. Romney civil action No. 01-30199-MAP filed in the United
63 States District Court.

64 “Family with children requiring assistance”, the parents, guardians, custodian, siblings,
65 and any other relatives or caretakers who are responsible for a child requiring assistance.

66 “Habitually truant”, a school-aged child not otherwise excused from attendance in
67 accordance with the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school who fails to attend school
68 for more than 8 school days in a quarter;

69 “Secretary”, the secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

70 Creation of the CBS network

71 (c) Subject to appropriation or third party reimbursement, the secretary shall:

72 (1) establish a network of child and family service programs
73 throughout the Commonwealth to provide community-based services to families with children
74 requiring assistance. The network of community-based services programs shall assist families
75 so that whenever possible children will be able to continue residing with their families in their
76 home communities; assist families to enable children to continue as students in their community
77 schools; strengthen the relationships between children and families; and provide coordinated,
78 comprehensive, community-based services for children at risk of dropping out of school,
79 delinquency, or engaging in behaviors which impede the likelihood of their leading healthy,
80 productive lives. (48 months)

81 (2) develop guidelines and standards necessary to achieve and
82 maintain on a statewide basis a comprehensive and integrated network of community based
83 services for children and families. (Immediately)

84 (3) seek to promote efficiency and access to existing services in
85 establishing the network by including: organizations that are part of the comprehensive
86 community-based behavioral health delivery system coordinated by the secretary under section
87 16S; that provide services or have experience in coordinating access to community-based
88 services such as Community Service Agencies (CSAs); local schools; other local public
89 agencies, private organizations, or medical or mental health care providers. (48 months)

90 (4) coordinate the purchase of services for the network which
91 may include outreach, intake, screening, assessment and referral to services. Services offered

92 through the network shall include, but are not limited to treatment for or assistance with:
93 eligibility determinations, behavioral, medical, and mental health needs, special education
94 evaluation, remedial education services, assistance with insurance issues, mentoring, family and
95 parent support, civic engagement and community service, after school and out-of-school
96 opportunities, residential programs, crisis management and case management. The secretary
97 shall encourage cooperation among local providers as needed to provide the full complement of
98 services required under this section. (48 months)

99 (5) monitor and provide technical assistance to providers of
100 community based services. (36 months – to apply to pilot)

101 (6) require the use of a standard intake screening and
102 assessment tool to evaluate all families and children seeking community based services which
103 shall identify the family’s strengths, resources and service needs such as mental health,
104 behavioral health or substance abuse treatment, basic family shelter, clothing and food needs,
105 child care needs, health insurance status, legal issues, education placement and child protection.
106 (36 months – to apply to pilot)

107 (7) create a data collection system for use by programs within
108 the community based services network which maintains the privacy of clients served, assists
109 programs and the secretary in addressing the needs of the population to be served, collects
110 information related to, among other things, the insurance status and benefit coverage of clients
111 served, income documentation as needed to apply a sliding fee scale for payment or waiver of
112 payment for services, and other information that may assist the program and the secretary in

113 providing services, identifying service needs and gaps, and evaluating the effectiveness of
114 community-based services.(36 months- to apply to pilot)

115 Confidentiality

116 (d) Any documentation of services provided to the family and child through the
117 network of community based services shall not be public records. Except as otherwise required
118 by law, including laws related to the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect under section 51A
119 of chapter 119, statements made by the family and child while receiving services from the
120 network of community based services shall be treated as confidential and may not be used in
121 school disciplinary proceedings without the written consent of the person making the statement.
122 Information about the child and family requiring assistance, including interactions with service
123 providers and protected health information services, may be shared among providers of
124 community services providing such services to the child and family as well as with any agency
125 within the executive office of health and human services providing services to the child as
126 needed to coordinate treatment and provide appropriate case management. Notwithstanding any
127 general or special law to the contrary, information about the child and family, including
128 interactions with service providers and protected health information services, may be shared
129 among members of the case team as needed to coordinate treatment and provide appropriate case
130 management, to the extent permitted under applicable federal law, unless the child or family
131 decline in writing to permit such information sharing.

132 Voluntary nature of services

133 (e) Participation in community based services shall be pursuant to a voluntary
134 agreement of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian and the child; provided however that

135 provision of community based services shall be contingent upon parents, legal guardians and
136 custodians granting consent to allow covered services to be billed to the insurance providers.

137 School referrals during expulsion process

138 (f) Except as provided herein, a school administrator shall refer a child to
139 community-based services at the same time that the administrator notifies the student and his
140 parent, legal guardian, or custodian that the student will be expelled for failure to comply with
141 the lawful and reasonable rules of the school. After providing the process that is due the student,
142 including an expulsion hearing if requested under section 37H of chapter 71, the school
143 administrator shall consider the outcome of the community-based services if the student provides
144 that information to the school. When a school administrator refers a child for habitually truant
145 behavior, it must be shown that the school, child, and family have completed a department of
146 education certified truancy program, if such a program is available at the school. Whenever a
147 child or family seeks assistance from a community-based service network program for habitually
148 truant behavior, the program staff shall assist the family in gaining access to the child's school's
149 certified truancy program.

150 DESE certified truancy prevention program

151 SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official
152 Edition, is hereby amended by adding after section 1N the following new section:-

153 Section 10. The department of elementary and secondary education shall
154 promulgate regulations establishing a truancy prevention program certification process. The
155 regulations shall be consistent with the schools and behavioral health framework developed by
156 the department under section 19 of chapter 321 of the acts of 2008 and shall include

157 requirements that the truancy prevention program evaluate the level of out-of-school support for
158 students and families, and address the conditions that may make students more likely to become
159 truant, including previously unidentified special needs, bullying and harassment. School districts
160 shall establish a truancy prevention program which meets the requirements for certification by
161 the department.

162 Chapter 119 definitions

163 SECTION 4. Section 21 of Chapter 119 of the General Laws, as appearing in
164 the 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking lines 8 to 16 and inserting in place
165 thereof the following:-

166 “Child requiring assistance”, a child between the ages of 6 and 18 who (a) repeatedly
167 runs away from the home of his parents or legal guardian; (b) repeatedly fails to obey the lawful
168 and reasonable commands of his parents or legal guardian, thereby interfering with said parent’s
169 or legal guardian’s ability to adequately care for and protect said child; (c) repeatedly fails to
170 obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school; (d) who is a habitual truant;

171 SECTION 5. Section 21 of Chapter 119 of the General Law, as appearing in the
172 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following definitions:

173 “Family requiring assistance”, the parents, guardians, siblings and any other relatives or
174 caretakers responsible for a school aged child who needs assistance.;

175 “Habitual truant”, a school-aged child, not otherwise excused from attendance in
176 accordance with the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school, who willfully fails to attend
177 school for more than 8 school days in a quarter;

178 SECTION 6. Section 21 of Chapter 119 of the General Laws, as appearing in
179 the 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended at line 54 by inserting at the end thereof the
180 following sentence:

181 For purposes of sections 39L through 39Y exclusive the word “Parent”, includes a legal
182 guardian or other person legally responsible for a child’s care.

183 Court Process

184 SECTION 7. Chapter 119 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out
185 sections 39E to 39J, inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the following new sections:

186 Section 39K. Jurisdiction

187 The Juvenile court department has original and exclusive jurisdiction over any
188 proceeding commenced under section 39M alleging that a family or child requires assistance.
189 The jurisdiction of the Boston juvenile court for the subject matter of this section shall extend to
190 the territorial limits of Suffolk County.

191 Section 39L. Nature of the Proceedings

192 (a) Proceedings pursuant to sections 39K to 39Y, inclusive, shall not be deemed criminal
193 proceedings and any record of these proceedings, including the filing of a request for assistance
194 and creation of a docket, shall not be entered in the criminal offender record information system.

195 (b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, no record pertaining to the
196 child involved in the proceedings shall be maintained or remain active after the request for
197 assistance is dismissed. The identity and record of any child for which a request for assistance is

198 filed shall not be submitted to the criminal history systems board, criminal offender record
199 information system, court activity record index or any other criminal record information system.

200 (c) Proceedings pursuant to sections 39K to 39Y, inclusive, shall be
201 confidential and not be open to the public.

202 Section 39M. Request for Assistance

203 (a) A proceeding to determine whether or not a child or family requires assistance is
204 originated by the filing of a request for assistance, stating the petitioner's information and belief :

205 (1) that the child repeatedly runs away from the home of his parents
206 or legal guardian or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of his parents
207 thereby resulting in said parent's inability to adequately care for and protect said child, or that
208 the child is habitually truant or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of
209 his school;

210 (2) that the child was under the age of 18 at the time the specified
211 acts took place;

212 (3) specific acts on which the request for assistance is based and the
213 time and place they are believed to have occurred;

214 (4) that the child and family require assistance;

215 (5) when the petitioner is a school district, the request for assistance
216 shall additionally include the following:

217 (i) if the request for assistance states that a child is
218 habitually truant, a statement of the actions taken by the school district to comply with its
219 obligations under its truancy prevention program certified pursuant to section 10 of chapter 69
220 and to improve the school attendance of the child. The request for assistance shall also state
221 whether or not the child and his family have participated in the truancy prevention program; and

222 (ii) if the request for assistance states that a child has
223 repeatedly failed to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of the school, a statement of the
224 specific steps taken by the school to improve the child's conduct;

225 (6) when the petitioner is a parent, the request for assistance shall
226 additionally include documentation that the family was informed of and referred to a
227 community-based services program under section 16T of chapter 6A.

228 (b) The following persons may originate a proceeding under this section:

229 (1) a police officer, but only if the request states that the child
230 repeatedly runs away from the home of his parents, legal guardian, or custodian;

231 (2) a parent;

232 (3) a school district, but only if the request states that the child is
233 habitually truant or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school;

234 (c) (1) When a request for assistance is presented to the clerk for filing by a parent
235 or a police officer, the clerk shall determine whether or not the child and family named in the
236 petition have received services from a community service program created under section 16T of
237 chapter 6A. If the child and family have participated in such services, the clerk shall attach to

260 how to proceed to obtain assistance for the child. After considering such advice the clerk may
261 accept the request for assistance for filing.

262 Section 39N. Notice

263 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), upon the filing of a request for assistance
264 pursuant to this section, the court shall cause a copy of the request for assistance and a summons
265 to be issued, requiring the child and each parent, to appear at the court at a time and place named
266 to address the request for assistance. Where the safety and wellbeing of the child or other parent
267 is in danger, only the primary custodial parent shall be required to appear.

268 (b) In proceedings commenced by a parent, the court shall, at the time the request is filed,
269 notify the parent in writing of the time and place that the request for assistance will be heard to
270 ensure the parent has a copy of the request for assistance. The court is not required to issue a
271 summons to either parent in such a case if the parents are living together. If the parents are not
272 living together, the court shall cause a copy of the request for assistance and a summons to be
273 issued, requiring the child and the parent who did not initiate the request for assistance to appear
274 to address the request for assistance at the court at a time and place named, except in cases where
275 the safety and wellbeing of the child or other parent is in danger, then only the primary custodial
276 parent shall attend.

277 (c) A copy of the request for assistance served or provided under subsection (a) or (b)
278 shall be accompanied by a notice that, in the event that the court deems it necessary to place the
279 child in the care and custody of the department of children and families, said parent may be
280 named as a respondent in any child support proceeding brought in connection with the child's
281 care.

282 (d) Unless service of the summons required by this section is waived in writing, such
283 summons shall be served by a constable or police officer, either by delivering it personally to the
284 person to whom addressed, or by leaving it with a person of proper age to receive the same, at
285 the place of residence or business of such person, and said constable or police officer shall
286 immediately make return to the court of the time and manner of service.

287 Section 39O. Determination of probable cause that a child and family require
288 assistance; Expungement.

289 Whenever a request for assistance is filed, the clerk, or a judge if the clerk is
290 not available, shall hold a hearing as soon as possible, but not later than 15 days after the creation
291 of a docket. At that hearing the clerk, or a judge if the clerk is not available, shall receive the
292 recommendation of the probation officer and receive evidence from the petitioner and the child.
293 The clerk, or the judge shall determine (i) whether or not there is probable cause for a
294 determination that a child and family are in need of assistance and (ii) whether it is in the best
295 interest of the child for the matter to proceed to a fact finding hearing. The clerk or judge shall
296 then either i) dismiss the request for assistance, or (ii) create a docket for the matter, unless a
297 docket has already been created under section 39M(b), and refer the child and family to a
298 probation officer for the preliminary inquiry under section 39R. When a request for assistance is
299 dismissed under this section, the court shall enter an order directing the expungement of any
300 records of the claimant maintained by the clerk, the court, the criminal history systems board,
301 the court activity record index, and the probation department that directly pertain to the this
302 request for assistance.

303 Section 39P. Scheduling the Fact Finding Hearing

304 At the conclusion of the probable cause hearing required by section 39O, the
305 clerk shall set a date for a fact finding hearing no more than 90 days from the date the request for
306 assistance was filed. If at any time prior to the fact finding hearing the parents, child, petitioner
307 and probation officer agree, the fact finding hearing may be postponed for an additional 90 days
308 after the expiration of the initial 90 day period.

309 Section 39Q. Appointment of Counsel

310 (a) When the request for assistance is filed the child shall be informed that he has a right
311 to counsel at all hearings. At the time the request for assistance is filed, that court shall ensure
312 that if said child is not able to retain counsel, the court shall at that time appoint counsel for said
313 child. The clerk shall cause a copy of the request for assistance and notice of the time and place
314 of the fact finding hearing to be delivered to counsel at the time of appointment.

315 (b) When the request for assistance is filed, each parent or legal guardian of the child
316 shall be informed that he has the right to participate as a party in any proceeding under sections
317 39K to 39Y involving his child and that he has the right to counsel at any hearing or proceeding
318 regarding custody of his child. If said parent or legal guardian is financially unable to retain
319 counsel, the court shall appoint counsel for said parent or legal guardian.

320 (c) The court shall determine whether the parent or legal guardian of a child alleged to
321 require assistance is indigent. If the court determines that the parent or legal guardian is not
322 indigent, the court shall assess up to a \$1000 fee against the parent or legal guardian to pay for
323 the cost of counsel appointed for the child. If the parent or legal guardian is determined to be
324 indigent but is still able to contribute toward the payment of some of said costs, the court shall

325 order the parent or legal guardian to pay a reasonable amount toward the cost of counsel
326 appointed for the child.

327 Section 39R. Preliminary Inquiry by Probation

328 (a) When requested by the court or a clerk, the chief probation officer or his designee
329 shall conduct a preliminary inquiry to determine whether in his opinion the best interests of the
330 child and family require that crisis intervention services be provided to the child and family.

331 The probation officer in his discretion may:

332 (1) refer the family and child to a community-based services program
333 in the community where the child resides;

334 (2) confer with the provider of community-based services;

335 (3) refer the child to an appropriate public or private organization or
336 person for psychiatric, psychological, educational, occupational, medical, dental or social
337 services;

338 (4) conduct conferences with the child, the child's family and the
339 petitioner for the purpose of effecting adjustments or agreements which are calculated to resolve
340 the situation which formed the basis of the request for assistance. Information obtained by the
341 probation officer may be used in the present proceeding but it is otherwise confidential and may
342 not be used in school disciplinary proceedings or other court proceedings.

343 (b) If the child or his parents fail to participate in good faith with the referrals
344 or conferences arranged by the probation officer or if the probation officer is not able to refer the
345 child or his parents to an appropriate public or private organization which is willing and able to

346 provide appropriate services, the probation officer shall so certify in writing and present these
347 findings to the court.

348 (c) (1) The commissioner of probation shall establish a system to collect data on
349 all requests for assistance made and how they are resolved under sections 39K through 39Y.
350 Said system shall maintain the privacy of clients served, assist the court in addressing the needs
351 of the population to be served and collect information related to: the racial and ethnic identity of
352 the child; the insurance status and coverage of clients served; the length of time a child is
353 receiving assistance from a probation officer; the identity of any public or private organization to
354 whom a probation officer has referred a child or family for services; and any other information
355 that may assist the commissioner and the court in evaluating the availability and effectiveness of
356 services for children who are the subjects of requests for assistance pursuant to this section.

357 (2) The probation officer shall gather information concerning each
358 child and family referred to the officer which in both substance and format is compatible with
359 and complementary to the information gathered by programs providing community-based
360 services pursuant to section 16T of chapter 6A, including but not limited to the insurance status
361 and coverage and other information that may assist the commissioner of probation and the court
362 in evaluating the availability and effectiveness of services for children who are the subjects of
363 requests for assistance pursuant to this section.

364 (3) The commissioner of probation shall report annually to the child
365 advocate, the Families and Children Engaged in Services advisory board, the house and senate
366 committees on ways and means, joint committee on children, families and persons with
367 disabilities and the joint committee on the judiciary on the assistance provided by probation

368 officers to children and families under Sections 39K to 39Y. The report shall be filed on October
369 1 of each year and shall include for each juvenile court district: the number of children and
370 families receiving assistance; their racial and ethnic identity, as identified by the child and family
371 members; an analysis of the services provided and an identification of gaps in services available;
372 the status or resolution of each request for assistance filed in the previous year; and the numbers
373 of children who are the subject of a request for assistance and also charged with a delinquency
374 matter in the previous year. The report shall exclude information that identifies or allows others
375 to identify any child or family who is the subject of a request for assistance.

376 Section 39S. Custody, Failure to Appear

377 If, after a hearing at which the child and his parent is represented by counsel,
378 the court finds that a child alleged to require assistance by reason of repeatedly running away
379 from the home of his parents or legal guardian or repeatedly failing to obey the lawful and
380 reasonable commands of his parent, is likely not to appear at the fact finding hearing or at the
381 disposition hearing, the court may order the child to be released upon such terms and conditions
382 as it determines to be reasonable or may place the child in the temporary custody of the
383 department of children and families. Prior to the court granting temporary custody to the
384 department of children and families, the court must make a written certification and
385 determination that it is contrary to the welfare of the child to be in his home, and that the
386 department of children and families has made reasonable efforts to prevent removal of the child
387 from his home or the existing circumstances indicate that there is an immediate risk of harm or
388 neglect which precludes the provision of the preventative services as an alternative to removal.

389 An order placing a child with the department under this section shall be valid
390 for no more than 15 days, upon which the child and his parents, both represented by counsel,
391 must be brought again before the court for a hearing on whether the order should be continued
392 for another 15 day period. If the court decides to extend the order, it shall note in writing the
393 detailed reasons for its decision. Orders under this section may be in effect for no more than 45
394 days total.

395 A child who is the subject of a request for assistance may not be confined in
396 shackles or similar restraints or in a court lockup facility in connection with any proceedings
397 pursuant to Sections 39K through 39Y.

398 Section 39T. Withdrawal of Request for Assistance

399 The petitioner may, withdraw the request for assistance at any time prior to a
400 hearing to determine the disposition of a request for assistance. A probation officer may at any
401 time recommend to the court that the request for assistance be dismissed upon a showing that
402 dismissal is in the best interests of the child.

403 Section 39U. Fact Finding Hearing

404 (a) The court shall hold a fact finding hearing in which it shall receive evidence from the
405 petitioner, the parent, the child, a representative from the community-based services program, if
406 involved with the family, and the probation officer. At any hearing held to determine whether a
407 child and family require assistance, the child and his attorney shall be present and the parents or
408 legal guardian shall be given an opportunity to be heard. The petitioner who files the request for
409 assistance shall bear the burden of presenting evidence proving that the child and family require
410 assistance.

411 (b) Following a fact finding hearing the court shall either:

412 (1) dismiss the request for assistance because the circumstances
413 which led to the filing of a request for assistance have been resolved or the court finds that the
414 child and family will not benefit from the assistance being offered;

415 (2) adjourn the hearing for up to 60 days because it finds that the
416 interests of the child would best be served by continued informal assistance, in which case the
417 court shall, with the consent of the child and his parent, refer the child to a probation officer or
418 refer the child and family to the designated community-based services program for additional
419 community-based assistance; or

420 (3) If the court finds the allegations in the request for assistance have
421 been proved at the fact finding hearing beyond a reasonable doubt, it may find that the child and
422 family named in such request for assistance to be a child and family requiring assistance and
423 schedule a hearing for disposition.

424 (c). No statements made by a child, family member, or by any other person during the
425 period of inquiries, conferences, or referrals may be admitted at any hearing without the consent
426 of the child or the family member who made the statement.

427 Section 39V. Disposition Conference and Hearing

428 (a). Upon making a finding that a child requires assistance after a fact finding hearing, the
429 court shall convene a conference of the probation officer who conducted the preliminary inquiry,
430 a representative from the community-based services program, if involved with the family, the
431 petitioner, a representative from the child's school, the child's parent and his attorney, the child

432 and his attorney, a representative of the department of children and families, if involved with the
433 family, and any other person who may be helpful in determining the most effective assistance
434 available to be offered to the child and family. The probation officer shall present written
435 recommendations and other persons at the conference may present written recommendations to
436 the court to advise the court on appropriate treatment and services for the child and family,
437 appropriate placement for the child, and appropriate conditions and limitations of such
438 placement.

439 At the conference and subsequent hearing on disposition, the child and his attorney shall
440 be present and the parents or legal guardian and the petitioner shall be given an opportunity to be
441 heard. The court may receive evidence as to the best disposition from all persons who
442 participate in the conference and any other person who may be helpful in determining an
443 appropriate disposition.

444 (b). The court shall then conduct a dispositional hearing. The court, taking into
445 consideration the evidence admitted at the hearing, the report of the probation officer, and the
446 physical and emotional welfare of the child, may make any of the following orders of
447 disposition:

448 (1) subject to any conditions and limitations the court may prescribe,
449 including: provisions for medical, psychological, psychiatric, educational, occupational and
450 social services; and for supervision by a court clinic or by any public or private organization
451 providing counseling or guidance; and for any other services deemed appropriate by the court,
452 permit the child to remain with his parents;

453 (2) subject to such conditions and limitations as the court may
454 prescribe, including, but not limited to provisions for services deemed appropriate by the court,
455 including but not limited to services described in clause (1), place the child in the care of any of
456 the following:

457 (i) a relative, or other adult individual who, after inquiry by
458 the probation officer or other person or agency designated by the court, is found to be qualified
459 to receive and care for the child; or

460 (ii) a private charitable or childcare agency or other private
461 organization, licensed or otherwise authorized by law to receive and provide care for such
462 children;

463 (3) subject to the provisions of sections 32 and 33 and with such
464 conditions and limitations as the court may recommend, place the child in the custody of the
465 department of children and families. If the court chooses to place the child in the custody of the
466 department then at the same time, the court shall consider the provisions of section 29C and shall
467 make the written certification and determinations required by said section 29C. When the court
468 has placed a child in the custody of the department, then the department:

469 (i) may not refuse out-of-home placement of a child if
470 the placement is recommended by the court provided that the court has made the written
471 certification and determinations required by said section 29C;

472 (ii) may not refuse out of home placement when
473 requested by the child if there is a substantiated history of abuse or neglect in the home by the
474 parent or legal guardian or any other person living in the home;

475 (iii) subject to clauses (i) and (ii), shall direct the type
476 and length of such out-of-home placement;

477 (iv) subject to clauses (i) and (ii), shall give due
478 consideration to the recommendations of the court. Whenever the department decides not to
479 carry out the recommendations of the court regarding placement and treatment of the child it
480 shall present the reasons for its decision and the alternative plan for treatment and placement in
481 writing to the court.

482 (4) The court may issue an order directing any state agency to
483 provide particular services to the family and child including but not limited to those services
484 described in clause (b)(1). If the agency is not able to comply with the order directing services
485 then the agency shall provide to the court a written statement of the reasons why it is unable to
486 provide those services. A copy of the statement shall be sent to the house and senate committees
487 on ways and means and the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities
488 and the office of the child advocate.

489 (5) Where the family or child are directed by the court to participate
490 in treatment or services which are eligible for coverage by an insurance plan under section 22 of
491 chapter 32A, section 10F of chapter 118E, section 47B of chapter 175, section 8A of chapter
492 176A, or section 4A of chapter Ch.176B Sec.4A, payment for such services shall not be denied if
493 the treatment or services otherwise meet the criteria for health plan coverage.

494 Section 39W. Prohibition on placements with the department of youth services
495 or in locked facilities

496 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b)2(ii) of section 39V, the court may
497 not order the child to be placed in the custody of the department of youth services.

498 (b) A child found to require assistance shall not be placed in a locked facility or any
499 facility designated or operated for juveniles who are alleged to be delinquent or who have been
500 adjudicated delinquent. However, such child may be placed in a facility which operates as a
501 group home to provide therapeutic care for juveniles regardless of whether juveniles adjudicated
502 delinquent are also provided care in such facility.

503 Section 39X. Duration of Assistance

504 (a) Any order of disposition under Section 39V shall continue in force for not more than
505 120 days; provided, however, that the court which entered the order may, after a hearing, extend
506 its duration for up to three additional periods, each such period not to exceed 90 days, if the court
507 finds that the purposes of the order have not been accomplished and that such extension would
508 be reasonably likely to further those purposes. The child shall have the opportunity to present
509 evidence and rebut evidence presented at any extension hearing.

510 (b) No order shall continue in effect after the nineteenth birthday of a child named in a
511 request for assistance.

512 Section 39Y. Custodial Protection

513 (a) (1) A child may be taken into custodial protection for engaging in the
514 behaviors described in section 39M, only if such child has failed to obey a summons issued
515 pursuant to section 39N, or if the law enforcement officer initiating limited custody has probable

516 cause to believe that such child has run away from the home of his parents or legal guardian and
517 will not respond to a summons.

518 (2) After an officer has taken a child into custodial protection, the
519 officer shall immediately notify the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's
520 care, or the person with whom he is domiciled, that he is under the custodial protection of the
521 officer.

522 (3) After making every reasonable effort to give notice under
523 paragraph (2), the officer shall:

524 (i) release the child to the custody of his or her parent
525 or other person legally responsible for his or her care upon the written promise, without surety,
526 of the person to whose custody the child is released that he will bring the child to the court on the
527 next court date ; or

528 (ii) forthwith and with all reasonable speed take the child
529 directly, and without first being taken to the police station house, to the program designated to
530 provide community-based services for the geographic region which constitutes the district of the
531 juvenile court department within which the child was taken into custodial protection or in which
532 the child resides; or

533 (iii) release the child to a representative of the department
534 of children and families, if the law enforcement officer has reason to believe that the child is or
535 has been in the care or custody of such department; or

536 (iv) take the child directly to the juvenile court in which the
537 act occasioning the taking into custodial protection occurred, provided that the officer affirms on
538 the record that he attempted to exercise the options identified in paragraphs (i), (ii), and (iii) of
539 this subsection, was unable to exercise these options, and the reasons therefore.

540 (4) In the absence of special circumstances, the officer shall release
541 the child to his parents or other person legally responsible for his care in accordance with
542 paragraph (3)(i).

543 (5) A child may not be securely detained in a police station or town
544 lockup. At no time shall a child be held in any locked facility.

545 (6) Notwithstanding the foregoing requirements for placement, any
546 such child who has been taken into custodial protection shall, if necessary, be taken to a medical
547 facility for treatment or observation.

548 Increasing the age of mandatory school attendance

549 SECTION 8. (36 months) Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965 is hereby amended
550 by striking out, in line 3 of the first paragraph, the word “sixteen” and inserting in place thereof
551 the following word:- eighteen.

552 SECTION 9. (36 months) Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965 is hereby amended
553 by striking out, in line 4 of the second paragraph, the word “sixteen” and inserting in place
554 thereof the following word:- eighteen

555 Restorative Justice – truancy prevention pilot

556 SECTION 10. Subject to appropriation, the department of elementary and
557 secondary education shall pilot a truancy prevention program using a restorative justice format in
558 at least one urban high school in the Commonwealth. The program shall include the use of
559 healing circles which allow family, neighborhood and school community members to be present;
560 a reparative board, comprised of peers and led by an adult; family group counseling, and
561 mediation or alternative dispute resolution with the child, family members and school
562 representatives. The program shall be designed to address the underlying causes both in and out
563 of school which led to truancy. The program shall be consistent with and organized according to
564 the schools and behavioral health framework developed by the department under section 19 of
565 chapter 321 of the acts of 2008. The department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the program
566 in preventing truancy and enhancing the child's academic performance and report the results of
567 that evaluation to the board of elementary and secondary education, the house and senate
568 committees on ways and means, joint committee on education and the department of elementary
569 and secondary education and the child advocate.

570 Runaway pilot

571 SECTION 11. Subject to appropriation, the secretary of the executive office of
572 health and human services shall pilot a program to address the unique needs of girls who run
573 away from their parents and legal guardians.

574 Probation Data collection

575 SECTION 12. Within 12 months of the effective date of this act, the
576 Commissioner of Probation shall submit a report to the Child Advocate, the Families and
577 Children Engaged in Services advisory board, the house and senate committees on ways and

578 means, joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the joint
579 committee on the judiciary. The report shall include for each juvenile court district: the number
580 of children and families receiving assistance from probation officers; the racial and ethnic
581 identity of the children and families, as identified by the child and family members; an analysis
582 of the services provided and an identification of gaps in services available; the status or
583 resolution of each request for assistance filed under section 39M of chapter 119; the number of
584 children who are the subject of a request for assistance and also charged with a delinquency
585 matter in the previous year; and the custody status of the child that is subject to the request for
586 assistance, specifying if the child is in the custody of the department of children and families or
587 committed to the care of the department of youth services. The report shall exclude information
588 that identifies or allows others to identify any child or family involved in the juvenile justice
589 system.

590 Advisory board to guide implementation and monitor the new system

591 SECTION 13. (a) There shall be established within the executive office of
592 health and human services but not subject to the control of said executive office a Families and
593 Children Requiring Assistance Advisory Board, hereinafter called the advisory board. The
594 advisory board shall consist of the following members: 4 representatives of the executive office
595 of health and human services appointed by the secretary, one of whom shall be a representative
596 of the department of children and families, one of whom shall be a representative of the
597 department of youth services, one of whom shall be a representative of the department of mental
598 health, one of whom shall be a representative of the office of Medicaid; the child advocate or her
599 designee; a representative of the department of elementary and secondary education, appointed
600 by the commissioner; a juvenile court judge appointed by the chief justice of the juvenile court; a

601 probation officer assigned to a juvenile court, appointed by the commissioner of probation; 4
602 members appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be a district attorney, one of whom shall
603 be a designee of the committee for public counsel services, one of whom shall be an independent
604 education advocate, and one who is a parent and is not an employee of the commonwealth; one
605 member appointed by the Speaker of the House and one member appointed by the President of
606 the Senate.

607 The secretary of health and human services and the chief justice of the juvenile court
608 shall each designate one board members to serve as co-chairs. All appointments to the advisory
609 board shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy
610 shall be filled by the appointing authority. The chairpersons of the board shall schedule the first
611 meeting of the advisory board, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective
612 date of this section.

613 (b) The advisory board shall (1) monitor the progress being made by the
614 executive office of health and human services in developing a community based services
615 network under section 16T of chapter 6A; (2) monitor the progress being made by the probation
616 department in developing a system to collect data regarding requests for assistance made and
617 how they are resolved as required by section 39R of chapter 119; (3) monitor the effectiveness of
618 the juvenile court in providing assistance to children and families who file or are the subjects of
619 requests for assistance under sections 39K through 39Y of chapter 119; (4) provide advice with
620 respect to such implementation upon the request of the chief justice of the juvenile court, the
621 commissioner of probation, the secretary of health and human services or the general court and
622 make recommendations to the governor annually whether there are sufficient resources and

623 support to continue with the activities identified in section 16T of chapter 6A and sections 39K
624 through 39Y of chapter 119.

625 (c) The secretary of the executive office of health and human services, the
626 commissioner of department of elementary and secondary education, the commissioner of
627 probation, and the chief justice of the juvenile court shall provide to the advisory board periodic
628 data reports which include information about families and children seeking or referred for
629 assistance and services provided. Within 12 months of the effective date of this act the advisory
630 board shall submit recommendations to the governor for funding and implementation activities
631 based on the review of the data submitted.

632 (d) The Families and Children Requiring Assistance Advisory Board shall
633 annually, not later than January 30th of each year, report in writing to the governor, the child
634 advocate, the house and senate committees on ways and means, and the joint committees on
635 children and families and persons with disabilities and on the judiciary on the progress made on
636 the implementation of section 16T of chapter 6A and sections 39K through 39Y of chapter 119.
637 In each annual report the advisory board shall report its expectation of progress toward the goals
638 of section 16T of chapter 6A which will be achieved in the following year. The annual report
639 shall also contain a recommended budget for the continued implementation activities to be
640 undertaken in the following year. The board will make a final report on the implementation of
641 section 16T of chapter 6A and sections 39K through 39Y of chapter 119 together with any
642 recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes not later than January 30, 2016. The
643 report shall be public. The board shall terminate following submission of the final report.

644 Timeline

645 SECTION 14. (a) Within 24 months of the effective date of this act, the
646 secretary of the executive office of health and human services shall, with the advice of the
647 advisory board established in SECTION 13 of this act, design a model for the delivery of
648 community based services for children requiring assistance which will augment, be compatible
649 with and integrated with existing community-based service systems for children, as required by
650 SECTION 2 of this act. Said model shall include a system to gather data including:
651 demographic information, insurance status and benefit coverage of clients served, income
652 documentation as needed to apply a sliding fee scale for payment or waiver of payment for
653 services, and other information that may assist the program and the secretary in providing
654 services and evaluating the effectiveness of community based services, as required by SECTION
655 2 of this act. The model shall allow a child or family to seek assistance from a community-based
656 services agency directly and without referral. The model shall include procedures for referral to
657 other services whenever the staff of the agency offering community-based services determines
658 that a family seeking or referred for services for a child has significant and complex medical
659 needs which cannot be met by the agency or where the child's behavior presents a significant
660 risk of harm that cannot be safely managed in the community.

661 (b) The advisory board will review the model design and make
662 recommendations to the secretary for pilot programs including recommendations of whether
663 there is sufficient information, workforce, and funding available to prepare and implement a pilot
664 program.

665 (c) Subject to appropriation, within 36 months of the effective date of this act,
666 the secretary shall pilot a community based service system program in one or more geographic
667 regions of the commonwealth. The secretary, with the advice and assistance of the advisory

668 board shall analyze the effectiveness of these pilot sites in order to make necessary changes to
669 the program design in establishing network of community-based service programs throughout
670 the commonwealth.

671 (d) Subject to appropriation, within 48 months of the effective date of this act,
672 the secretary shall establish a network of child and family service programs throughout the
673 Commonwealth to provide community-based services to families with children requiring
674 assistance, as required by section 16T of Chapter 16A.