

**Massachusetts House of Representatives  
Bill Summary**

**Bill #:** H.2285

**Title:** An Act creating a commission to study the effects of unfunded mandates on municipalities

**Sponsor:** Rep. Steven Howitt

**Committee:** Municipalities and Regional Government

**Hearing Date:** July 29, 2025

**Prior History:** Refile of H.2170 (Study Order H.4573)

**Current Law:** MGL Chapter 39 concerns municipal government.

The local mandate law was enacted as part of the property tax limit initiative known as Proposition 2 ½. In general terms, the Local Mandate Law provides that any post-1980 state law or regulation "imposing any direct service or cost obligation upon any city or town shall be effective only if" the community votes to accept the law or regulation, or the Commonwealth assumes the cost of compliance. M.G.L. c. 29, s. 27C (a). It also allows any community aggrieved by an unfunded state mandate to petition superior court for an exemption from compliance. In such a proceeding, the determination by the Division of Local Mandates (DLM) of the amount of compliance cost is considered prima facie evidence of the amount of state funding necessary to sustain the mandate. G.L. c. 29, s. 27C (e).

Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1984 expanded the Division's mission by authorizing DLM to examine any state law or regulation that has a significant local cost impact, regardless of whether it satisfies the more technical standards for a mandate determination. This statute is codified as Section 6B of Chapter 11 of the General Laws.

**Summary:** Section 1 amends Chapter 39 of MGL by inserting a new section after Section 24, titled Section 25. This new section establishes a seven-member commission to study the effects of unfunded mandates on municipalities, consisting of three appointed by the governor, one municipal official who shall serve as co-chair; the director of the division of local mandates who shall also serve as co-chair; one nominated by the Massachusetts Municipal Association; one nominated by the Massachusetts Treasurers and Collectors Association; and one to be nominated by the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association.

Members shall serve 2-year terms without compensation. Vacancies should be filled through appointment from the same office.

The commission shall compile a list of unfunded mandates and costs to municipal government and shall file the list with the clerks of the Senate and the House of Representatives together with proposals, if any, to mitigate the effects of such mandates.

The commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- Review and analyze all unfunded local mandates from state and federal authorities, and to deliver an economic impact report of such effects on municipalities
- Act as an independent advocate for the interests of local governments in their relations with state and federal governments
- Promulgate rules and regulations governing its procedures and those of the executive committee
- Perform such other like services as the commission shall decide upon.