

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #:	H.499
Title:	An Act establishing the Abigail Adams entrepreneurial program for women
Sponsor:	Rep. Alan Silvia
Committee:	Economic Development and Emerging Technologies
Hearing Date:	June 5, 2025
Reporting Deadline:	August 4, 2025 (subject to extensions under House Rule 27)
Prior History:	<p>2023-2024 (H.423): Reported favorably, Referred to House Ways and Means</p> <p>2021-2022 (H.533): Reported favorably, Referred to House Ways and Means</p> <p>2019-2020 (H.3755): Reported favorably, Referred to House Ways and Means</p>
Key Terms:	<p>MGL refers to the Massachusetts General Laws.</p> <p>MassTech refers to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, which is a state quasi-economic development agency that supports the growth of the state's technology sector by fostering innovation and collaboration across various industries, academia, and government.</p>
Current Law:	<p>Chapter 29 of MGL governs state finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 2RR of MGL establishes the Workforce Training Fund, which is a program that provides grants to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees, aiming to enhance business productivity and competitiveness. This fund consists of the workforce training contributions required by section 14L of chapter 151A of MGL. Subsection (b) of this section lists what purposes the director of the department of career services shall use this fund for, subject to appropriation.

Chapter 40J of MGL concerns the Massachusetts Technology Park, which is a quasi-public agency now known as MassTech. This quasi-agency was established to advance the growth of the technology sector of the state's economy.

- Section 6A of this chapter required MassTech to establish the John Adams Innovation Institute, which is known today as the Innovation Institute at MassTech. This institute shall serve as an institute for regional innovation, technology and competitiveness. This section also required the creation of the Innovation Institute Fund to finance the activities of said institute.

Chapter 151A of MGL governs unemployment insurance.

- Section 14(i) of this chapter states that the contribution rate of each employer to unemployment insurance shall be 5.4% of the portion of their payroll subject to this chapter and lists certain exceptions.
- Section 14L of this chapter requires that employers liable for contributions under section 14(i) pay a workforce training contribution of 0.056% of wages subject to contributions, with the director of unemployment assistance adjusting this rate to ensure that a total of \$22 million is annually deposited into the Workforce Training Fund.

Summary: This bill establishes a new entrepreneurial institute for women in STEM to be known as the Abigail Adams Center for Women in STEM under MassTech. The bill also authorizes the director of the department of career services to use the Workforce Training Fund to assist the work of the Abigail Adams Center for Women in STEM.

Section 1 states that this act shall be known as the Abigail Adams Entrepreneurship Act.

Section 2 holds that the General Court finds and declares that:

- Women make up almost 50% of the workforce, but less than 25% of the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions.
- Women are less likely to focus on the STEM disciplines in undergraduate and graduate study.
- Only 26% of women who earn degrees in STEM fields work in STEM jobs.
- There is an increasing demand for individuals with STEM degrees to extend their focus beyond the laboratory so they can be leaders in discovery commercialization.

- Studies have shown that technology and commercialization ventures are successful when women are in top management positions.
- It's vital to encourage the commonwealth's entrepreneurial programs to recruit and support women to extend their focus beyond the laboratory and into the commercial world.

Section 3 amends subsection (b) of section 2RR of chapter 29 of MGL, which currently lists for what purposes the director of the department of career services can use the money from the Workforce Training Fund, by adding a new purpose to the list. This change will allow the director of the department of career services to use this fund to provide grants to create and maintain more favorable small business opportunities and workplace environments for women in science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions through the Abigail Adams Center for Women in STEM established in Section 4 of this bill.

Section 4 amends chapter 40J of MGL, which concerns MassTech, by inserting a new section.

Subsection (a) of this new section requires MassTech to establish an entrepreneurial institute for technology and commercialization ventures to provide opportunities for women in the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics professions to be known as the Abigail Adams Center for Women in STEM. The executive director of MassTech shall appoint a qualified individual to serve as the director to manage the center.

This center shall serve as an agent for Massachusetts to create and maintain more favorable small business opportunities and workplace environments for women in STEM professions. The center shall provide development support for women in STEM small businesses and in the workplace. This center shall work collaboratively with MassTech, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, the Massachusetts Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and other quasi-public and not-for-profit agencies.

Subsection (b) of this new section requires the center to provide:

- Assistance with grants for startup expenses and project costs
- Small business incubator development
- Entrepreneurial training
- STEM industry networking support
- Business plan preparation
- Market research
- Workforce development

- Business assistance services and marketing expenses

Subsection (c) of this new section authorizes this center to make grants to further the purposes of this section.

Notes:

Section 4 of the act references the new section being added to chapter 40J of MGL as section 6B. There is already a section 6B in existence in this chapter. If the bill was to be reported out favorably, a new section number would need to be inserted.