

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1952**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

***Gloria L. Fox***

*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 to establish folic acid awareness programs for young girls and women .

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Gloria L. Fox</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Linda Dorcena Forry</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>Martin J. Walsh</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Aaron Vega</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Christine E. Canavan</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1952**

By Ms. Fox of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1952) of Gloria L. Fox and others relative to establishing the folic acid awareness programs for young girls and women. Public Health.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1479 OF 2011-2012.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen**

An Act to establish folic acid awareness programs for young girls and women .

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

1 This legislation aims to build upon the work of health institutions such as Children’s  
2 Hospital Boston Center for Young Women’s Health, Fenway Health Center, and Whittier Health  
3 Center, all other centers, programs and healthcare facilities. Folic acid is a key element of  
4 healthy diets in young girls and women; its daily consumption has been linked to reducing the  
5 incidence of neural tube defects, cleft palates, congenital heart defects, prematurity, and low  
6 birth weight in newborns. It is imperative that the Commonwealth recognize the importance of  
7 folic acid in girls’ and women’s diets, and assist health institutions in continuing their health and  
8 wellness advocacy programs around its consumption. This is especially true given the high  
9 incidence of premature births and low birth weight among women of color.

10 Taking folic acid daily is recommended for all people, especially for women in their  
11 childbearing years. Folic Acid when taken before pregnancy and in the early weeks of pregnancy  
12 can reduce the risk of neural tube defects by 70%. For all women and men: In the body, folic  
13 acid:

- 14 • May prevent heart disease and certain types of cancers
- 15 • May protect against depression and decline in cognitive functioning
- 16 • Is necessary for cell division and replication

17 • Helps in the formation of mature red blood cells and prevents a type of anemia  
18 called megaloblastic anemia

19 • Helps maintain heart health by lowering levels of homocysteine, a compound  
20 known to increase risk of cardiovascular complications

21 For moms-to-be: In the body, folic acid:

22 • Helps prevent birth defects

23 • Helps reduce risk of high blood pressure in pregnancy

24 • Helps prevent low birth weight

25 • Helps reduce risk of miscarriage

26 In recognizing the importance of folic acid in the diets of women and girls, research  
27 suggest that consumption of multivitamins containing folic acid may also help prevent many of  
28 the health issues listed. We hope that by creating an awareness program in all of our areas that  
29 cover young women and women health, wellness and education of such.