



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE ADMINISTRATION AND
REGULATORY OVERSIGHT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Rep. Antonio F. D. Cabral
House Chair

Sen. Nick Collins
Senate Chair

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Time: 1:00 PM-5:00 PM

Location: B-2 and Virtual

Matters concerning land, state agency and open meeting law.

Please be advised that the schedule and agenda are subject to change at the discretion of the chairs. Further, the Chairs may schedule an executive session to coincide with this hearing. Per Committee Rules, Joint Committee members will be given any advance notice and materials to review.

All House matters listed above shall be reported on by December 12, 2025, subject to extensions pursuant to House Rule 27.

ORAL TESTIMONY REGISTRATION:

Please be advised that legislators, appointed officials, and the public **must** register to provide oral testimony.

In-Person/Virtual: If you plan to testify **in-person** or **virtually**, please fill out the form at [this link](#) before the registration deadline: **4:00 PM on Friday, October 10, 2025.**

Please note that you may also register in person on the day of the hearing; a table with a sign-up form will be available outside the hearing room.

Those registered to testify will receive further instruction on how to participate remotely via email prior to the start of the hearing.

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Panels: In the registration form linked above, please indicate if you wish to testify as part of a panel and include the names of those you plan to testify with when registering. All panelists testifying will need to register individually via the registration form.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMISSIONS: Written testimony can be submitted via email to Nicole Janeiro at nicole.janeiro@mahouse.gov and Riley Nichols at riley.nichols@masenate.gov. We kindly ask that you indicate your position (support, oppose, or request for amendment) along with the bill number(s) in the subject line of testimony submission emails. Alternatively, testimony can be physically mailed to either the House or Senate Chair:

Chair Antonio F.D. Cabral
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
ATTN: Nicole Janeiro
24 Beacon St, Suite 466
Boston, MA 02133

Chair Nick Collins
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
ATTN: Riley Nichols
24 Beacon St, Room 511-A
Boston, MA 02133

Written testimony is encouraged and will continue to be accepted after the hearing until relevant bills are acted upon.

Please note that oral and written testimony submitted to the committee may be made publicly available, subject to the discretion of the Chairs and in accordance with committee rules. The committee may limit or redact testimony that includes sensitive personal information or information that may jeopardize the health, wellness or safety of the testifier or others.

LIVESTREAM: A livestream of this hearing will be available on the General Court website, <https://malegislature.gov/>

The hearing will be recorded and posted publicly on the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight webpage at the following link: <https://malegislature.gov/Committees/Detail/J25/Hearings>

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

The Committee will work to coordinate reasonable accommodations required to ensure that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in the hearing process. Requests for accessibility accommodations, such as assistive listening devices and systems, sign language interpreting services, closed captioning and transcription services, will be provided upon request. Requests for services should be submitted by completing the state house accessibility form, <https://malegislature.gov/StateHouse/AccessibilityForm/>.

You may contact committee staff with any questions by emailing Nicole Janeiro at nicole.janeiro@mahouse.gov or Riley Nichols at riley.nichols@masenate.gov.

Bill No.	Sponsor	Title
H6	Auditor of the Commonwealth	An Act improving government accountability
H47	Office of the State Treasurer	An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment
H2238	Turco, Jeffrey Rosario (HOU)	An Act relative to rate fairness for water and sewer ratepayers under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
H3283	Arciero, James (HOU)	An Act relative to the open meeting law
H3284	Arena-DeRosa, James C. (HOU)	An Act relative to public hiring preference for veterans, peace corps, americorps and commonwealth corps workers
H3290	Badger, Michelle L. (HOU)	An Act relative to the executive session interview process
H3291	Barber, Christine P. (HOU)	An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health
H3299	Cabral, Antonio F. D. (HOU)	An Act to modernize participation in public meetings
H3302	Cabral, Antonio F. D. (HOU)	An Act to establish a Massachusetts children's cabinet
H3303	Cataldo, Simon (HOU)	An Act establishing an office of restorative justice
H3313	Decker, Marjorie C. (HOU)	An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health
H3328	Farley-Bouvier, Tricia (HOU)	An Act relative to virtual meetings of appointed statewide public bodies
H3331	Ferrante, Ann-Margaret (HOU)	An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security
H3336	Garballey, Sean (HOU)	An Act relative to MWRA employees
H3342	Gregoire, Danielle W. (HOU)	An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections
H3348	Holmes, Russell E. (HOU)	An Act establishing the executive office of structural racism
H3349	Holmes, Russell E. (HOU)	An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services
H3365	Jones, Jr., Bradley H. (HOU)	An Act relative to permitting public corporations to hold remote annual and special meetings
H3382	Linsky, David Paul (HOU)	An Act promoting governmental efficiency
H3425	Ultrino, Steven (HOU)	An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment
H3426	Uyterhoeven, Erika (HOU)	An Act relative to the open meeting law
H3439	Williams, Bud L. (HOU)	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction
H3440	Williams, Bud L. (HOU)	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction

Bill No.	Sponsor	Title
H3441	Williams, Bud L. (HOU)	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction
H3891	Boldyga, Nicholas A. (HOU)	An Act enhancing legislative oversight of regulatory actions in Massachusetts
H4028	Holmes, Russell E. (HOU)	An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services
H4351	Fluker-Reid, Brandy (HOU)	An Act establishing a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs
H4483	Blais, Natalie M. (HOU)	An Act authorizing the release or exclusion of certain land from conservation restrictions in the town of Deerfield
S2124	Cyr, Julian (SEN)	An Act relative to government efficiency
S2129	Durant, Peter J. (SEN)	An Act relative to remote access for public bodies and town meeting
S2130	Eldridge, James B. (SEN)	An Act establishing a legislative fiscal office
S2131	Eldridge, James B. (SEN)	An Act establishing an office of economic empowerment
S2140	Fattman, Ryan C. (SEN)	An Act to SAVE tax dollars in the Commonwealth
S2143	Feeney, Paul R. (SEN)	An Act to permit enhanced public access to deliberations of public bodies and to permit improved efficiency of public bodies
S2159	Kennedy, Robyn K. (SEN)	An Act establishing an office of restorative justice
S2161	Lewis, Jason M. (SEN)	An Act to update disability commission chair requirements
S2171	Mark, Paul W. (SEN)	An Act relative to the creation of the office of municipal efficiency and regionalization (OMER)
S2197	Oliveira, Jacob R. (SEN)	An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections
S2205	Rausch, Rebecca L. (SEN)	An Act updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation
S2206	Rausch, Rebecca L. (SEN)	An Act promoting governmental efficiency
S2223	Tarr, Bruce E. (SEN)	An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security
S2225	Tarr, Bruce E. (SEN)	An Act creating an Inspector General oversight of the Emergency Assistance Shelter system

Please be advised that the schedule and agenda are subject to change at the discretion of the chair per committee rules.

You may contact committee staff with any questions at (617) 722-2017 or (617) 722-1150.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 6
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act improving government accountability
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Auditor of the Commonwealth
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3050: Reported favorably, Referred to House Ways and Means

(2021-22) H. 3156: Reported favorably, Referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 11: Department of the State Auditor

SUMMARY

This legislation proposes a series of updates to Chapter 11 of the General Laws. It includes technical updates to statutory language; expands the state auditor's authority to staff and organize the office; revises audit procedures, timelines, and reporting requirements; narrows the scope of mandated reviews of local financial impacts to newly enacted laws and regulations; and strengthens the auditor's authority to access records from the Department of Revenue, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and other entities.

SECTIONS 1-5: Updates statutory language to remove gendered references ("him," "his") and insert clarifying language, including "state" and "state auditor" where appropriate.

SECTION 6: Removes language about the state auditor being able to appoint "a second, third, and fourth deputy auditor, administrator of field operations of state audits and an administrator of field operations of authority audits" and replaces that with "deputy auditors".

SECTION 7: Deletes language in lines 2–5 describing the organizational structure of the state auditor's department, which states: "Said employees shall be organized in five divisions, namely, the division of state audits, the division of authority audits, the division of federal audits, the division of contract audits and the division of local mandates."

SECTION 8: Inserts in line 12 after the word "C" the following words: "and the significant financial impacts under this section"

SECTIONS 9 & 10: Amends the review requirement to specify that, instead of reviewing every five years all laws and administrative regulations with a significant financial impact on cities and towns, the state auditor shall also review newly enacted laws every five years and regulations that have such an impact.

SECTION 11: Adds to the definition of "significant financial impact" to a town the "grant or increase exemptions from local taxation".

SECTION 12 Adds a requirement that administrative agencies that adopt or amend rules or regulations that may impact a city or town shall provide the division of local mandates with a copy of the local impact statement (as described in Executive Order Number 145).

SECTION 13: Clarifies language by inserting the words "and the general court itself" in line 5 following the word "court".

SECTION: 14: Replaces the phrase "and, for" with ". For" following the word "revenue" in lines 6 and 7 of Section 12.

SECTION 15: Clarifies that the state auditor shall determine what constitutes a "reasonable time" for access to records of accounts subject to audit by the department of the state auditor.

SECTIONS 16 & 17: Adds that the auditor may require the "timely" production of documents, as determined by the auditor, but no later than 10 business days following the request.

SECTION 18: Adds "physical records, forms" to the list of materials the auditor may request.

SECTION 19: Adds to the list of materials the auditor may request, including but not limited to: "electronic data, databases, applications, and systems in their native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or other confidential information".

SECTION 20: Changes language in lines 10 and 11 of Section 12 from "relating to any matter within the scope of" an audit to "relating in any way to" an audit.

SECTION 21: Inserts a paragraph break between the words "returns." and "In".

SECTION 22: Revises the audit frequency requirement by removing the mandate that each entity be audited at least once every three years, and instead requires that each entity be audited as often as determined by the state auditor, but not less than once every five years, based on a risk assessment of statewide processes, programs, or agency-specific operations and activities.

SECTION 23: Amends language regarding court enforcement of record production by replacing "within the scope of any such audit" with "relating in any way to an audit," thereby broadening the scope of records the superior court may compel to include any records connected to an audit, as determined by the auditor.

SECTION 24: Amends language in Section 12 by replacing "In any audit report of" with "For all audits issued by the department of the state auditor where it has identified findings relative to," clarifying that the following provisions apply specifically to audits with identified findings, and aligning the sentence structure more directly with the preceding reference to federal audit standards.

SECTION 25: Amends existing language to require that auditees must provide a written response to the department of the state auditor when an audit report contains adverse or critical findings, replacing prior language that made such a response discretionary at the auditor's request.

SECTION 26: Adds a requirement that the written response from the auditee must include a detailed description of the auditee's plans to address the findings and recommendations in the audit report, specifying the expected content of the response.

SECTION 27: Removes the following requirements:

(1) that a copy of the auditee's written response be filed with the appropriate secretariat, the secretary of A&F, the cognizant executive board (in the case of an authority), and the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means.

(2) that the state auditor notify these entities if an agency fails to respond or submits an unresponsive answer.

SECTION 28: Adds a new paragraph to Section 12 stating that the state auditor may require a corrective action plan and prescribe forms and guidelines for its submission. If a plan is required, the head of the entity audited shall file the corrective action plan within a time frame as determined by the auditor. The plan shall be filed with the auditor, governor, senate president and minority leader, the house speaker and minority leader, and the house and senate committees on post audit and oversight.

SECTION 29: Inserts a paragraph break between the words "county." and "On".

SECTION 30: Inserts a paragraph break between the words “fraud.” and “The”.

SECTION 31: Amends Section 12 to add the word “physical” after “books,” clarifying that the state auditor’s access to records during audits explicitly includes physical records.

SECTION 32: Amends Section 12 by inserting the words “, documents, forms,” after “records,” to explicitly include these items as materials the state auditor may access during audits.

SECTION 33: Amends Section 12 by inserting language that explicitly includes electronic data, databases, applications, and systems in their native format, as well as any personally identifiable, protected health, or other confidential information within those electronic records as subject to audit and review by the state auditor.

SECTION 34: Inserts language that the auditor shall determine when access to these records is necessary.

SECTION 35: Adds reference to definition of activities added in sections 30-32.

SECTION 36: Inserts a paragraph break between the words “vendor.” and “The”.

SECTION 37-38: Requires “timely” production of records, as determined by the auditor, but no later than 10 days following any request

SECTION 39: Section 39 amends Section 12 by inserting the words “physical records, forms,” after “documents,” to explicitly include these materials as accessible to the state auditor during audits.

SECTION 40: Inserts same language as Section 19

SECTION 41: Changes when the auditor may request said records from “relating to any matter within the scope of such audit” to “relating in any way to an audit”. A similar change to Section 23.

SECTIONS 42 & 43: Updates section to match changes made in Section 31.

SECTION 44: Updates section to match changes made in Sections 32 & 33.

SECTION 45: Replaces wording similar to that in Section 41 and inserts the same phrase as Section 41.

SECTIONS 46-47: Updates language to make it gender neutral.

SECTIONS 49-50: Expands Director of Bureau of Special Investigations authority to any agency or department administering assistance programs.

SECTIONS 50-51: Updates definition of records and accounts subject to Director's authority to match previous sections.

SECTION 52: Strikes language that the Director may require production of books and documents from certain departments and divisions.

HOUSE No. 6

So much of the recommendations of the State Auditor (House, No. 3) as relates to improving government accountability

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act improving government accountability.

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. Section 2 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by deleting, in line 2, the word “him”

3 SECTION 2. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
4 in line 3, the word “him” and inserting, in line 3, after the word “by” the following words:- the
5 state auditor

6 SECTION 3. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting,
7 in line 4, after the word “the” the following word:- state

8 SECTION 4. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
9 in line 5, the word “his” and inserting, in line 5, after the word “of” the following word:- the

10 SECTION 5. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
11 in line 10, the word “his”

12 SECTION 6. Section 5 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
13 in lines 2, 3, and 4, the words “a second, third and fourth deputy auditor, administrator of field
14 operations of state audits and an administrator of field operations of authority audits” and
15 inserting, in line 2, after the word “remove” the following words:- deputy auditors

16 SECTION 7. Section 6 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
17 in lines 2, 3, 4, and 5, the words “Said employees shall be organized in five divisions, namely,
18 the division of state audits, the division of authority audits, the division of federal audits, the
19 division of contract audits and the division of local mandates.”

20 SECTION 8. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
21 in line 12 after the word “C” the following words:- and the significant financial impacts under
22 this section

23 SECTION 9. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
24 in line 19, the words “every five years”

25 SECTION 10: Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
26 inserting, in line 21, after the word “towns.” the following words:- The division shall also
27 review every five years newly enacted laws and administrative regulations which have a
28 significant financial impact upon cities and towns.

29 SECTION 11. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
30 deleting, in line 23, the word “or” and inserting, in line 24, after the word “expenditures” the
31 following words:- , or grant or increase exemptions from local taxation

32 SECTION 12. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
33 inserting after the fourth paragraph the following paragraph:-

34 Administrative agencies when adopting, repealing, or amending any rule or regulation
35 that may have an impact on the cities and towns of the commonwealth shall provide the division
36 with a copy of the local impact statement as described in Executive Order Number 145.

37 SECTION 13: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
38 inserting, in line 5, following the word “court” the following words:- and the general court itself,

39 SECTION 14: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
40 deleting, in lines 6 and 7, the words “and, for” and inserting, in line 6, following the word
41 “revenue” the following words:- . For

42 SECTION 15: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
43 inserting, in line 9, after the word “times” the following words:- , as determined by the state
44 auditor,

45 SECTION 16: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
46 inserting, in line 9, after the words “require the” the following word:- timely

47 SECTION 17: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
48 inserting, in line 9, after the word “production” the following words:- , as determined by the
49 state auditor, but not later than ten business days following any request,

50 SECTION 18: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
51 inserting, in line 10, after the word “documents,” the following words:- physical records, forms,

52 SECTION 19: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
53 inserting, in line 10, after the word “records” the following words:- , including but not limited to
54 electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their
55 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
56 other confidential information contained therein,

57 SECTION 20: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
58 deleting, in lines 10 and 11, the words “to any matter within the scope of” and inserting, in line
59 10, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to

60 SECTION 21: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
61 deleting, in line 12, the words “returns. In” and inserting, line 12, after word “tax’ the following
62 words:-returns.

63 In

64 SECTION 22: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
65 deleting, in lines 17, 18, and 19, the words “; provided, however, that each entity shall be audited
66 at least once every 3 years and an entity shall be subject to audit as often as the state auditor
67 determines it necessary. The” and inserting, in line 17, after the word “entities” the following
68 words:- . The state auditor shall audit each entity as often as determined by the state auditor, but
69 not less than once every five years, based upon an identification of risk in statewide processes or
70 programs or agency specific operations and activities.

71 The

72 SECTION 23: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
73 deleting, in line 23, the words “within the scope of any such” and inserting, in line 22, after the
74 word “records” the following words:- relating in any way to an

75 SECTION 24: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
76 deleting, in line 26, the words “States. In any audit report of” and inserting, in line 26, after the
77 word “United” the following words:- States.

78 For all audits issued by the department of the state auditor where it has identified
79 findings relative to

80 SECTION 25: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
81 deleting, in lines 30, 31, and 32, the following words “issued by the department of the state
82 auditor, wherein there appears adverse or critical audit results, the state auditor may require a
83 response, in writing, to such audit results.” and inserting, in line 30, after the word “court,” the
84 following words:- the auditee shall provide a written response to the department of the state
85 auditor.

86 SECTION 26: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
87 inserting, in line 33, after the word “shall” the following words:- contain a detailed description
88 of the auditee’s plans to address the findings and recommendations contained in the audit report,
89 and shall

90 SECTION 27: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
91 deleting, in lines 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42, the words “A copy of the response shall
92 be filed with the appropriate secretariat, the secretary of administration and finance, the
93 cognizant executive board in the case of an authority, and the house and senate committees on

94 ways and means. The state auditor shall notify the appropriate secretariat, the secretary of
95 administration and finance, the cognizant executive board in the case of an authority, and the
96 house and senate committees on ways and means in the event of an agency's failure to respond
97 or of the filing of unresponsive answers.”

98 SECTION 28: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
99 deleting, in lines 44 and 45, the following words “examine; provided, however, that in” and
100 inserting, in line 44, after the word “to” the following words:- examine.

101 The department of the state auditor may require a corrective action plan. The state
102 auditor may prescribe forms and issue guidelines governing an auditee's corrective action plan.
103 If the final audit report issued by the department of the state auditor requires a corrective action
104 plan, the head of the entity audited shall file the corrective action plan within the timeframe
105 required by the state auditor. The auditee's corrective action plan shall be filed with the state
106 auditor, the governor, the president and minority leader of the senate, the speaker and minority
107 leader of the house of representatives, and the chairman and ranking minority members of the
108 senate committee on post audit and oversight, and the chairman and ranking minority members
109 of the house committee on post audit and oversight.

110 In

111 SECTION 29: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
112 deleting, in line 61, the following words “county. On” and inserting, in line 61, after the word
113 “or” the following words:- county.

114 On

115 SECTION 30: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
116 deleting, in line 69, the words “fraud. The” and inserting, in line 69, after the word “involve” the
117 following words:- fraud.

118 The

119 SECTION 31: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
120 inserting, in line 72, after the word “books,” the following word:- physical

121 SECTION 32: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
122 inserting, in line 72, after the word “records” the following words:- , documents, forms,

123 SECTION 33: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
124 inserting, in line 72, after the word “activities” the following words:- , including but not limited
125 to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their
126 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
127 other confidential information contained therein,

128 SECTION 34: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
129 inserting, in line 77, after the word “necessary” the following words:- , as determined by the
130 state auditor,

131 SECTION 35: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
132 inserting, in line 91, after the words “activities,” the following words:- as defined in this
133 paragraph,

134 SECTION 36: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
135 deleting, in line 92, the words “vendor. The” and inserting, in line 92, the following words:-
136 vendor.

137 The

138 SECTION 37: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
139 inserting, in line 101, after the word “the” the following word:- timely

140 SECTION 38: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
141 inserting, in line 101, after the word “production” the following words:- , as determined by the
142 state auditor, but not later than ten business days following any request,

143 SECTION 39: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
144 inserting, in line 101, after the word “documents,” the following words:- physical records, forms,

145 SECTION 40: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
146 inserting, in line 102, after the word “records” the following words:- , including but not limited
147 to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their
148 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
149 other confidential information contained therein,

150 SECTION 41: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
151 deleting, in lines 102 and 103, the words “to any matter within the scope of such” and inserting,
152 in line 102, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to an

153 SECTION 42: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
154 inserting, in line 105, after the word “books,” the following words:- physical

155 SECTION 43: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
156 deleting, in line 105, the following word:- and

157 SECTION 44: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
158 inserting, in line 105, after the word “activities,” the following words:- documents, and forms,
159 including but not limited to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and
160 electronic systems in their native format, including any personally identifiable information,
161 protected health information, or other confidential information contained therein,

162 SECTION 45: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
163 deleting, in lines 106 and 107, the words “to any matter within the scope of the” and inserting, in
164 line 106, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to an

165 SECTION 46: Section 16 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
166 deleting, in line 4, the words “and shall devote his entire time” and inserting, in line 4, after the
167 word “experience” the following words:- . The director’s time shall be devoted entirely

168 SECTION 47: Section 16 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
169 deleting, in line 5, the word “he” and inserting, in line 5, after the word “as” the following
170 words:- the state auditor

171 SECTION 48: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
172 inserting, in line 6, after the word “assistance” the following words:- , or any other agency or
173 department,

174 SECTION 49: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
175 inserting, in line 7, after the word “said” the following words:- agencies or

176 SECTION 50: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
177 inserting, in line 21, after the word “services” the following words:- , and any other agency or
178 department administering any assistance program,

179 SECTION 51: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
180 deleting, in line 22, the words “records and accounts” and inserting, in line 22, after the word
181 “such” the following words:- physical records, forms, vouchers, and other records, including but
182 not limited to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic
183 systems in their native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health
184 information, or other confidential information contained therein

185 SECTION 52: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
186 deleting, in line 23, the words “and may require the production of books, documents and
187 vouchers”

HOUSE No. 6

So much of the recommendations of the State Auditor (House, No. 3) as relates to improving government accountability

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

By striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the following:–

1 SECTION 1. Section 2 of chapter 11 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by deleting, in line 2, the word “him”

3 SECTION 2. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
4 in line 3, the word “him” and inserting, in line 3, after the word “by” the following words:- the
5 state auditor

6 SECTION 3. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting,
7 in line 4, after the word “the” the following word:- state

8 SECTION 4. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
9 in line 5, the word “his” and inserting, in line 5, after the word “of” the following word:- the

10 SECTION 5. Section 2 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
11 in line 10, the word “his”

12 SECTION 6. Section 5 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
13 in lines 2, 3, and 4, the words “a second, third and fourth deputy auditor, administrator of field

14 operations of state audits and an administrator of field operations of authority audits” and
15 inserting, in line 2, after the word “remove” the following words:- deputy auditors

16 SECTION 7. Section 6 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
17 in lines 2, 3, 4, and 5, the words “Said employees shall be organized in five divisions, namely,
18 the division of state audits, the division of authority audits, the division of federal audits, the
19 division of contract audits and the division of local mandates.”

20 SECTION 8. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
21 in line 12 after the word “C” the following words:- and the significant financial impacts under
22 this section

23 SECTION 9. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by deleting,
24 in line 19, the words “every five years”

25 SECTION 10: Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
26 inserting, in line 21, after the word “towns.” the following words:- The division shall also
27 review every five years newly enacted laws and administrative regulations which have a
28 significant financial impact upon cities and towns.

29 SECTION 11. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
30 deleting, in line 23, the word “or” and inserting, in line 24, after the word “expenditures” the
31 following words:- , or grant or increase exemptions from local taxation

32 SECTION 12. Section 6B of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
33 inserting after the fourth paragraph the following paragraph:-

34 Administrative agencies when adopting, repealing, or amending any rule or regulation
35 that may have an impact on the cities and towns of the commonwealth shall provide the division
36 with a copy of the local impact statement as described in Executive Order Number 145.

37 SECTION 13: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
38 inserting, in line 5, following the word “court” the following words:- and the general court itself,

39 SECTION 14: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
40 deleting, in lines 6 and 7, the words “and, for” and inserting, in line 6, following the word
41 “revenue” the following words:- . For

42 SECTION 15: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
43 inserting, in line 9, after the word “times” the following words:- , as determined by the state
44 auditor,

45 SECTION 16: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
46 inserting, in line 9, after the words “require the” the following word:- timely

47 SECTION 17: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
48 inserting, in line 9, after the word “production” the following words:- , as determined by the
49 state auditor, but not later than ten business days following any request,

50 SECTION 18: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
51 inserting, in line 10, after the word “documents,” the following words:- physical records, forms,

52 SECTION 19: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
53 inserting, in line 10, after the word “records” the following words:- , including but not limited to
54 electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their

55 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
56 other confidential information contained therein,

57 SECTION 20: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
58 deleting, in lines 10 and 11, the words “to any matter within the scope of” and inserting, in line
59 10, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to

60 SECTION 21: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
61 deleting, in line 12, the words “returns. In” and inserting, line 12, after word “tax’ the following
62 words:-returns.

63 In

64 SECTION 22: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
65 deleting, in lines 17, 18, and 19, the words “; provided, however, that each entity shall be audited
66 at least once every 3 years and an entity shall be subject to audit as often as the state auditor
67 determines it necessary. The” and inserting, in line 17, after the word “entities” the following
68 words:- . The state auditor shall audit each entity as often as determined by the state auditor, but
69 not less than once every five years, based upon an identification of risk in statewide processes or
70 programs or agency specific operations and activities.

71 The

72 SECTION 23: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
73 deleting, in line 23, the words “within the scope of any such” and inserting, in line 22, after the
74 word “records” the following words:- relating in any way to an

75 SECTION 24: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
76 deleting, in line 26, the words “States. In any audit report of” and inserting, in line 26, after the
77 word “United” the following words:- States.

78 For all audits issued by the department of the state auditor where it has identified
79 findings relative to

80 SECTION 25: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
81 deleting, in lines 30, 31, and 32, the following words “issued by the department of the state
82 auditor, wherein there appears adverse or critical audit results, the state auditor may require a
83 response, in writing, to such audit results.” and inserting, in line 30, after the word “court,” the
84 following words:- the auditee shall provide a written response to the department of the state
85 auditor.

86 SECTION 26: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
87 inserting, in line 33, after the word “shall” the following words:- contain a detailed description
88 of the auditee’s plans to address the findings and recommendations contained in the audit report,
89 and shall

90 SECTION 27: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
91 deleting, in lines 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42, the words “A copy of the response shall
92 be filed with the appropriate secretariat, the secretary of administration and finance, the
93 cognizant executive board in the case of an authority, and the house and senate committees on
94 ways and means. The state auditor shall notify the appropriate secretariat, the secretary of
95 administration and finance, the cognizant executive board in the case of an authority, and the

96 house and senate committees on ways and means in the event of an agency’s failure to respond
97 or of the filing of unresponsive answers.”

98 SECTION 28: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
99 deleting, in lines 44 and 45, the following words “examine; provided, however, that in” and
100 inserting, in line 44, after the word “to” the following words:- examine.

101 The department of the state auditor may require a corrective action plan. The state
102 auditor may prescribe forms and issue guidelines governing an auditee’s corrective action plan.
103 If the final audit report issued by the department of the state auditor requires a corrective action
104 plan, the head of the entity audited shall file the corrective action plan within the timeframe
105 required by the state auditor. The auditee’s corrective action plan shall be filed with the state
106 auditor, the governor, the president and minority leader of the senate, the speaker and minority
107 leader of the house of representatives, and the chairman and ranking minority members of the
108 senate committee on post audit and oversight, and the chairman and ranking minority members
109 of the house committee on post audit and oversight.

110 In

111 SECTION 29: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
112 deleting, in line 61, the following words “county. On” and inserting, in line 61, after the word
113 “or” the following words:- county.

114 On

115 SECTION 30: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
116 deleting, in line 69, the words “fraud. The” and inserting, in line 69, after the word “involve” the
117 following words:- fraud.

118 The

119 SECTION 31: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
120 inserting, in line 72, after the word “books,” the following word:- physical

121 SECTION 32: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
122 inserting, in line 72, after the word “records” the following words:- , documents, forms,

123 SECTION 33: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
124 inserting, in line 72, after the word “activities” the following words:- , including but not limited
125 to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their
126 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
127 other confidential information contained therein,

128 SECTION 34: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
129 inserting, in line 77, after the word “necessary” the following words:- , as determined by the
130 state auditor,

131 SECTION 35: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
132 inserting, in line 91, after the words “activities,” the following words:- as defined in this
133 paragraph,

134 SECTION 36: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
135 deleting, in line 92, the words “vendor. The” and inserting, in line 92, the following words:-
136 vendor.

137 The

138 SECTION 37: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
139 inserting, in line 101, after the word “the” the following word:- timely

140 SECTION 38: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
141 inserting, in line 101, after the word “production” the following words:- , as determined by the
142 state auditor, but not later than ten business days following any request,

143 SECTION 39: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
144 inserting, in line 101, after the word “documents,” the following words:- physical records, forms,

145 SECTION 40: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
146 inserting, in line 102, after the word “records” the following words:- , including but not limited
147 to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic systems in their
148 native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health information, or
149 other confidential information contained therein,

150 SECTION 41: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
151 deleting, in lines 102 and 103, the words “to any matter within the scope of such” and inserting,
152 in line 102, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to an

153 SECTION 42: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
154 inserting, in line 105, after the word “books,” the following words:- physical

155 SECTION 43: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
156 deleting, in line 105, the following word:- and

157 SECTION 44: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
158 inserting, in line 105, after the word “activities,” the following words:- documents, and forms,
159 including but not limited to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and
160 electronic systems in their native format, including any personally identifiable information,
161 protected health information, or other confidential information contained therein,

162 SECTION 45: Section 12 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
163 deleting, in lines 106 and 107, the words “to any matter within the scope of the” and inserting, in
164 line 106, after the word “relating” the following words:- in any way to an

165 SECTION 46: Section 16 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
166 deleting, in line 4, the words “and shall devote his entire time” and inserting, in line 4, after the
167 word “experience” the following words:- . The director’s time shall be devoted entirely

168 SECTION 47: Section 16 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
169 deleting, in line 5, the word “he” and inserting, in line 5, after the word “as” the following
170 words:- the state auditor

171 SECTION 48: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
172 inserting, in line 6, after the word “assistance” the following words:- , or any other agency or
173 department,

174 SECTION 49: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
175 inserting, in line 7, after the word “said” the following words:- agencies or

176 SECTION 50: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
177 inserting, in line 21, after the word “services” the following words:- , and any other agency or
178 department administering any assistance program,

179 SECTION 51: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
180 deleting, in line 22, the words “records and accounts” and inserting, in line 22, after the word
181 “such” the following words:- physical records, forms, vouchers, and other records, including but
182 not limited to electronic data, electronic databases, electronic applications, and electronic
183 systems in their native format, including any personally identifiable information, protected health
184 information, or other confidential information contained therein

185 SECTION 52: Section 17 of said chapter, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
186 deleting, in line 23, the words “and may require the production of books, documents and
187 vouchers”

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 47
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Office of the State Treasurer
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3425 (Rep. Ultrino – Identical) S. 2131 (Sen. Eldridge – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3118: Accompanied study order, H. 4675

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 10: Department of the State Treasurer

SUMMARY

Inserts a new Section 79 to Chapter 10 of the General Laws, establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment within the Office of the State Treasurer. This office will aim to provide equitable access to opportunities and resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships aimed at promoting economic mobility and financial independence for residents of the commonwealth.

The office will be led by an executive director, who serves as its executive and administrative head and is responsible for administering and enforcing laws and regulations related to the office under the supervision of the State Treasurer. The executive director may, subject to appropriation, hire and remove employees as necessary, determine their salaries and duties, with total salaries limited to the amount appropriated by the General Court.

HOUSE No. 47

So much of the recommendations of the Department of the State Treasurer (House, No. 35) as relates to establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment.

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

1 Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 78 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 79. (a) There shall be within the office of the state treasurer an office of
4 economic empowerment. The office of economic empowerment shall perform such functions as
5 the treasurer may determine in relation to the provision of equitable access to opportunities and
6 resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships to promote economic
7 mobility and financial independence to residents across the commonwealth.

8 (b) The office shall be under the supervision and control of the executive director. The
9 executive director shall be the executive and administrative head of the office and shall be
10 responsible for administering and enforcing the laws and regulations relative to the office and to
11 any administrative unit of the office thereof. The duties given to the executive director in this act

12 shall be exercised and discharged subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the state
13 treasurer.

14 (c) The executive director may, subject to appropriation, appoint and remove such
15 employees as they deem necessary to perform the duties of their office, and may determine their
16 salaries and duties; provided, however, that the total amount of all such salaries shall not exceed
17 the sum appropriated by the general court.

HOUSE No. 47

So much of the recommendations of the Department of the State Treasurer (House, No. 35) as relates to establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

By striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the following:—

1 Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 78 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 79. (a) There shall be within the office of the state treasurer an office of
4 economic empowerment. The office of economic empowerment shall perform such functions as
5 the treasurer may determine in relation to the provision of equitable access to opportunities and
6 resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships to promote economic
7 mobility and financial independence to residents across the commonwealth.

8 (b) The office shall be under the supervision and control of the executive director. The
9 executive director shall be the executive and administrative head of the office and shall be
10 responsible for administering and enforcing the laws and regulations relative to the office and to
11 any administrative unit of the office thereof. The duties given to the executive director in this act
12 shall be exercised and discharged subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the state
13 treasurer.

14 (c) The executive director may, subject to appropriation, appoint and remove such
15 employees as they deem necessary to perform the duties of their office, and may determine their
16 salaries and duties; provided, however, that the total amount of all such salaries shall not exceed
17 the sum appropriated by the general court.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 2238
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to rate fairness for water and sewer ratepayers under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Turco of Winthrop
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 372, Section 10A of the Acts of 1984

Chapter 110, Section 224 of the Acts of 1993

SUMMARY

This legislation amends the Acts of 1984 and 1993 with a new section, requiring that any city or town choosing to include actual costs of providing sewer or water services in assessments and charges (as allowed under Section 10A) must undergo an audit by the Office of the State Auditor at least once every three years. The audit must review chargebacks, expenses, and conduct a staffing analysis to ensure that most employee time charged is genuinely related to providing sewer or water services, not unrelated municipal work.

HOUSE No. 2238

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jeffrey Rosario Turco

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 relative to rate fairness for water and sewer ratepayers under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Jeffrey Rosario Turco</i>	<i>19th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/8/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 2238

By Representative Turco of Winthrop, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2238) of Jeffrey Rosario Turco for legislation to require the State Auditor to audit cities and towns for certain assessments charged for the furnishing of sewer or water services. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to rate fairness for water and sewer ratepayers under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

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 10A as section 10A of chapter 372 of the acts of 1984, as inserted by section 244
2 of chapter 110 of the acts of 1993 is amended by inserting the following:

3 Section 10B. Any city or town which elects to include in such assessments and charges,
4 costs actually incurred in the furnishing of sewer or water services as provided in Section 10A
5 shall be audited, for such assessments and charges, by the Office of the State Auditor not less
6 than every three years. Such audit shall include but not be limited to a review of all chargebacks
7 and expenses as well as a staffing analysis which shall determine whether a substantial majority
8 of each employee's time is a cost actually incurred in the furnishing of sewer or water services as
9 opposed to unrelated municipal services.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3283
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to the open meeting law
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Arciero of Westford and Pease of Westfield
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 2981: Accompanied a redraft, H. 4771

(2021-22) H. 4180: Accompanied study order, H. 5256

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 149, Section 44A ½, Subsection (c): Fair competition for bidders on construction

Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25: Sections regarding the open meeting law

SUMMARY

Amends subsection (c) of Section 44A ½ of chapter 149 to add conditions to public agencies during the interview process. The change requires a process to be developed to ensure that a bidder or their representative may not witness or attend an interview of another bidder for the same contract. It also adds that no written testimony or video from an interview may be publicly disseminated until the interviews for all bidders are completed.

HOUSE No. 3283

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James Arciero

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 relative to the open meeting law.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Thomas E. Ellis, Jr.</i>		<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Kelly W. Pease</i>	<i>4th Hampden</i>	<i>4/5/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3283

By Representative Arciero of Westford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3283) of James Arciero and Thomas E. Ellis, Jr., for legislation to assure for bidder privacy in certain interviews for public construction contracts. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2981 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to the open meeting law.

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

1 Subsection (c) of section 44A ½ of chapter 149 of the General Laws, as appearing in the
2 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:-

3 Notwithstanding sections 18 to 25, inclusive, of chapter 30A or any other general or
4 special law to the contrary, when conducting interviews as part of the selection process, a public
5 agency: (i) shall develop a process to ensure that a bidder or a representative of that bidder may
6 not witness or attend, whether in-person or remotely, the interview of another bidder for the
7 same contract; and (ii) shall not publicly disseminate or post written testimony or video from an
8 interview until the interviews of all bidders for that contract are completed.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3284
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to public hiring preference for veterans, peace corps, americorps and commonwealth corps workers
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Arena-DeRosa of Holliston and Montaña of Boston
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7: Executive Office for Administration and Finance

SUMMARY

This bill would insert a section into Chapter 7 to establish a program to recruit and hire military veterans, Peace Corps alumni, and those from the commonwealth student corps and provide a list to agency and department heads.

HOUSE No. 3284

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James C. Arena-DeRosa

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 relative to public hiring preference for veterans, peace corps, americorps and commonwealth corps workers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/10/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3284

By Representative Arena-DeRosa of Holliston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3284) of James C. Arena-DeRosa and Samantha Montañó relative to public hiring preference for veterans, peace corps, americorps and commonwealth corps workers. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act relative to public hiring preference for veterans, peace corps, americorps and commonwealth corps workers.

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

1 Chapter 7 of the General Laws, as most recently amended by section 10 of chapter 238 of
2 the acts of 2024, is hereby further amended by inserting after section 4T the following section:-

3 Section 4U. The human resources division shall establish a program for agency heads and
4 department heads as defined in section 1 of chapter 29 that shall identify, recruit, hire, develop,
5 promote and retain military veterans and alumni of: (i) the Peace Corps of the United States; (ii)
6 AmeriCorps; and (iii) commonwealth student corps established under chapter 192 of the acts of
7 2007 in non-civil service public hiring practices. The human resources division shall provide
8 agency heads or department heads with a certificate confirming a person is a military veterans or
9 an alumnus of the Peace Corps of the United States, AmeriCorps and commonwealth student
10 corps.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3290
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to the executive session interview process
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Badger of Plymouth and LaNatra of Kingston; Senator Oliveira
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	S. 2195 (Sen. Oliveira – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A, Section 21: Executive sessions of a public body

SUMMARY

Strikes paragraph 8 of section 21 of chapter 30A and inserts additional language into paragraph 8 that the body public may go into executive session to consider or interview applicants including preparation for the interview questions.

HOUSE No. 3290

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michelle L. Badger

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 relative to the executive session interview process.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Michelle L. Badger</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>	<i>1/16/2025</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>	<i>3/19/2025</i>
<i>Jacob R. Oliveira</i>	<i>Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester</i>	<i>3/22/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3290

By Representative Badger of Plymouth, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3290) of Michelle L. Badger for legislation to further regulate meetings of public bodies in executive sessions. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to the executive session interview process.

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 21 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended in
2 subsection (a) by deleting paragraph 8 and inserting in place thereof the following:-

3 8. To consider or interview applicants, including the preparation of interview questions
4 for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that
5 an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants; provided,
6 however that this clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary
7 screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a prior preliminary
8 screening; nothing in this section shall prohibit all members of a school committee, city council,
9 town council, select board, or board of alderman from participating as members of the
10 preliminary screening committee meeting in executive session for the purposes of this section.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3291
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Barber of Somerville, Connolly of Cambridge, DuBois of Brockton, Elliott of Lowell, Gentile of Sudbury, Higgins of Leominster, Howard of Lowell, Keefe of Worcester, Kerans of Danvers, Montaña of Boston, Sadosa of Northampton, Scarsdale of Pepperell, Uytterhoeven of Somerville, and Whipps of Athol
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3313 (Rep. Decker – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 2985: Reported favorably, Referred to Health Care Financing, Recommended ought to pass, Referred to Senate Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 19, Section 7: State facilities under the department of mental health control

Chapter 19, Section 16A: Program to provide remote mental health consultations

Chapter 123: Mental Health

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Inserts language to include Bridgewater State Hospital as a state facility under the control of the Dept. of Mental Health (“department”).

SECTION 2: Inserts language into the paragraph that the commissioner shall be responsible for Bridgewater State Hospital. The commissioner shall operate Bridgewater State Hospital under Section 16A of Chapter 19 and Chapter 123.

SECTION 3: Repeals Section 18 of Chapter 125 which removes Bridgewater State Hospital from the MA Correctional Institution.

SECTION 4: The department shall develop a division of forensic mental health services.

SECTIONS 5-9: Removes language that refers to the “medical director” for Bridgewater State Hospital.

SECTION 10: Repeals section 13 of chapter 123 that transfers dangerous males to Bridgewater State Hospital and the procedure of it.

SECTIONS 11-17: Removes language that refers to the “medical director” for Bridgewater State Hospital and inserts language the refers to the “superintendent” and “commissioner”.

SECTION 18: This section strikes section 21 of chapter 123 and inserts new language that copies of restraint forms shall be sent to the commissioner of the department and reviewed and signed within 30 days. Restraint records shall be kept by every facility and physician, but differs from the previous language because it removes “advanced practice registered nurse” from retaining the records. It also removes language that refers to “Bridgewater State Hospital”. The amended language also simplifies that the general public shall have access to the files without patient identification.

SECTION 19: Repeals section 33 of chapter 123 which details the expenses of apprehension of a mentally ill person or an alleged alcoholic.

SECTION 20: The commissioner of DMH shall conduct a feasibility study of constructing a new facility for patients at Bridgewater State Hospital.

SECTION 21: This bill goes into effect on December 31, 2026.

HOUSE No. 3291

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Christine P. Barber

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 transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/9/2025</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/3/2025</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>	<i>4/16/2025</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/7/2025</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/24/2025</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>3/16/2025</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>8/18/2025</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>3/4/2025</i>
<i>Sally P. Kerans</i>	<i>13th Essex</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>4/3/2025</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/10/2025</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>5/15/2025</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>7/10/2025</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>3/3/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3291

By Representative Barber of Somerville, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3291) of Christine P. Barber and others for legislation to transfer Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2985 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**
—————

An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health.

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. Section 7 of Chapter 19, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting, in line 3, after the words "health facilities, the following new language:- “,
3 including the Bridgewater State Hospital,”:-

4 SECTION 2. Section 7 of Chapter 19, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
5 after the first paragraph the following paragraph:

6 The commissioner shall have the responsibility for the operation and oversight of
7 Bridgewater State Hospital and for providing, according to the rules and regulations of the
8 department of mental health, all medical and mental health treatment for all men sent to that

9 facility. The Commissioner will operate Bridgewater State Hospital in accordance with section
10 16A of this chapter, the provisions of chapter 123 and regulations of the department. The
11 Commissioner shall provide forensic services for individuals committed for evaluation or
12 treatment pursuant to sections 15 through 18 of chapter 123, as well as continuing care inpatient
13 services for individuals determined to require strict security in accordance with the regulations of
14 the department.

15 SECTION 3. Section 18 of Chapter 125, as so appearing, is hereby repealed.

16 SECTION 4. Chapter 19 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
17 inserting after section 16A the following section:—

18 Section 16B. The department shall develop and maintain, in accordance with its
19 standards, a division of forensic mental health services to provide forensic services that shall
20 include, but shall not be limited to: court-ordered evaluations of competence to stand trial,
21 criminal responsibility, and aid-in-sentencing; programs and services for restoration of
22 competence for individuals who have been adjudicated incompetent to stand trial; evaluations of
23 need for care and treatment for individuals who have been adjudicated incompetent to stand trial,
24 not guilty by reason of mental illness or who are being held in correctional facilities or places of
25 detention; the setting of standards for and certification of clinicians qualified to perform
26 evaluations; and specialized risk assessment evaluations; and the establishment and maintenance
27 of court clinics for the performance of clinical consultations and court-ordered evaluations.
28 Forensic services may also include, but shall not be limited to: programs and services for police
29 and pre-trial diversion; post adjudication alternatives to incarceration, including specialty court
30 services; and re-entry.

31 The division shall give major consideration to the development of forensic health services
32 that can be provided in the community or in settings other than an inpatient facility.

33 SECTION 5. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
34 the words “, or the medical director if said person is at the Bridgewater state hospital,” in the first
35 sentence of the first paragraph.

36 SECTION 6. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
37 out the words in the second paragraph “or the medical director at the Bridgewater state hospital”.

38 SECTION 7. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
39 out in the third paragraph the words “or said medical director“.

40 SECTION 8. Section 7(b) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
41 replacing it with the following

42 (b) The Commissioner of mental health, or with the approval of the commissioner of
43 mental health, the superintendent of a facility, may petition the district court or the division of
44 the juvenile court department in whose jurisdiction the facility is located for the commitment to
45 the Bridgewater state hospital of any male patient at said facility when it is determined that the
46 failure to hospitalize in strict security would create a likelihood of serious harm by reason of
47 mental illness.

48 SECTION 9. Section 8B of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out the
49 words in the first paragraph “or medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

50 SECTION 10. Section 13 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby repealed.

51 SECTION 11. Section 14 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is deleted and inserting in
52 place thereof the following paragraph:

53 Whenever the failure to retain any person in strict security would not create a likelihood
54 of serious harm by reason of mental illness but that such person is in need of further care and
55 treatment in a facility, the superintendent shall submit a request to the commissioner for a
56 transfer to another facility. The commissioner will approve transfer from Bridgewater to a
57 designated facility. The Commissioner shall execute the transfer within thirty days of receipt of
58 such request.

59 SECTION 12. Section 16(b) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
60 the words in the first sentence “or the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

61 SECTION 13. Section 16(e) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
62 the words “or medical director of Bridgewater state hospital”.

63 SECTION 14. Section 17(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
64 the words “or the medical director of Bridgewater state hospital” and striking out the words “or
65 medical director”.

66 SECTION 15 Section 17(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking the
67 words “or medical director”.

68 SECTION 16. Section 18(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
69 the words “and the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital” and “; provided, however,
70 that, notwithstanding the court's failure, after an initial hearing or after any subsequent hearing,
71 to make a finding required for commitment to the Bridgewater state hospital, the prisoner shall

72 be confined at said hospital if the findings required for commitment to a facility are made and if
73 the commissioner of correction certifies to the court that confinement of the prisoner at said
74 hospital is necessary to insure his continued retention in custody.”

75 SECTION 17. Section 18(c) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
76 the words “or the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

77 SECTION 18. Section 21 of Chapter 123 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
78 amended by striking out the twelfth paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following
79 paragraph:–

80 A copy of the restraint form and any such attachments shall become part of the chart of
81 the patient. Copies of all restraint forms and attachments shall be sent to the commissioner of
82 mental health who will review and sign them within thirty days. Statistical restraint records shall
83 be kept for every facility and each designated physician, in a form and manner that will permit
84 the commissioner to analyze and, if appropriate, request corrective action regarding the use of
85 restraint in facilities under supervision and control of the department and all facilities licensed by
86 it. Such data, excluding patient identification, shall be made available to the general public.

87 SECTION 19. Section 33 of chapter 123 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
88 repealed.

89 SECTION 20. The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health shall conduct a
90 study of the feasibility of constructing a new physical facility for the treatment of patients
91 currently held at Bridgewater State Hospital which shall support the health and recovery of the
92 patients. The study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the possible locations
93 for the construction of the facility, including the campus of the Worcester Recovery Center.

SECTION 21. This Act shall be effective no later than December 31, 2026.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3299
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to modernize participation in public meetings
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Cabral of New Bedford, Sabadosa of Northampton, Higgins of Leominster, Uyterhoeven of Somerville, Linsky of Natick, Kearney of Scituate, Kassner of Hamilton, Whipps of Athol, Flanagan of Dennis, Gentile of Sudbury, MacGregor of Boston, Badger of Plymouth, Arena-DeRosa of Holliston, Hendricks of New Bedford, Decker of Cambridge, Montaña of Boston, Duffy of Holyoke, Davis of Great Barrington, Hong of Lowell, Elliott of Lowell, Arciero of Westford, Honan of Boston, Gómez of Easthampton, Rogers of Norwood, Armini of Marblehead, Cruz of Salem, Donahue of Worcester, Madaro of Boston, Ramos of North Andover, Moran of Boston, Jones of North Reading, Sena of Acton, Orrall of Lakeville, Rogers of Cambridge, Barrett of North Adams, Sangiolo of Newton, Stanley of Waltham, Kushmerek of Fitchburg, Connolly of Cambridge, Vitolo of Brookline, LeBoeuf of Worcester, and Scarsdale of Pepperell; Senators O'Connor, Tarr, Moore, Jehlen, and Payano
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	(2023-24) H. 2998: Redraft; referred to House Ways and Means (2021-22) H. 3152: Redraft; referred to House Steering
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	Chapter 30A, Section 18: Definitions that are applicable to the open meetings Chapter 30A, Section 20: Open Meeting Law Chapter 30A, Section 22: Minutes of open meeting Chapter 30A, Section 23: Enforcement of open meeting law

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: A technical change.

SECTION 2: Inserts a definition for “remote access” that the public may have access to view a public body meeting and when appropriate participate in the meeting remotely. Also inserts a definition for “remote participation” that members of a public body may participate in the meeting through the internet with video.

SECTION 3: Strikes out section 20 and inserts new language.

All public meetings shall be hybrid, except in an emergency. Local public meetings shall post the notice with the clerk and the website. The same shall be done for regional public bodies and state public bodies. Chairs of a public body may request to use an alternative method for open meetings from the Attorney General’s office.

Chairs of public bodies shall physically participate in meetings, whereas members may participate remotely, but cannot go between in person and virtual in a meeting. One-third of a public body’s members must participate in-person in the meeting to establish a quorum and the members that participate remotely will also have their votes count towards the quorum except for local commissions on disability.

All public bodies shall ensure that the public can access the meeting without payment and ensure that the meeting is accessible to members with disabilities.

The chair must be notified if there is a person making a video or audio of the meeting. The meeting shall not be disrupted and if the person continues to disrupt it the Chair may remove the person from the meeting. After qualifying for office, all persons shall receive a copy of the open meeting law.

SECTION 4: A public body shall maintain minutes of meetings and the minutes shall be approved by the following meeting or within 30 days, whichever is later.

SECTION 5: Minutes of a meeting may be available to a person who requests them within 10 business days.

SECTION 6: 10 business days after a non-disclosure of executive session minutes is no longer needed, they shall be posted online.

SECTION 7: A public body may send requester’s request for minutes to their website.

SECTION 8: A penalty of \$200 may be levied for a third or subsequent knowing violation by a member of a public body and the member may not use public funds.

SECTION 9: Inserts a clause that would punish a member of a public body by issuing a private education letter.

SECTION 10: A remedy may be to reimburse voters reasonable attorney’s fees for an action that is brought by 3 or more registered voters.

SECTION 11: This bill would become effective on 4/1/25.

HOUSE No. 3299

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Antonio F. D. Cabral

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 modernize participation in public meetings.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>1/8/2025</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Kristin E. Kassner</i>	<i>2nd Essex</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Christopher Richard Flanagan</i>	<i>1st Barnstable</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/12/2025</i>
<i>William F. MacGregor</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/12/2025</i>
<i>Michelle L. Badger</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>	<i>2/12/2025</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/12/2025</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>

<i>Leigh Davis</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Tara T. Hong</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Homar Gómez</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2025</i>
<i>John H. Rogers</i>	<i>12th Norfolk</i>	<i>3/3/2025</i>
<i>Jennifer Balinsky Armini</i>	<i>8th Essex</i>	<i>3/3/2025</i>
<i>Manny Cruz</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Adrienne Pusateri Ramos</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>3/7/2025</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>3/7/2025</i>
<i>John Francis Moran</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/7/2025</i>
<i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>	<i>20th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/11/2025</i>
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/11/2025</i>
<i>Norman J. Orrall</i>	<i>12th Bristol</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>Amy Mah Sangiolo</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/25/2025</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>4/6/2025</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/6/2025</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>	<i>4/7/2025</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>	<i>5/15/2025</i>
<i>Pavel M. Payano</i>	<i>First Essex</i>	<i>7/10/2025</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>7/10/2025</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>8/11/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3299

By Representative Cabral of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3299) of Antonio F. D. Cabral and others relative to participation in public meetings. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to modernize participation in public meetings.

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. Section 18 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “meeting”, in line 9, the
3 following word:- information.

4 SECTION 2. Section 18 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
5 by inserting at the end thereof the following:-

6 “Remote access,” access through the internet, video conferencing or other video
7 technology that allows the public to view and, when permitted or required, participate in a
8 meeting of a public body remotely from a location other than the meeting location.

9 “Remote participation,” participation by a member of a public body in a meeting of that
10 public body through internet, video conferencing or other video technology remotely from a
11 location other than the meeting location.

12 SECTION 3. Chapter 30A is hereby amended by striking out section 20 and inserting in
13 place thereof the following section:

14 Section 20 (a) Except as provided in section 21, all meetings of a public body shall be
15 physically open, and remotely accessible, to the public.

16 (b) Except in an emergency, in addition to any notice otherwise required by law, a public
17 body shall post notice of every meeting at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, excluding
18 Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. In an emergency, a public body shall post notice as soon
19 as reasonably possible prior to the meeting. Notice shall be printed in a legible, easily
20 understandable format and shall contain the date, time and place of the meeting and a listing of
21 topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting.

22 (c) For meetings of a local public body, notice shall be filed with the municipal clerk and
23 posted to the municipal website by the municipal clerk and may be posted in a manner
24 conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal building in which the
25 clerk's office is located. For meetings of a regional or district public body, notice shall be filed
26 and posted in each city or town within the region or district in the manner prescribed for local
27 public bodies and notice shall be posted on the regional or district public body's website. For
28 meetings of a regional school district, the secretary of the regional school district committee shall
29 be considered to be its clerk and shall file notice with the clerk of each city or town within the
30 district and the clerk of such each city or town shall post the notice in the manner prescribed for
31 local public bodies, and notice shall be posted on the regional school district's website. For
32 meetings of a county public body, notice shall be filed in the office of the county commissioners
33 for the county and shall be posted on the county public body's website, and notice may be posted

34 in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in the places as the county
35 commissioners shall designate for the purpose.

36 For meetings of a state public body, notice shall be filed with the attorney general by
37 posting on a website under the procedures established for this purpose and a duplicate copy of
38 the notice shall be filed with the regulations division in the state secretary's office and notice
39 shall be posted on the state public body's website, or the website of its parent agency.

40 The chair of a public body may petition the attorney general for the use of an alternative
41 method of notice where the use of a website is unduly burdensome or presents a hardship to the
42 public body or regional school district. The attorney general may prescribe or approve alternative
43 methods of notice where the attorney general determines that the use of a website is unduly
44 burdensome or presents a hardship and the alternative methods will afford effective notice to the
45 public.

46 (d) (1) All public bodies shall provide for remote access and remote participation at every
47 meeting.

48 (2) Members of a public body participating physically or participating remotely in a
49 meeting shall participate in the same manner for the duration of that meeting. A public body,
50 other than a local commission on disability, shall have at least one-third of its members
51 physically present at all meetings and members participating remotely may vote, count towards
52 the quorum, and shall not be deemed absent for the purposes of section 23D of chapter 39. The
53 chair of a local commission on disability or, in the chair's absence, the person authorized to chair
54 the meeting of a local commission on disability, shall be physically present at the meeting
55 location.

56 (3) Members of a state public body participating physically or participating remotely in a
57 meeting shall participate in the same manner for the duration of that meeting. A state public body
58 shall have at least one of its members physically present at all meetings and members
59 participating remotely may vote, count towards the quorum, and shall not be deemed absent for
60 the purposes of section 23D of chapter 39. All meetings of a state public body shall be video
61 recorded with access to the recording posted on the website of the public body within 10
62 business days after the meeting.

63 (4) Remote access allowing the public to view or participate in the deliberations of a
64 public body shall be available without any paid subscription, toll, or similar charge. All public
65 bodies shall ensure remote access to meetings is accessible to persons with disabilities and
66 provided in such a manner as to ensure equal opportunity to such persons. Public bodies shall
67 include captioning, which may be provided through automatic speech recognition technology, or
68 other reasonable accommodations if needed, consistent with the American Disabilities Act and
69 chapter 151B to persons with disabilities remotely accessing the meeting.

70 (6) All public bodies shall ensure that remote participation by members is accessible to
71 members with disabilities and provided in such a manner as to ensure equal opportunity to such
72 members. Public bodies shall include captioning, which may be provided through automatic
73 speech recognition technology, or other reasonable accommodations if needed, consistent with
74 the American Disabilities Act and chapter 151B to persons with disabilities participating
75 remotely.

76 (e) After notifying the chair of the public body, any person may make a video or audio
77 recording of an open session of a meeting of a public body, or may transmit the meeting through

78 any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the chair as to the number, placement and
79 operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. At the
80 beginning of the meeting, the chair shall inform other attendees of any recordings.

81 (f) No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair,
82 and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings
83 of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt
84 the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person
85 does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person
86 from the meeting.

87 (g) Within 2 weeks of qualification for office, all persons serving on a public body shall
88 certify, on a form prescribed by the attorney general, the receipt of a copy of the open meeting
89 law, regulations promulgated under section 25 and a copy of the educational materials prepared
90 by the attorney general explaining the open meeting law and its application under section 19.
91 Unless otherwise directed or approved by the attorney general, the appointing authority, city or
92 town clerk or the executive director or other appropriate administrator of a state or regional body,
93 or their designees, shall obtain certification from each person upon entering service and shall
94 retain it subject to the applicable records retention schedule where the body maintains its official
95 records. The certification shall be evidence that the member of a public body has read and
96 understands the requirements of the open meeting law and the consequences of violating it.

97 SECTION 4. Section 22 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
98 amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsections:-

99 (a) A public body shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including
100 executive sessions, setting forth the date, time and place, the members present or absent, a
101 summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the
102 meeting, the decisions made, and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all
103 votes. Minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions, shall be created, and approved by
104 the following meeting or within 30 days, whichever is later, unless the public body can show
105 good cause for further delay.

106 SECTION 5. Section 22 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
107 by striking subsection (c) and inserting in place thereof the following:-

108 (c) The minutes of an open session, if they exist and whether approved or in draft form,
109 shall be made available upon request to any person within 10 business days. A public body may,
110 within 10 business days, refer the requester to the public body's website where the requested
111 minutes, whether approved or in draft form, may be found. Within 10 business days of approval,
112 minutes of an open session shall be posted to the public body's website.

113

114 SECTION 6. Said Section 22 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
115 amended by inserting after the word "meeting", in line 60, the following words:-

116 Within 10 business days of a determination that continued non-disclosure of executive
117 session minutes is no longer warranted, such executive session minutes shall be posted to the
118 public body's website.

119 SECTION 7. Said section 22 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
120 amended by inserting after the word “review”, in line 69, the following words:-

121 A public body may, within 10 business days, refer the requester to the public body’s
122 website where the requested minutes may be found if all requested minutes have been released to
123 the public.

124

125 SECTION 8. Section 23 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
126 inserting after the word “violation”, in line 34, the following words: or a civil penalty of not
127 more than \$200 against any member of a public body for a third or subsequent knowing
128 violation. A civil penalty against an individual member of a public body shall not be
129 reimbursable with public funds.

130 SECTION 9. Subsection (c) of said section 23 of said Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is
131 hereby further amended by striking out the seventh clause and inserting in place thereof the
132 following clauses:- (7) issue a private education letter to a member of a public body; (8)
133 reprimand a member of a public body; provided, however, that no member of a public body shall
134 be reprimanded unless the attorney general has issued a private education letter to said member
135 within the past twelve months; or; (9) prescribe other appropriate action.

136 SECTION 10. Subsection (f) of said section 23 of said Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is
137 hereby further amended by inserting at the end thereof the following paragraph:-

138 The remedy created hereby is not exclusive but shall be in addition to every other
139 available remedy. In an action brought by 3 or more registered voters, such order of notice may
140 also require the public body to reimburse said voters reasonable attorney's fees and court costs.

141 SECTION 11. Sections 1 through 10 of this act shall take effect on April 1, 2025.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3302
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to establish a Massachusetts children’s cabinet
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Cabral of New Bedford
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	S. 115 (Sen. DiDomenico—Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-2024) H. 189: Reported out favorably, referred to House Rules

(2021-2022) H. 3187: Accompanied new draft, H. 5088, Favorable, referred to House Rules

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 6A: Establishing and outlining the duties and responsibilities of the state’s executive offices

SUMMARY

This bill would establish within the Executive Office of the Governor a Children's Cabinet to ensure that the public policy of the Commonwealth relating to children and youth is developed to promote interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the children’s self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life.

HOUSE No. 3302

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Antonio F. D. Cabral

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 a Massachusetts children’s cabinet.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>1/14/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3302

By Representative Cabral of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3302) of Antonio F. D. Cabral for legislation to establish a Massachusetts children’s cabinet. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 189 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to establish a Massachusetts children’s cabinet.

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

1 Chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by adding, after section 16FF, the following section:-

3 Section 16GG. There shall be established within the executive office of the governor a
4 children's cabinet. The cabinet shall include, but not be limited to: the secretary of administration
5 and finance; the secretary of health and human services; the secretary of education; the secretary
6 of labor and workforce development; the commissioner of the department of children, and
7 families; the secretary of the department of housing and community development; the
8 commissioner of the department of youth services; the commissioner of the department of
9 transitional assistance; the commissioner of the department of mental health, the commissioner
10 of the department of public health; the commissioner of the department of early education and

11 care; the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education; the
12 commissioner of the department of higher education; the commissioner of the department of
13 development services; the director of the office of the child advocate; and the assistant secretary
14 of health and human services for MassHealth; The cabinet shall be co-chaired by the secretary of
15 health and human services and the secretary of education.

16 (a) The cabinet shall ensure that the public policy of the Commonwealth relating to
17 children and youth is developed to promote interdepartmental collaboration and program
18 implementation in order that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and
19 delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the children's self-sufficiency, safety,
20 economic stability, health, and quality of life. The cabinet shall:

21 i. Develop and implement a shared and cohesive vision using integrated services to
22 improve child, youth, and family outcomes, including but not limited to issues relating to child
23 poverty, educational preparedness, mental health, homelessness, foster care, juvenile justice, and
24 the health, safety and welfare of children.

25 ii. Develop a strategic plan to achieve the goals of the shared and cohesive vision. The
26 plan shall be centered upon a long-term commitment to children and youth issues and align all
27 public resources to serve children and youth and their families in a manner that supports the
28 healthy growth and development of children. The plan shall include a continuum of services that
29 will benefit children from prenatal care through services for youth in transition to adulthood.

30 iii. Develop and implement measurable outcomes for each state department, agency, and
31 program that are consistent with the strategic plan. The cabinet shall establish a baseline

32 measurement for each outcome and regularly report on the progress made toward achieving the
33 desired outcome.

34 iv. Design and implement actions that will promote collaboration, creativity, increased
35 efficiency, information sharing, and improved service delivery between and within state
36 governmental organizations that provide services for children and youth and their families and
37 shall include the long-range planning process mandated by clause ii.

38 v. Recommend improvements to existing services and programs, as well as new programs
39 to meet unmet needs, based on data on current levels of use and outcomes wherever possible and
40 recommending evidence-based programs wherever possible and appropriate.

41 vi. Foster public awareness of children and youth issues and develop new partners in the
42 effort to serve children and youth.

43 vii Create a children and youth impact statement for evaluating proposed legislation,
44 requested appropriations, and programs. The impact statement shall be shared with the
45 legislature.

46 viii. Identify existing and potential funding streams and resources for children's services,
47 including, but not limited to, public funding, foundation and organization grants, and other forms
48 of private funding opportunities, including public-private partnerships.

49 ix. Develop a children and youth based budget structure and nomenclature that includes
50 all relevant departments, funding streams, and programs. The budget shall facilitate improved
51 coordination and efficiency, explore options for and allow maximization of federal financial
52 participation, and implement the state's vision and strategic plan.

53 x. Engage in other activities that will implement improved collaboration of agencies in
54 order to create, manage, and promote coordinated policies, programs, and service delivery
55 systems that support children and youth.

56 (b) The governor shall appoint an advisory committee that shall meet not less than four
57 times a year and jointly with the children’s cabinet not less than two times a year. The advisory
58 committee shall provide data-driven recommendations to address service gaps and regional
59 equity concerns and will shall provide recommendations on coordinating services across the
60 state. Members shall include the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on children,
61 families and persons with disabilities, 6-4 representatives from family resource centers including
62 representatives from the western, central, and southeastern regions of the state; the executive
63 director of the children’s trust fund or their designee; the executive director of the
64 parent/professional action league or their designee; the executive director of the center for health
65 information and analysis or their designee; the director of the department of family and medical
66 leave or their designee; a member of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission; the
67 director of the Massachusetts cultural council or their designee; the executive director of the
68 GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders or their designee; the president of the Baker Center for
69 Children and Families or their designee; the executive director of the Disability Law Center or
70 their designee; an executive director of a non-profit child welfare agency; and an additional 5
71 members with backgrounds including, but not limited to, pediatricians or other health care
72 professionals servicing children, early childhood educators, teachers, school administrators,
73 parents, youth, and other relevant experts with attention to diversity reflecting the composition of
74 the child population. The governor shall designate one of the members of the advisory committee
75 to serve as chair.

76 (c) The children's cabinet shall, by November 1 of each year, provide an annual report
77 concerning its activities, the status of children and youth in the commonwealth, and progress
78 towards achieving the goals outlined in this section to the governor, the legislature and the
79 public. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the
80 house and senate chairs of the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities;
81 the joint committee on education; the joint committee on higher education; the joint committee
82 on mental health and substance abuse; the joint committee on public health; the joint committee
83 on health care financing and the house and senate committees on ways and means.

84 (d) The executive office of the governor shall provide administrative support and service
85 to the cabinet. The cabinet shall meet at least four times each year and may solicit input from the
86 public and any other individual offering testimony relevant to the issues considered. Each
87 meeting must include a public comment session.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3303
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing an office of restorative justice
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Cataldo of Concord, Garballey of Arlington, and Donato of Medford
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	S. 2159 (Sen. Kennedy – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7: Executive Office for Administration and Finance

SUMMARY

Inserts a new section to chapter 7 to establish an office of restorative justice within the executive office for administration and finance and the secretary will appoint a director. The office shall assist government agencies and local communities on developing and expanding restorative justice initiatives. The director will have the authority to convene a statewide advisory committee and may establish fees to charge public agencies for their services. The office shall also prepare an annual report detailing the offices activities and funding.

HOUSE No. 3303

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Simon Cataldo and Sean Garballey

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 establishing an office of restorative justice.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Simon Cataldo</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/10/2025</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/10/2025</i>
<i>Paul J. Donato</i>	<i>35th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/4/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3303

By Representatives Cataldo of Concord and Garballey of Arlington, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3303) of Simon Cataldo, Sean Garballey and Paul J. Donato for legislation to establish an office of restorative justice within the executive office for administration and finance to build restorative justice capacity in the Commonwealth. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act establishing an office of restorative justice.

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 7 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
2 section:-

3 Section 63. There shall be an office of restorative justice within the executive office for
4 administration and finance, subject to appropriation. The office shall be under the supervision
5 and control of a director who shall be appointed by the secretary of administration and finance.
6 The director shall be a person with substantial training and professional experience in restorative
7 justice and shall maintain complete impartiality with respect to the matters coming before the
8 office and devote their full time to the duties of the office.

9 The office of restorative justice shall build restorative justice capacity across multiple
10 disciplines and serve as the primary administrative and funding entity for publicly sponsored
11 restorative justice initiatives in the commonwealth. The office shall be available to assist the

12 legislative, judicial and executive branches, counties, cities, towns, community organizations and
13 members of the public with developing and expanding restorative justice initiatives. The office
14 shall promote the implementation of chapter 276B of the General Laws and any other laws that
15 provide for the use of restorative justice.

16 (a) For purposes of this section, the term “restorative justice” shall have the same meaning
17 as in section 1 of said chapter 276B and include restorative practices rooted in community values
18 and incorporating restorative principles. Restorative practices under this section shall include,
19 but not be limited to victim-offender conferences, family group conferences, circles, community
20 conferences and other similar victim-centered practices. Restorative practices may be used at any
21 point before, during and after court involvement, to prevent court involvement and to support the
22 healing of harm within communities.

23 (b) The office, in collaboration with communities and government agencies and consistent
24 with restorative justice values, may: (i) design, develop, launch or fund restorative justice
25 programs; (ii) create standards and guidelines for best practices for administering, providing
26 training on and facilitating restorative justice programs operated or funded by the office; (iii)
27 conduct restorative justice educational programs and provide other technical assistance; (iv)
28 serve as a centralized repository for restorative justice resources; (v) establish policies and
29 procedures to effectuate the purposes of this section, including, but not limited to, provisions for
30 grant making, data collection, and evaluation of restorative justice programs operated or funded
31 by the office; and (vi) take other actions to promote restorative justice within local communities
32 and public entities of the commonwealth.

33 (c) The director shall convene a statewide advisory committee to guide the office of
34 restorative justice in carrying out the purposes of this section. The statewide advisory committee
35 shall consist of not more than 18 members trained in restorative justice practices; provided, that
36 there shall be an equal number of government members and non-government community
37 members on the committee; provided further, that the government members shall be from the
38 legislative, judicial and executive branches and government-related statewide associations,
39 including, but not limited to, representatives of public safety, law enforcement, victim services,
40 health and human services, education, child welfare and legal agencies; and provided further,
41 that the non-government community members shall be representatives of indigenous
42 communities, survivors, formerly incarcerated, incarcerated populations, community-based
43 restorative justice programs and practitioners working with juveniles and adults in communities,
44 schools and criminal justice systems. Members of the committee shall be selected from diverse
45 ethnicities, races, religions, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic statuses,
46 differently abled, and geographical backgrounds from throughout the commonwealth. The
47 members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be
48 reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

49 (d) The director may establish reasonable fees to be charged to public agencies for the
50 provision of restorative justice education, consultation or other services authorized under this
51 section, and may apply for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth any federal, local or
52 private grants, bequests, gifts or contributions to aid in the financing of any of the programs or
53 activities of the office. Fees, grants, bequests, gifts or contributions shall be received by the
54 office and deposited in a separate account and shall be expended, without further appropriation,
55 at the direction of the director for the cost of operating the office, including personnel, and for

56 programs funded by the office. The office may make agreements with public agencies and
57 officers and may contract with other persons, including private agencies, corporations or
58 associations, to carry out any of the functions and purposes of this section.

59 (e) Annually, the office shall annually prepare a report on its activities, including all
60 income and expenditures, and file the report with the governor, the secretary of administration
61 and finance, the secretary of public safety and security, the secretary of health and human
62 services, the secretary of education, the chief justice of the supreme judicial court, the chief
63 justice of the trial court, the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means, and
64 the chairs of the joint committee on public safety and homeland security, the joint committee on
65 mental health, substance use and recovery, the joint committee on the judiciary and the joint
66 committee on education not later than December 31.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3313
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Decker of Cambridge, Whipps of Athol, Elliott of Lowell, Higgins of Leominster, Connolly of Cambridge, Montañó of Boston, Scarsdale of Pepperell, Reyes of Lawrence, and Uytterhoeven of Somerville
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H.3291 (Identical — Rep. Barber) S.1386 (Identical — Sen. Creem)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H.2985: Favorable, referred to Health Care Financing

(2021-22) H.2063: Favorable, referred to Health Care Financing

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 19, Section 7: State facilities under the department of mental health control

Chapter 19, Section 16A: Program to provide remote mental health consultations

Chapter 123: Mental Health

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Inserts language to include Bridgewater State Hospital as a state facility under the control of the Dept. of Mental Health (“department”).

SECTION 2: Inserts language into the paragraph that the commissioner shall be responsible for Bridgewater State Hospital. The commissioner shall operate Bridgewater State Hospital under Section 16A of Chapter 19 and Chapter 123.

SECTION 3: Repeals Section 18 of Chapter 125 which removes Bridgewater State Hospital from the MA Correctional Institution.

SECTION 4: The department shall develop a division of forensic mental health services.

SECTIONS 5-9: Removes language that refers to the “medical director” for Bridgewater State Hospital.

SECTION 10: Repeals section 13 of chapter 123 that transfers dangerous males to Bridgewater State Hospital and the procedure of it.

SECTIONS 11-17: Removes language that refers to the “medical director” for Bridgewater State Hospital and inserts language the refers to the “superintendent” and “commissioner”.

SECTION 18: This section strikes section 21 of chapter 123 and inserts new language that copies of restraint forms shall be sent to the commissioner of the department and reviewed and signed within 30 days. Restraint records shall be kept by every facility and physician, but differs from the previous language because it removes “advanced practice registered nurse” from retaining the records. It also removes language that refers to “Bridgewater State Hospital”. The amended language also simplifies that the general public shall have access to the files without patient identification.

SECTION 19: Repeals section 33 of chapter 123 which details the expenses of apprehension of a mentally ill person or an alleged alcoholic.

SECTION 20: The commissioner of DMH shall conduct a feasibility study of constructing a new facility for patients at Bridgewater State Hospital.

SECTION 21: This bill goes into effect on December 31, 2026.

HOUSE No. 3313

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Marjorie C. Decker

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 transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/11/2025</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>3/17/2025</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/7/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>4/7/2025</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>5/28/2025</i>
<i>Estela A. Reyes</i>	<i>4th Essex</i>	<i>5/28/2025</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>7/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3313

By Representative Decker of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3313) of Marjorie C. Decker, Susannah M. Whipps and Rodney M. Elliott for legislation to transfer Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health.

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. Section 7 of Chapter 19, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting, in line 3, after the words "health facilities", the following new language:-
3 “, including the Bridgewater State Hospital,”:-

4 SECTION 2. Section 7 of Chapter 19, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
5 after the first paragraph the following paragraph:

6 The commissioner shall have the responsibility for the operation and oversight of
7 Bridgewater State Hospital and for providing, according to the rules and regulations of the
8 department of mental health, all medical and mental health treatment for all men sent to that
9 facility. The commissioner will operate Bridgewater State Hospital in accordance with section
10 16A of this chapter, the provisions of chapter 123 and regulations of the department. The
11 commissioner shall provide forensic services for individuals committed for evaluation or

12 treatment pursuant to sections 15 through 18 of chapter 123, as well as continuing care inpatient
13 services for individuals determined to require strict security in accordance with the regulations of
14 the department.

15 SECTION 3. Section 18 of Chapter 125, as so appearing, is hereby repealed.

16 SECTION 4. Chapter 19 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
17 inserting after section 16A the following section:—

18 Section 16B. The department shall develop and maintain, in accordance with its
19 standards, a division of forensic mental health services to provide forensic services that shall
20 include, but shall not be limited to: court-ordered evaluations of competence to stand trial,
21 criminal responsibility, and aid-in-sentencing; programs and services for restoration of
22 competence for individuals who have been adjudicated incompetent to stand trial; evaluations of
23 need for care and treatment for individuals who have been adjudicated incompetent to stand trial,
24 not guilty by reason of mental illness or who are being held in correctional facilities or places of
25 detention; the setting of standards for and certification of clinicians qualified to perform
26 evaluations; and specialized risk assessment evaluations; and the establishment and maintenance
27 of court clinics for the performance of clinical consultations and court-ordered evaluations.
28 Forensic services may also include, but shall not be limited to: programs and services for police
29 and pre-trial diversion; post adjudication alternatives to incarceration, including specialty court
30 services; and re-entry.

31 The division shall give major consideration to the development of forensic health services
32 that can be provided in the community or in settings other than an inpatient facility.

33 SECTION 5. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
34 the words “, or the medical director if said person is at the Bridgewater state hospital,” in the first
35 sentence of the first paragraph.

36 SECTION 6. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
37 out the words in the second paragraph “or the medical director at the Bridgewater state hospital”.

38 SECTION 7. Section 4 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
39 out in the third paragraph the words “or said medical director“.

40 SECTION 8. Section 7(b) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
41 replacing it with the following

42 (b) The Commissioner of mental health, or with the approval of the commissioner of
43 mental health, the superintendent of a facility, may petition the district court or the division of
44 the juvenile court department in whose jurisdiction the facility is located for the commitment to
45 the Bridgewater state hospital of any male patient at said facility when it is determined that the
46 failure to hospitalize in strict security would create a likelihood of serious harm by reason of
47 mental illness.

48 SECTION 9. Section 8B of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out the
49 words in the first paragraph “or medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

50 SECTION 10. Section 13 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby repealed.

51 SECTION 11. Section 14 of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is deleted and inserting in
52 place thereof the following paragraph:

53 Whenever the failure to retain any person in strict security would not create a likelihood
54 of serious harm by reason of mental illness but that such person is in need of further care and
55 treatment in a facility, the superintendent shall submit a request to the commissioner for a
56 transfer to another facility. The commissioner will approve transfer from Bridgewater to a
57 designated facility. The Commissioner shall execute the transfer within thirty days of receipt of
58 such request.

59 SECTION 12. Section 16(b) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
60 the words in the first sentence “or the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

61 SECTION 13. Section 16(e) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
62 the words “or medical director of Bridgewater state hospital”.

63 SECTION 14. Section 17(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
64 the words “or the medical director of Bridgewater state hospital” and striking out the words “or
65 medical director”.

66 SECTION 15 Section 17(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking the
67 words “or medical director”.

68 SECTION 16. Section 18(a) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
69 the words “and the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital” and “; provided, however,
70 that, notwithstanding the court's failure, after an initial hearing or after any subsequent hearing,
71 to make a finding required for commitment to the Bridgewater state hospital, the prisoner shall
72 be confined at said hospital if the findings required for commitment to a facility are made and if
73 the commissioner of correction certifies to the court that confinement of the prisoner at said
74 hospital is necessary to insure his continued retention in custody.”

75 SECTION 17. Section 18(c) of Chapter 123, as so appearing, is amended by striking out
76 the words “or the medical director of the Bridgewater state hospital”.

77 SECTION 18. Section 21 of Chapter 123 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
78 amended by striking out the twelfth paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following
79 paragraph:–

80 A copy of the restraint form and any such attachments shall become part of the chart of
81 the patient. Copies of all restraint forms and attachments shall be sent to the commissioner of
82 mental health who will review and sign them within thirty days. Statistical restraint records shall
83 be kept for every facility and each designated physician, in a form and manner that will permit
84 the commissioner to analyze and, if appropriate, request corrective action regarding the use of
85 restraint in facilities under supervision and control of the department and all facilities licensed by
86 it. Such data, excluding patient identification, shall be made available to the general public.

87 SECTION 19. Section 33 of chapter 123 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
88 repealed.

89 SECTION 20. The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health shall conduct a
90 study of the feasibility of constructing a new physical facility for the treatment of patients
91 currently held at Bridgewater State Hospital which shall support the health and recovery of the
92 patients. The study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the possible locations
93 for the construction of the facility, including the campus of the Worcester Recovery Center.

94 SECTION 21. This Act shall be effective no later than December 31, 2026.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3328
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to virtual meetings of appointed statewide public bodies
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Farley-Bouvier of Pittsfield and Domb of Amherst
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3671: Accompanied a redraft

(2021-22) H. 3224: Accompanied a redraft

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A, Section 20: This paragraph allows the attorney general to authorize remote participation for public bodies

SUMMARY

This new section would allow an appointed statewide public body to allow members to participate remotely and be considered present for quorums. All in-person and remote members of the public body participating shall be clearly audible and have their names be viewed for everyone. The public body shall ensure public access to the deliberations through adequate alternative means in a transparent and timely manner without a subscription, toll, or similar charge. The public shall have access and if allowed, participate, in the meeting via audio or video or any other technology that ensures the public is able to follow the meeting. Any documents used for the meeting should be available to the public before or at the time of the meeting. This will not apply to municipal bodies.

HOUSE No. 3328

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Mindy Domb

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 relative to virtual meetings of appointed statewide public bodies.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>	<i>1/14/2025</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3328

By Representatives Farley-Bouvier of Pittsfield and Domb of Amherst, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3328) of Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Mindy Domb relative to virtual meetings of appointed statewide public bodies. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3671 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to virtual meetings of appointed statewide public bodies.

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. Section 20 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out subsection (d).

3 SECTION 2. Said chapter 30A is hereby further amended by inserting after section 20
4 the following section:

5 Section 20A. (1) A statewide public body, hereafter “public body”, whose members are
6 appointed may allow remote participation by any member for any meeting of the public body.
7 For the purposes of this section, the term “remote participation” means participation by a
8 member of a public body during a meeting of that public body where the member is not
9 physically present at the meeting location.

10 (2) Members remotely participating in a meeting may vote and shall be considered
11 present and in attendance for all purposes, including for purposes of determining a quorum.

12 (3) All members of the public body participating either remotely or at a meeting location
13 shall be clearly audible to one another and shall make known the names of members of the
14 public body and the public present either remotely or at a meeting location.

15 (4) For any meeting conducted through remote participation, the public body shall make
16 provisions to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body for interested members
17 of the public through adequate, alternative means. Adequate, alternative means of public access
18 shall mean measures that provide transparency and permit timely and effective public access to
19 the virtual meeting. Such means may include, without limitation, providing public access
20 through telephone, internet or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other
21 technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the virtual meeting while
22 those proceedings are occurring. Documents used for any such meeting should be made available

23 to the public before or at the time of the meeting of the public body. Where allowance for
24 active, real-time participation by members of the public is required by law, pursuant to which the
25 proceeding is conducted, any alternative means of public access shall provide for such
26 participation. A public body shall offer its selected alternative means of public access to virtual
27 meetings without subscription, toll or similar charge to the public.

28 (5) A public body that elects to conduct its proceedings remotely shall ensure that any
29 party entitled or required to appear before it may do so through remote means, as if the party
30 were a member of the public body participating remotely.

31 (6) This section shall not apply to any municipal body.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3331
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Ferrante of Gloucester, Kane of Shrewsbury, Gentile of Sudbury, and Domb of Amherst
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-2024) H. 3029: Favorable, referred to House Ways and Means

(2021-2022) H. 3144: Favorable, referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 6A, Section 2: Establishing the state's executive offices

Chapter 23G, Section 3: Outlining the powers of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Amends Section 2 of Chapter 6A of the General Laws by adding "food resources and security" to the list of areas under the jurisdiction of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

SECTION 2: Amends Section 3 of Chapter 23G of the General Laws by authorizing the provision of loans to food producers selected by the Department of Investment and Financing for Food Production, as outlined in Section 10 of Chapter 28B.

SECTION 3: Inserts a new chapter following section 28A.

The proposed addition of Chapter 28B includes the following sections:

SECTION 1: Defines key terms used in the chapter (i.e. food producer, food production, office, and secretary)

SECTION 2: Establishes the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security, which will be overseen by a secretary appointed by the governor. The secretary is empowered to issue regulations related to laws administered by the office. The office will include several departments focused on different aspects of food policy, such as food production, workforce development, food security, innovation, and nutrition.

Each department will be led by a commissioner, also appointed by the secretary with the governor's approval. Commissioners are required to have relevant expertise, may adopt regulations, and will oversee staffing in their departments. The secretary is authorized to consolidate shared administrative functions across departments—such as HR, finance, IT, and legal—to improve efficiency. Commissioner positions are exempt from civil service rules, and in case of a vacancy or emergency, the secretary may appoint acting commissioners for up to six months.

SECTION 3: Outlines the responsibilities of the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security and its departments in carrying out policies related to food production in Massachusetts. Their duties include:

- Supporting food producers to operate safely, effectively, and sustainably
- Promoting job creation and economic development in food production and local distribution
- Building a strong and attractive workforce pipeline for future food industry workers and researchers
- Developing programs to improve nutrition and encourage healthy eating habits
- Creating statewide marketing and branding strategies to boost demand for local foods
- Conducting scientific research on food production, transportation, and consumption
- Forming public and private partnerships to advance food policy goals
- Offering support to reduce production costs and improve financial planning for food producers

- Strengthening in-state food production to reduce reliance on out-of-state imports
- Enhancing relationships between food producers and consumers to foster cultural and economic growth
- Acting as a resource hub for food-related information and assisting institutions at all levels
- Representing the state in federal food-related grant programs
- Managing administrative tasks, such as contracts, records, and property acquisitions
- Assisting local governments and agencies with food-related grant and loan applications
- Coordinating educational and research programs at public institutions of higher learning
- Issuing regulations needed to fulfill the office's statutory duties.

SECTION 5: Outlines the responsibilities of the Secretary of Food Resources and Security in overseeing the executive office. The secretary is required to:

- Conduct comprehensive planning and coordinate departmental activities to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Regularly review operations to enhance administrative structure, procedures, and cost-effectiveness.
- Prepare an annual report detailing the office's structure, departmental activities, and how the public can access information or services.
- Include in the report an annual evaluation of food production, distribution, labeling, and consumption in Massachusetts, along with recommendations for best practices.
- Collaborate with state institutions of higher education to utilize their research, technical, and educational resources in support of the office's mission.

SECTION 6: Authorizes the secretary, with the governor's approval and subject to appropriation, to appoint experts and assistants necessary for the office's functions. These appointments are exempt from certain civil service laws (chapter 31 and section 9A of chapter 30). Appointees must have experience and skill relevant to their positions. The secretary is encouraged to promote classified state employees when possible.

Employees appointed from classified positions who leave those positions for unclassified roles in the office have the right to return to their previous classified positions without loss of seniority, tenure, or other rights. During their unclassified service, they remain eligible to take competitive promotional exams for which they qualify.

SECTION 7: Establishes the department of food production responsible for promoting effective, profitable, and safe food production across farms and fishing communities within the commonwealth.

SECTION 8: Establishes a Department of Food Labor and Workforce Development tasked with creating economic incentive programs for food producers, building a skilled workforce for future food production and research, and supporting research into new economic growth opportunities in food

production and distribution within the commonwealth.

SECTION 9: Establishes a Department of Food Innovation, Development, and Research responsible for conducting scientific research and maintaining laboratories to support food producers. The department will study how environmental, biological, meteorological, and chemical factors affect food production in the commonwealth, aiming to develop new methods and technologies to conserve and improve agricultural fields, water resources, and wildlife for food production.

SECTION 10: Establishes a Department of Investment and Financial Planning for Food Production. The department will identify and select food producers eligible for loans from the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, giving preference to those in designated port areas. It will research production methods, explore shared equipment and infrastructure opportunities, and recommend ways to reduce production and transportation costs. Additionally, the department will develop programs to attract entrepreneurs and new investors by providing equity-like, risk capital to support production growth with smaller investments and lower returns.

SECTION 11: Establishes a Department of Food Security, Identification, and Labeling responsible for developing and managing programs and policies to enhance food management and security. The department will also research and implement advanced food tracking systems, management policies, and labeling procedures to ensure a secure food infrastructure in the commonwealth.

SECTION 12: Creates a Department of Economic Development for Locally-Produced Food, tasked with developing and managing public relations, marketing, and branding programs to encourage public institutions and private businesses to buy locally grown foods, thereby supporting and strengthening local food producers in the marketplace.

SECTION 13: Establishes a Department of Nutrition and Food Health responsible for creating and managing public relations campaigns and programs that provide nutritional education to food producers and consumers and promote healthy eating habits among the public.

SECTION 14: Establishes a Department of Self-Sufficiency for Food Production tasked with developing and managing programs aimed at increasing Massachusetts' capacity to produce enough food locally to feed its residents without relying on imports from other states.

HOUSE No. 3331

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Ann-Margaret Ferrante and Hannah Kane

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 establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Ann-Margaret Ferrante</i>	<i>5th Essex</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3331

By Representatives Ferrante of Gloucester and Kane of Shrewsbury, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3331) of Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Hannah Kane and others for legislation to establish an executive office of food resources and security. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3029 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**
—————

An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

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. Section 2 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “affairs”, in line 3, the following
3 words:- , food resources and security.

4 SECTION 2. Section 3 of chapter 23G of the General Laws is hereby amended by
5 inserting after the word “projects”, in line 89, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, the
6 following words:- and loans to food producers selected by the department of investment and
7 financing for food production pursuant to section 10 of chapter 28B.

8 SECTION 3. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after section 28A the
9 following chapter:-

10 CHAPTER 28B.

11 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF FOOD RESOURCES AND SECURITY

12 Section 1. As used in this chapter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly
13 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

14 “Food Producer”, a person who produces food by farming, as that term is defined in
15 section 1A of chapter 128, in the commonwealth, or by taking and selling fish, including
16 shellfish, lobsters, edible crabs or other living marine resources, from coastal waters of the
17 commonwealth under a commercial fishing license, permit or certificate issued pursuant to
18 chapter 130.

19 “Food production”, the process by which a food producer cultivates, raises, harvests,
20 collects, takes, gathers or otherwise handles plant or animal life, in whole or in part, whether or
21 not embedded in the soil, for the purpose of offering for sale such plant or animal life, or part
22 thereof, as food in the open market.

23 “Office”, the executive office of food resources and security.

24 “Secretary”, the secretary of food resources and security.

25 Section 2. There shall be an executive office of food resources and security, which shall
26 be under the supervision and control of a secretary of food resources and security, appointed by
27 the governor. The secretary may, pursuant to chapter 30A, adopt regulations for the
28 implementation or interpretation of any law enforced or administered by any department, office,
29 agency, or other entity in the executive office of food resources and security. In the executive
30 office shall be the department of food production, the department of food labor and workforce

31 development, the department of food innovation, development and research, the department of
32 investment and financing for food production, the department of food security, identification and
33 labeling, the department of economic development for locally-produced food, the department of
34 nutrition and food health and the department of self-sufficiency for food production. Each
35 department shall be headed by a commissioner. The executive office shall be organized and shall
36 function as a single state agency with the authority and control for administrative purposes
37 including, but not limited to, for the purposes of the accounting and financial system of the
38 commonwealth. The secretary shall, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary,
39 identify and consolidate administrative activities and functions common to the separate
40 departments within the office and may designate such functions “core administrative functions”
41 in order to improve administrative efficiency and preserve fiscal resources; provided, however,
42 that common functions that shall be designated core administrative functions shall include, but
43 shall not be limited to, human resources, financial management, information technology, legal,
44 procurement and asset management.

45 Each commissioner shall be appointed and may be removed by the secretary, with the
46 approval of the governor. Each commissioner shall be a person of skill and experience in the
47 field of his appointment. The commissioner of each department may adopt reasonable
48 regulations to allow those employees within his or her department to testify in civil proceedings
49 so as to further the performance of the department's business. The commissioner of each
50 department shall appoint all necessary employees within the department, except as may be
51 otherwise provided by law. The positions of commissioner shall not be subject to the provisions
52 of chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30. Each commissioner shall perform such functions as
53 may be assigned to him by the secretary and shall devote his full time during business hours to

54 the duties of the position. In case of a vacancy or an emergency, the secretary may appoint a
55 person as acting commissioner for a period not exceeding 6 months, of any of the above
56 departments, provided, the appointee is a person of skill and experience in the field of his or her
57 appointment. The positions of the commissioners shall be classified in accordance with section
58 45 of chapter 30 and the salaries shall be determined in accordance with section 46C of said
59 chapter 30.

60 Section 3. The office and its appropriate departments shall carry out policy relative to
61 food production and in so doing shall:

62 (1) foster and support food producers so they are able to effectively and safely produce,
63 market and sell food in a sustainable manner throughout the commonwealth.

64 (2) promote job creation and economic development in food production and local food
65 distribution;

66 (3) create a workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for
67 next-generation food production workers and researchers;

68 (4) develop and administer programs and incentives to improve nutrition and promote
69 healthy eating habits across all age groups;

70 (5) develop statewide polices to increase demand for local foods through marketing and
71 branding initiatives, and improve market and environmental statistics to support such polices;

72 (6) encourage, support, and undertake research and maintain laboratory and other
73 research facilities to produce information regarding the science of food production,

74 transportation and consumption for the benefit of the commonwealth, its communities, its
75 citizens and other interested parties;

76 (7) enter into contracts and partnerships with private and public institutions for the
77 advancement of the goals and directives set forth in this chapter;

78 (8) develop and administer programs and recommendations to reduce input costs, while
79 strengthening financing and business planning for food producers;

80 (9) develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the
81 commonwealth so that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens
82 without importation of food from other states;

83 (10) foster strong relationships with food producers and consumers to achieve the goals
84 and directives set forth in this chapter while creating opportunities for cultural and economic
85 growth for the citizens of this commonwealth;

86 (11) advise and assist local governments, private and public institutions, organizations
87 and associations, businesses, industries, and individuals by providing and acting as a
88 clearinghouse for food production and labeling and consumption information, data, and other
89 materials;

90 (12) represent and act on behalf of the commonwealth in connection with federal grant
91 programs;

92 (13) keep accounts, records, personal data, enter into contracts, adjust claims, accept
93 gifts, grants, bequests and devises, and subject to appropriation, acquire real or personal property
94 by eminent domain or otherwise;

95 (14) advise and assist state agencies, cities, towns, and other units of local government in
96 the preparation of grant or loan applications with respect to any food production or protection
97 programs;

98 (15) coordinate activities among public institutions of higher education to engage in
99 complementary state educational programs and collaborative research initiatives regarding food
100 production; and

101 (16) promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out their statutory
102 responsibilities.

103 Section 4. The secretary shall have the following powers and duties concerning any
104 power or duty assigned to any department:

105 (1) the power and duty to resolve administrative and jurisdictional conflicts between any
106 such departments or officers;

107 (2) the power and duty to implement, upon request of any such department or officer,
108 programs jointly agreed to by the secretary and such agency or officer; and

109 (3) the power and duty to coordinate and improve program activities involving 2 or more
110 such departments or officers.

111 Section 5. The secretary shall conduct comprehensive planning with respect to the
112 functions of the office and shall coordinate the activities and programs of the departments and
113 divisions within the office. The secretary shall continually review the operations of the office
114 with a view toward improving administrative organization, procedures and practices, promoting
115 economy and efficiency.

116 The secretary shall prepare annually a report of the organization and activities of the
117 office as individually reported by the various departments and divisions within the office, the
118 assignment of functions to various administrative units, officers and employees, and of the
119 established places at which, and the methods whereby, the public may receive information or
120 may make requests, and such other matters as the secretary deem appropriate.

121 The secretary shall annually evaluate the status of the production, distribution, labeling
122 and consumption of food within the commonwealth. This evaluation shall be submitted as a part
123 of the report referred to in the preceding paragraph, and it shall be accompanied by
124 recommendations for appropriate actions to be taken to achieve best practices with respect to the
125 production, distribution, labeling and consumption of food within the commonwealth.

126 In order to carry out the provisions of this chapter the secretary may, and is encouraged
127 to, seek the laboratory, technical, education, and research skills and facilities of state institutions
128 of higher learning.

129 Section 6. Subject to appropriation, the secretary, with the approval of the governor, may
130 appoint such experts and other assistants as he shall deem necessary to perform the functions of
131 his office, provided that the provisions of chapter 31 and section 9A of chapter 30 shall not apply
132 to any person holding any such appointment. Every person so appointed to any position in his
133 office shall have experience and skill in the field of such position. So far as practicable in the
134 judgment of the secretary, appointments to such positions in his office shall be made by
135 promoting employees of the commonwealth serving in positions which are classified under
136 chapter 31, and such appointments shall at all times reflect the professional needs of the
137 department or division affected. If an employee serving in a position which is classified under

138 chapter 31 or in which he has tenure by reason of section 9A of chapter 30 shall be appointed to
139 a position within his office which is not subject to the provisions of chapter 31, he shall upon
140 termination of his service in such unclassified position be restored to the position which he held
141 immediately prior to such appointment; provided, however, that his service in such unclassified
142 position shall be determined by the civil service commission in accordance with the standards
143 applied by said commission in administering chapter 31. Such restoration shall be made without
144 impairment of his civil service status or tenure under section 9A of chapter 30 and without loss
145 of seniority, retirement, or other rights to which uninterrupted service in such prior position
146 would have entitled him. During the period of such appointment, each person so appointed from
147 a position in the classified civil service shall be eligible to take any competitive promotional
148 examination for which he would otherwise have been eligible.

149 Section 7. There shall be a department of food production broadly tasked with promoting
150 the effective, profitable and safe production of food throughout farms and fishing communities
151 located in the commonwealth.

152 Section 8. There shall be a department of food labor and workforce development, which
153 shall: (1) develop programs that provide economic incentive to food producers; (2) create a
154 workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for future food
155 production workers and researchers; and (3) encourage, support, and undertake research into
156 alternative centers of economic growth for food production and distribution within the
157 commonwealth, including projects like the Gloucester Genomics Institute.

158 Section 9. There shall be a department of food innovation, development and research,
159 which shall undertake research and maintain laboratory and other research facilities to provide

160 information to food producers and other interested parties regarding the science behind food
161 production. The department shall undertake research regarding the impact that specific
162 environmental, biological, meteorological and chemical conditions have on food production in
163 the commonwealth in order to, develop new sciences, proposals and techniques for the
164 conservation and enhancement of fields, water and wildlife for food production.

165 Section 10. There shall be a department of investment and financial planning for food
166 production, which shall identify and select food producers who are eligible to receive loans from
167 the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency pursuant to clause (17) of section 3 of chapter
168 23G, based on criteria to be determined by the department; provided, however, in selecting food
169 producers pursuant to this section, the department shall give preference to food producers
170 operating in designated port areas. The department shall research and investigate production and
171 operation methods of food producers, including the possibility and efficacy for producers to
172 utilize shared equipment and infrastructure, and make recommendations to reduce input costs
173 associated with production and transportation. The department shall develop programs and make
174 recommendations to food producers designed to attract entrepreneurs and other new investors
175 with a focus on providing equity-like, risk capital for production growth to be supplied in smaller
176 amounts and at lower returns.

177 Section 11. There shall be a department of food security, identification and labeling,
178 which shall develop and administer programs and policies to improve food management and
179 security and shall research the efficacy and implementation of next-generation food tracking
180 systems, food management policies and labeling procedures to ensure a secure food
181 infrastructure in the commonwealth.

182 Section 12. There shall be a department of economic development for locally-produced
183 food that shall develop and administer public relations campaigns and marketing and branding
184 programs to encourage public institutions and private businesses to purchase locally grown foods
185 in order to strengthen and maintain local food producers positions in the local marketplace.

186 Section 13. There shall be a department of nutrition and food health, which shall develop
187 and administer a public relations campaign and other programs designed to: (i) provide
188 nutritional education to food producers and consumers; and (ii) encourage consumers to adopt
189 healthy eating habits.

190 Section 14. There shall be a department of self-sufficiency for food production, which
191 shall develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the commonwealth so
192 that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens without importation
193 of food from other states.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3336
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to MWRA employees
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Garballey of Arlington
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3034: Accompanied study order, H. 4675

(2021-22) H. 3146: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

(2019-20) H. 2700: Accompanied study order, H. 5103

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 296 of the Acts of 1993: Taxpayer Protection Act

SUMMARY

This legislation requires that the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) be subject to the provisions of Chapter 296 of the Acts of 1993, also known as the Taxpayer Protection Act.

HOUSE No. 3336

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sean Garballey

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 relative to MWRA employees.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/16/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3336

By Representative Garballey of Arlington, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3336) of Sean Garballey relative to privatization contracts of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3034 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to MWRA employees.

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

- 1 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the Massachusetts Water
- 2 Resources Authority shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 296 of the Acts of 1993.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3342
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Gregoire of Marlborough, Badger of Plymouth, Gómez of Easthampton, Kassner of Hamilton, Xiarhos of Barnstable, Ashe of Longmeadow, Sweezey of Duxbury, Garcia of Chelsea, Arena-DeRosa of Holliston, Donaghue of Westborough, Arciero of Westford, Kushmerek of Fitchburg, and Gentile of Sudbury; Senators Oliveira, Eldridge, and Brady
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	S. 2197 (Sen. Oliveira – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A, Section 20: Open Meeting Law

Chapter 39: Municipal government

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Gives “Select Board” the same meaning as “Board of Selectmen” that’s used in general or special law or municipal charters.

SECTION 2: Amends Section 20 of Chapter 30A by striking paragraphs (d) and (e). Paragraph (d) allowed the attorney general to authorize members of a public body to participate in a meeting remotely. Paragraph (e) allows remote meetings for local commissions on disability.

SECTION 3: Inserts section 20A after section 20 of chapter 30A.

This section allows for remote participation in public body meetings including for those who are required or entitled to attend the meetings and those that participate remotely shall count towards the quorum. It requires public bodies to ensure access to remote participation without charge. It outlines rules for remote participation regarding voting, the distribution of documents, and the creation and adoption of guidelines for such meetings.

SECTION 4: Requires the attorney general to develop the best practices for remote participation within 90 days of the effective date of this act but will not take effect until a public hearing. There must be at least 2 week’s notice for the public hearing and the public should have access to the proposed guidelines.

SECTION 5: Inserts section 10B and 10C after section 10A to chapter 39.

This section allows for a select board to vote to delay the date of an annual election to a date no earlier than 64 days from the vote to postpone and no later than June 30 of that fiscal year. It outlines the procedures for delaying elections based on weather, public safety or public health emergencies. It also allows for remote meetings regarding postponements and to comply with the open meeting law and election laws as much as possible.

This section allows for a moderator, in consultation with a select board and public safety/health officials, to call for any town meeting to be held through remote participation or hybrid. It also outlines the procedure for notice and details the minimum requirements for a video or telephone conference platform for meetings. When having a remote meeting, the moderator must ensure that everyone can hear them, that those who are participating in the meeting can hear one another, determine that there is a quorum, conduct a roll call, allow the public to have access to the meeting, and for the meeting to be recorded.

Registered voters have no less than 48 hours before a meeting to submit a request for remote participation and will be provided with the appropriate information no later than 48 hours before the meeting. Votes taken by roll call at a remote or hybrid meeting shall be recorded, and the recorded meeting shall be available on the town’s website for at least 90 days after the meeting or until the town clerk prepares the meeting’s minutes.

HOUSE No. 3342

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Danielle W. Gregoire

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 modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Danielle W. Gregoire</i>	<i>4th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/16/2025</i>
<i>Jacob R. Oliveira</i>	<i>Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester</i>	<i>2/19/2025</i>
<i>Michelle L. Badger</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Homar Gómez</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Kristin E. Kassner</i>	<i>2nd Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>3/4/2025</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>3/4/2025</i>
<i>Kenneth P. Swezey</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>	<i>3/6/2025</i>
<i>Judith A. Garcia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/11/2025</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/13/2025</i>
<i>Kate Donaghue</i>	<i>19th Worcester</i>	<i>3/13/2025</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/19/2025</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/27/2025</i>
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/27/2025</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>4/1/2025</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>5/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3342

By Representative Gregoire of Marlborough, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3342) of Danielle W. Gregoire and others relative to remote participation of municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections.

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. For the purposes of this Act, the term “Select Board” shall have the same
2 meaning as “Board of Selectmen” as that term is used in any general or special law or municipal
3 charter.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
5 Edition, is hereby amended by striking out paragraphs (d) and (e) of section 20 and renumbering
6 the remaining paragraphs accordingly.

7 SECTION 3. Chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
8 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 20 the following section:-

9 SECTION 20A

10 (a) A public body may elect to allow remote participation by any member for any
11 meeting of the public body. For the purposes of this section, the term remote participation means

12 participation by a member of a public body by means other than physical presence, which may
13 include, without limitation, participation by telephone, audio or video conferencing or any other
14 technology that enables each member of the public body to be audible to all other members of
15 the public body and the public.

16 (b) Members remotely participating in a meeting may vote, and shall be considered
17 present and in attendance for all purposes, including for purposes of determining a quorum and
18 for the purposes of section 23D of chapter 39.

19 (c) If a public body allows remote participation by its members for a meeting under
20 subsection (a), it may also allow remote participation by members of the public and any party
21 entitled or required to appear before it in accordance with the following requirements:

22 (i) A public body that elects to conduct its proceedings completely or partially through
23 remote means in accordance with this section shall ensure public access to the deliberations of
24 the public body for interested members of the public through adequate, alternative means. A
25 public body shall offer its selected adequate, alternative means of public access to its
26 proceedings without subscription, toll, or similar charge to the public.

27 (ii) Documents intended to be used for any such meeting shall be made available to
28 members of the public body before or during the course of the meeting of the public body subject
29 to any limitations as may be imposed by law.

30 (iii) If the opportunity for participation at a meeting of a public body by an individual or
31 the public is a specific requirement of a particular general or special law or state regulation,
32 charter, local ordinance or bylaw, any alternative means of public access shall provide for the
33 required opportunity to participate; provided further however that this section shall not impose

34 on any public body a general requirement to allow the public to speak, absent an applicable
35 special law or charter, or to participate in the debate of the public body. A public body shall offer
36 its selected alternative means of public access to virtual meetings without subscription, toll, or
37 similar charge to the public.

38 (iv) If a member is participating remotely, all votes taken shall be recorded roll call votes.

39 (v) A municipal public body that for reasons of economic hardship is unable to provide
40 adequate, alternative means of public access that will enable the public to follow the proceedings
41 of the municipal public body may instead post on its municipal website a full and complete
42 transcript, recording or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as practicable
43 upon conclusion of the proceedings.

44 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the chief executive officer of a
45 municipality may develop and adopt standards and guidelines regarding remote participation of
46 public bodies of that municipality; provided however that a local commission on disability may
47 adopt its own standards and guidelines for remote participation applicable to meetings of such
48 local commission on disability only.

49 (e) State, county, and regional public bodies, and public bodies that are not otherwise a
50 department or subdivision of a city or town, may adopt their own standards and guidelines for
51 remote participation applicable to meetings of such public body.

52 SECTION 4. Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this act, the attorney general
53 shall develop best practices for remote participation of public bodies in furtherance of the
54 foregoing Section 3 of this act provided, however, that such proposed best practices guidelines
55 shall not take effect until a public hearing, for which at least 2 weeks notice is provided and such

56 proposed guidelines are made available to the public, is held 2 weeks has passed since that public
57 hearing.

58 SECTION 5. Chapter 39 of the general laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is
59 hereby amended by inserting after Section 10A the following two sections:

60 SECTION 10B.

61 (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law, charter provision or bylaw to the
62 contrary, a select board may vote, prior to the date nomination papers must be submitted to the
63 town clerk under the provisions of section 7 of chapter 53 of the general laws, to delay the date
64 of an annual election to a date no earlier than 64 days from the vote to postpone and no later than
65 June 30 of that fiscal year.

66 (b) Notwithstanding any general or special law, charter provision or bylaw to the
67 contrary, a select board may, during any weather-related, public safety or public health
68 emergency declared by the chief executive officer of the town or the governor, and for the 5 days
69 after such emergency has terminated, postpone a properly posted caucus or election to an initial
70 date certain. If the nature of the emergency precludes identification of an initial date certain or
71 renders the initial date inconvenient or impossible, the select board shall meet expeditiously, in
72 accordance with chapter 30A of the general laws, and after consultation with the town clerk, to
73 vote on a date certain.

74 (c) (i) If an election is postponed hereunder, all of the deadlines applicable to and all of
75 materials prepared for and submitted in connection with the original election shall be used at
76 such postponed election; provided, however, that if an election is postponed for less than 7 days,
77 early voting by mail and absentee ballots properly received prior to the close of polls on the date

78 of the postponed election shall be treated as if they were timely received. If a scheduled election
79 is postponed for more than 7 days from the original date, any such election shall be held no
80 earlier than 15 days from the date of the postponement to accommodate additional voter
81 registration, early voting by mail and absentee voting by the otherwise applicable statutory
82 deadlines.

83 (ii) Except as set forth herein, all provisions of election law applicable to the original
84 election shall apply to such postponed election in the same manner.

85 (iii) Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 30A or other state or local law to the
86 contrary, a meeting to vote on a postponement may be held by remote participation of some or
87 all of the members, and such public body shall endeavor, to the maximum extent possible, to
88 comply with all other provisions of sections 18 to 25 of chapter 30A. If the public body is not
89 able to comply with the provisions of said chapter 30A, it shall hold a properly posted meeting
90 within one week following at which an item substantially similar to the following shall appear on
91 the agenda: "Review action taken at (date) (time) meeting of (name of board) and adopt minutes
92 from such meeting to be included with the minutes of this meeting".

93 (d) Notice of postponement shall be prepared by the town clerk and printed in a legible,
94 easily understandable format with the date, time and place of the rescheduled caucus or election,
95 the reason for the postponement, and the date and time of the select board vote for postponement.
96 To the extent practicable, notice shall be posted in the manner in which that municipality
97 provides notice of meetings pursuant to chapter 30A, whether on the municipal website or in a
98 manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal building in which
99 the clerk's office is located. The town clerk shall forthwith send a copy of the notice to the

100 offices of the attorney general and secretary of the commonwealth, and may use any other form
101 of communication to notify the voters of the postponement, including but not limited to
102 electronic, broadcast or print media.

103 SECTION 10C.

104 (a) In a town having a representative or open town meeting form of government, the town
105 moderator may, in consultation with the select board and local public safety or public health
106 officials, call for any town meeting to be held through remote participation or a hybrid of in-
107 person and remote participation, including, but not limited to, by means of a video or telephone
108 conferencing platform. If a town does not have a moderator, the select board may call for any
109 town meeting to be held through remote participation or a hybrid of in-person and remote
110 participation in accordance with this paragraph.

111 (b) A notice of decision to hold town meeting through remote participation or a hybrid of
112 in-person and remote participation shall be prepared by the moderator and printed in a legible,
113 easily understandable format and shall contain: (i) the moderator's determination and request to
114 hold a town meeting through remote participation or a hybrid of in-person and remote
115 participation in accordance with this section; (ii) the video or telephone conferencing platform
116 the moderator has determined to use to hold the town meeting; (iii) confirmation that the
117 moderator has consulted with the local disability commission or coordinator for federal
118 Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; (iv) confirmation that the moderator has consulted
119 with the select board; and (v) a certification by the moderator that: (A) the moderator has tested
120 the video or telephone conferencing platform; and (B) the platform satisfactorily enables the
121 remote portion of the town meeting to be conducted in substantially the same manner as if the

122 meeting occurred in person at a physical location and in accordance with the operational and
123 functional requirements set forth in this section.

124 (c) A video or telephone conference platform used by a town meeting for remote
125 participation under this section shall, at minimum:

126 (i) strictly limit voting at an open, remote, or hybrid town meeting to only those
127 confirmed by the town clerk to be eligible to vote at that meeting, Each person deemed eligible
128 to vote shall be provided with appropriate physical or technological participation credentials
129 designed to allow remote participation of all eligible voters while also establishing regularity in
130 administration, minimizing inaccurate results and creating and maintaining a virtual and physical
131 environment free from fraud;

132 (ii) enable the moderator, voters, representative town meeting members, town officials
133 and any other interested members of the public to identify and hear the moderator and each voter
134 or other speaker recognized by the moderator, whether remotely or in person;

135 (iii) if applicable, determine whether a quorum is present;

136 (iv) a voter, town meeting member, town official or other individual authorized to
137 participate in the meeting to request recognition by the moderator without prior authorization,
138 consistent with any town meeting rules established by bylaw, charter or special act. To the extent
139 technologically feasible, the request shall be visible or audible to the town meeting and the
140 public in real time and upon review of the recording of the town meeting proceedings, preserved
141 according to subsection (h);

142 (v) the moderator to determine when a remote or in person voter wishes to be recognized
143 to speak, make a motion, raise a point of order or object to a request for unanimous consent;

144 (vi) the moderator to recognize a remote or in person voter, town official or other
145 individual to speak and to enable that person to speak;

146 (vii) in the case of a representative town meeting, the ability to conduct a roll call vote;

147 (viii) any interested members of the public to access the meeting remotely for purposes of
148 witnessing the deliberations and actions taken at the town meeting, subject to the provisions of
149 any municipal charter; and

150 (ix) the town meeting to be recorded.

151 (d) (i) Registered voters, other than representatives elected or appointed in accordance
152 with applicable state or local law, seeking to participate remotely in a representative town
153 meeting shall, not less than 48 hours in advance, submit to the town moderator a request to
154 participate in the meeting. Upon receipt of the request and verification of the requester's voter
155 registration status, the designated official shall provide appropriate physical or technological
156 participation credentials; nothing herein shall be construed to require greater participation by
157 voters or non-town meeting members than required by any applicable general or special law or
158 municipal charter.

159 (ii) Eligible registered voters seeking to participate remotely in an open town meeting
160 shall be provided with instructions, no later than 48 hours in advance, as to how to access
161 appropriate physical or technological participation credentials; provided, however that the

162 inability to comply with this subparagraph shall require that the meeting be delayed until a
163 quorum is reached or 30 minutes has passed, whichever occurs sooner.

164 (e) Prior to taking up any business at a remote or hybrid town meeting, and following the
165 determination of a quorum, if applicable, the meeting shall vote on whether to commence the
166 business of the meeting using remote or hybrid access. If the town meeting votes to continue,
167 then the town meeting shall proceed to hold a remote or hybrid meeting to address the articles in
168 the warrant. If the town meeting votes not to conduct the town meeting by remote or hybrid
169 means, then the town meeting shall be adjourned, without further action, to the date, time and
170 place specified in the notice or warrant or to such other time, date and place as may be approved
171 by town meeting.

172 (f) Votes taken by a roll call vote at a remote or hybrid representative town meeting shall
173 be recorded and kept with the minutes of the town meeting.

174 (g) A remote or hybrid town meeting shall be recorded and the recording shall be
175 preserved and made publicly available on the town's website for at least 90 days after the
176 dissolution of said town meeting and until the official minutes of the meeting have been prepared
177 by the town clerk.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3348
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing the executive office of structural racism
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Holmes of Boston
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3047: Favorable; referred to House Ways and Means

(2021-22) H. 4043: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 6A, Section 2: Executive Offices, Establishment of executive offices

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Amends Section 2 of Chapter 6A of the General Laws by adding the term "structural racism" immediately after the second occurrence of the word "security."

SECTION 2: Establishes the Executive Office of Structural Racism, a new state agency under the supervision of a Secretary of Structural Racism, who will be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. The secretary will lead the office full-time and have the authority to establish bureaus, hire staff, and manage operations.

The office is tasked with identifying, analyzing, and addressing laws, policies, and systems that perpetuate structural racism in Massachusetts. Its core responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and advancing racial equity strategies across state agencies and the Governor's Office.
- Reviewing existing laws and policies that have contributed to racial disparities in areas such as health, housing, education, employment, and the economy.
- Investigating whether such laws were created with discriminatory intent.
- Analyzing proposed laws and regulations to determine whether they could perpetuate racial inequities.
- Monitoring facially neutral policies that may still disproportionately harm communities of color.
- Making data-informed recommendations based on recent studies to reduce racial disparities.
- Publishing annual findings on the impact of incarceration on low-income residents of color and the broader effects on the Commonwealth.
- Identifying behavioral health impacts caused by structural disadvantage and raising awareness in affected communities.
- Studying how structural racism contributes to disproportionate contact between communities of color and the criminal legal system.

The office will have direct access to records from state agencies and will not require their approval to collect or publish findings. It is also authorized to adopt and amend regulations necessary to carry out its mission.

HOUSE No. 3348

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Russell E. Holmes

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 establishing the executive office of structural racism.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3348

By Representative Holmes of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3348) of Russell E. Holmes relative to establishing the executive office of structural racism. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3047 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing the executive office of structural racism.

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. Section 2 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “security”, in line 5, the second
3 time it appears, the following words:- , structural racism.

4 SECTION 2. Said chapter 6A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the
5 following section:-

6 Section 105. (a) There shall be an executive office of structural racism.

7 (b) The executive office of structural racism shall be under the supervision and control of
8 a secretary of structural racism, in this section called the secretary. The secretary shall be

9 appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor, shall receive such salary as the governor
10 determines and shall devote full-time to the duties of the office.

11 (c) The secretary shall have all powers necessary or convenient to carry out the duties of
12 the office including, but not limited to, the following duties and powers:

13 (1) Establish bureaus and other functional units within the office and hire employees;

14 (2) Coordinate, analyze, develop, evaluate, recommend and assist in implementing
15 strategies and policies for advancing racial equity across state agencies and the office of the
16 governor;

17 (3) Identify all known laws and rules, including but not limited to: general laws, special
18 laws, ordinances, regulations, policies, standards and licensing that have perpetuated the
19 structural inequality in the areas of economics, employment, housing, health and education,
20 which have had a devastating impact on communities of color in Massachusetts. The office shall
21 also investigate whether such rules and laws were crafted with a discriminatory intent to hinder
22 the progress of federally protected groups;

23 (4) Review the various laws, ordinances policies, rules or regulations that are expected to
24 be adopted by the commonwealth and create published findings on whether they will eventually
25 perpetuate the structural disadvantages often faced by communities of color before any steps are
26 taken in their implementation in the commonwealth. The office shall also monitor ongoing
27 policy trends of facially neutral laws that are gravel impacting minority communities;

28 (5) Utilize the findings of recent studies that highlight racial disparities to make
29 recommendations that would legitimately curtail the discriminatory treatment communities of
30 color should have long been protected against;

31 (6) Develop yearly findings on the disproportionate impact that incarceration is having on
32 low income residents of color in Massachusetts and describe its negative effects, not just on the
33 lives of marginalized communities, but on the commonwealth as a whole;

34 (7) Identify the behavioral health conditions that develop due to the structural
35 disadvantages, which impact people of color in the commonwealth, in addition to this strategize
36 ways to make these communities more aware of the distinct behavioral health conditions that
37 often come from their experience in the communities; and

38 (8) Study and develop published findings on how structural racism has exacerbated
39 disproportionate minority contact with the criminal law system in Massachusetts.

40 (c) The office shall be provided access to any record of a state agency. The office shall
41 not be required to obtain the approval of any state agency in connection with the collection or
42 analysis of any such information, nor shall the office be required, prior to publication, to obtain
43 the approval of any officer or employee of any executive or state agency with respect to the
44 substance of any findings or reports, which the office has prepared under this section.

45 (d) The office may adopt and amend rules and regulations for the administration of its
46 duties and powers to effectuate this section.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3349
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Holmes of Boston
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (H. 3949): Accompanied study order, H. 4675

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 6A, Section 16: Agencies within executive office of health and human services

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Amends section 16 of chapter 6A by striking the second paragraph and replacing it with language that includes the department of corrections under the executive office of health and human services.

SECTION 2: Amends chapter 6A by striking section 18 and replacing it with language that removes the department of corrections from the executive office of public safety and security.

SECTIONS 3-6: Amends language in chapter 27 to reflect that the department of corrections will be within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

HOUSE No. 3349

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Russell E. Holmes

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 return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3349

By Representative Holmes of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3349) of Russell E. Holmes for legislation to transfer jurisdiction of the Department of Correction and the Parole Board from the Executive Office of Public Safety to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3949 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**
—————

An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human 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 SECTION 1. Section 16 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the second paragraph and inserting in place
3 thereof the following paragraph:-

4 The executive office of health and human services shall include: (1) the department of
5 elder affairs under the direction of a secretary of elder affairs, who shall be appointed by the
6 governor; (2) the office of health services, which shall include the department of public health,
7 the department of mental health, the division of medical assistance and the Betsy Lehman center
8 for patient safety and medical error reduction; (3) the office of children, youth and family
9 services, which shall include the department of children and families, the department of

10 transitional assistance, the department of youth services, the child abuse prevention board and
11 the office for refugees and immigrants; (4) the department of correction, including the parole
12 board; (5) the office of disabilities and community services, which shall include the department
13 of developmental services, the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, the Massachusetts
14 commission for the blind and the Massachusetts commission for the deaf and hard of hearing; (6)
15 the managed care oversight board; (7) the health facilities appeals board; and () the office of
16 health equity.

17 SECTION 2. Said chapter 6A, as so appearing is hereby further amended by striking out
18 section 18 and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

19 Section 18. The following state agencies are hereby declared to be within the executive
20 office of public safety and security: the department of fire services; the office of grants and
21 research and the highway safety division; the municipal police training committee; the
22 Massachusetts department of criminal justice information services; the state 911 department; the
23 department of state police; the office of the chief medical examiner; the Massachusetts
24 emergency management agency; the military department; the sex offender registry board; and all
25 other agencies and boards within said departments, committees and boards.

26 SECTION 3. Section 1 of chapter 27 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
27 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 10, the words "public safety" and
28 inserting in place thereof the following words:- health and human services.

29 SECTION 4. Section 2 of said chapter 27, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
30 out, in line 2, the words "public safety" and inserting in place thereof the following words:-
31 health and human services.

32 SECTION 5. Section 4 of said chapter 27, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
33 out, in line 20, the words "public safety" and inserting in place thereof the following words:-
34 health and human services.

35 SECTION 6. Section 7 of said chapter 27, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
36 out, in line 4, the words "public safety" and inserting in place thereof the words:- health and
37 human services.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3365
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to permitting public corporations to hold remote annual and special meetings
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Jones of North Reading, Ferguson of Holden, Frost of Auburn, Smola of Warren, and Kane of Shrewsbury
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3063: Accompanied study order, H. 4675

(2021-22) H. 3183: Accompanied study order, H. 5256

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 156D, Section 7.08: Meetings by remote communications and participation

SUMMARY

Amends Section 7.08 of Chapter 156D by striking the first paragraph and replacing it. The new paragraph allows for any annual or special meetings of shareholders to be held remotely.

HOUSE No. 3365

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

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 relative to permitting public corporations to hold remote annual and special meetings.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>	<i>20th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/14/2025</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Paul K. Frost</i>	<i>7th Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2025</i>
<i>Todd M. Smola</i>	<i>1st Hampden</i>	<i>3/10/2025</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3365

By Representative Jones of North Reading, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3365) of Bradley H. Jones, Jr., and others for legislation to authorize public corporations to hold remote annual and special meetings. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3063 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

—————
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**
—————

An Act relative to permitting public corporations to hold remote annual and special meetings.

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 7.08 of chapter 156D of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out the
2 first paragraph, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the
3 following paragraph:-

4 Unless otherwise provided in the articles of organization or bylaws, if authorized by the
5 board of directors: any annual or special meeting of shareholders need not be held at any place
6 but may instead be held solely by means of remote communication, including, if said meetings
7 are held by public corporations; and subject to such guidelines and procedures as the board of
8 directors may adopt, shareholders and proxyholders not physically present at a meeting of
9 shareholders may, by means of remote communications:

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3382
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act promoting governmental efficiency
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Linsky of Natick; Senator Rausch
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	S. 2206 (Sen. Rausch – Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3079: Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

(2021-22) H. 3194: Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A, Section 23: Open meeting law complaints

Chapter 66, Section 10: Inspection and copies of public records requests; extension of time; fees

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Amends section 23 of chapter 30A.

The language amends the time from 30 days to 20 days after an alleged violation that an individual may file a complaint with a public body.

The language also amends the procedures for when an open meeting law complaint is filed. When a complaint is filed with a public body, the public body must respond within 14 business days confirming receipt. If the complainant filed more than 5 complaints with the same public body in the same year, or a complaint is unduly burdensome, the public body may respond stating the complaint is unduly burdensome and advise that the complainant may petition the attorney general (AG). The AG may authorize an extension for the public body to take remedial action in its response to the petition by the complainant.

SECTION 2: Strikes every instance of "complaint" in paragraph (c) of section 23 of chapter 30A and replaces it with "petition for review of an open meeting law complaint".

SECTION 3: Strikes from section 10 of chapter 66 "the requests are not intended for the broad dissemination of information to the public about actual or alleged government activity," and by striking it this is no longer a reason that a public body may petition the supervisor of records for a request for an extension for response to a records request.

HOUSE No. 3382

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

David Paul Linsky

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 promoting governmental efficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>4/10/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3382

By Representative Linsky of Natick, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3382) of David Paul Linsky relative to open meeting law complaints. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3079 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act promoting governmental efficiency.

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. Paragraph (b) of section 23 of chapter 30A of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by striking out said paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph:-

3 (b) Complaints.

4 (1) Any individual may file a complaint with a public body alleging violation of the Open
5 Meeting Law, provided that the complaint:

6 (A) Reasonably describes the circumstances constituting the alleged violation;

7 (B) is filed with the public body within 20 business days of the date of the alleged
8 violation;

9 (C) includes electronic and postal mail contact information for the complainant; and

10 (D) is signed by the complainant either in ink or in compliance with Chapter 110G.

11 (2) Complaints shall be deemed received:

12 (A) if filed by electronic mail, on the business day of submission if submitted by 4:00
13 p.m., and otherwise on the next business day; or

14 (B) three days after mailing via first class postal mail.

15 (3) A public body must meet to review and respond to a complaint not later than 14
16 business days after receipt thereof confirming receipt of the complaint and identifying any
17 remedial action(s) taken or intended to be taken by the public body in response to the complaint;
18 provided, however, that if a complainant files more than twelve complaints with the same public
19 body within the same calendar year, or a complaint is otherwise unduly burdensome, the public
20 body may file a petition with the Attorney General seeking relief from the obligation to respond
21 to the complaint. In determining whether to grant an order requiring the public body to respond
22 to the complaint, the Attorney General may consider, without limitation, (i) the previous record
23 of compliance or non-compliance by the public body; (ii) the burden placed on the public body
24 in responding to the complaint; (iii) any evidence of harassment or intimidation on the part of the
25 complainant; (iv) the facts of the alleged violation; and (v) the number of complaints filed
26 against the public body or other public bodies within the municipality. The Attorney General
27 may authorize an extension of time to the public body for the purpose of taking remedial action
28 upon the written request of the public body and a showing of good cause to grant the extension.

29 (4) The public body shall, within 14 business days of receipt of a complaint unless
30 granted an extension of time pursuant to subsection (B)(3), send a copy of the complaint to the
31 attorney general and notify the attorney general of any remedial action.

32 (5) Any remedial action(s) stated pursuant to subparagraph (3) of this Section shall not be
33 admissible as evidence against the public body in any subsequent administrative or judicial
34 proceeding related to the alleged violation.

35 SECTION 2. Paragraph (c) of section 23 of chapter 30A of the General Laws is hereby
36 amended by striking out the word “complaint” in the first line and inserting in place thereof the
37 following words:- petition for review of an open meeting law complaint.

38 SECTION 3. Section 10 of chapter 66 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking
39 out, in line 96, the words “and the requests are not intended for the broad dissemination of
40 information to the public about actual or alleged government activity,”.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3425
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Ultrino of Malden and Sena of Acton
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 47 (Office of the State Treasurer — Identical) S. 2131 (Sen. Eldridge — Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3118: Accompanied study order, H. 4675

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 10, Section 78: Payment to persons who served in armed forces in active service as part of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle, Inherent Resolve or Freedom Sentinel or successor or related operations

SUMMARY

This legislation adds a new section after Section 78 of Chapter 10 of the Massachusetts General Laws, establishing the Office of Economic Empowerment within the Office of the State Treasurer. The office is tasked with promoting equitable access to opportunities and resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships aimed at advancing economic mobility and financial independence for residents across the Commonwealth.

The office will be led by an Executive Director, who will serve as the executive and administrative head. The Executive Director will operate under the supervision of the State Treasurer and will be responsible for administering and enforcing applicable laws and regulations.

Subject to appropriation, the Executive Director may appoint and remove staff as necessary and determine their duties and salaries, within the funding limits established by the General Court.

HOUSE No. 3425

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Steven Ultrino

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 establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/9/2025</i>
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/10/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3425

By Representative Ultrino of Malden, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3425) of Steven Ultrino for legislation to establish an office of economic empowerment within the office of the State Treasurer. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing an Office of Economic Empowerment.

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 10, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by
2 inserting after section 78 the following section:-

3 Section 79. (a) There shall be within the office of the state treasurer an office of
4 economic empowerment. The office of economic empowerment shall perform such functions as
5 the treasurer may determine in relation to the provision of equitable access to opportunities and
6 resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships to promote economic
7 mobility and financial independence to residents across the commonwealth.

8 (b) The office shall be under the supervision and control of the executive director. The
9 executive director shall be the executive and administrative head of the office and shall be
10 responsible for administering and enforcing the laws and regulations relative to the office and to
11 any administrative unit of the office thereof. The duties given to the executive director in this act

12 shall be exercised and discharged subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the state
13 treasurer.

14 (c) The executive director may, subject to appropriation, appoint and remove such
15 employees as they deem necessary to perform the duties of their office, and may determine their
16 salaries and duties; provided, however, that the total amount of all such salaries shall not exceed
17 the sum appropriated by the general court.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3426
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to the open meeting law
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Uytterhoeven of Somerville
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3121: Accompanied a redraft, H. 4771

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A, Section 18: Definitions applicable to the open meeting law

SUMMARY

Strikes the phrase “the general court or the committees or recess commissions thereof” from the definition of “Public Body” in Section 18 of chapter 30A, so that the general court would be subject to the open meeting law.

HOUSE No. 3426

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Erika Uytterhoeven

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 relative to the open meeting law.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/9/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3426

By Representative Uyterhoeven of Somerville, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3426) of Erika Uyterhoeven for legislation to make the General Court subject to the open meeting law. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to the open meeting law.

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 18 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, is hereby amended in the definition of
- 2 "Public Body", by striking the phrase "the general court or the committees or recess commissions
- 3 thereof".

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3439
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Williams of Springfield
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3440 (Rep. Williams — Identical) H. 3441 (Rep. Williams — Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2021-22) H. 3245: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

(2021-22) H. 3246: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 29, Section 2CCCC: State Finance, Local Aid Stabilization Fund

Chapter 30: General provisions relative to state departments, commissions, officers and employees

- Section 9A: Veterans holding unclassified positions; separation from state service

- Section 45: Office and position classification plan; pay plan

- Section 46C: Management pay plan

Chapter 31: Civil Service

Chapter 152: Workers' Compensation

Chapter 180: Corporations for charitable and certain other purposes

SUMMARY

This legislation recognizes the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Latino residents and other historically underserved communities in Massachusetts, highlighting long-standing social and economic disparities. It outlines a framework to reduce longstanding disparities in health, housing, education, and economic opportunity through coordinated investments, program development, and structural reform.

SECTION 1: Expresses the General Court's commitment to taking meaningful action during and after the COVID19 recovery period to address inequities and their root causes. It also establishes a new act formally titled: the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act (CHEEERR Act).

SECTION 2: Provides key definitions used throughout Sections 2 through 13 of the Act. It defines important terms related to the structure, implementation, and target populations of the legislation (i.e. Agencies, Bureau, Commission, Corps/CHEEERRS Corps, Corps Members, and Corps Projects)

It also defines disparately impacted communities as areas where COVID-19 infection rates for Black and Latino residents exceeded their population share, or that are medically underserved, low-income, or educationally disadvantaged.

SECTION 3: Establishes the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction ("the bureau"), which is composed of an administrator and an advisory council (outlined in Section 15).

The administrator is appointed by the governor from a list of three candidates nominated by a seven-member selection committee, which includes appointees from the governor, House and Senate leadership (including minority leaders). All appointments must be made within 30 days of the Act's passage.

The administrator serves a five-year term, may be reappointed once, and can only be removed for cause. The position is full-time and salaried under state classification rules.

With guidance from the advisory council, the administrator oversees the bureau's operations and may hire staff, assistants, and consultants as needed, within budget constraints. No more than 10% of the bureau's budget may be used on staffing annually.

Hiring must prioritize individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 4: With input from the advisory council, the administrator is authorized to apply for and accept federal, local, or private funds, including grants, gifts, bequests, or contributions, to support the bureau's programs and policies. All funds received will be deposited in a separate state account and expended at the direction of the administrator.

SECTION 5: Outlines the core duties and functions of the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction.

The bureau is responsible for:

- Administering the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund to support the bureau's goals.

Monitoring and evaluating public policies and programs, especially those related to COVID-19 recovery, for their impacts on communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This includes:

- Identifying funding sources to improve access to capital for small businesses in these communities.
- Recommending funds to increase access to affordable housing.
- Addressing health disparities by directing resources to mitigate illness and disease.
- Improving educational outcomes in underserved school districts.
- Dedicating at least \$50 million to create re-entry programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. This includes:
 - Funding nonprofit organizations (up to \$500,000 annually) with experience supporting re-entry.
 - Supporting initiatives such as:
 - Family resource and reunification centers
 - Community-based substance-use treatment and counseling services
 - Transitional and permanent housing for returning citizens
 - Community-led post-incarceration support services

To carry out these initiatives, the bureau may enter into contracts or grants with local organizations and must establish public guidelines to govern such funding

SECTION 6: Authorizes the bureau to request information necessary to fulfill its functions from any state department, division, board, bureau, commission, or agency.

Upon receiving a written request from the administrator, these entities must provide the information without delay.

SECTION 7: Establishes that the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Fund will operate within the bureau. The fund will be managed either directly by the administrator or by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The bureau, in consultation with the secretary of administration and finance, will develop guidelines to implement the fund.

Funds from the fund may be used to support the bureau's operations as outlined in Sections 3 through 14. Additionally, the fund will support new and innovative strategies aimed at addressing disparities in health, economic, and educational outcomes in disparately impacted communities. These funds can be spent without further appropriation; however, the administrator may not spend more than 20% annually of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund.

The administrator is required to submit an annual report by October 1 to the clerks of the House and

Senate as well as to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees. This report must include details on the sources and amounts of revenue received, expenditures and their purposes, grants provided, and projected revenues and expenditures for the following year.

SECTION 8: Establishes a Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund within the bureau, managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The administrator will develop guidelines for the fund's operation, consulting with relevant agencies and organizations as needed. The fund is initially capitalized with \$300 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund.

Funds may be invested, and returns will be used to support the fund's purposes. The bureau will use the fund to provide grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans, or a combination to support small businesses located in disparately impacted communities.

In deciding how to allocate support, the bureau will consider factors such as business stabilization, job retention or creation, employment opportunities for residents of impacted communities, and broader economic development benefits. The bureau will limit expenditures to no more than \$50 million annually, with a maximum award of \$1 million per business. An annual summary of activities and their impacts will be included in the bureau's yearly report.

SECTION 9: Creates the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Fund as a special, segregated fund within the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. It will be administered by a deputy fund director appointed by the administrator.

The fund will be initially capitalized with \$50 million transferred from the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. Additional funding sources may include legislative appropriations, public and private donations, and sponsorship agreements.

Monies in this fund will be dedicated to implementing, operating, and administering the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program, which supports returning citizens in starting or growing businesses within disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 10: Establishes the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program within the bureau to support returning citizens who aim to start or operate businesses in disparately impacted communities. The program will provide technical assistance and business training covering topics like accounting, finance, marketing, business law, and access to capital. It will also offer micro-grants up to \$50,000, ongoing mentorship, and monthly networking opportunities with business leaders and investors.

The bureau will collaborate with various agencies and organizations to implement the program. Returning citizens are defined as individuals released from incarceration within the last six months or about to be released, residing in disparately impacted communities.

The bureau must include an annual program summary in its yearly report, detailing business formations, sustained operations, and other relevant metrics while protecting participant anonymity if requested.

SECTION 11: This section establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps (CHEEERRS Corps), composed of young adults aged 17 to 26 from disparately impacted communities. The corps will work on projects addressing unmet

community needs for a limited time.

The corps is overseen by a commission within the bureau, consisting of the bureau administrator and 14 governor-appointed members representing various organizations, including municipal associations, labor unions, civil rights groups, community health centers, senior councils, and youth development experts. Members serve three-year terms without compensation, with the commission electing a chair annually.

The commission's duties include contracting with nonprofit agencies to manage service projects, approving corps plans and updates, and evaluating agency performance in operating the corps projects.

SECTION 12: Defines corps members as residents of disparately impacted communities aged 17 to 26 who engage in meaningful service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas like environment, education, health, and basic human services. Corps members may serve full or part-time and those working with minors or vulnerable adults must pass a background check.

Contracted agencies are responsible for corps members, aiming to place them in projects that match their skills and interests. Agencies may set additional standards, enroll individuals who defer stipends, and strive to recruit diverse corps members economically, ethnically, socially, physically, and educationally.

Corps members are not considered employees of the commonwealth for benefits or legal employment purposes under relevant state laws.

SECTION 13: Requires contracted agencies to administer the corps according to contracts with the commission. Agencies must provide necessary personnel, recruit corps sponsors, and pay corps members a stipend equivalent to \$15 per hour, whether full- or part-time. They are also responsible for studying service projects, recommending expansion, setting recruitment criteria, matching corps members with projects, and establishing personnel policies.

The commission will prioritize projects that address unmet community needs, have measurable goals, do not replace existing jobs, and provide direct services such as tutoring, health education, and environmental restoration.

SECTION 14: Establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund will be managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator and will support the commission's activities and contracts with agencies related to sections 11 through 13.

The fund will initially be capitalized with \$100 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund. Any returns on investments will be reinvested to benefit the fund.

SECTION 15: Establishes an advisory council for the bureau, composed of fifteen members appointed by the governor based on their expertise or interest in health, economic, and educational inequities. Members are appointed for staggered terms of one, two, or three years, with successors serving three-year terms. The council elects a chair and meets at least quarterly. Members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses.

If a member misses two quarterly meetings in a year, their seat is considered vacant, and the chair must

notify the governor. The advisory council's role is to advise the bureau's administrator on all matters within the bureau's jurisdiction, help set priorities, and annually review programs, budgets, and policies.

SECTION 16: Creates a new fund called the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic Education Equity in Recovery Fund within Chapter 29 of the General Laws. The fund will be credited with \$850 million transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund, along with any appropriations, authorized revenues, interest earned, and public or private donations aimed at supporting civics and history education and professional development.

Money in the fund is not subject to further appropriation, and any remaining balance at the end of a fiscal year will not revert to the General Fund.

SECTION 17: States that, despite any other general or special laws, the act will take effect immediately upon passage.

HOUSE No. 3439

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bud L. Williams

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 the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>1/6/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3439

By Representative Williams of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3439) of Bud L. Williams relative to housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction in the Commonwealth. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3130 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

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. Whereas Black and Latino residents of the Commonwealth have been
2 impacted in ways disproportionate to their respective numbers in the population; and, the
3 disparate impacts of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has revealed in stark ways existing social
4 and economic disparities, which Black and Latino residents have endured for far too long; it is
5 the intention of the general court, during the recovery from the pandemic and after, to take
6 meaningful actions to redress said disparities and the social and economic determinants that are
7 at the root of them. To achieve the purposes as stated in this section and sections 2 through 8,
8 inclusive, this Act shall be known as the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
9 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act or the CHEEERR ACT.

10 SECTION 2. As used in sections 2 through 13, inclusive, the following words shall,
11 unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:—

12 “Agencies”, non-profit organizations located and operating within disparately impacted
13 communities with whom the commission may enter into contracts pursuant to section 9 for the
14 operation of corps projects.

15 “Commission”, the commonwealth corps commission established pursuant to section

16 “Bureau”, the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and
17 Reconstruction established pursuant to section 3.

18 “Corps”, the commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and
19 reconstruction service corps or CHEEERRS corps established pursuant to section 11.

20 “Corps members”, individuals who commit to no more than 24 months of full or part-
21 time service in the commonwealth service corps pursuant to section 12.

22 “Corps projects”, programs established pursuant to this act to satisfy unmet community
23 needs.

24 “Disparately impacted community”, shall mean (a) a defined geographic area in which
25 Black and Latino residents whose rate of infection for the coronavirus exceeds their
26 proportionate share of the population of said geographic area as of May 1, 2020; or, (b) a
27 medically underserved community or (c) low and moderate income community; or, (c) an
28 educationally disadvantaged community;

29 “Educationally disadvantaged community”, shall mean a local school district in which the
30 percentage of children attending school in the district eligible for free or reduced cost lunches

31 under eligibility guidelines promulgated by the federal government under 42 USC 1758 exceeds
32 the forty percent;

33 "Low and moderate income community", a geographic area, within a city or town,
34 consisting of either (a) three or more contiguous census tracts or (b) a zip code or (c) a
35 neighborhood, in which either: (1) a majority of the households are low and moderate income
36 households as defined herein; or (2) the unemployment rate is at least 20 per cent higher than the
37 annual statewide average unemployment rate where such statewide unemployment rate is less
38 than or equal to 5 per cent; provided that, if the annual statewide average unemployment rate is
39 greater than 5 per cent, the community's unemployment rate need only be 10 per cent higher;

40 "Low and moderate income households", households which have incomes that do not
41 exceed 80 per cent of the median income for the area, with adjustments made for smaller and
42 larger families, as such median shall be determined from time to time by the Secretary of
43 Housing and Urban Development pursuant to 42 USC section 1437(a)(B)(2);

44 "Medically underserved community", shall have the same meaning as used pursuant to
45 section 799B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p); and,

46 "Small business", shall mean a business (i) owned or controlled by a Black or Latino
47 individual or individuals (ii) whose annual net revenue is less than \$5,000,000 and (iii) located in
48 a low or moderate income community.

49 "Unmet community needs", needs including, but not limited to, those pertaining to
50 education, public health, public safety, the environment and other human needs in underserved
51 populations in disparately impacted communities in the commonwealth.

52 SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a Massachusetts bureau on social and economic equity in
53 recovery and reconstruction, in this section and in sections 4 through 15, inclusive, called the
54 bureau. Said bureau shall consist of an administrator and an advisory council, as described in
55 section 15. The administrator shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to paragraph (b), shall
56 serve a term of five years, and shall be removed only for cause. Notwithstanding the foregoing,
57 the administrator shall be eligible for reappointment to an additional five-year term.

58 (b) The administrator shall be appointed by the governor and shall serve a term of five
59 years; provided that in making said appointment, the governor shall choose the administrator
60 from a list of three candidates presented to the governor from a committee, consisting of seven
61 individuals comprised as follows: one member appointed to be appointed by the governor, two
62 members to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one member to be
63 appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives, two members to be appointed
64 by the senate president, and one member to be appointed by the senate minority leader; provided
65 further , that said all said appointments shall be made within thirty days of passage of this Act.

66 (c) The position of administrator shall be classified in accordance with section forty-five
67 of chapter thirty, and the salary shall be determined in accordance with section forty-six C of
68 said chapter thirty. The administrator shall devote his or her full time during business hours to
69 the duties of the office.

70 (d) The administrator shall, with the advice of the advisory council, have sole charge of
71 the supervision and administration of the office. The administrator may, subject to fiscal
72 resources available to support the operations of the bureau, employ and remove such assistant
73 administrators and other employees and consultants as administrator may deem necessary to

74 enable the performance of the functions of the bureau; provided that not more than ten percent of
75 said resources shall be expended on staff in any fiscal year. The provisions of chapter thirty-one
76 and section nine A of chapter thirty shall not apply to the administrator or to such assistant
77 administrators and consultants as may be appointed. In making such appointments, the
78 administrator shall hire individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic and gender make-up of
79 disparately impacted communities.

80 SECTION 4. Subject to the advice of the advisory council, the administrator may apply
81 for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth any federal, local or private grants of money or
82 property, whether real or personal, from any source, whether public or private, bequests, gifts or
83 contributions to aid in the financing of any of the programs or policies of the bureau. Such funds
84 shall be received by the state treasurer on behalf of the commonwealth and deposited in a
85 separate account and shall be expended under the direction of the administrator.

86 SECTION 5. The bureau, in fulfillment of its purposes, shall have the following duties
87 and functions:

88 (a) to administer and manage the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and
89 Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section 2DDDDD of chapter
90 29, and to effectuate the purposes of the bureau as outlined in this section and in sections 4
91 through 14, inclusive.

92 (b) to identify, analyze, evaluate and monitor public policies, programs, services and
93 regulations promulgated by state agencies (i) in response to recovery efforts pursued in response
94 to the Covid-19 pandemic and (ii) in the course of state agency activity; provided that a
95 particular focus shall be on the affect said policies, programs, services or regulations may have

96 or are likely to have on persons residing in disparately impacted communities. In addition, the
97 bureau shall have the following specific functions:

98 (i) to identify and recommend to the secretary of housing and community development
99 and to the director of the department of business and technology sources of state, federal and
100 private funds which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to
101 capital and technical assistance available to small businesses owned or operated by individuals
102 who reside in disparately impacted communities; (ii) to identify and recommend to the
103 undersecretary for housing and community development and public instrumentalities with the
104 department of housing and community development sources of state, federal and private funds
105 which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to affordable and
106 adequate housing on the part of individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted
107 communities; (iii) to identify and recommend to the commissioner of public health sources of
108 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise are available to mitigate, or
109 can be directed to mitigate, existing and emerging disparate incidences of illness and disease
110 experienced by individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted communities;
111 provided that in mitigating such incidences, the commissioner of public health shall expend said
112 monies in a manner proportionate to the prevalence of said diseases and illnesses among racial
113 and ethnic minorities; provided further, that the administrator may consult with the office of
114 health equity as necessary and appropriate to effect the purposes of this subsection; (iv) to
115 identify and recommend to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education sources of
116 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise available to mitigate, or can
117 be utilized to mitigate, disparate access to and outcomes in educational instruction and programs
118 experienced by students attending schools in disparately impacted communities;

119 (c) to set aside an amount not less than fifty million dollars to implement innovative and
120 strategic re-entry programs targeted to returning citizens, as such term is defined in section ___;
121 provided, that in implementing said innovative and strategic re-entry programs, the bureau is
122 hereby authorized to enter into grants, not to exceed five hundred thousand per annum, with
123 nonprofit organizations with a demonstrated track record of assisting returning citizens in
124 integrating back into the community; provided further, that the bureau is hereby authorized to
125 undertake, solely or in conjunction with state agencies, public instrumentalities, municipalities in
126 which disparately impacted communities are located or nonprofits located in disparately
127 impacted communities the following activities:

128 (i) the development and implementation of family resource and reunification centers in
129 numerous quadrants of a disparately impacted community;

130 (ii) the development and implementation of community-led or neighborhood based, long-
131 term substance use treatment services dispersed in numerous locations throughout a disparately
132 impacted community;

133 (iii) the development and implementation of community-led counseling services
134 dispersed in locations throughout a disparately impacted community;

135 (iv) the development and implementation of transitional to permanent housing for
136 returning citizens; and,

137 (v) the development and implementation of community-led post incarceration support to
138 replace parole and probation In fulfillment of paragraphs (a) and (b), the bureau is hereby
139 authorized to contract with or provide grant funding to individuals, organizations, corporations,
140 associations or nonprofit organizations located in disparately impacted communities to carry out

141 the purpose and functions of the bureau. In fulfillment of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), the
142 administrator shall establish and promulgate public guidelines to govern contracts and grants.

143 SECTION 6. In order to fulfill the functions of the bureau such information as the
144 administrator may require from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency
145 shall be made available without delay, upon written request, to any said department, division,
146 board, bureau, commission, or agency of the commonwealth.

147 SECTION 7. (a) The Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in
148 Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29, shall
149 be within the bureau. The administrator shall oversee the management and activities of the fund
150 either directly or through the appointment of a fund director, to be appointed by the
151 administrator. The bureau, with the advice of the secretary of administration and finance, shall
152 adopt guidelines to implement the fund.

153 (b) The amounts credited to the fund shall be used to support (i) the activities of the
154 bureau as outlined in sections 3 through 14, inclusive and (ii) new and innovative strategies and
155 efforts to redress disparities in health, economic and educational outcomes by individuals and
156 households residing in disparately impacted communities and may be expended, without further
157 appropriation. To maximize the mitigation of disparate impacts across the policy and program
158 areas, including but not limited to health, economics and education, the administrator may
159 expend such amounts are necessary; provided that the administrator shall not expend, annually,
160 any more than twenty percent of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization
161 Fund pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29.

162 (c) Annually, not later than October 1, the administrator shall report to the clerks of the
163 house of representatives and senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means on
164 the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of
165 funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii)
166 any grants provided to stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure
167 projections for the next year.

168 SECTION 8. There shall be a designated small business stabilization and support fund
169 within the bureau. The fund shall be administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be
170 appointed by the administrator. The administrator shall adopt guidelines that are necessary to
171 implement the purposes of the fund. The administrator may consult with state agencies, public
172 instrumentalities, community development financial institutions, and other such organizations as
173 the administrator shall deem appropriate in the development of said guidelines. The fund shall be
174 initially capitalized by a transfer of three hundred million dollars from the CCHEERS fund.
175 Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and invested by an institution
176 designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A return on an investment
177 received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit of the fund. The bureau
178 may make payments from a deposit account for use under this section. The bureau shall use the
179 fund to make grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof to support the
180 ongoing operations of small businesses located in disparately impacted communities. In
181 determining whether to make a grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or a combination thereof,
182 the bureau shall consider whether the action: (i) supports the economic stabilization or expansion
183 of small business; or (ii) promotes the retention or creation of jobs by the small business; (iii)
184 promotes employment opportunities for residents of disparately impacted communities; or, (iv)

185 supports the creation or expansion of a businesses whose success would promote further
186 economic development activity within the disparately impacted community and enhances the
187 quality of life of residents of a disparately impacted community. The bureau shall ensure that not
188 more than fifty million dollars are expended each year to support the making of grants,
189 forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof. The maximum amount of any
190 grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof shall not exceed one million
191 dollars. The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
192 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include each grant, loan,
193 forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof made during the preceding calendar
194 year and an assessment of the impact each grant, loan, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or
195 combination thereof.

196 SECTION 9. (a) There is established a special fund called the incarceration to
197 incorporation entrepreneurship fund, which shall be a segregated fund within the designated
198 small business stabilization and support fund, and which shall be administered by a deputy fund
199 director to be appointed by the administrator.

200 (b) The incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall initially be capitalized
201 by a transfer of fifty million dollars from the designated small business stabilization and support
202 fund; provided, that the following sources of funds may be deposited into the incarceration to
203 incorporation entrepreneurship fund: (1) any funds appropriated by the legislature for the
204 purposes of this section and section 10; (2) donations from the public; (3) donations from private
205 entities; and (4) any funds provided through a sponsorship agreement.

206 (c) Monies in the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall be used to
207 implement, operate, and administer the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship program
208 established pursuant to section 10.

209 SECTION 10. (a) There is established within the bureau an incarceration to incorporation
210 entrepreneurship program, herein after “the program,” a business development program for
211 returning citizens, which shall be operated by the bureau and whose functions are to:

212 (1) provide technical assistance and business development training to returning citizens
213 who are seeking to operate or are already operating a business enterprise to be located within a
214 disparately impacted community; provided that said technical assistance and business
215 development training shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

216 (A) Accounting;

217 (B) Finance;

218 (C) Business management;

219 (D) Business planning;

220 (E) Budgeting;

221 (F) Marketing;

222 (G) Business law;

223 (H) Accessing startup capital, and other business startup topics as identified by the U.S.
224 small business administration and certified community development financial institutions;

225 (I) Estimating if the business enterprise is engaged in the construction industry; and,

226 (J) Technology training;

227 (2) provide micro-investments, in the form of grants, in an amount not to exceed fifty
228 thousand dollars, to assist returning citizens in the development and operation of a business
229 enterprise to be located within a disparately impacted community;

230 (3) provide ongoing mentorship and support; and

231 (4) Provide monthly networking meetings with business leaders, such as:

232 (A) business owners;

233 (B) representatives of financial institutions;

234 (B) angel investors; and

235 (C) heads of venture capital and investment firms; and

236 (b) For the purposes of implementing this section, the bureau shall confer with other
237 agencies, organizations, and individuals, including but not limited to, (1) the office of small
238 business and entrepreneurship, (2) the small business development center, (3) the Black
239 economic council of Massachusetts, (4) the Hispanic chamber of commerce, (5) the Latino
240 chamber of commerce, (6) the greater new england minority supplier development council, (7)
241 the center for women and enterprise, and any other relevant agency or organization that the
242 bureau consider necessary to meet the objectives of this section.

243 (c) For the purposes of this section, the term "returning citizen" means an individual who
244 is within six months of release, or has been released, from a local jail, county house of

245 corrections or a department of corrections facility and who resides in a disparately impacted
246 community.

247 (d) The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
248 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include: (1) the number of
249 businesses formed and launched by program participants; (a) The number of businesses formed
250 by program participants that have sustained operations through the production of the annual
251 summary, (3) the number of business enterprises owned and operated by returning citizens and
252 whom the program has provided technical assistance and business development training, and (4)
253 any other information the bureau deems pertinent to evaluating the program; provided that
254 program participants may expressly authorize that their anonymity be preserved in the annual
255 summary.

256 SECTION 11. (a) There shall be a commonwealth housing, economic, education and
257 equity in recovery and reconstruction service corps to be composed of a limited number of
258 carefully selected men and women, not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years
259 of age, recruited from disparately impacted communities, to be made available for a limited time
260 for projects directed toward satisfying unmet community needs.

261 (b) The corps shall be governed by a commission, which shall be within the bureau,
262 consisting of the administrator of the bureau and 14 members to be appointed by the governor; 1
263 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Association; 1 of whom shall be a
264 member of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO; 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two local
265 chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons, 2 of whom shall
266 be members chosen from local affiliates of the National Urban League, 1 of whom shall be a

267 member chosen from a Community Health Centers, 1 of whom shall be a member chosen by the
268 Massachusetts Senior Action Council, 2 of whom shall be members chosen by the Massachusetts
269 Association for Community Action, 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two community
270 development corporations, and 2 of whom shall be individuals with expertise in the educational,
271 training, and development needs of youth, particularly disadvantaged youth; Each member shall
272 serve for a term of 3 years and shall serve without compensation. A person appointed to fill a
273 vacancy in the office of a member of the board shall be appointed in a like manner and shall

274 serve for only the unexpired term of such member. A member shall be eligible for
275 reappointment. A chairman of the commission shall be elected annually from the membership.
276 The bureau shall provide administrative support to the commission as requested.

277 (c) The duties of the commission shall include, but not be limited to: (i) contracting with
278 agencies to administer service projects to address unmet community needs by recruiting corps
279 members; (ii) reviewing and approving the commonwealth corps plan and annual updates
280 prepared by each agency; and reviewing each agency's performance in carrying out its
281 responsibilities pursuant to this act. Each agency the commission contracts with shall be a
282 nonprofit organization incorporated pursuant to the provisions of chapter 180 of the General
283 Laws for the operation of corps projects.

284 SECTION 12. (a) Corps members shall be residents of disparately impacted communities
285 who are not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years of age. Corps members
286 shall be the responsibility of each contracted agency. Corps members shall undertake meaningful
287 service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas including, but not limited to, the
288 environment, education, health and basic human services and may serve full or part-time; but,

289 members having direct contact with minor children or vulnerable adults shall be required to pass
290 a background check.

291 (b) Each contracted agency shall, to the extent practicable, ensure that corps members are
292 placed in corps projects that match their interests, skills and abilities. The contracted agency may
293 prescribe additional standards and procedures in consultation with the commission. Each
294 contracted agency may enroll individuals who choose to defer a stipend to serve as a corps
295 member. Each contracted agency shall seek to enroll individuals who are economically,
296 ethnically, socially, physically or educationally diverse.

297 (c) A corps member shall not be subject to chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30 of the
298 General Laws. Corps members shall not be considered to be an employee of the commonwealth
299 entitled to the benefit of chapter 152 of the General Laws, nor shall a corps member be
300 considered to be an employee of the commonwealth for any other purpose.

301 SECTION 13. (a) Each contracted agency shall, without limitation and subject to a duly
302 executed contract with the commission, administer the corps and in so doing shall: (1) provide
303 the personnel necessary to satisfy its obligations pursuant to the contract with the commission;
304 (2) function as or recruit corps sponsors; (3) compensate each corps member via a stipend
305 that has the value equivalent to fifteen dollar per hour worked, whether a corps member performs
306 on a full-time or part-time basis, (4) initiate studies and analyses of proposed and implemented
307 service and volunteer projects, which will aid in addressing local problems; (5) recommend
308 expansion of corps opportunities to address all unmet community needs; (6) identify the criteria
309 it will use to recruit individuals to serve as corps members (7) establish procedures for matching

310 and placing corps members with corps projects; and (8) establish personnel policies and
311 procedures for corps members.

312 (b) In entering into a contract with an agency, the commission shall give projects meeting
313 the following criteria preference: (1) projects addressing a well-established unmet community
314 need or unmet community needs; (2) projects articulating measurable goals, including an
315 assessment of the impact on the corps members and on the targeted community; (3) projects not
316 using corps members to replace previously budgeted positions or to reduce overtime, hours of
317 work or opportunities for advancement for employees or members of corps sponsors; and (4)
318 direct service projects that give corps members opportunities to provide direct services
319 addressing unmet community needs including, but not limited to, tutoring or mentoring,
320 providing health care education, providing services to individuals, families, seniors, homeless
321 populations, enhancing historic, cultural, and natural resources of the commonwealth, engaging
322 in environmental restoration projects, or enhancing emergency preparedness and response.

323 SECTION 14. There shall be a Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
324 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund shall be
325 administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be appointed by the administrator. The
326 fund shall be established and utilized to support the work of the commission and to support the
327 costs of contracts entered into by the commission with agencies for the purposes of section 11
328 through 13, inclusive. The fund shall be initially capitalized by a transfer of one hundred million
329 dollars from the CCHEERS fund. Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and
330 invested by an institution designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A
331 return on an investment received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit
332 of the fund.

333 SECTION 15. The advisory council of the bureau shall consist of fifteen persons
334 qualified by training, experience, or demonstrated interest in the health, economic and
335 educational inequities or disparities, to be appointed by the governor as follows:— five for a
336 term of three years, five for a term of two years, and five for a term of one year. Upon expiration
337 of the term of any appointive member, said member’s successor shall be appointed in like
338 manner for a term of three years. The governor shall in like manner fill any vacancy for the
339 remainder of the unexpired term. Said members of the advisory council shall elect a person to
340 serve as chair and the advisory council shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall serve without
341 compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of
342 their duties. If any member is absent from two regularly scheduled quarterly meetings in any one
343 calendar year, said member shall be determined to have vacated the member’s appointment to
344 the council. The chair of the council shall forthwith notify the governor that such vacancy exists.
345 Said advisory council shall advise the administrator on any matter within the jurisdiction of said
346 bureau and shall advise the administrator in establishing priorities for bureau activities; and
347 annually review the programs, budgets and policies of the bureau.

348 SECTION 16. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
349 Section 2CCCCC the following new section:

350 Section 2DDDDD. There shall be established and set up on the books of the
351 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic
352 Education Equity in Recovery Fund. The fund shall be credited with: (i) a transfer, to be made by
353 the Comptroller, of eight hundred and fifty million dollars from the Commonwealth Stabilization
354 Fund, (ii) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and
355 specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (iii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iv)

356 funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations to further civics and
357 history education and professional development. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be
358 subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year
359 shall not revert to the General Fund.

360 SECTION 17. Notwithstanding and general or special law to the contrary, this act shall
361 take effect immediately.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3440
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Williams of Springfield
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3439 (Rep. Williams — Identical) H. 3441 (Rep. Williams — Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3130: Accompanied study order, H. 4675
(2023-24) H. 3131: Accompanied study order, H. 4675
(2021-22) H. 3245: Accompanied study order, H. 4969
(2021-22) H. 3246: Accompanied study order, H. 4969
(2021-22) H. 3247: Accompanied study order, H. 4969
(2021-22) H. 3248: Accompanied study order, H. 4969
(2021-22) H. 3249: Accompanied study order, H. 4969
(2021-22) H. 3250: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 29, Section 2CCCC: State Finance, Local Aid Stabilization Fund

Chapter 30: General provisions relative to state departments, commissions, officers and employees

- Section 9A: Veterans holding unclassified positions; separation from state service
- Section 45: Office and position classification plan; pay plan
- Section 46C: Management pay plan

Chapter 31: Civil Service

Chapter 152: Workers' Compensation

Chapter 180: Corporations for charitable and certain other purposes

SUMMARY

This legislation recognizes the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Latino residents and other historically underserved communities in Massachusetts, highlighting long-standing social and economic disparities. It outlines a framework to reduce longstanding disparities in health, housing, education, and economic opportunity through coordinated investments, program development, and structural reform.

SECTION 1: Expresses the General Court's commitment to taking meaningful action during and after the COVID19 recovery period to address inequities and their root causes. It also establishes a new act formally titled: the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act (CHEEERR Act).

SECTION 2: Provides key definitions used throughout Sections 2 through 13 of the Act. It defines important terms related to the structure, implementation, and target populations of the legislation (i.e. Agencies, Bureau, Commission, Corps/CHEEERRS Corps, Corps Members, and Corps Projects)

It also defines disparately impacted communities as areas where COVID-19 infection rates for Black and Latino residents exceeded their population share, or that are medically underserved, low-income, or educationally disadvantaged.

SECTION 3: Establishes the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction ("the bureau"), which is composed of an administrator and an advisory council (outlined in Section 15).

The administrator is appointed by the governor from a list of three candidates nominated by a seven-member selection committee, which includes appointees from the governor, House and Senate leadership (including minority leaders). All appointments must be made within 30 days of the Act's passage.

The administrator serves a five-year term, may be reappointed once, and can only be removed for cause. The position is full-time and salaried under state classification rules.

With guidance from the advisory council, the administrator oversees the bureau's operations and may hire staff, assistants, and consultants as needed, within budget constraints. No more than 10% of the bureau's budget may be used on staffing annually.

Hiring must prioritize individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 4: With input from the advisory council, the administrator is authorized to apply for and accept federal, local, or private funds, including grants, gifts, bequests, or contributions, to support the bureau's programs and policies. All funds received will be deposited in a separate state account and expended at the direction of the administrator.

SECTION 5: Outlines the core duties and functions of the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction.

The bureau is responsible for:

Administering the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund to support the bureau's goals.

Monitoring and evaluating public policies and programs, especially those related to COVID-19 recovery, for their impacts on communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This includes:

- Identifying funding sources to improve access to capital for small businesses in these communities.
- Recommending funds to increase access to affordable housing.
- Addressing health disparities by directing resources to mitigate illness and disease.
- Improving educational outcomes in underserved school districts.
- Dedicating at least \$50 million to create re-entry programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. This includes:
 - Funding nonprofit organizations (up to \$500,000 annually) with experience supporting re-entry.
 - Supporting initiatives such as:
 - Family resource and reunification centers
 - Community-based substance-use treatment and counseling services
 - Transitional and permanent housing for returning citizens
 - Community-led post-incarceration support services

To carry out these initiatives, the bureau may enter into contracts or grants with local organizations and must establish public guidelines to govern such funding

SECTION 6: Authorizes the bureau to request information necessary to fulfill its functions from any state department, division, board, bureau, commission, or agency.

Upon receiving a written request from the administrator, these entities must provide the information without delay.

SECTION 7: Establishes that the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Fund will operate within the bureau. The fund will be managed either directly by the administrator or by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The bureau, in consultation with the secretary of administration and finance, will develop guidelines to implement the fund.

Funds from the fund may be used to support the bureau's operations as outlined in Sections 3 through 14. Additionally, the fund will support new and innovative strategies aimed at addressing disparities in health, economic, and educational outcomes in disparately impacted communities. These funds can be spent without further appropriation; however, the administrator may not spend more than 20% annually of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund.

The administrator is required to submit an annual report by October 1 to the clerks of the House and

Senate as well as to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees. This report must include details on the sources and amounts of revenue received, expenditures and their purposes, grants provided, and projected revenues and expenditures for the following year.

SECTION 8: Establishes a Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund within the bureau, managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The administrator will develop guidelines for the fund's operation, consulting with relevant agencies and organizations as needed. The fund is initially capitalized with \$300 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund.

Funds may be invested, and returns will be used to support the fund's purposes. The bureau will use the fund to provide grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans, or a combination to support small businesses located in disparately impacted communities.

In deciding how to allocate support, the bureau will consider factors such as business stabilization, job retention or creation, employment opportunities for residents of impacted communities, and broader economic development benefits. The bureau will limit expenditures to no more than \$50 million annually, with a maximum award of \$1 million per business. An annual summary of activities and their impacts will be included in the bureau's yearly report.

SECTION 9: Creates the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Fund as a special, segregated fund within the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. It will be administered by a deputy fund director appointed by the administrator.

The fund will be initially capitalized with \$50 million transferred from the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. Additional funding sources may include legislative appropriations, public and private donations, and sponsorship agreements.

Monies in this fund will be dedicated to implementing, operating, and administering the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program, which supports returning citizens in starting or growing businesses within disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 10: Establishes the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program within the bureau to support returning citizens who aim to start or operate businesses in disparately impacted communities. The program will provide technical assistance and business training covering topics like accounting, finance, marketing, business law, and access to capital. It will also offer micro-grants up to \$50,000, ongoing mentorship, and monthly networking opportunities with business leaders and investors.

The bureau will collaborate with various agencies and organizations to implement the program. Returning citizens are defined as individuals released from incarceration within the last six months or about to be released, residing in disparately impacted communities.

The bureau must include an annual program summary in its yearly report, detailing business formations, sustained operations, and other relevant metrics while protecting participant anonymity if requested.

SECTION 11: This section establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps (CHEEERRS Corps), composed of young adults aged 17 to 26 from disparately impacted communities. The corps will work on projects addressing unmet

community needs for a limited time.

The corps is overseen by a commission within the bureau, consisting of the bureau administrator and 14 governor-appointed members representing various organizations, including municipal associations, labor unions, civil rights groups, community health centers, senior councils, and youth development experts. Members serve three-year terms without compensation, with the commission electing a chair annually.

The commission's duties include contracting with nonprofit agencies to manage service projects, approving corps plans and updates, and evaluating agency performance in operating the corps projects.

SECTION 12: Defines corps members as residents of disparately impacted communities aged 17 to 26 who engage in meaningful service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas like environment, education, health, and basic human services. Corps members may serve full or part-time and those working with minors or vulnerable adults must pass a background check.

Contracted agencies are responsible for corps members, aiming to place them in projects that match their skills and interests. Agencies may set additional standards, enroll individuals who defer stipends, and strive to recruit diverse corps members economically, ethnically, socially, physically, and educationally.

Corps members are not considered employees of the commonwealth for benefits or legal employment purposes under relevant state laws.

SECTION 13: Requires contracted agencies to administer the corps according to contracts with the commission. Agencies must provide necessary personnel, recruit corps sponsors, and pay corps members a stipend equivalent to \$15 per hour, whether full- or part-time. They are also responsible for studying service projects, recommending expansion, setting recruitment criteria, matching corps members with projects, and establishing personnel policies.

The commission will prioritize projects that address unmet community needs, have measurable goals, do not replace existing jobs, and provide direct services such as tutoring, health education, and environmental restoration.

SECTION 14: Establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund will be managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator and will support the commission's activities and contracts with agencies related to sections 11 through 13.

The fund will initially be capitalized with \$100 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund. Any returns on investments will be reinvested to benefit the fund.

SECTION 15: Establishes an advisory council for the bureau, composed of fifteen members appointed by the governor based on their expertise or interest in health, economic, and educational inequities. Members are appointed for staggered terms of one, two, or three years, with successors serving three-year terms. The council elects a chair and meets at least quarterly. Members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses.

If a member misses two quarterly meetings in a year, their seat is considered vacant, and the chair must

notify the governor. The advisory council's role is to advise the bureau's administrator on all matters within the bureau's jurisdiction, help set priorities, and annually review programs, budgets, and policies.

SECTION 16: Creates a new fund called the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic Education Equity in Recovery Fund within Chapter 29 of the General Laws. The fund will be credited with \$850 million transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund, along with any appropriations, authorized revenues, interest earned, and public or private donations aimed at supporting civics and history education and professional development.

Money in the fund is not subject to further appropriation, and any remaining balance at the end of a fiscal year will not revert to the General Fund.

SECTION 17: States that, despite any other general or special laws, the act will take effect immediately upon passage.

HOUSE No. 3440

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bud L. Williams

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 the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>1/6/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3440

By Representative Williams of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3440) of Bud L. Williams relative to housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction in the Commonwealth. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3131 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to address stark racial, social, and economic disparities, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health.

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. Whereas Black and Latino residents of the Commonwealth have been
2 impacted in ways disproportionate to their respective numbers in the population; and, the
3 disparate impacts of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has revealed in stark ways existing social
4 and economic disparities, which Black and Latino residents have endured for far too long; it is
5 the intention of the general court, during the recovery from the pandemic and after, to take
6 meaningful actions to redress said disparities and the social and economic determinants that are
7 at the root of them. To achieve the purposes as stated in this section and sections 2 through 8,

8 inclusive, this Act shall be known as the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
9 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act or the CHEEERR ACT.

10 SECTION 2. As used in sections 2 through 13, inclusive, the following words shall,
11 unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:—

12 “Agencies”, non-profit organizations located and operating within disparately impacted
13 communities with whom the commission may enter into contracts pursuant to section 9 for the
14 operation of corps projects.

15 “Commission”, the commonwealth corps commission established pursuant to section

16 “Bureau”, the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and
17 Reconstruction established pursuant to section 3.

18 “Corps”, the commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and
19 reconstruction service corps or CHEEERRS corps established pursuant to section 11.

20 “Corps members”, individuals who commit to no more than 24 months of full or part-
21 time service in the commonwealth service corps pursuant to section 12.

22 “Corps projects”, programs established pursuant to this act to satisfy unmet community
23 needs.

24 “Disparately impacted community”, shall mean (a) a defined geographic area in which
25 Black and Latino residents whose rate of infection for the coronavirus exceeds their
26 proportionate share of the population of said geographic area as of May 1, 2020; or, (b) a
27 medically underserved community or (c) low and moderate income community; or, (c) an
28 educationally disadvantaged community;

29 “Educationally disadvantaged community”, shall mean a local school district in which the
30 percentage of children attending school in the district eligible for free or reduced cost lunches
31 under eligibility guidelines promulgated by the federal government under 42 USC 1758 exceeds
32 the forty percent;

33 "Low and moderate income community", a geographic area, within a city or town,
34 consisting of either (a) three or more contiguous census tracts or (b) a zip code or (c) a
35 neighborhood, in which either: (1) a majority of the households are low and moderate income
36 households as defined herein; or (2) the unemployment rate is at least 20 per cent higher than the
37 annual statewide average unemployment rate where such statewide unemployment rate is less
38 than or equal to 5 per cent; provided that, if the annual statewide average unemployment rate is
39 greater than 5 per cent, the community's unemployment rate need only be 10 per cent higher;

40 "Low and moderate income households", households which have incomes that do not
41 exceed 80 per cent of the median income for the area, with adjustments made for smaller and
42 larger families, as such median shall be determined from time to time by the Secretary of
43 Housing and Urban Development pursuant to 42 USC section 1437(a)(B)(2);

44 “Medically underserved community”, shall have the same meaning as used pursuant to
45 section 799B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p); and,

46 “Small business”, shall mean a business (i) owned or controlled by a Black or Latino
47 individual or individuals (ii) whose annual net revenue is less than \$5,000,000 and (iii) located in
48 a low or moderate income community.

49 “Unmet community needs”, needs including, but not limited to, those pertaining to
50 education, public health, public safety, the environment and other human needs in underserved
51 populations in disparately impacted communities in the commonwealth.

52 SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a Massachusetts bureau on social and economic equity in
53 recovery and reconstruction, in this section and in sections 4 through 15, inclusive, called the
54 bureau. Said bureau shall consist of an administrator and an advisory council, as described in
55 section 15. The administrator shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to paragraph (b), shall
56 serve a term of five years, and shall be removed only for cause. Notwithstanding the foregoing,
57 the administrator shall be eligible for reappointment to an additional five-year term.

58 (b) The administrator shall be appointed by the governor and shall serve a term of five
59 years; provided that in making said appointment, the governor shall choose the administrator
60 from a list of three candidates presented to the governor from a committee, consisting of seven
61 individuals comprised as follows: one member appointed to be appointed by the governor, two
62 members to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one member to be
63 appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives, two members to be appointed
64 by the senate president, and one member to be appointed by the senate minority leader; provided
65 further , that said all said appointments shall be made within thirty days of passage of this Act.

66 (c) The position of administrator shall be classified in accordance with section forty-five
67 of chapter thirty, and the salary shall be determined in accordance with section forty-six C of
68 said chapter thirty. The administrator shall devote his or her full time during business hours to
69 the duties of the office.

70 (d) The administrator shall, with the advice of the advisory council, have sole charge of
71 the supervision and administration of the office. The administrator may, subject to fiscal
72 resources available to support the operations of the bureau, employ and remove such assistant
73 administrators and other employees and consultants as administrator may deem necessary to
74 enable the performance of the functions of the bureau; provided that not more than ten percent of
75 said resources shall be expended on staff in any fiscal year. The provisions of chapter thirty-one
76 and section nine A of chapter thirty shall not apply to the administrator or to such assistant
77 administrators and consultants as may be appointed. In making such appointments, the
78 administrator shall hire individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic and gender make-up of
79 disparately impacted communities.

80 SECTION 4. Subject to the advice of the advisory council, the administrator may apply
81 for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth any federal, local or private grants of money or
82 property, whether real or personal, from any source, whether public or private, bequests, gifts or
83 contributions to aid in the financing of any of the programs or policies of the bureau. Such funds
84 shall be received by the state treasurer on behalf of the commonwealth and deposited in a
85 separate account and shall be expended under the direction of the administrator.

86 SECTION 5. The bureau, in fulfillment of its purposes, shall have the following duties
87 and functions:

88 (a) to administer and manage the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and
89 Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section 2DDDDDD of chapter
90 29, and to effectuate the purposes of the bureau as outlined in this section and in sections 4
91 through 14, inclusive.

92 (b) to identify, analyze, evaluate and monitor public policies, programs, services and
93 regulations promulgated by state agencies (i) in response to recovery efforts pursued in response
94 to the Covid-19 pandemic and (ii) in the course of state agency activity; provided that a
95 particular focus shall be on the affect said policies, programs, services or regulations may have
96 or are likely to have on persons residing in disparately impacted communities. In addition, the
97 bureau shall have the following specific functions:

98 (i) to identify and recommend to the secretary of housing and community development
99 and to the director of the department of business and technology sources of state, federal and
100 private funds which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to
101 capital and technical assistance available to small businesses owned or operated by individuals
102 who reside in disparately impacted communities; (ii) to identify and recommend to the
103 undersecretary for housing and community development and public instrumentalities with the
104 department of housing and community development sources of state, federal and private funds
105 which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to affordable and
106 adequate housing on the part of individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted
107 communities; (iii) to identify and recommend to the commissioner of public health sources of
108 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise are available to mitigate, or
109 can be directed to mitigate, existing and emerging disparate incidences of illness and disease
110 experienced by individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted communities;
111 provided that in mitigating such incidences, the commissioner of public health shall expend said
112 monies in a manner proportionate to the prevalence of said diseases and illnesses among racial
113 and ethnic minorities; provided further, that the administrator may consult with the office of
114 health equity as necessary and appropriate to effect the purposes of this subsection; (iv) to

115 identify and recommend to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education sources of
116 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise available to mitigate, or can
117 be utilized to mitigate, disparate access to and outcomes in educational instruction and programs
118 experienced by students attending schools in disparately impacted communities;

119 (c) to set aside an amount not less than fifty million dollars to implement innovative and
120 strategic re-entry programs targeted to returning citizens, as such term is defined in section ___;
121 provided, that in implementing said innovative and strategic re-entry programs, the bureau is
122 hereby authorized to enter into grants, not to exceed five hundred thousand per annum, with
123 nonprofit organizations with a demonstrated track record of assisting returning citizens in
124 integrating back into the community; provided further, that the bureau is hereby authorized to
125 undertake, solely or in conjunction with state agencies, public instrumentalities, municipalities in
126 which disparately impacted communities are located or nonprofits located in disparately
127 impacted communities the following activities:

128 (i) the development and implementation of family resource and reunification centers in
129 numerous quadrants of a disparately impacted community;

130 (ii) the development and implementation of community-led or neighborhood based, long-
131 term substance use treatment services dispersed in numerous locations throughout a disparately
132 impacted community;

133 (iii) the development and implementation of community-led counseling services
134 dispersed in locations throughout a disparately impacted community;

135 (iv) the development and implementation of transitional to permanent housing for
136 returning citizens; and,

137 (v) the development and implementation of community-led post incarceration support to
138 replace parole and probation In fulfillment of paragraphs (a) and (b), the bureau is hereby
139 authorized to contract with or provide grant funding to individuals, organizations, corporations,
140 associations or nonprofit organizations located in disparately impacted communities to carry out
141 the purpose and functions of the bureau. In fulfillment of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), the
142 administrator shall establish and promulgate public guidelines to govern contracts and grants.

143 SECTION 6. In order to fulfill the functions of the bureau such information as the
144 administrator may require from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency
145 shall be made available without delay, upon written request, to any said department, division,
146 board, bureau, commission, or agency of the commonwealth.

147 SECTION 7. (a) The Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in
148 Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29, shall
149 be within the bureau. The administrator shall oversee the management and activities of the fund
150 either directly or through the appointment of a fund director, to be appointed by the
151 administrator. The bureau, with the advice of the secretary of administration and finance, shall
152 adopt guidelines to implement the fund.

153 (b) The amounts credited to the fund shall be used to support (i) the activities of the
154 bureau as outlined in sections 3 through 14, inclusive and (ii) new and innovative strategies and
155 efforts to redress disparities in health, economic and educational outcomes by individuals and
156 households residing in disparately impacted communities and may be expended, without further
157 appropriation. To maximize the mitigation of disparate impacts across the policy and program
158 areas, including but not limited to health, economics and education, the administrator may

159 expends such amounts are necessary; provided that the administrator shall not expend, annually,
160 any more than twenty percent of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization
161 Fund pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29.

162 (c) Annually, not later than October 1, the administrator shall report to the clerks of the
163 house of representatives and senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means on
164 the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of
165 funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii)
166 any grants provided to stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure
167 projections for the next year.

168 SECTION 8. There shall be a designated small business stabilization and support fund
169 within the bureau. The fund shall be administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be
170 appointed by the administrator. The administrator shall adopt guidelines that are necessary to
171 implement the purposes of the fund. The administrator may consult with state agencies, public
172 instrumentalities, community development financial institutions, and other such organizations as
173 the administrator shall deem appropriate in the development of said guidelines. The fund shall be
174 initially capitalized by a transfer of three hundred million dollars from the CCHEERS fund.
175 Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and invested by an institution
176 designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A return on an investment
177 received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit of the fund. The bureau
178 may make payments from a deposit account for use under this section. The bureau shall use the
179 fund to make grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof to support the
180 ongoing operations of small businesses located in disparately impacted communities. In
181 determining whether to make a grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or a combination thereof,

182 the bureau shall consider whether the action: (i) supports the economic stabilization or expansion
183 of small business; or (ii) promotes the retention or creation of jobs by the small business; (iii)
184 promotes employment opportunities for residents of disparately impacted communities; or, (iv)
185 supports the creation or expansion of a businesses whose success would promote further
186 economic development activity within the disparately impacted community and enhances the
187 quality of life of residents of a disparately impacted community. The bureau shall ensure that not
188 more than fifty million dollars are expended each year to support the making of grants,
189 forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof. The maximum amount of any
190 grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof shall not exceed one million
191 dollars. The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
192 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include each grant, loan,
193 forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof made during the preceding calendar
194 year and an assessment of the impact each grant, loan, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or
195 combination thereof.

196 SECTION 9. (a) There is established a special fund called the incarceration to
197 incorporation entrepreneurship fund, which shall be a segregated fund within the designated
198 small business stabilization and support fund, and which shall be administered by a deputy fund
199 director to be appointed by the administrator.

200 (b) The incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall initially be capitalized
201 by a transfer of fifty million dollars from the designated small business stabilization and support
202 fund; provided, that the following sources of funds may be deposited into the incarceration to
203 incorporation entrepreneurship fund: (1) any funds appropriated by the legislature for the

204 purposes of this section and section 10; (2) donations from the public; (3) donations from private
205 entities; and (4) any funds provided through a sponsorship agreement.

206 (c) Monies in the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall be used to
207 implement, operate, and administer the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship program
208 established pursuant to section 10.

209 SECTION 10. (a) There is established within the bureau an incarceration to incorporation
210 entrepreneurship program, herein after “the program,” a business development program for
211 returning citizens, which shall be operated by the bureau and whose functions are to:

212 (1) provide technical assistance and business development training to returning citizens
213 who are seeking to operate or are already operating a business enterprise to be located within a
214 disparately impacted community; provided that said technical assistance and business
215 development training shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

216 (A) Accounting;

217 (B) Finance;

218 (C) Business management;

219 (D) Business planning;

220 (E) Budgeting;

221 (F) Marketing;

222 (G) Business law;

223 (H) Accessing startup capital, and other business startup topics as identified by the U.S.
224 small business administration and certified community development financial institutions;

225 (I) Estimating if the business enterprise is engaged in the construction industry; and,

226 (J) Technology training;

227 (2) provide micro-investments, in the form of grants, in an amount not to exceed fifty
228 thousand dollars, to assist returning citizens in the development and operation of a business
229 enterprise to be located within a disparately impacted community;

230 (3) provide ongoing mentorship and support; and

231 (4) Provide monthly networking meetings with business leaders, such as:

232 (A) business owners;

233 (B) representatives of financial institutions;

234 (B) angel investors; and

235 (C) heads of venture capital and investment firms; and

236 (b) For the purposes of implementing this section, the bureau shall confer with other
237 agencies, organizations, and individuals, including but not limited to, (1) the office of small
238 business and entrepreneurship, (2) the small business development center, (3) the Black
239 economic council of Massachusetts, (4) the Hispanic chamber of commerce, (5) the Latino
240 chamber of commerce, (6) the greater new england minority supplier development council, (7)
241 the center for women and enterprise, and any other relevant agency or organization that the
242 bureau consider necessary to meet the objectives of this section.

243 (c) For the purposes of this section, the term "returning citizen" means an individual who
244 is within six months of release, or has been released, from a local jail, county house of
245 corrections or a department of corrections facility and who resides in a disparately impacted
246 community.

247 (d) The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
248 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include: (1) the number of
249 businesses formed and launched by program participants; (a) The number of businesses formed
250 by program participants that have sustained operations through the production of the annual
251 summary, (3) the number of business enterprises owned and operated by returning citizens and
252 whom the program has provided technical assistance and business development training, and (4)
253 any other information the bureau deems pertinent to evaluating the program; provided that
254 program participants may expressly authorize that their anonymity be preserved in the annual
255 summary.

256 SECTION 11. (a) There shall be a commonwealth housing, economic, education and
257 equity in recovery and reconstruction service corps to be composed of a limited number of
258 carefully selected men and women, not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years
259 of age, recruited from disparately impacted communities, to be made available for a limited time
260 for projects directed toward satisfying unmet community needs.

261 (b) The corps shall be governed by a commission, which shall be within the bureau,
262 consisting of the administrator of the bureau and 14 members to be appointed by the governor; 1
263 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Association; 1 of whom shall be a
264 member of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO; 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two local

265 chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons, 2 of whom shall
266 be members chosen from local affiliates of the National Urban League, 1 of whom shall be a
267 member chosen from a Community Health Centers, 1 of whom shall be a member chosen by the
268 Massachusetts Senior Action Council, 2 of whom shall be members chosen by the Massachusetts
269 Association for Community Action, 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two community
270 development corporations, and 2 of whom shall be individuals with expertise in the educational,
271 training, and development needs of youth, particularly disadvantaged youth; Each member shall
272 serve for a term of 3 years and shall serve without compensation. A person appointed to fill a
273 vacancy in the office of a member of the board shall be appointed in a like manner and shall

274 serve for only the unexpired term of such member. A member shall be eligible for
275 reappointment. A chairman of the commission shall be elected annually from the membership.
276 The bureau shall provide administrative support to the commission as requested.

277 (c) The duties of the commission shall include, but not be limited to: (i) contracting with
278 agencies to administer service projects to address unmet community needs by recruiting corps
279 members; (ii) reviewing and approving the commonwealth corps plan and annual updates
280 prepared by each agency; and reviewing each agency's performance in carrying out its
281 responsibilities pursuant to this act. Each agency the commission contracts with shall be a
282 nonprofit organization incorporated pursuant to the provisions of chapter 180 of the General
283 Laws for the operation of corps projects.

284 SECTION 12. (a) Corps members shall be residents of disparately impacted communities
285 who are not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years of age. Corps members
286 shall be the responsibility of each contracted agency. Corps members shall undertake meaningful

287 service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas including, but not limited to, the
288 environment, education, health and basic human services and may serve full or part-time; but,
289 members having direct contact with minor children or vulnerable adults shall be required to pass
290 a background check.

291 (b) Each contracted agency shall, to the extent practicable, ensure that corps members are
292 placed in corps projects that match their interests, skills and abilities. The contracted agency may
293 prescribe additional standards and procedures in consultation with the commission. Each
294 contracted agency may enroll individuals who choose to defer a stipend to serve as a corps
295 member. Each contracted agency shall seek to enroll individuals who are economically,
296 ethnically, socially, physically or educationally diverse.

297 (c) A corps member shall not be subject to chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30 of the
298 General Laws. Corps members shall not be considered to be an employee of the commonwealth
299 entitled to the benefit of chapter 152 of the General Laws, nor shall a corps member be
300 considered to be an employee of the commonwealth for any other purpose.

301 SECTION 13. (a) Each contracted agency shall, without limitation and subject to a duly
302 executed contract with the commission, administer the corps and in so doing shall: (1) provide
303 the personnel necessary to satisfy its obligations pursuant to the contract with the commission;

304 (2) function as or recruit corps sponsors; (3) compensate each corps member via a stipend
305 that has the value equivalent to fifteen dollar per hour worked, whether a corps member performs
306 on a full-time or part-time basis, (4) initiate studies and analyses of proposed and implemented
307 service and volunteer projects, which will aid in addressing local problems; (5) recommend
308 expansion of corps opportunities to address all unmet community needs; (6) identify the criteria

309 it will use to recruit individuals to serve as corps members (7) establish procedures for matching
310 and placing corps members with corps projects; and (8) establish personnel policies and
311 procedures for corps members.

312 (b) In entering into a contract with an agency, the commission shall give projects meeting
313 the following criteria preference: (1) projects addressing a well-established unmet community
314 need or unmet community needs; (2) projects articulating measurable goals, including an
315 assessment of the impact on the corps members and on the targeted community; (3) projects not
316 using corps members to replace previously budgeted positions or to reduce overtime, hours of
317 work or opportunities for advancement for employees or members of corps sponsors; and (4)
318 direct service projects that give corps members opportunities to provide direct services
319 addressing unmet community needs including, but not limited to, tutoring or mentoring,
320 providing health care education, providing services to individuals, families, seniors, homeless
321 populations, enhancing historic, cultural, and natural resources of the commonwealth, engaging
322 in environmental restoration projects, or enhancing emergency preparedness and response.

323 SECTION 14. There shall be a Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
324 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund shall be
325 administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be appointed by the administrator. The
326 fund shall be established and utilized to support the work of the commission and to support the
327 costs of contracts entered into by the commission with agencies for the purposes of section 11
328 through 13, inclusive. The fund shall be initially capitalized by a transfer of one hundred million
329 dollars from the CCHEERS fund. Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and
330 invested by an institution designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A

331 return on an investment received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit
332 of the fund.

333 SECTION 15. The advisory council of the bureau shall consist of fifteen persons
334 qualified by training, experience, or demonstrated interest in the health, economic and
335 educational inequities or disparities, to be appointed by the governor as follows:— five for a
336 term of three years, five for a term of two years, and five for a term of one year. Upon expiration
337 of the term of any appointive member, said member’s successor shall be appointed in like
338 manner for a term of three years. The governor shall in like manner fill any vacancy for the
339 remainder of the unexpired term. Said members of the advisory council shall elect a person to
340 serve as chair and the advisory council shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall serve without
341 compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of
342 their duties. If any member is absent from two regularly scheduled quarterly meetings in any one
343 calendar year, said member shall be determined to have vacated the member’s appointment to
344 the council. The chair of the council shall forthwith notify the governor that such vacancy exists.
345 Said advisory council shall advise the administrator on any matter within the jurisdiction of said
346 bureau and shall advise the administrator in establishing priorities for bureau activities; and
347 annually review the programs, budgets and policies of the bureau.

348 SECTION 16. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
349 Section 2CCCCC the following new section:

350 Section 2DDDDD. There shall be established and set up on the books of the
351 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic
352 Education Equity in Recovery Fund. The fund shall be credited with: (i) a transfer, to be made by

353 the Comptroller, of eight hundred and fifty million dollars from the Commonwealth Stabilization
354 Fund, (ii) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and
355 specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (iii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iv)
356 funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations to further civics and
357 history education and professional development. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be
358 subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year
359 shall not revert to the General Fund.

360 SECTION 17. Notwithstanding and general or special law to the contrary, this act shall
361 take effect immediately.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3441
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Williams of Springfield
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3439 (Rep. Williams — Identical) H. 3440 (Rep. Williams — Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2021-22) H. 3245: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

(2021-22) H. 3246: Accompanied study order, H. 4969

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 29, Section 2CCCC: State Finance, Local Aid Stabilization Fund

Chapter 30: General provisions relative to state departments, commissions, officers and employees

- Section 9A: Veterans holding unclassified positions; separation from state service

- Section 45: Office and position classification plan; pay plan

- Section 46C: Management pay plan

Chapter 31: Civil Service

Chapter 152: Workers' Compensation

Chapter 180: Corporations for charitable and certain other purposes

SUMMARY

This legislation recognizes the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Latino residents and other historically underserved communities in Massachusetts, highlighting long-standing social and economic disparities. It outlines a framework to reduce longstanding disparities in health, housing, education, and economic opportunity through coordinated investments, program development, and structural reform.

SECTION 1: Expresses the General Court's commitment to taking meaningful action during and after the COVID19 recovery period to address inequities and their root causes. It also establishes a new act formally titled: the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act (CHEEERR Act).

SECTION 2: Provides key definitions used throughout Sections 2 through 13 of the Act. It defines important terms related to the structure, implementation, and target populations of the legislation (i.e. Agencies, Bureau, Commission, Corps / CHEEERRS Corps, Corps Members, Corps Projects).

It also defines disparately impacted communities as areas where COVID-19 infection rates for Black and Latino residents exceeded their population share, or that are medically underserved, low-income, or educationally disadvantaged.

SECTION 3: Establishes the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction ("the bureau"), which is composed of an administrator and an advisory council (outlined in Section 15).

The administrator is appointed by the governor from a list of three candidates nominated by a seven-member selection committee, which includes appointees from the governor, House and Senate leadership (including minority leaders). All appointments must be made within 30 days of the Act's passage.

The administrator serves a five-year term, may be reappointed once, and can only be removed for cause. The position is full-time and salaried under state classification rules.

With guidance from the advisory council, the administrator oversees the bureau's operations and may hire staff, assistants, and consultants as needed, within budget constraints. No more than 10% of the bureau's budget may be used on staffing annually.

Hiring must prioritize individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 4: With input from the advisory council, the administrator is authorized to apply for and accept federal, local, or private funds, including grants, gifts, bequests, or contributions, to support the bureau's programs and policies. All funds received will be deposited in a separate state account and expended at the direction of the administrator.

SECTION 5: Outlines the core duties and functions of the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction.

The bureau is responsible for:

- Administering the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund to support the bureau's goals.
- Monitoring and evaluating public policies and programs, especially those related to COVID-19 recovery, for their impacts on communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This includes:
 - Identifying funding sources to improve access to capital for small businesses in these communities.
 - Recommending funds to increase access to affordable housing.
 - Addressing health disparities by directing resources to mitigate illness and disease.
 - Improving educational outcomes in underserved school districts.
- Dedicating at least \$50 million to create re-entry programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. This includes:
 - Funding nonprofit organizations (up to \$500,000 annually) with experience supporting re-entry.
 - Supporting initiatives such as:
 - Family resource and reunification centers
 - Community-based substance-use treatment and counseling services
 - Transitional and permanent housing for returning citizens
 - Community-led post-incarceration support services

To carry out these initiatives, the bureau may enter into contracts or grants with local organizations and must establish public guidelines to govern such funding

SECTION 6: Authorizes the bureau to request information necessary to fulfill its functions from any state department, division, board, bureau, commission, or agency.

Upon receiving a written request from the administrator, these entities must provide the information without delay.

SECTION 7: Establishes that the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Fund will operate within the bureau. The fund will be managed either directly by the administrator or by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The bureau, in consultation with the secretary of administration and finance, will develop guidelines to implement the fund.

Funds from the fund may be used to support the bureau's operations as outlined in Sections 3 through 14. Additionally, the fund will support new and innovative strategies aimed at addressing disparities in health, economic, and educational outcomes in disparately impacted communities. These funds can be spent without further appropriation; however, the administrator may not spend more than 20% annually of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund.

The administrator is required to submit an annual report by October 1 to the clerks of the House and

Senate as well as to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees. This report must include details on the sources and amounts of revenue received, expenditures and their purposes, grants provided, and projected revenues and expenditures for the following year.

SECTION 8: Establishes a Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund within the bureau, managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator. The administrator will develop guidelines for the fund's operation, consulting with relevant agencies and organizations as needed. The fund is initially capitalized with \$300 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund.

Funds may be invested, and returns will be used to support the fund's purposes. The bureau will use the fund to provide grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans, or a combination to support small businesses located in disparately impacted communities.

In deciding how to allocate support, the bureau will consider factors such as business stabilization, job retention or creation, employment opportunities for residents of impacted communities, and broader economic development benefits. The bureau will limit expenditures to no more than \$50 million annually, with a maximum award of \$1 million per business. An annual summary of activities and their impacts will be included in the bureau's yearly report.

SECTION 9: Creates the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Fund as a special, segregated fund within the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. It will be administered by a deputy fund director appointed by the administrator.

The fund will be initially capitalized with \$50 million transferred from the Small Business Stabilization and Support Fund. Additional funding sources may include legislative appropriations, public and private donations, and sponsorship agreements.

Monies in this fund will be dedicated to implementing, operating, and administering the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program, which supports returning citizens in starting or growing businesses within disparately impacted communities.

SECTION 10: Establishes the Incarceration to Incorporation Entrepreneurship Program within the bureau to support returning citizens who aim to start or operate businesses in disparately impacted communities. The program will provide technical assistance and business training covering topics like accounting, finance, marketing, business law, and access to capital. It will also offer micro-grants up to \$50,000, ongoing mentorship, and monthly networking opportunities with business leaders and investors.

The bureau will collaborate with various agencies and organizations to implement the program. Returning citizens are defined as individuals released from incarceration within the last six months or about to be released, residing in disparately impacted communities.

The bureau must include an annual program summary in its yearly report, detailing business formations, sustained operations, and other relevant metrics while protecting participant anonymity if requested.

SECTION 11: This section establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps (CHEEERRS Corps), composed of young adults aged 17 to 26 from disparately impacted communities. The corps will work on projects addressing unmet

community needs for a limited time.

The corps is overseen by a commission within the bureau, consisting of the bureau administrator and 14 governor-appointed members representing various organizations, including municipal associations, labor unions, civil rights groups, community health centers, senior councils, and youth development experts. Members serve three-year terms without compensation, with the commission electing a chair annually.

The commission's duties include contracting with nonprofit agencies to manage service projects, approving corps plans and updates, and evaluating agency performance in operating the corps projects.

SECTION 12: Defines corps members as residents of disparately impacted communities aged 17 to 26 who engage in meaningful service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas like environment, education, health, and basic human services. Corps members may serve full or part-time and those working with minors or vulnerable adults must pass a background check.

Contracted agencies are responsible for corps members, aiming to place them in projects that match their skills and interests. Agencies may set additional standards, enroll individuals who defer stipends, and strive to recruit diverse corps members economically, ethnically, socially, physically, and educationally.

Corps members are not considered employees of the commonwealth for benefits or legal employment purposes under relevant state laws.

SECTION 13: Requires contracted agencies to administer the corps according to contracts with the commission. Agencies must provide necessary personnel, recruit corps sponsors, and pay corps members a stipend equivalent to \$15 per hour, whether full- or part-time. They are also responsible for studying service projects, recommending expansion, setting recruitment criteria, matching corps members with projects, and establishing personnel policies.

The commission will prioritize projects that address unmet community needs, have measurable goals, do not replace existing jobs, and provide direct services such as tutoring, health education, and environmental restoration.

SECTION 14: Establishes the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education, and Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund will be managed by a fund director appointed by the administrator and will support the commission's activities and contracts with agencies related to sections 11 through 13.

The fund will initially be capitalized with \$100 million transferred from the CHEEERRS fund. Any returns on investments will be reinvested to benefit the fund.

SECTION 15: Establishes an advisory council for the bureau, composed of fifteen members appointed by the governor based on their expertise or interest in health, economic, and educational inequities. Members are appointed for staggered terms of one, two, or three years, with successors serving three-year terms. The council elects a chair and meets at least quarterly. Members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses.

If a member misses two quarterly meetings in a year, their seat is considered vacant, and the chair must

notify the governor. The advisory council's role is to advise the bureau's administrator on all matters within the bureau's jurisdiction, help set priorities, and annually review programs, budgets, and policies.

SECTION 16: Creates a new fund called the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic Education Equity in Recovery Fund within Chapter 29 of the General Laws. The fund will be credited with \$850 million transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund, along with any appropriations, authorized revenues, interest earned, and public or private donations aimed at supporting civics and history education and professional development.

Money in the fund is not subject to further appropriation, and any remaining balance at the end of a fiscal year will not revert to the General Fund.

SECTION 17: States that, despite any other general or special laws, the act will take effect immediately upon passage.

HOUSE No. 3441

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bud L. Williams

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 the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>1/6/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3441

By Representative Williams of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3441) of Bud L. Williams relative to housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction in the Commonwealth. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3130 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act the Commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and reconstruction.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to address stark racial, social, and economic disparities, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health.

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. Whereas Black and Latino residents of the Commonwealth have been
2 impacted in ways disproportionate to their respective numbers in the population; and, the
3 disparate impacts of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has revealed in stark ways existing social
4 and economic disparities, which Black and Latino residents have endured for far too long; it is
5 the intention of the general court, during the recovery from the pandemic and after, to take
6 meaningful actions to redress said disparities and the social and economic determinants that are
7 at the root of them. To achieve the purposes as stated in this section and sections 2 through 8,

8 inclusive, this Act shall be known as the Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
9 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Act or the CHEEERR ACT.

10 SECTION 2. As used in sections 2 through 13, inclusive, the following words shall,
11 unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:—

12 “Agencies”, non-profit organizations located and operating within disparately impacted
13 communities with whom the commission may enter into contracts pursuant to section 9 for the
14 operation of corps projects.

15 “Commission”, the commonwealth corps commission established pursuant to section

16 “Bureau”, the Massachusetts Bureau on Social and Economic Equity in Recovery and
17 Reconstruction established pursuant to section 3.

18 “Corps”, the commonwealth housing, economic, education and equity in recovery and
19 reconstruction service corps or CHEEERRS corps established pursuant to section 11.

20 “Corps members”, individuals who commit to no more than 24 months of full or part-
21 time service in the commonwealth service corps pursuant to section 12.

22 “Corps projects”, programs established pursuant to this act to satisfy unmet community
23 needs.

24 “Disparately impacted community”, shall mean (a) a defined geographic area in which
25 Black and Latino residents whose rate of infection for the coronavirus exceeds their
26 proportionate share of the population of said geographic area as of May 1, 2020; or, (b) a
27 medically underserved community or (c) low and moderate income community; or, (c) an
28 educationally disadvantaged community;

29 “Educationally disadvantaged community”, shall mean a local school district in which the
30 percentage of children attending school in the district eligible for free or reduced cost lunches
31 under eligibility guidelines promulgated by the federal government under 42 USC 1758 exceeds
32 the forty percent;

33 "Low and moderate income community", a geographic area, within a city or town,
34 consisting of either (a) three or more contiguous census tracts or (b) a zip code or (c) a
35 neighborhood, in which either: (1) a majority of the households are low and moderate income
36 households as defined herein; or (2) the unemployment rate is at least 20 per cent higher than the
37 annual statewide average unemployment rate where such statewide unemployment rate is less
38 than or equal to 5 per cent; provided that, if the annual statewide average unemployment rate is
39 greater than 5 per cent, the community's unemployment rate need only be 10 per cent higher;

40 "Low and moderate income households", households which have incomes that do not
41 exceed 80 per cent of the median income for the area, with adjustments made for smaller and
42 larger families, as such median shall be determined from time to time by the Secretary of
43 Housing and Urban Development pursuant to 42 USC section 1437(a)(B)(2);

44 “Medically underserved community”, shall have the same meaning as used pursuant to
45 section 799B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 295p); and,

46 “Small business”, shall mean a business (i) owned or controlled by a Black or Latino
47 individual or individuals (ii) whose annual net revenue is less than \$5,000,000 and (iii) located in
48 a low or moderate income community.

49 “Unmet community needs”, needs including, but not limited to, those pertaining to
50 education, public health, public safety, the environment and other human needs in underserved
51 populations in disparately impacted communities in the commonwealth.

52 SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a Massachusetts bureau on social and economic equity in
53 recovery and reconstruction, in this section and in sections 4 through 15, inclusive, called the
54 bureau. Said bureau shall consist of an administrator and an advisory council, as described in
55 section 15. The administrator shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to paragraph (b), shall
56 serve a term of five years, and shall be removed only for cause. Notwithstanding the foregoing,
57 the administrator shall be eligible for reappointment to an additional five-year term.

58 (b) The administrator shall be appointed by the governor and shall serve a term of five
59 years; provided that in making said appointment, the governor shall choose the administrator
60 from a list of three candidates presented to the governor from a committee, consisting of seven
61 individuals comprised as follows: one member appointed to be appointed by the governor, two
62 members to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one member to be
63 appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives, two members to be appointed
64 by the senate president, and one member to be appointed by the senate minority leader; provided
65 further , that said all said appointments shall be made within thirty days of passage of this Act.

66 (c) The position of administrator shall be classified in accordance with section forty-five
67 of chapter thirty, and the salary shall be determined in accordance with section forty-six C of
68 said chapter thirty. The administrator shall devote his or her full time during business hours to
69 the duties of the office.

70 (d) The administrator shall, with the advice of the advisory council, have sole charge of
71 the supervision and administration of the office. The administrator may, subject to fiscal
72 resources available to support the operations of the bureau, employ and remove such assistant
73 administrators and other employees and consultants as administrator may deem necessary to
74 enable the performance of the functions of the bureau; provided that not more than ten percent of
75 said resources shall be expended on staff in any fiscal year. The provisions of chapter thirty-one
76 and section nine A of chapter thirty shall not apply to the administrator or to such assistant
77 administrators and consultants as may be appointed. In making such appointments, the
78 administrator shall hire individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic and gender make-up of
79 disparately impacted communities.

80 SECTION 4. Subject to the advice of the advisory council, the administrator may apply
81 for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth any federal, local or private grants of money or
82 property, whether real or personal, from any source, whether public or private, bequests, gifts or
83 contributions to aid in the financing of any of the programs or policies of the bureau. Such funds
84 shall be received by the state treasurer on behalf of the commonwealth and deposited in a
85 separate account and shall be expended under the direction of the administrator.

86 SECTION 5. The bureau, in fulfillment of its purposes, shall have the following duties
87 and functions:

88 (a) to administer and manage the Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and
89 Equity Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section 2DDDDD of chapter
90 29, and to effectuate the purposes of the bureau as outlined in this section and in sections 4
91 through 14, inclusive.

92 (b) to identify, analyze, evaluate and monitor public policies, programs, services and
93 regulations promulgated by state agencies (i) in response to recovery efforts pursued in response
94 to the Covid-19 pandemic and (ii) in the course of state agency activity; provided that a
95 particular focus shall be on the affect said policies, programs, services or regulations may have
96 or are likely to have on persons residing in disparately impacted communities. In addition, the
97 bureau shall have the following specific functions:

98 (i) to identify and recommend to the secretary of housing and community development
99 and to the director of the department of business and technology sources of state, federal and
100 private funds which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to
101 capital and technical assistance available to small businesses owned or operated by individuals
102 who reside in disparately impacted communities; (ii) to identify and recommend to the
103 undersecretary for housing and community development and public instrumentalities with the
104 department of housing and community development sources of state, federal and private funds
105 which are available to mitigate, or can be used to mitigate, the disparate access to affordable and
106 adequate housing on the part of individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted
107 communities; (iii) to identify and recommend to the commissioner of public health sources of
108 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise are available to mitigate, or
109 can be directed to mitigate, existing and emerging disparate incidences of illness and disease
110 experienced by individuals and households who reside in disparately impacted communities;
111 provided that in mitigating such incidences, the commissioner of public health shall expend said
112 monies in a manner proportionate to the prevalence of said diseases and illnesses among racial
113 and ethnic minorities; provided further, that the administrator may consult with the office of
114 health equity as necessary and appropriate to effect the purposes of this subsection; (iv) to

115 identify and recommend to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education sources of
116 state, federal and private funds which are appropriated or otherwise available to mitigate, or can
117 be utilized to mitigate, disparate access to and outcomes in educational instruction and programs
118 experienced by students attending schools in disparately impacted communities;

119 (c) to set aside an amount not less than fifty million dollars to implement innovative and
120 strategic re-entry programs targeted to returning citizens, as such term is defined in section ___;
121 provided, that in implementing said innovative and strategic re-entry programs, the bureau is
122 hereby authorized to enter into grants, not to exceed five hundred thousand per annum, with
123 nonprofit organizations with a demonstrated track record of assisting returning citizens in
124 integrating back into the community; provided further, that the bureau is hereby authorized to
125 undertake, solely or in conjunction with state agencies, public instrumentalities, municipalities in
126 which disparately impacted communities are located or nonprofits located in disparately
127 impacted communities the following activities:

128 (i) the development and implementation of family resource and reunification centers in
129 numerous quadrants of a disparately impacted community;

130 (ii) the development and implementation of community-led or neighborhood based, long-
131 term substance use treatment services dispersed in numerous locations throughout a disparately
132 impacted community;

133 (iii) the development and implementation of community-led counseling services
134 dispersed in locations throughout a disparately impacted community;

135 (iv) the development and implementation of transitional to permanent housing for
136 returning citizens; and,

137 (v) the development and implementation of community-led post incarceration support to
138 replace parole and probation In fulfillment of paragraphs (a) and (b), the bureau is hereby
139 authorized to contract with or provide grant funding to individuals, organizations, corporations,
140 associations or nonprofit organizations located in disparately impacted communities to carry out
141 the purpose and functions of the bureau. In fulfillment of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), the
142 administrator shall establish and promulgate public guidelines to govern contracts and grants.

143 SECTION 6. In order to fulfill the functions of the bureau such information as the
144 administrator may require from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency
145 shall be made available without delay, upon written request, to any said department, division,
146 board, bureau, commission, or agency of the commonwealth.

147 SECTION 7. (a) The Commonwealth Health, Economic, Education, and Equity in
148 Recovery and Reconstruction Fund, established pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29, shall
149 be within the bureau. The administrator shall oversee the management and activities of the fund
150 either directly or through the appointment of a fund director, to be appointed by the
151 administrator. The bureau, with the advice of the secretary of administration and finance, shall
152 adopt guidelines to implement the fund.

153 (b) The amounts credited to the fund shall be used to support (i) the activities of the
154 bureau as outlined in sections 3 through 14, inclusive and (ii) new and innovative strategies and
155 efforts to redress disparities in health, economic and educational outcomes by individuals and
156 households residing in disparately impacted communities and may be expended, without further
157 appropriation. To maximize the mitigation of disparate impacts across the policy and program
158 areas, including but not limited to health, economics and education, the administrator may

159 expends such amounts are necessary; provided that the administrator shall not expend, annually,
160 any more than twenty percent of the amount transferred from the Commonwealth Stabilization
161 Fund pursuant to section DDDDD of chapter 29.

162 (c) Annually, not later than October 1, the administrator shall report to the clerks of the
163 house of representatives and senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means on
164 the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the source and amount of
165 funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii)
166 any grants provided to stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure
167 projections for the next year.

168 SECTION 8. There shall be a designated small business stabilization and support fund
169 within the bureau. The fund shall be administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be
170 appointed by the administrator. The administrator shall adopt guidelines that are necessary to
171 implement the purposes of the fund. The administrator may consult with state agencies, public
172 instrumentalities, community development financial institutions, and other such organizations as
173 the administrator shall deem appropriate in the development of said guidelines. The fund shall be
174 initially capitalized by a transfer of three hundred million dollars from the CCHEERS fund.
175 Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and invested by an institution
176 designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A return on an investment
177 received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit of the fund. The bureau
178 may make payments from a deposit account for use under this section. The bureau shall use the
179 fund to make grants, forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof to support the
180 ongoing operations of small businesses located in disparately impacted communities. In
181 determining whether to make a grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or a combination thereof,

182 the bureau shall consider whether the action: (i) supports the economic stabilization or expansion
183 of small business; or (ii) promotes the retention or creation of jobs by the small business; (iii)
184 promotes employment opportunities for residents of disparately impacted communities; or, (iv)
185 supports the creation or expansion of a businesses whose success would promote further
186 economic development activity within the disparately impacted community and enhances the
187 quality of life of residents of a disparately impacted community. The bureau shall ensure that not
188 more than fifty million dollars are expended each year to support the making of grants,
189 forgivable loans, low-interest loans or a combination thereof. The maximum amount of any
190 grant, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof shall not exceed one million
191 dollars. The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
192 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include each grant, loan,
193 forgivable loan, low-interest loan or combination thereof made during the preceding calendar
194 year and an assessment of the impact each grant, loan, forgivable loan, low-interest loan or
195 combination thereof.

196 SECTION 9. (a) There is established a special fund called the incarceration to
197 incorporation entrepreneurship fund, which shall be a segregated fund within the designated
198 small business stabilization and support fund, and which shall be administered by a deputy fund
199 director to be appointed by the administrator.

200 (b) The incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall initially be capitalized
201 by a transfer of fifty million dollars from the designated small business stabilization and support
202 fund; provided, that the following sources of funds may be deposited into the incarceration to
203 incorporation entrepreneurship fund: (1) any funds appropriated by the legislature for the

204 purposes of this section and section 10; (2) donations from the public; (3) donations from private
205 entities; and (4) any funds provided through a sponsorship agreement.

206 (c) Monies in the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship fund shall be used to
207 implement, operate, and administer the incarceration to incorporation entrepreneurship program
208 established pursuant to section 10.

209 SECTION 10. (a) There is established within the bureau an incarceration to incorporation
210 entrepreneurship program, herein after “the program,” a business development program for
211 returning citizens, which shall be operated by the bureau and whose functions are to:

212 (1) provide technical assistance and business development training to returning citizens
213 who are seeking to operate or are already operating a business enterprise to be located within a
214 disparately impacted community; provided that said technical assistance and business
215 development training shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

216 (A) Accounting;

217 (B) Finance;

218 (C) Business management;

219 (D) Business planning;

220 (E) Budgeting;

221 (F) Marketing;

222 (G) Business law;

223 (H) Accessing startup capital, and other business startup topics as identified by the U.S.
224 small business administration and certified community development financial institutions;

225 (I) Estimating if the business enterprise is engaged in the construction industry; and,

226 (J) Technology training;

227 (2) provide micro-investments, in the form of grants, in an amount not to exceed fifty
228 thousand dollars, to assist returning citizens in the development and operation of a business
229 enterprise to be located within a disparately impacted community;

230 (3) provide ongoing mentorship and support; and

231 (4) Provide monthly networking meetings with business leaders, such as:

232 (A) business owners;

233 (B) representatives of financial institutions;

234 (B) angel investors; and

235 (C) heads of venture capital and investment firms; and

236 (b) For the purposes of implementing this section, the bureau shall confer with other
237 agencies, organizations, and individuals, including but not limited to, (1) the office of small
238 business and entrepreneurship, (2) the small business development center, (3) the Black
239 economic council of Massachusetts, (4) the Hispanic chamber of commerce, (5) the Latino
240 chamber of commerce, (6) the greater new england minority supplier development council, (7)
241 the center for women and enterprise, and any other relevant agency or organization that the
242 bureau consider necessary to meet the objectives of this section.

243 (c) For the purposes of this section, the term "returning citizen" means an individual who
244 is within six months of release, or has been released, from a local jail, county house of
245 corrections or a department of corrections facility and who resides in a disparately impacted
246 community.

247 (d) The bureau shall include an annual summary of activities as part of the report due
248 annually pursuant to paragraph (c) of section 7. The summary shall include: (1) the number of
249 businesses formed and launched by program participants; (a) The number of businesses formed
250 by program participants that have sustained operations through the production of the annual
251 summary, (3) the number of business enterprises owned and operated by returning citizens and
252 whom the program has provided technical assistance and business development training, and (4)
253 any other information the bureau deems pertinent to evaluating the program; provided that
254 program participants may expressly authorize that their anonymity be preserved in the annual
255 summary.

256 SECTION 11. (a) There shall be a commonwealth housing, economic, education and
257 equity in recovery and reconstruction service corps to be composed of a limited number of
258 carefully selected men and women, not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years
259 of age, recruited from disparately impacted communities, to be made available for a limited time
260 for projects directed toward satisfying unmet community needs.

261 (b) The corps shall be governed by a commission, which shall be within the bureau,
262 consisting of the administrator of the bureau and 14 members to be appointed by the governor; 1
263 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Association; 1 of whom shall be a
264 member of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO; 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two local

265 chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons, 2 of whom shall
266 be members chosen from local affiliates of the National Urban League, 1 of whom shall be a
267 member chosen from a Community Health Centers, 1 of whom shall be a member chosen by the
268 Massachusetts Senior Action Council, 2 of whom shall be members chosen by the Massachusetts
269 Association for Community Action, 2 of whom shall be members chosen from two community
270 development corporations, and 2 of whom shall be individuals with expertise in the educational,
271 training, and development needs of youth, particularly disadvantaged youth; Each member shall
272 serve for a term of 3 years and shall serve without compensation. A person appointed to fill a
273 vacancy in the office of a member of the board shall be appointed in a like manner and shall

274 serve for only the unexpired term of such member. A member shall be eligible for
275 reappointment. A chairman of the commission shall be elected annually from the membership.
276 The bureau shall provide administrative support to the commission as requested.

277 (c) The duties of the commission shall include, but not be limited to: (i) contracting with
278 agencies to administer service projects to address unmet community needs by recruiting corps
279 members; (ii) reviewing and approving the commonwealth corps plan and annual updates
280 prepared by each agency; and reviewing each agency's performance in carrying out its
281 responsibilities pursuant to this act. Each agency the commission contracts with shall be a
282 nonprofit organization incorporated pursuant to the provisions of chapter 180 of the General
283 Laws for the operation of corps projects.

284 SECTION 12. (a) Corps members shall be residents of disparately impacted communities
285 who are not younger than 17 years of age and not older than 26 years of age. Corps members
286 shall be the responsibility of each contracted agency. Corps members shall undertake meaningful

287 service projects addressing unmet community needs in areas including, but not limited to, the
288 environment, education, health and basic human services and may serve full or part-time; but,
289 members having direct contact with minor children or vulnerable adults shall be required to pass
290 a background check.

291 (b) Each contracted agency shall, to the extent practicable, ensure that corps members are
292 placed in corps projects that match their interests, skills and abilities. The contracted agency may
293 prescribe additional standards and procedures in consultation with the commission. Each
294 contracted agency may enroll individuals who choose to defer a stipend to serve as a corps
295 member. Each contracted agency shall seek to enroll individuals who are economically,
296 ethnically, socially, physically or educationally diverse.

297 (c) A corps member shall not be subject to chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30 of the
298 General Laws. Corps members shall not be considered to be an employee of the commonwealth
299 entitled to the benefit of chapter 152 of the General Laws, nor shall a corps member be
300 considered to be an employee of the commonwealth for any other purpose.

301 SECTION 13. (a) Each contracted agency shall, without limitation and subject to a duly
302 executed contract with the commission, administer the corps and in so doing shall: (1) provide
303 the personnel necessary to satisfy its obligations pursuant to the contract with the commission;

304 (2) function as or recruit corps sponsors; (3) compensate each corps member via a stipend
305 that has the value equivalent to fifteen dollar per hour worked, whether a corps member performs
306 on a full-time or part-time basis, (4) initiate studies and analyses of proposed and implemented
307 service and volunteer projects, which will aid in addressing local problems; (5) recommend
308 expansion of corps opportunities to address all unmet community needs; (6) identify the criteria

309 it will use to recruit individuals to serve as corps members (7) establish procedures for matching
310 and placing corps members with corps projects; and (8) establish personnel policies and
311 procedures for corps members.

312 (b) In entering into a contract with an agency, the commission shall give projects meeting
313 the following criteria preference: (1) projects addressing a well-established unmet community
314 need or unmet community needs; (2) projects articulating measurable goals, including an
315 assessment of the impact on the corps members and on the targeted community; (3) projects not
316 using corps members to replace previously budgeted positions or to reduce overtime, hours of
317 work or opportunities for advancement for employees or members of corps sponsors; and (4)
318 direct service projects that give corps members opportunities to provide direct services
319 addressing unmet community needs including, but not limited to, tutoring or mentoring,
320 providing health care education, providing services to individuals, families, seniors, homeless
321 populations, enhancing historic, cultural, and natural resources of the commonwealth, engaging
322 in environmental restoration projects, or enhancing emergency preparedness and response.

323 SECTION 14. There shall be a Commonwealth Housing, Economic, Education and
324 Equity in Recovery and Reconstruction Service Corps Fund within the bureau. The fund shall be
325 administered and managed by a fund director, who shall be appointed by the administrator. The
326 fund shall be established and utilized to support the work of the commission and to support the
327 costs of contracts entered into by the commission with agencies for the purposes of section 11
328 through 13, inclusive. The fund shall be initially capitalized by a transfer of one hundred million
329 dollars from the CCHEERS fund. Money in or received for the fund may be deposited with and
330 invested by an institution designated by the bureau and paid as the fund director shall direct. A

331 return on an investment received by the fund shall be deposited and held for the use and benefit
332 of the fund.

333 SECTION 15. The advisory council of the bureau shall consist of fifteen persons
334 qualified by training, experience, or demonstrated interest in the health, economic and
335 educational inequities or disparities, to be appointed by the governor as follows:— five for a
336 term of three years, five for a term of two years, and five for a term of one year. Upon expiration
337 of the term of any appointive member, said member’s successor shall be appointed in like
338 manner for a term of three years. The governor shall in like manner fill any vacancy for the
339 remainder of the unexpired term. Said members of the advisory council shall elect a person to
340 serve as chair and the advisory council shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall serve without
341 compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of
342 their duties. If any member is absent from two regularly scheduled quarterly meetings in any one
343 calendar year, said member shall be determined to have vacated the member’s appointment to
344 the council. The chair of the council shall forthwith notify the governor that such vacancy exists.
345 Said advisory council shall advise the administrator on any matter within the jurisdiction of said
346 bureau and shall advise the administrator in establishing priorities for bureau activities; and
347 annually review the programs, budgets and policies of the bureau.

348 SECTION 16. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
349 Section 2CCCCC the following new section:

350 Section 2DDDDD. There shall be established and set up on the books of the
351 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Commonwealth Covid-19 Health Economic
352 Education Equity in Recovery Fund. The fund shall be credited with: (i) a transfer, to be made by

353 the Comptroller, of eight hundred and fifty million dollars from the Commonwealth Stabilization
354 Fund, (ii) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and
355 specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (iii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iv)
356 funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations to further civics and
357 history education and professional development. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be
358 subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year
359 shall not revert to the General Fund.

360 SECTION 17. Notwithstanding and general or special law to the contrary, this act shall
361 take effect immediately.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 3891
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act enhancing legislative oversight of regulatory actions in Massachusetts
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Boldyga of Southwick
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	None
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	Chapter 30A: State Administrative Procedure

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Defines key terms used in the act (i.e. Agency, Rule, Legislature, and Major Rule)

SECTION 2: Outlines the process agencies must follow before implementing any major rule

Before proposing a major rule, an agency must prepare an economic impact statement (EIS) that estimates the rule's effect on the state economy, job creation, and business costs, including those for small businesses. The EIS must also include an analysis of alternative regulatory approaches and their respective costs.

A major rule cannot take effect unless it is formally approved by both branches of the Massachusetts Legislature. To initiate this process, the agency must submit the proposed rule and the EIS to the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Legislature has the authority to review, approve, or reject the rule through a concurrent resolution, which must be passed within 90 days of submission; otherwise, the rule is automatically disapproved.

In cases where a rule is urgently needed to preserve public peace, health, safety, or welfare, it may take effect immediately, but it must still be submitted for legislative ratification within 30 days.

SECTION 3: Requires that agencies must give the public a chance to participate in the rulemaking process for major rules by allowing public comments and holding at least one public hearing.

All economic impact statements, proposed rules, and related legislative resolutions must be made available to the public both online and in the State House library for review.

SECTION 4: Allows any person adversely affected by a rule implemented under this act to seek judicial review under Massachusetts law, specifically to challenge the rule's validity based on improper ratification or a miscalculation of its economic impact.

SECTION 5: Requires each agency to submit an annual report to the Legislature detailing the number of rules it proposed, how many were classified as major rules, and the outcomes of legislative ratification for those major rules.

HOUSE No. 3891

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Nicholas A. Boldyga

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 enhancing legislative oversight of regulatory actions in Massachusetts.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Nicholas A. Boldyga</i>	<i>3rd Hampden</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 3891

By Representative Boldyga of Southwick, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3891) of Nicholas A. Boldyga relative to legislative oversight of certain regulatory actions. Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act enhancing legislative oversight of regulatory actions in Massachusetts.

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. Definitions

2 As used in this act, the following words shall have the following meanings unless the
3 context clearly requires otherwise:

4 (a) "Agency" means any department, commission, board, council, authority, or other
5 body of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including executive offices, that has the authority
6 to promulgate regulations.

7 (b) "Rule" means any regulation, standard, statement of policy, or other form of agency
8 action that has the force and effect of law.

9 (c) "Legislature" means the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
10 consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

11 (d) "Major Rule" means a rule proposed by an agency which is likely to have an adverse
12 impact on economic growth, private sector job creation or employment, or have a direct and
13 significant adverse impact on businesses, including small businesses. A major rule is one that has
14 an estimated economic impact of more than \$1 million over five years, adjusted annually for
15 inflation.

16 Section 2. Legislative Review of Major Rules

17 (a) Economic Impact Statement. Before proposing a major rule, an agency shall prepare
18 an economic impact statement (EIS) that includes:

19 (1) An estimate of the economic impact of the rule on the state economy, job creation,
20 and business costs, including small businesses.

21 (2) An analysis of alternative regulatory approaches and their associated costs.

22 (b) Legislative Ratification Required. No major rule shall be effective unless ratified by
23 both branches of the Legislature. The agency shall submit the proposed rule and the EIS to the
24 Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives for consideration by the
25 legislature

26 (c) Legislative Process.

27 (1) The Legislature shall have the authority to review, approve, or reject the proposed
28 major rule.

29 (2) Approval shall be by a concurrent resolution of both the Senate and the House, which
30 must be passed within 90 days of the rule's submission or the rule shall be deemed disapproved.

31 (3) If the Legislature does not act within this period, the rule is considered disapproved.

32 (d) Emergency Rules. Rules necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
33 peace, health, safety, or welfare may take effect immediately but must be submitted to the
34 Legislature for ratification within 30 days.

35 Section 3. Public Participation and Transparency

36 (a) Agencies must provide opportunities for public comment on proposed major rules,
37 including at least one public hearing.

38 (b) All economic impact statements, proposed rules, and legislative resolutions shall be
39 made available online and in the State House library for public inspection.

40 Section 4. Judicial Review

41 (a) Any person adversely affected by a rule implemented under this act may seek judicial
42 review in accordance with Massachusetts law to challenge the rule's validity on the grounds that
43 it was not properly ratified or that its economic impact was miscalculated.

44 Section 5. Reporting

45 (a) Each agency shall annually report to the Legislature on the number of rules proposed,
46 the number of major rules, and the outcomes of legislative ratification for those rules.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 4028
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Holmes of Boston
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H. 3349 (Rep. Holmes — Identical)

PRIOR HISTORY

(2023-24) H. 3949: Accompanied study order, H. 4675

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30: General provisions relative to state departments, commissions, officers and employees

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Outlines legislative findings and establishes a special commission to study the potential transfer of the Department of Correction (DOC) and the Parole Board from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

Legislative findings include:

- Before 1991, the Department of Correction (DOC) operated under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) with a mission focused on rehabilitation (i.e. substance use disorders, mental illness, and supporting system-involved youth).
- Reports show widespread structural issues in correctional facilities, including lack of treatment and ongoing constitutional violations in mental health care, with agreed-upon remedies remaining unfulfilled.
- Approximately 70% of the DOC annual budget goes to labor costs, while only 2% is directed toward rehabilitative programming.
- The 1991 transfer of DOC to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) has negatively impacted health conditions and treatment quality in the prison system.
- EOHHS serves approximately one-third of Massachusetts residents and is focused on healthcare and support services, while EOPSS primarily manages policy and budgets, with limited emphasis on rehabilitation.

SECTION 2: Establishes the composition of the special commission tasked with studying the potential transfer of the Department of Correction and the Parole Board to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

The commission will include six members of the Legislature: three Senators—including the Senate Chairs of the Joint Committees on Public Safety and on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery, along with one member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; and three Representatives—including the House Chairs of the same Joint Committees and one member appointed by the House Minority Leader.

The commission will include four executive officials or their designees: the Secretary of Public Safety and Security, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Correction, and the Chair of the Parole Board.

The Governor will appoint seven individuals to the commission, including: one representative from a prisoners' rights organization, one from a correctional officers' union, one from a mental health advocacy group, one formerly incarcerated individual, one expert in criminal justice reform, one expert in correctional healthcare, and one representative from a legal services organization.

SECTION 3: Requires the commission to hold at least four public hearings across geographically diverse regions of the Commonwealth to gather input for its study.

The commission is also authorized to request any necessary information from state agencies to support

its investigation and analysis.

SECTION 4: Requires the commission to submit a final report of its findings and recommendations, including any draft legislation needed to implement them, to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives by December 31, 2026.

The commission may also issue interim reports as it sees fit during the study period.

HOUSE No. 4028

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Russell E. Holmes

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 return DOC and Parole to Health and Human Services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 4028

By Representative Holmes of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4028) of Russell E. Holmes for an investigation and study by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to transferring the Department of Correction and the Parole Board from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act to return DOC and Parole to Health and Human 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 SECTION 1. (a) The general court hereby finds that:

2 (i) Prior to 1991, the department of correction operated under the governance of the
3 executive office of health and human services with a focus on rehabilitating vulnerable residents.
4 The department's focus included addressing substance use disorder, mental illness, and system-
5 involved youth.

6 (ii) Legislative reports have identified structural issues within correctional
7 institutions, with significant percentages of incarcerated individuals lacking adequate treatment.
8 Constitutional violations in mental health care have been reported throughout department of
9 correction facilities, leading to agreements that remain unmet.

10 (iii) The department of correction's annual budget allocates approximately 70 per cent
11 for labor costs while only 2 per cent is spent on programming for incarcerated individuals.
12 Following the 1991 executive order transferring the department of correction to the executive
13 office of public safety and security, health conditions and treatment quality have been
14 significantly affected.

15 (iv) The executive office of health and human services serves approximately 1 in 3
16 residents of the commonwealth with a focus on healthcare, treatment, and support services. The
17 executive office of public safety and security focuses primarily on policy development and
18 budgetary oversight rather than rehabilitative services.

19 (b) There shall be a special commission to study the feasibility and advisability of
20 transferring the department of correction and the parole board from the executive office of public
21 safety and security to the executive office of health and human services. The commission shall
22 investigate: (i) the historical organization and governance of the department of correction and
23 parole board; (ii) the legal implications of transferring supervision of the department of
24 correction and parole board; (iii) the potential impacts on services, programming, healthcare,
25 rehabilitative efforts, and recidivism rates; (iv) the fiscal implications of such transfer; (v)
26 practices of other states regarding similar governance structures; and (vi) any other matters the
27 commission deems relevant to its investigation and study.

28 SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of: 3 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall
29 be the senate chair of the joint committee on public safety and homeland security who shall serve
30 as co-chair, 1 of whom shall be the senate chair of the joint committee on mental health,
31 substance use and recovery, and 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the

32 senate; 3 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the house chair of the
33 joint committee on public safety and homeland security who shall serve as co-chair, 1 of whom
34 shall be the house chair of the joint committee on mental health, substance use and recovery, and
35 1 of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house; the secretary of public safety
36 and security or a designee; the secretary of health and human services or a designee; the
37 commissioner of correction or a designee; the chair of the parole board or a designee; and 7
38 persons to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of a prisoners'
39 rights organization, 1 of whom shall be a representative of a correctional officers' union, 1 of
40 whom shall be a representative of a mental health advocacy organization, 1 of whom shall be a
41 formerly incarcerated individual, 1 of whom shall be an expert in criminal justice reform, 1 of
42 whom shall be an expert in correctional healthcare, and 1 of whom shall be a representative of a
43 legal services organization.

44 SECTION 3. The commission shall hold at least 4 public hearings in geographically
45 diverse regions of the commonwealth. The commission may request from all state agencies such
46 information as the commission may require in the course of its investigation and study.

47 SECTION 4. The commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations,
48 together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing
49 the same with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives not later than December 31,
50 2026. The commission may issue interim reports as it deems appropriate.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 4351
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representatives Fluker-Reid of Boston and Montaño of Boston
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	None
<u>CURRENT LAW</u>	Chapter 6E: Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission

SUMMARY

This legislation inserts a new Chapter 6F to the Massachusetts General Laws establishing an Office of Freedmen Affairs. This new state agency will serve American Freedmen - descendants of individuals emancipated from U.S. slavery—by addressing historical and ongoing inequities, preserving heritage, and improving social and economic outcomes through targeted advocacy, policy, and programming.

The office will be led by a governor-appointed director serving renewable 5-year terms and will:

- Supervise and manage the office of freedmen affairs work by:
 - Advising the governor and legislature on policies impacting American Freedmen
 - Advocating for equitable resource allocation and access to state programs, benefits, and services through strategic outreach and education initiatives.
 - Developing and implementing programs to expand economic opportunities and workforce development
 - Establishing and managing pr genealogy research and historical documentation
 - Conduct policy analysis and engage American Freedmen communities and other stakeholders to inform priorities & activities
 - Partner with public and private entities to advance equity goals

The office may hire staff and contract experts to fulfill its responsibilities. It must submit an annual report to the governor with updates, data, and recommendations. The office will be funded by legislative appropriations and may also accept external funding.

HOUSE No. 4351

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Brandy Fluker-Reid

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 establishing a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Brandy Fluker-Reid</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 4351

By Representative Fluker-Reid of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4351) of Brandy Fluker-Reid and Samantha Montañó for legislation to establish the Massachusetts office of freedmen affairs. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing a Massachusetts Agency of Freedmen Affairs.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to forthwith establish a Massachusetts Office of Freedmen Affairs, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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

1 The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 6E the following
2 chapter:-

3 CHAPTER 6F.

4 OFFICE OF FREEDMEN AFFAIRS.

5 Section 1. The commonwealth recognizes the unique needs of American Freedmen,
6 defined as descendants of persons emancipated from slavery in the United States. It
7 acknowledges their historical and ongoing marginalization, and cultural erasure. This chapter
8 establishes the office of freedmen Affairs, acknowledging the historical and ongoing
9 marginalization and cultural erasure of American Freedman, this office will preserve their

10 heritage, address ongoing inequities and improve social determinants of health through targeted
11 advocacy, policy recommendations and resource allocation.

12 Section 2. (a) The office of freedmen affairs is hereby established as a state agency to
13 provide resources, advocacy and oversight on matters affecting American Freedmen residing in
14 the commonwealth.

15 (b) The office shall be led by a director appointed by the governor. The director shall
16 serve a term of 5 years and may be reappointed for additional terms.

17 Section 3. The director of the office of freedmen affairs shall be responsible for the
18 supervision and management of the office of freedmen affairs work. This work includes, but is
19 not limited to:

20 (1) Providing guidance to the governor and legislature on policies and programs to
21 support American Freedmen residents.

22 (2) Advocating for the equitable allocation of state resources, funding, and opportunities
23 tailored to American Freedmen.

24 (3) Enhancing access to state programs, benefits and services for American Freedmen
25 through strategic outreach and education initiatives.

26 (4) Developing and implementing programs to expand economic opportunities and
27 workforce development tailored to the needs of American Freedmen.

28 (5) Establishing and managing pr genealogy research and historical documentation to
29 support individuals in identifying their American Freedmen heritage.

30 (6) Conducting policy analysis, program evaluations and progress reporting to ensure
31 state policies align with the needs of American Freedmen.

32 (7) Soliciting input from American Freedmen communities and other stakeholders to
33 shape the office's priorities and activities.

34 (8) Partnering with public and private organizations to amplify the office's impact and
35 ensure alignment with broader equity goals.

36 (9) Advising state agencies on challenges and barriers faced by American Freedmen
37 residents and recommend strategies to address them.

38 Section 4. (a) The office shall have adequate staff to perform its statutory duties,
39 including but not limited to experts in policy analysis, community outreach, genealogy and
40 financial planning.

41 (b) The office may contract with academic institutions, private consultants, organizations
42 dedicated to remedial justice or other professionals as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.

43 Section 5. Annually, the office of freedmen affairs shall submit an annual report to the
44 governor no later than December 31. This report shall include:

45 (1) A summary of the office's activities and accomplishments.

46 (2) An analysis of the status and well-being of American Freedmen residents in the
47 commonwealth.

48 (3) Recommendations for legislative or policy changes to address ongoing inequities.

49 Section 6. (a) The office shall be funded through annual appropriations by the general
50 court.

51 (b) The office may accept and solicit funds, including gifts, grants or donations, to
52 support its mission

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	House, No. 4483
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act authorizing the release or exclusion of certain land from conservation restrictions in the town of Deerfield
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Representative Blais of Deerfield; Senator Comerford
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	None

PRIOR HISTORY

None

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7C, Sections 32-37 (inclusive): Capital Asset Management and Maintenance

Chapter 184, Section 31: General Provisions Relative to Real Property, Restrictions, defined

Chapter 132A, Section 1: State Recreation Areas Outside of the Metropolitan Parks District, Bequests, restitutions or gifts; Conservation Trust

Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution

SUMMARY

SECTION 1: Authorizes the Commissioner of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, in consultation with the Commissioner of Conservation and Recreation, to release or amend a portion of an existing conservation restriction. The restriction was originally granted to the Department of Environmental Management by U.S. Gen New England, Inc., and now involves land owned by Great River Hydro LLC.

The release applies to approximately 15,977 square feet of land in Deerfield, Massachusetts, needed for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's rehabilitation project on Upper Road over the Deerfield River. The affected parcels are identified in official plans and deeds and will be recorded accordingly.

Following the project, the land used must be restored to its previous condition as much as practicable, taking into account the presence of permanent infrastructure.

SECTION 2: Requires that the town of Deerfield must provide mitigation for the release of conservation land authorized in Section 1. As part of this, the town will convey a conservation restriction to the Commonwealth over approximately 5.5 acres of land located along the Deerfield River. This land, identified as parcel ID No. 87-8, will be held under the care and control of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for conservation and recreation purposes under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution.

The town must grant the Commonwealth an easement to allow foot access to the conserved land from a public way and make any necessary improvements to the easement area. The location of the easement will be determined by agreement between the town and state officials.

If an appraisal determines that the value of the land and easement conveyed is less than the value of the land released in Section 1, the town must pay the Commonwealth 110% of the difference. This amount will be deposited into the Conservation Trust, as established under Chapter 132A, Section 1 of the General Laws, for use in acquiring land or interests in land under Article 97.

SECTION 3: Requires that the value of the property described in the act be determined by an independent professional appraisal, assessing both its fair market value and value in use. The appraisal must be conducted according to standard professional practices by a qualified appraiser commissioned by the commissioner of capital asset management and maintenance, in consultation with the commissioner of conservation and recreation.

A submission of the appraisal and report to the inspector general are required for review and approval, including a review of the appraisal's methodology. The inspector general must then prepare a report and file it with the commissioner.

The commissioner is required to submit the appraisal, the appraisal report, and the inspector general's review and comments (if any) to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means and the chairs of the Joint Committee on State Administration at least 15 days prior to executing the conveyance authorized in Section 1.

SECTION 4: Requires the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to assume all costs related to the conveyances authorized in the act, including expenses for engineering, surveys, appraisals, deed

preparation, and any other necessary costs.

SECTION 5: Requires that, aside from the partial release or amendment authorized by this act, the conservation restriction identified in Section 1 shall remain fully in effect.

SECTION 6: Provides that the act shall take effect upon its passage.

HOUSE No. 4483

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Natalie M. Blais and Joanne M. Comerford

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 authorizing the release or exclusion of certain land from conservation restrictions in the town of Deerfield.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>8/11/2025</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>8/11/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 4483

By Representative Blais of Deerfield and Senator Comerford, a joint petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Natalie M. Blais and Joanne M. Comerford (by vote of the town) for legislation to authorize the release or exclusion of certain land from conservation restrictions in the town of Deerfield. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. [Local Approval Received.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act authorizing the release or exclusion of certain land from conservation restrictions in the town of Deerfield.

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. (a) Notwithstanding sections 32 to 37, inclusive, of chapter 7C of the
2 General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, the commissioner of capital
3 asset management and maintenance, in consultation with the commissioner of conservation and
4 recreation, may execute a certificate of release or amendment of conservation restriction to
5 release or exclude from a conservation restriction granted to the department of environmental
6 management, predecessor to the department of conservation and recreation, by U.S. Gen New
7 England, Inc., predecessor in title to Great River Hydro LLC, that portion of land as lies within
8 the limits of lands to be acquired by the town of Deerfield for the purpose of the Massachusetts
9 department of transportation’s rehabilitation of Upper road over the Deerfield river in Deerfield,
10 Massachusetts, said portion being more particularly described in Section 1(b) of this act. The
11 conservation restriction is described in book 3812, page 90, dated July 16, 2001, recorded in the

12 franklin registry of deeds. The land for this conservation restriction is shown on maps on file
13 with the federal energy regulatory commission, license No. 2323.

14 (b) The portion of land to be released or excluded pursuant to Section 1(a) is an
15 approximately 15,977 square foot portion of the lands located along the northwesterly side of
16 Stillwater and Upper roads, shown as permanent easement parcels E-1, E-2, E-3, D-S-1, D-1, S-
17 1, and PUE-6 on plan sheets No. 9 through 11, temporary construction areas parcel TCA-1 on
18 plan sheet No. 9, and temporary occupancy areas parcels A, B, C, D, and E and further TCA-1
19 on said plan sheets in a preliminary set of right of way plans entitled “Upper Road Over
20 Deerfield River (Bridge No. D-06- 001 (OPP)), in the Town of Deerfield, Franklin County,
21 Preliminary Right of Way Plans,” except as otherwise noted, to be filed with the chief engineer
22 of the highway division of the Massachusetts department of transportation, and recorded with the
23 Franklin registry of deeds. Said lands are partially identified on the Deerfield town assessors’
24 maps as parcel ID No. 89-11 and 89-13, and are fully and presently owned by Great River Hydro
25 LLC, successor in title to U.S. Gen New England, Inc., pursuant to a deed recorded in the
26 Franklin county registry of deeds in book 4823, page 84, and as clarified by the affidavit
27 recorded in book 5192, page 154, of the same.

28 (c) All parcels to be used for this construction project shall be restored to their condition
29 prior to the construction project to the furthest extent possible considering the permanent
30 structures to be installed thereon, in order to protect the conservation values of the surrounding
31 lands.

32 SECTION 2. (a) As mitigation for the release or exclusion described in section 1, to
33 ensure no net loss of land subject to article 97 of the amendments to the constitution of the

34 commonwealth, the town of Deerfield shall convey to the commonwealth, to be held under the
35 care and control of the department of conservation and recreation for the purposes of
36 conservation and recreation pursuant to said article 97, a conservation restriction as defined in
37 section 31 of chapter 184 of the General Laws over certain land in the town of Deerfield
38 consisting of approximately 5.5 acres along the Deerfield river, located on martins falls road/off
39 mill village road identified on the Deerfield town assessors' maps as parcel ID No. 87-8, which
40 is presently under the care, custody, management and control of the town of Deerfield
41 Selectboard pursuant to a deed recorded in the Franklin county registry of deeds in book 973,
42 page 319. Said land is shown on a plan titled "Plan of Land for Proposed Conservation
43 Restriction Martins Falls Road", dated April 14, 2025, on file with the town of Deerfield.

44 (b) As additional mitigation for said release or exclusion, the town of Deerfield shall
45 convey to the commonwealth, to be held under the care and control of the department of
46 conservation and recreation, an easement over other lands to enable the department of
47 conservation and recreation and its agents to access the land by foot described in section 2(a)
48 from a public way, and shall such make improvements to the easement area necessary for its use
49 by said department. The precise location of the easement may be determined by agreement
50 between the town of Deerfield and the commissioner of capital access management and
51 maintenance, in consultation with the commissioner of conservation and recreation.

52 (c) If the appraisals conducted pursuant to section 3 determine that the fair market value
53 or value in use, whichever is greater, of the land and interests in land to be conveyed to the
54 commonwealth pursuant to Section 2 is less than the corresponding value of the land authorized
55 for release or exclusion pursuant to said Section 1, the town shall compensate the commonwealth
56 in an amount equal to 110 per cent of the difference. The town shall pay such sum to the

57 department of conservation and recreation for deposit into the conservation trust established
58 under section 1 of chapter 132A of the General Laws, to be used to acquire land or interests in
59 land subject to said article 97, including due diligence costs.

60 SECTION 3. The value of the property described in this act shall be determined by an
61 independent professional appraisal of its fair market value and value in use prepared in
62 accordance with the usual and customary professional appraisal practice by a qualified appraiser
63 commissioned by the commissioner of capital asset management and maintenance, in
64 consultation with the commissioner of conservation and recreation. The commissioner of capital
65 asset management and maintenance shall submit the appraisal and a report thereon to the
66 inspector general for review and comment. The inspector general shall review and approve the
67 appraisal, and the review shall include an examination of the methodology utilized for the
68 appraisal. The inspector general shall prepare a report of the review and file the report with the
69 commissioner of capital asset management and maintenance, and the commissioner shall submit
70 copies of the appraisal, the report thereon and the inspector general's review and approval and
71 comments, if any, to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the senate and
72 house chairs of the joint committee on state administration at least 15 days prior to the execution
73 of the conveyance authorized in Section 1 of this act.

74 SECTION 4. The Massachusetts department of transportation shall assume all costs
75 associated with engineering, surveys, appraisal, deed preparation and other expenses necessary to
76 execute the conveyances authorized in this act.

77 SECTION 5. Except as partially released or amended in accordance with this act, the
78 conservation restriction identified in Section 1 shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2124
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to government efficiency
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Cyr
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 1988): Reported favorably; referred to Senate Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 6A: Executive Offices

SUMMARY

This legislation establishes a behavioral science insight policy directive to encourage agencies, independent agencies, and judicial administrations to integrate behavioral science insight into government operations. These insights shall be applied to programs and policies that will yield substantial improvements to public welfare by streamlining processes, reducing administrative barriers, simplifying methods, and improving efficiency. Agencies are directed to collaborate with external researchers with expertise in behavioral science for evidence-based evaluation.

SENATE No. 2124

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Julian Cyr

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 relative to government efficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Julian Cyr

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Cape and Islands

SENATE No. 2124

By Mr. Cyr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2124) of Julian Cyr for legislation to create a behavioral science insights policy directive. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1988 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to government efficiency.

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

1 Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 4A the
2 following new section:-

3 Section 4B. Behavioral science insights policy directive.

4 (a) Administrative agencies, independent agencies, and judicial administration are
5 encouraged to do all of the following:

6 (1) identify policies, programs, and operations where applying behavioral science insights
7 may yield substantial improvements in public welfare, program outcomes, and program cost
8 effectiveness;

9 (2) develop strategies for applying behavioral science insights to programs and, where
10 possible, rigorously test and evaluate the impact of these insights; and

11 (3) strengthen governmental relationships with the research community to better use
12 empirical findings from the behavioral sciences.

13 (b) In implementing the policy directives in subsection (a), agencies and administrators
14 shall do all of the following:

15 (1) identify opportunities to help qualifying individuals, families, communities, and
16 businesses access public programs and benefits by, as appropriate, streamlining processes that
17 may otherwise limit or delay participation -- for example, removing administrative hurdles,
18 shortening wait times, and simplifying forms;

19 (2) improve how information is presented to consumers, borrowers, program
20 beneficiaries, and other individuals, whether as directly conveyed by the agency, or in setting
21 standards for the presentation of information, by considering how the content, format, timing,
22 and medium by which information is conveyed affects comprehension and action by individuals,
23 as appropriate;

24 (3) identify programs that offer choices and carefully consider how the presentation and
25 structure of those choices, including the order, number, and arrangement of options, can most
26 effectively promote public welfare, as appropriate, giving particular consideration to the
27 selection and setting of default options; and

28 (4) review elements of their policies and programs that are designed to encourage or
29 make it easier for individuals to take specific actions, such as saving for retirement, resolving

30 legal issues, or completing education programs. In doing so, agencies shall consider how the
31 timing, frequency, presentation, and labeling of benefits, taxes, subsidies, and other incentives
32 can more effectively and efficiently promote those actions, as appropriate. Particular attention
33 should be paid to opportunities to use nonfinancial incentives.

34 (c) For policies with a regulatory component, agencies are encouraged to combine this
35 behavioral science insights policy directive with their ongoing review of existing significant
36 regulations to identify and reduce regulatory burdens, as appropriate and consistent with Access
37 to Justice Commission recommendations and the Best Practices for Administrative Agencies to
38 Enhance Administrative Justice.

39 (d) Agencies shall engage outside researchers to provide advice and policy guidance to
40 assist in developing policy objectives and rigorous evaluation of initiatives under this statute, as
41 appropriate. Criteria for researchers shall include an emphasis on rigorous, evidence-based
42 evaluation, including but not limited to randomized control trials, and expertise in behavioral
43 science and related disciplines.

44 (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority
45 granted by law to any government entity.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2129
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to remote access for public bodies and town meeting
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Durant and Tarr
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2011): Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Section 20 of Chapter 30A: Meetings of a public body to be open to the public; notice of meeting; remote participation; recording and transmission of meeting; removal of persons for disruption of proceedings; office holders to certify receipt of open meeting law and educational materials

SUMMARY

This legislation ensures all public body meetings are open to the public, with notices posted at least 48 hours in advance, with posting requirements depending on the type of public body. The meetings must allow for remote participation, and if they are unable to accommodate, must publicly post a full transcript of the meeting. Members are required to certify their understanding of open meeting laws within two weeks of starting their service. The legislation lays out requirements for voting, comment periods, record preservation, and processes for town moderators to request remote and hybrid meetings.

SENATE No. 2129

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Peter J. Durant

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 relative to remote access for public bodies and town meeting.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Peter J. Durant</i>	<i>Worcester and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/27/2025</i>

SENATE No. 2129

By Mr. Durant, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2129) of Peter J. Durant and Bruce E. Tarr for legislation relative to remote access for public bodies and town meetings. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2011 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to remote access for public bodies and town meeting.

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. Section 20 of Chapter 30A of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out section 20, and inserting in place thereof the
3 following section:

4 Section 20. (a) Except as provided in section 21, all meetings of a public body shall be
5 open to the public.

6 (b) Except in an emergency, in addition to any notice otherwise required by law, a public
7 body shall post notice of every meeting at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, excluding
8 Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. In an emergency, a public body shall post notice as soon
9 as reasonably possible prior to the meeting. Notice shall be printed in a legible, easily

10 understandable format and shall contain the date, time and place of the meeting and a listing of
11 topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting.

12 (c) For meetings of a local public body, notice shall be filed with the municipal clerk and
13 posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal
14 building in which the clerk's office is located and on the municipal website.

15 For meetings of a regional or district public body, notice shall be filed and posted in each
16 city or town within the region or district in the manner prescribed for local public bodies. For
17 meetings of a regional school district, the secretary of the regional school district committee shall
18 be considered to be its clerk and shall file notice with the clerk of each city or town within the
19 district and shall post the notice in the manner prescribed for local public bodies. For meetings of
20 a county public body, notice shall be filed in the office of the county commissioners and a copy
21 of the notice shall be publicly posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours
22 in the places as the county commissioners shall designate for the purpose.

23 For meetings of a state public body, notice shall be filed with the attorney general by
24 posting on a website under the procedures established for this purpose and a duplicate copy of
25 the notice shall be filed with the regulations division in the state secretary's office.

26 The attorney general may prescribe or approve alternative methods of notice where the
27 attorney general determines the alternative methods will afford more effective notice to the
28 public.

29 (d) Public bodies may allow remote meeting participation provided that all persons
30 present at the meeting are clearly audible to each other. Remote members may vote and shall not
31 be deemed absent for the purposes of section 23D of chapter 39. The public body shall ensure

32 public access to the deliberations of the public body for interested members of the public through
33 adequate, alternative means of public access. Where active, real-time participation by members
34 of the public is a specific requirement of a general or special law, regulation or a local ordinance
35 or by-law, pursuant to which the proceeding is conducted, any adequate, alternative means of
36 public access pursuant to regulations established under section j shall provide for such
37 participation and shall be sufficient to meet such participation requirement. A municipal public
38 body that for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts is unable to provide
39 adequate, alternative means of public access that will enable the public to follow the proceedings
40 of the municipal public body as those activities are occurring in real-time may instead post on its
41 municipal website a full and complete transcript, recording or other comprehensive records of
42 the proceedings as soon as practicable upon conclusion of the proceedings. This paragraph shall
43 not apply to proceedings that are conducted pursuant to a general or special law, regulation or a
44 local ordinance or bylaw that requires allowance for active participation by members of the
45 public. A public body shall offer its selected adequate, alternative means of public access to its
46 proceedings without subscription, toll or similar charge to the public.

47 (e) Public bodies may allow hybrid meeting participation provided that all persons
48 present at the meeting are clearly audible to each other.

49 (f) A public body may allow remote participation by all members in any meeting of the
50 public body and a quorum of the body and the chair shall not be required to be physically present
51 at a specified meeting location.

52 (g) A public body that elects to conduct its proceedings under this section shall ensure
53 that any party entitled or required to appear before it shall be able to appear through remote

54 means, as if the party were a member of the public body and participating remotely as provided
55 in subsection

56 (h) No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair,
57 and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings
58 of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt
59 the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person
60 does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person
61 from the meeting.

62 (i) Within 2 weeks of qualification for office, all persons serving on a public body shall
63 certify, on a form prescribed by the attorney general, the receipt of a copy of the open meeting
64 law, regulations promulgated under section 25 and a copy of the educational materials prepared
65 by the attorney general explaining the open meeting law and its application under section 19.
66 Unless otherwise directed or approved by the attorney general, the appointing authority, city or
67 town clerk or the executive director or other appropriate administrator of a state or regional body,
68 or their designees, shall obtain certification from each person upon entering service and shall
69 retain it subject to the applicable records retention schedule where the body maintains its official
70 records. The certification shall be evidence that the member of a public body has read and
71 understands the requirements of the open meeting law and the consequences of violating it.

72 (j) The attorney general shall develop and adopt standards and guidelines for remote or
73 hybrid participation of public bodies.

74 SECTION 2. Said chapter 30A of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
75 inserting after section 20 the following section:

76 Section 20 ½ . (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law, charter provision,
77 ordinance or by-law to the contrary, the moderator in a town having a representative or open
78 town meeting form of government may request that the select board or board of selectmen of the
79 town call for a representative or open town meeting to be held through remote or hybrid
80 participation, including, but not limited to, by means of a video or telephone conferencing
81 platform. Such a request by the moderator to the select board or board of selectmen shall be in
82 writing and shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) the moderator's determination and
83 request to hold a town meeting through remote participation in accordance with this section; (ii)
84 the video or telephone conferencing platform the moderator has determined to use to hold the
85 town meeting; (iii) confirmation that the moderator has consulted with the local disability
86 commission or coordinator for federal Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; and (iv) a
87 certification by the moderator that: (A) the moderator has tested the video or telephone
88 conferencing platform; and (B) the platform satisfactorily enables the town meeting to be
89 conducted in substantially the same manner as if the meeting occurred in person at a physical
90 location and in accordance with the operational and functional requirements set forth in this
91 section.

92 A video or telephone conference platform used by a town meeting for remote or hybrid
93 participation under this section shall, at minimum, provide for the ability for: (i) the moderator,
94 town meeting members, town officials and any other interested members of the public to identify
95 and hear the moderator and each town meeting member who attends and participates in the
96 remotely-held town meeting, as well as any other individuals who participate in the remotely-
97 held town meeting; (ii) the ability to determine whether a quorum is present; (iii) a town meeting
98 member, town official or other individual to request recognition by the moderator without prior

99 authorization; provided, however, that to the extent technologically feasible, the request is visible
100 or audible to the public in real time and upon review of the recording of the town meeting
101 proceedings, preserved according to subsection (h); (iv) the moderator to determine when a town
102 meeting member wishes to be recognized to speak, make a motion, raise a point of order or
103 object to a request for unanimous consent; (v) the moderator to recognize a town meeting
104 member, town official or other individual to speak and to enable that person to speak; (vi) the
105 ability to conduct a roll call vote; (vii) any interested members of the public to access the
106 meeting remotely for purposes of witnessing the deliberations and actions taken at the town
107 meeting; and (viii) the town meeting to be recorded. Registered voters residing in the town
108 wishing to participate in a remote town meeting conducted pursuant to this section shall submit a
109 request to participate to the town clerk not less than 48 hours in advance of the town meeting.
110 Upon receipt of the request and verification of the requester's voter registration status, the clerk
111 shall provide to the requester instructions for participating in the remote town meeting.

112 (b) Not later than 10 business days following receipt of a written request by the
113 moderator for remote or hybrid participation at a town meeting pursuant to subsection (a), the
114 select board or board of selectmen shall vote to determine if the town meeting shall be held
115 remotely by means of the video or telephone conferencing platform requested by the moderator.

116 (c) If the select board or board of selectmen votes to approve the request of the moderator
117 for remote or hybrid participation at a town meeting the select board shall issue, a notice that
118 expressly states: (i) that the town meeting shall be held remotely by means of the video or
119 telephone conferencing platform requested by the moderator; (ii) the date and time of the
120 meeting; and (iii) any information necessary for the moderator, town meeting members, town

121 officials and interested members of the public to access and witness the deliberations and actions
122 taken at the town meeting remotely.

123 The notice issued by the select board or board of selectmen shall be: (i) accompanied by
124 the written request of the moderator submitted to the select board or board of selectmen under
125 subsection (a); (ii) filed and posted in accordance with the requirements of subsection (b) of
126 section 10A of chapter 39 of the General Laws; (iii) publicly posted not less than 10 days before
127 the scheduled date of the remote town meeting. The notice may include a date, time and place for
128 the town meeting to be resumed if the town meeting does not vote to continue the town meeting
129 remotely pursuant to subsection (f).

130 (d) If the select board or board of selectmen votes to approve the request of the moderator
131 for remote or hybrid participation at a town meeting and the select board or board of selectmen
132 has not yet issued a warrant for a town meeting, the select board or board of selectmen shall
133 approve and issue a warrant pursuant to section 10 of said chapter 39 for the town meeting that
134 expressly states: (i) that the town meeting shall be held remotely or hybrid by means of the video
135 or telephone conferencing platform requested by the moderator; (ii) the date and time of the
136 meeting; and (iii) any information necessary for access and witness the deliberations and actions
137 taken at the town meeting remotely.

138 The warrant issued by the select board or board of selectmen shall be: (i) accompanied by
139 the written request of the moderator submitted to the select board or board of selectmen under
140 subsection (a); and (ii) filed in accordance with said section 10 of said chapter 39, all other
141 applicable laws and any relevant provisions of the town charter or by-laws. The warrant may

142 include a date, time and place for the town meeting to be resumed if the town meeting does not
143 vote to continue the town meeting remotely pursuant to subsection (f).

144 (e) Not later than 5 business days after a vote of the select board or board of selectmen to
145 approve the request of the moderator to hold a town meeting remotely or hybrid pursuant to
146 subsection (c) or (d), the town clerk shall submit certified copies of the vote of the select board
147 or board of selectmen and the written request of the moderator to the attorney general.

148 (f) Any roll call vote taken at a representative or open town meeting held through remote
149 or hybrid participation pursuant to this section shall be taken by any means that the moderator
150 determines accurately and securely records the votes of those entitled to vote at the meeting,
151 including, but not limited to, roll call vote, electronic voting, voting by ballot, voting by phone or
152 any combination thereof. The vote of each voting member on a roll call vote shall be recorded
153 and kept with the minutes of the town meeting.

154 (g) A representative or open town meeting held remotely or hybrid pursuant to this
155 section shall be recorded and the recording shall be preserved and made publicly available on the
156 town's website for not less than 90 days after the conclusion of the remote or hybrid town
157 meeting.

158 (h) All actions taken during a remote or hybrid town meeting held pursuant to this
159 section are hereby ratified, validated and confirmed to the same extent as if the town meeting had
160 been conducted in person and such actions are in accordance with all other applicable laws,
161 charter provisions, ordinances and by-laws.

162 (j) The attorney general shall develop and adopt standards and guidelines for remote or
163 hybrid participation of town meetings.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2130
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing a legislative fiscal office
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Eldridge
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-2024 (S1993): Sent to study

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 3: The General Court

SUMMARY

This legislation establishes a permanent legislative fiscal office of the Massachusetts General Court to provide assistance and analysis to legislators, legislative staff, and legislative committees on the fiscal aspects of legislation and budget matters.

SENATE No. 2130

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James B. Eldridge

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 establishing a legislative fiscal office.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

James B. Eldridge

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Middlesex and Worcester

SENATE No. 2130

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2130) of James B. Eldridge for legislation to establish a legislative fiscal office. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1993 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing a legislative fiscal office.

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

1 Chapter 3 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 71 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 72. (a) There shall be a permanent legislative fiscal office to serve as a service
4 agency for the general court, which shall consist of a director and deputy director and staff to
5 assist the director and deputy director. The director and deputy director shall be appointed by
6 joint decision of the lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of administration and finance, house
7 chair of ways and means and senate chair of ways and means. The director, deputy director and
8 staff shall have substantial experience in financial management, accounting or other related
9 fields.

10 (b) The legislative fiscal office shall research and provide assistance and analysis to
11 legislators, legislative staff and legislative committees on the fiscal impact of proposed
12 legislation or the state budget. The findings and recommendations of the office are not binding
13 upon the general court, but an independent assessment of costs and proposals of statutory
14 changes to produce a more cost-sensible and effective proposal. Legislators can request that costs
15 of a proposed bill be reviewed at any time during the legislative process, and if such a review is
16 requested, the review shall be completed before the reporting of the bill from its current
17 committee.

18 (c) The legislative fiscal office shall have the following responsibilities:

19 (1) Provide fiscal analysis on proposed legislation

20 (2) Analyze the governor's proposed budget

21 (3) Following each legislative session, the office shall prepare a report detailing all
22 appropriations of the legislature including, but not limited to, data concerning the final fiscal year
23 budget, supplemental budgets, bonds, tax incentives and fiscal impact of bills signed into law
24 during the legislative session.

25 (d) The funds for the operations of the legislative fiscal office shall be appropriated by
26 the general court from the general fund from year to year and shall be included in and constitute
27 a separate item in the act appropriating funds for the expenses of the general court.

28 (e) The books and records of the legislative fiscal office shall be subject to audit by the
29 state auditor's office.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2131
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing an office of economic empowerment
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Eldridge
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H3699 (Rep. Kimberly Ferguson)

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-2024 (S2131): Sent to study

CURRENT LAW

Section 133 of Chapter 164: Emergency mutual aid

SUMMARY

This legislation allows for municipal light plants providing emergency mutual aid to sell, rent, or lease any equipment or goods related to their emergency efforts. Employees providing aid are granted state retirement and pension coverage. Additionally, the legislation extends liability protections to include both the utility and its employees.

SENATE No. 2131

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James B. Eldridge

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 establishing an office of economic empowerment.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

James B. Eldridge

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Middlesex and Worcester

SENATE No. 2131

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2131) of James B. Eldridge for legislation to establish an office of economic empowerment. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing an office of economic empowerment.

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

1 Chapter 10 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 78 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 79. (a) There shall be within the office of the state treasurer an office of
4 economic empowerment. The office of economic empowerment shall perform such functions as
5 the treasurer may determine in relation to the provision of equitable access to opportunities and
6 resources through equity-centered programs, policies, and partnerships to promote economic
7 mobility and financial independence to residents across the commonwealth.

8 (b) The office shall be under the supervision and control of the executive director. The
9 executive director shall be the executive and administrative head of the office and shall be
10 responsible for administering and enforcing the laws and regulations relative to the office and to
11 any administrative unit of the office thereof. The duties given to the executive director in this act

12 shall be exercised and discharged subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the state
13 treasurer.

14 (c) The executive director may, subject to appropriation, appoint and remove such
15 employees as they deem necessary to perform the duties of their office and may determine their
16 salaries and duties.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2140
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to SAVE tax dollars in the Commonwealth
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Fattman and Tarr
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-2024 (S1998): Sent to study

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7: Executive Office for Administration and Finance

SUMMARY

This legislation requires the Secretary of Administration and Finance to direct all state agencies responsible for public benefits to register for the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program (SAVE). This shall be used to verify the eligibility of applicants for public benefits or licenses and ensure a uniform eligibility process. The Secretary shall file a written report detailing the steps taken to enroll and implement SAVE.

SENATE No. 2140

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Ryan C. Fattman

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 SAVE tax dollars in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Ryan C. Fattman</i>	<i>Worcester and Hampden</i>	
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>

SENATE No. 2140

By Mr. Fattman, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2140) of Ryan C. Fattman and Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to SAVE tax dollars in the Commonwealth. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1998 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to SAVE tax dollars in the Commonwealth.

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

1 Chapter 7 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 63. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the secretary
4 of administration and finance shall direct all state agencies under the control of the governor or a
5 secretary that are responsible for the issuance of public benefits or licensure to register for the
6 federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program, hereinafter referred to as SAVE.
7 The secretary shall further instruct said agencies and departments to use SAVE to verify whether
8 applicants for a public benefit or license, whose documentation is not available or is
9 questionable, are qualified for benefit eligibility purposes. The registration for SAVE pursuant to

10 this section shall be incorporated into a uniform system for said state agencies to determine
11 common eligibility standards for applicants.

12 (b) The secretary of administration and finance shall, on or before June 30, 2026, provide
13 a written report to the senate and house committees on ways and means and the clerks of the
14 senate and house of representatives detailing the steps taken to enroll in and implement SAVE. If
15 a state agency that is required to register for SAVE pursuant to subsection (a) has failed to do so
16 prior to June 30, 2026, the secretary shall include in the report the specific reasons that the
17 agency has been unable to register for SAVE and a 6 month action plan with any legislative
18 recommendations or requests for appropriations to effectuate its registration for SAVE.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

BILL NUMBER Senate, No. 2143

TITLE An Act to permit enhanced public access to deliberations of public bodies and to permit improved efficiency of public bodies

SPONSORS Senator Feeney

HEARING DATE Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2002): Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Section 18 of Chapter 30A: Definitions applicable to Secs. 18 to 25

SUMMARY

This legislation introduces the definition of “Public Internet Discussions” as part of public body meetings to include meetings by members of the public on the internet. The discussions must be accessible to the public and require notice. The legislation outlines further requirements for meeting minutes, comment periods, and message exchanges over chat functions.

SENATE No. 2143

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul R. Feeney

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 permit enhanced public access to deliberations of public bodies and to permit improved efficiency of public bodies.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Paul R. Feeney

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Bristol and Norfolk

SENATE No. 2143

By Mr. Feeney, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2143) of Paul R. Feeney for legislation to permit enhanced public access to deliberations of public bodies and to permit improved efficiency of public bodies. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2002 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to permit enhanced public access to deliberations of public bodies and to permit improved efficiency of public bodies.

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. The definition of “Deliberation” in Section 18 of Chapter 30A of the
2 General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the
3 phrase “procedural meeting”, the following word:- “materials”.

4 SECTION 2. The definition of “Meeting” in said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as so
5 appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the word “by”, and inserting in place
6 thereof the following words:- “at a gathering of”.

7 SECTION 3. The definition of “Meeting” in said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as so
8 appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the word “or” at the end of clause (d).

9 SECTION 4. The definition of “Meeting” in said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as so
10 appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the word, “session.” at the end of clause (e)
11 and inserting in place thereof the following words, “session; or”.

12 SECTION 5. The definition of “Meeting” in said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as so
13 appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the following clause:-

14 (f) participation by members of a public body in a Public Internet Discussion.

15 SECTION 6. The definition of “Post Notice” in said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as
16 so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “meeting”, the following words: -
17 “or a public internet discussion”.

18 SECTION 7. Said Section 18 of said Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
19 amended by inserting after the definition of “Post Notice” the following definition:-

20 “Public Internet Discussion”, a discussion via the Internet by members of a public body,
21 which may include matters within the body’s jurisdiction. All public Internet discussions shall be
22 set up so that the public can monitor the discussion among members of the public body. At the
23 discretion of the public body, a public Internet discussion may be set up so that some defined
24 subset of the public can also make statements in the public Internet discussion. Everyone making
25 statements in a public Internet discussion shall be authenticated, so that all statements can be
26 accurately attributed to the person making them. No votes or formal actions may be taken in a
27 public Internet discussion and there is no quorum requirement for a public Internet discussion.

28 SECTION 8. Section 20 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
29 out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

30 (a)(1) Except as provided in Section 21, all meetings of a public body shall be open to the
31 public.

32 (2) All public Internet discussions shall be open to the public in that members of the
33 public must be able to monitor the proceedings via the Internet.

34 (3) No deliberations may take place except at

35 (i) Meetings,

36 (ii) Public Internet Discussions, or

37 (iii) gatherings that meet exceptions (d) or (e) under the definition of Meeting, as defined
38 in Section 18.

39 SECTION 9. Said Section 20 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
40 by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following
41 subsection:-

42 (b) Except in an emergency, in addition to any notice otherwise required by law, a public
43 body shall post notice of every meeting and public Internet discussion at least 48 hours prior to
44 the start of such meeting or public Internet discussion, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal
45 holidays. In an emergency, a public body shall post notice as soon as reasonably possible prior to
46 such meeting or public Internet discussion. Notice shall be printed in a legible, easily
47 understandable format and shall contain a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates
48 will be discussed at the meeting or public Internet discussion.

49 (1) In the case of a meeting, the notice also shall contain the date, time and place of the
50 meeting.

51 (2)In the case of a public Internet discussion, the notice also shall contain the date and
52 time of the start of the public internet discussion and shall state whether the public is limited to
53 monitoring the discussion among members of the public body or whether some defined subset of
54 the public can also make statements in the public Internet discussion. If some defined subset of
55 the public can make statements in the public Internet discussion, the notice shall provide, or
56 direct readers to, directions for members of that subset to get authenticated so that they can make
57 statements in the public Internet discussion and their statements can be attributed accurately.

58 (3)In the case of a public Internet discussion held via an internet service such as a
59 computer-mediated discussion, conference, forum or blog, it shall be publicly accessible and the
60 notice shall include the URL (or URLs, if there are more than one) and any other information
61 required to access the discussion and its archive.

62 (4)In the case of a public Internet discussion based on the exchange of discrete messages,
63 it shall be possible for the public to subscribe to receive the messages and the messages shall be
64 available from a publicly accessible archive. The notice shall include instructions for subscribing
65 to the messages and instructions for accessing them from the archive.

66 (5)In the case of a continuing public Internet discussion, a notice that the public Internet
67 discussion is continuing shall be reposted at least once a month. This notice shall include the
68 instructions for accessing the public Internet discussion and its archive and shall list the topics
69 that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed during the following month.

70 SECTION 10. Said Section 20 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
71 amended by inserting after the word “meetings”, in each instance in which it appears in
72 subsection (c), the following words:- “and public internet discussions”.

73 SECTION 11. Said Section 20 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
74 amended by striking the word “The” at the beginning of subsection (d) and inserting in place
75 thereof the following words:- “In the case of a physical meeting, the”.

76 SECTION 12. Said Section 20 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further
77 amended by inserting in subsection (d), , the following sentences:- "In the case of public Internet
78 discussions, there is no concept of the physical location of the discussion. Independent of
79 participants’ physical locations, when they are participating in a public Internet discussion, they
80 are present at the discussion. The public must be offered the same access to see, read, or hear the
81 proceedings as the members of the public body have themselves.”

82 SECTION 13. Section 22 of Chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking
83 out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

84 (a)(1)A public body shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including
85 executive sessions, setting forth the date, time and place, the members present or absent, a
86 summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the
87 meeting, the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all
88 votes.

89 (2)All information exchanged during a public Internet discussion must be captured and
90 maintained and be freely accessible via the Internet. Each message or statement must have an
91 indication of the date and time it was made and the person who made it. All statements made or
92 opinions expressed in a public Internet discussion are made solely on behalf of the person
93 making the statement or expressing the opinion (independent of whether that person is a member
94 of the public body or the public at large), not on behalf of the public body.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2159
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing an office of restorative justice
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Kennedy
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H3303 (Rep. Simon Gataldo)

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7: Executive Office for Administration and Finance

SUMMARY

This legislation establishes the Office of Restorative Justice within the Executive Office of Administration and Finance. The office will serve to promote and coordinate restorative justice initiatives across Massachusetts and will be the central funding body for these efforts.

SENATE No. 2159

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Robyn K. Kennedy

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 establishing an office of restorative justice.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Robyn K. Kennedy

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Worcester

SENATE No. 2159

By Ms. Kennedy, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2159) of Robyn K. Kennedy for legislation to establish an office of restorative justice within the executive office for administration and finance. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing an office of restorative justice.

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

1 Chapter 7 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 63. There shall be an office of restorative justice within the executive office for
3 administration and finance, subject to appropriation. The office shall be under the supervision
4 and control of a director who shall be appointed by the secretary of administration and finance.

5 The director shall be a person with substantial training and professional experience in restorative
6 justice and shall maintain complete impartiality with respect to the matters coming before the
7 office and devote their full time to the duties of the office.

8 The office of restorative justice shall build restorative justice capacity across multiple
9 disciplines and serve as the primary administrative and funding entity for publicly sponsored
10 restorative justice initiatives in the commonwealth. The office shall be available to assist the
11 legislative, judicial and executive branches, counties, cities, towns, community organizations and
12 members of the public with developing and expanding restorative justice initiatives. The office

13 shall promote the implementation of chapter 276B of the General Laws and any other laws that
14 provide for the use of restorative justice.

15 (a) For purposes of this section, the term “restorative justice” shall have the same
16 meaning as in section 1 of said chapter 276B and include restorative practices rooted in
17 community values and incorporating restorative principles. Restorative practices under this
18 section shall include, but not be limited to victim-offender conferences, family group
19 conferences, circles, community conferences and other similar victim-centered practices.
20 Restorative practices may be used at any point before, during and after court involvement, to
21 prevent court involvement and to support the healing of harm within communities.

22 (b) The office, in collaboration with communities and government agencies and
23 consistent with restorative justice values, may: (i) design, develop, launch or fund restorative
24 justice programs; (ii) create standards and guidelines for best practices for administering,
25 providing training on and facilitating restorative justice programs operated or funded by the
26 office; (iii) conduct restorative justice educational programs and provide other technical
27 assistance; (iv) serve as a centralized repository for restorative justice resources; (v) establish
28 policies and procedures to effectuate the purposes of this section, including, but not limited to,
29 provisions for grant making, data collection, and evaluation of restorative justice programs
30 operated or funded by the office; and (vi) take other actions to promote restorative justice within
31 local communities and public entities of the commonwealth.

32 (c) The director shall convene a statewide advisory committee to guide the office of
33 restorative justice in carrying out the purposes of this section. The statewide advisory committee
34 shall consist of not more than 18 members trained in restorative justice practices; provided, that

35 there shall be an equal number of government members and non-government community
36 members on the committee; provided further, that the government members shall be from the
37 legislative, judicial and executive branches and government-related statewide associations,
38 including, but not limited to, representatives of public safety, law enforcement, victim services,
39 health and human services, education, child welfare and legal agencies; and provided further,
40 that the non-government community members shall be representatives of indigenous
41 communities, survivors, formerly incarcerated, incarcerated populations, community-based
42 restorative justice programs and practitioners working with juveniles and adults in communities,
43 schools and criminal justice systems. Members of the committee shall be selected from diverse
44 ethnicities, races, religions, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic statuses,
45 differently abled, and geographical backgrounds from throughout the commonwealth. The
46 members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be
47 reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

48 (d) The director may establish reasonable fees to be charged to public agencies for the
49 provision of restorative justice education, consultation or other services authorized under this
50 section, and may apply for and accept on behalf of the commonwealth any federal, local or
51 private grants, bequests, gifts or contributions to aid in the financing of any of the programs or
52 activities of the office. Fees, grants, bequests, gifts or contributions shall be received by the
53 office and deposited in a separate account and shall be expended, without further appropriation,
54 at the direction of the director for the cost of operating the office, including personnel, and for
55 programs funded by the office. The office may make agreements with public agencies and
56 officers and may contract with other persons, including private agencies, corporations or
57 associations, to carry out any of the functions and purposes of this section.

58 (e) Annually, the office shall annually prepare a report on its activities, including all
59 income and expenditures, and file the report with the governor, the secretary of administration
60 and finance, the secretary of public safety and security, the secretary of health and human
61 services, the secretary of education, the chief justice of the supreme judicial court, the chief
62 justice of the trial court, the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means, and
63 the chairs of the joint committee on public safety and homeland security, the joint committee on
64 mental health, substance use and recovery, the joint committee on the judiciary and the joint
65 committee on education not later than December 31.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2161
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to update disability commission chair requirements
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Lewis
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

CURRENT LAW

Subsection (e) of section 20 of chapter 30A: Meetings of a public body to be open to the public; notice of meeting; remote participation; recording and transmission of meeting; removal of persons for disruption of proceedings; office holders to certify receipt of open meeting law and educational materials

SUMMARY

This legislation amends the remote participation rules for local disability commissions from requiring a physical quorum of members to only requiring one commissioner to be physically present.

SENATE No. 2161

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jason M. Lewis

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 update disability commission chair requirements.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Jason M. Lewis

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Fifth Middlesex

SENATE No. 2161

By Mr. Lewis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2161) of Jason M. Lewis for legislation to update disability commission chair requirements to reflect that at least one commissioner shall be physically present at the meeting location. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to update disability commission chair requirements.

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

1 Subsection (e) of section 20 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the
2 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the second sentence and inserting in
3 place thereof the following sentence:-

4 If a local commission on disability is authorized to utilize remote participation, a physical
5 quorum of that commission's members shall not be required to be present at the meeting location;
6 provided, however, that at least one commissioner shall be physically present at the meeting
7 location.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2171
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act relative to the creation of the office of municipal efficiency and regionalization (OMER)
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Mark
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 7: Executive Office for Administration and Finance

SUMMARY

This legislation establishes the Office of Municipal Efficiency and Regionalization within the Executive Office of Administration and Finance. The office shall be empowered to support municipalities through technical assistance, grants, training, and facilitation of shared services and regional partnerships.

SENATE No. 2171

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul W. Mark

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 relative to the creation of the office of municipal efficiency and regionalization (OMER).

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Paul W. Mark

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and
Hampshire*

SENATE No. 2171

By Mr. Mark, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2171) of Paul W. Mark for legislation relative to the creation of the office of municipal efficiency and regionalization (OMER). State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to the creation of the office of municipal efficiency and regionalization (OMER).

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 7 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting at the end
2 the following section:-

3 Section 63

4 (a)Title This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Municipal Efficiency and
5 Regionalization Act."

6 (b) Purpose. The purpose of this act is to establish the Office of Municipal Efficiency and
7 Regionalization (OMER) to promote cost-effective governance, foster collaboration among
8 municipalities, and improve the delivery of public services through regionalization and shared
9 resource strategies.

10 (c) Definitions: As used in this chapter the following words shall have the following
11 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:-

12 "Office" refers to the Office of Municipal Efficiency and Regionalization.

13 "Regionalization" refers to the process by which two or more municipalities collaborate
14 to provide shared services or resources to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

15 "Municipality" refers to any city, town, or local government entity within the
16 Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

17 (d) Establishment of the Office (i) The Office of Municipal Efficiency and
18 Regionalization is hereby established within the Administration and Finance. (ii) The Office
19 shall be headed by a Director, appointed by the Governor, who has expertise in municipal
20 management, public administration, or related fields.

21 (e) Powers and Duties of the Office The Office shall have the following powers and
22 duties: (i) Provide technical assistance and guidance to municipalities on efficiency
23 improvements and regionalization opportunities. (ii) Administer grants and financial incentives
24 to support regionalization projects and shared services initiatives. (iii) Conduct studies and
25 develop reports identifying best practices for municipal efficiency and regional collaboration.
26 (iv) Facilitate inter-municipal agreements and partnerships to achieve economies of scale. (v)
27 Offer training programs for municipal officials and employees on topics related to efficiency,
28 regionalization, and resource optimization. (vi) Evaluate the financial and operational impacts of
29 proposed regionalization initiatives and provide recommendations. (vii) Monitor and report on
30 the progress and outcomes of regionalization efforts funded by the Office.

31 (f) Funding (i) The Office shall be funded through an annual appropriation by the
32 Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (i) The Office shall administer the dedicated grant fund,
33 "Efficiency & Regionalization grant program."

34 (g) Reporting Requirements (i) The Office shall submit an annual report to the Governor
35 and the Legislature detailing its activities, funding allocations, and the outcomes of supported
36 projects. (ii) The report shall include recommendations for further legislative or administrative
37 actions to promote municipal efficiency and regionalization.

38 SECTION 2.

39 (a) Effective date This act shall take effect upon its passage. (i) The Governor shall
40 appoint the Director within 90 days of the act's passage. (ii) The Office shall commence
41 operations within 180 days of the act's passage.

42 (b) Severability If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, such
43 invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect
44 without the invalid provision or application.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2197
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Oliveira, Comerford, Cronin, Keenan, Mark, Fernandes, Gómez, Finegold, Eldridge, Cyr, and Brady
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H3342 (Rep. Danielle Gregoire)

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2043): Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A: State Administrative Procedure

SUMMARY

This legislation expands the Open Meeting Law by authorizing public bodies to hold meetings remotely, while establishing requirements for voting procedures, public access, transcripts, and public comment. It also empowers municipal, state, regional bodies, and disability commissions to develop their own guidelines for remote participation.

SENATE No. 2197

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jacob R. Oliveira

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 modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Jacob R. Oliveira</i>	<i>Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester</i>	
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>2/25/2025</i>
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/27/2025</i>
<i>John F. Keenan</i>	<i>Norfolk and Plymouth</i>	<i>3/5/2025</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire</i>	<i>3/7/2025</i>
<i>Dylan A. Fernandes</i>	<i>Plymouth and Barnstable</i>	<i>3/12/2025</i>
<i>Adam Gómez</i>	<i>Hampden</i>	<i>3/13/2025</i>
<i>Barry R. Finegold</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/13/2025</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/24/2025</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	<i>3/27/2025</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/27/2025</i>

SENATE No. 2197

By Mr. Oliveira, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2197) of Jacob R. Oliveira, Joanne M. Comerford, John J. Cronin, John F. Keenan and others for legislation relative to remote participation in municipal and town meetings and postponement of local elections elections. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 4771 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to modernize municipal meetings, town meetings, and local elections.

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. For the purposes of this Act, the term “Select Board” shall have the same
2 meaning as “Board of Selectmen” as that term is used in any general or special law or municipal
3 charter.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
5 Edition, is hereby amended by striking out paragraphs (d) and (e) of section 20 and renumbering
6 the remaining paragraphs accordingly.

7 SECTION 3. Chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
8 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 20 the following section:-

9 SECTION 20A

10 (a) A public body may elect to allow remote participation by any member for any
11 meeting of the public body. For the purposes of this section, the term remote participation means
12 participation by a member of a public body by means other than physical presence, which may
13 include, without limitation, participation by telephone, audio or video conferencing or any other
14 technology that enables each member of the public body to be audible to all other members of
15 the public body and the public.

16 (b) Members remotely participating in a meeting may vote, and shall be considered
17 present and in attendance for all purposes, including for purposes of determining a quorum and
18 for the purposes of section 23D of chapter 39.

19 (c) If a public body allows remote participation by its members for a meeting under
20 subsection (a), it may also allow remote participation by members of the public and any party
21 entitled or required to appear before it in accordance with the following requirements:

22 (i) A public body that elects to conduct its proceedings completely or partially through
23 remote means in accordance with this section shall ensure public access to the deliberations of
24 the public body for interested members of the public through adequate, alternative means. A
25 public body shall offer its selected adequate, alternative means of public access to its
26 proceedings without subscription, toll, or similar charge to the public.

27 (ii) Documents intended to be used for any such meeting shall be made available to
28 members of the public body before or during the course of the meeting of the public body subject
29 to any limitations as may be imposed by law.

30 (iii) If the opportunity for participation at a meeting of a public body by an individual or
31 the public is a specific requirement of a particular general or special law or state regulation,
32 charter, local ordinance or bylaw, any alternative means of public access shall provide for the
33 required opportunity to participate; provided further however that this section shall not impose
34 on any public body a general requirement to allow the public to speak, absent an applicable
35 special law or charter, or to participate in the debate of the public body. A public body shall offer
36 its selected alternative means of public access to virtual meetings without subscription, toll, or
37 similar charge to the public.

38 (iv) If a member is participating remotely, all votes taken shall be recorded roll call votes.

39 (v) A municipal public body that for reasons of economic hardship is unable to provide
40 adequate, alternative means of public access that will enable the public to follow the proceedings
41 of the municipal public body may instead post on its municipal website a full and complete
42 transcript, recording or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as practicable
43 upon conclusion of the proceedings.

44 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the chief executive officer of a
45 municipality may develop and adopt standards and guidelines regarding remote participation of
46 public bodies of that municipality; provided however that a local commission on disability may
47 adopt its own standards and guidelines for remote participation applicable to meetings of such
48 local commission on disability only.

49 (e) State, county, and regional public bodies, and public bodies that are not otherwise a
50 department or subdivision of a city or town, may adopt their own standards and guidelines for
51 remote participation applicable to meetings of such public body.

52 SECTION 4. Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this act, the attorney general
53 shall develop best practices for remote participation of public bodies in furtherance of the
54 foregoing Section 3 of this act provided, however, that such proposed best practices guidelines
55 shall not take effect until a public hearing, for which at least 2 weeks notice is provided and such
56 proposed guidelines are made available to the public, is held 2 weeks has passed since that public
57 hearing.

58 SECTION 5. Chapter 39 of the general laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is
59 hereby amended by inserting after Section 10A the following two sections:

60 SECTION 10B.

61 (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law, charter provision or bylaw to the
62 contrary, a select board may vote, prior to the date nomination papers must be submitted to the
63 town clerk under the provisions of section 7 of chapter 53 of the general laws, to delay the date
64 of an annual election to a date no earlier than 64 days from the vote to postpone and no later than
65 June 30 of that fiscal year.

66 (b) Notwithstanding any general or special law, charter provision or bylaw to the
67 contrary, a select board may, during any weather-related, public safety or public health
68 emergency declared by the chief executive officer of the town or the governor, and for the 5 days
69 after such emergency has terminated, postpone a properly posted caucus or election to an initial
70 date certain. If the nature of the emergency precludes identification of an initial date certain or
71 renders the initial date inconvenient or impossible, the select board shall meet expeditiously, in
72 accordance with chapter 30A of the general laws, and after consultation with the town clerk, to
73 vote on a date certain.

74 (c) (i) If an election is postponed hereunder, all of the deadlines applicable to and all of
75 materials prepared for and submitted in connection with the original election shall be used at
76 such postponed election; provided, however, that if an election is postponed for less than 7 days,
77 early voting by mail and absentee ballots properly received prior to the close of polls on the date
78 of the postponed election shall be treated as if they were timely received. If a scheduled election
79 is postponed for more than 7 days from the original date, any such election shall be held no
80 earlier than 15 days from the date of the postponement to accommodate additional voter
81 registration, early voting by mail and absentee voting by the otherwise applicable statutory
82 deadlines.

83 (ii) Except as set forth herein, all provisions of election law applicable to the original
84 election shall apply to such postponed election in the same manner.

85 (iii) Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 30A or other state or local law to the
86 contrary, a meeting to vote on a postponement may be held by remote participation of some or
87 all of the members, and such public body shall endeavor, to the maximum extent possible, to
88 comply with all other provisions of sections 18 to 25 of chapter 30A. If the public body is not
89 able to comply with the provisions of said chapter 30A, it shall hold a properly posted meeting
90 within one week following at which an item substantially similar to the following shall appear on
91 the agenda: "Review action taken at (date) (time) meeting of (name of board) and adopt minutes
92 from such meeting to be included with the minutes of this meeting".

93 (d) Notice of postponement shall be prepared by the town clerk and printed in a legible,
94 easily understandable format with the date, time and place of the rescheduled caucus or election,
95 the reason for the postponement, and the date and time of the select board vote for postponement.

96 To the extent practicable, notice shall be posted in the manner in which that municipality
97 provides notice of meetings pursuant to chapter 30A, whether on the municipal website or in a
98 manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal building in which
99 the clerk's office is located. The town clerk shall forthwith send a copy of the notice to the
100 offices of the attorney general and secretary of the commonwealth, and may use any other form
101 of communication to notify the voters of the postponement, including but not limited to
102 electronic, broadcast or print media.

103 SECTION 10C.

104 (a) In a town having a representative or open town meeting form of government, the town
105 moderator may, in consultation with the select board and local public safety or public health
106 officials, call for any town meeting to be held through remote participation or a hybrid of in-
107 person and remote participation, including, but not limited to, by means of a video or telephone
108 conferencing platform. If a town does not have a moderator, the select board may call for any
109 town meeting to be held through remote participation or a hybrid of in-person and remote
110 participation in accordance with this paragraph.

111 (b) A notice of decision to hold town meeting through remote participation or a hybrid of
112 in-person and remote participation shall be prepared by the moderator and printed in a legible,
113 easily understandable format and shall contain: (i) the moderator's determination and request to
114 hold a town meeting through remote participation or a hybrid of in-person and remote
115 participation in accordance with this section; (ii) the video or telephone conferencing platform
116 the moderator has determined to use to hold the town meeting; (iii) confirmation that the
117 moderator has consulted with the local disability commission or coordinator for federal

118 Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; (iv) confirmation that the moderator has consulted
119 with the select board; and (v) a certification by the moderator that: (A) the moderator has tested
120 the video or telephone conferencing platform; and (B) the platform satisfactorily enables the
121 remote portion of the town meeting to be conducted in substantially the same manner as if the
122 meeting occurred in person at a physical location and in accordance with the operational and
123 functional requirements set forth in this section.

124 (c) A video or telephone conference platform used by a town meeting for remote
125 participation under this section shall, at minimum:

126 (i) strictly limit voting at an open, remote, or hybrid town meeting to only those
127 confirmed by the town clerk to be eligible to vote at that meeting, Each person deemed eligible
128 to vote shall be provided with appropriate physical or technological participation credentials
129 designed to allow remote participation of all eligible voters while also establishing regularity in
130 administration, minimizing inaccurate results and creating and maintaining a virtual and physical
131 environment free from fraud;

132 (ii) enable the moderator, voters, representative town meeting members, town officials
133 and any other interested members of the public to identify and hear the moderator and each voter
134 or other speaker recognized by the moderator, whether remotely or in person;

135 (iii) if applicable, determine whether a quorum is present;

136 (iv) a voter, town meeting member, town official or other individual authorized to
137 participate in the meeting to request recognition by the moderator without prior authorization,
138 consistent with any town meeting rules established by bylaw, charter or special act. To the extent
139 technologically feasible, the request shall be visible or audible to the town meeting and the

140 public in real time and upon review of the recording of the town meeting proceedings, preserved
141 according to subsection (h);

142 (v) the moderator to determine when a remote or in person voter wishes to be recognized
143 to speak, make a motion, raise a point of order or object to a request for unanimous consent;

144 (vi) the moderator to recognize a remote or in person voter, town official or other
145 individual to speak and to enable that person to speak;

146 (vii) in the case of a representative town meeting, the ability to conduct a roll call vote;

147 (viii) any interested members of the public to access the meeting remotely for purposes of
148 witnessing the deliberations and actions taken at the town meeting, subject to the provisions of
149 any municipal charter; and

150 (ix) the town meeting to be recorded.

151 (d) (i) Registered voters, other than representatives elected or appointed in accordance
152 with applicable state or local law, seeking to participate remotely in a representative town
153 meeting shall, not less than 48 hours in advance, submit to the town moderator a request to
154 participate in the meeting. Upon receipt of the request and verification of the requester's voter
155 registration status, the designated official shall provide appropriate physical or technological
156 participation credentials; nothing herein shall be construed to require greater participation by
157 voters or non-town meeting members than required by any applicable general or special law or
158 municipal charter.

159 (ii) Eligible registered voters seeking to participate remotely in an open town meeting
160 shall be provided with instructions, no later than 48 hours in advance, as to how to access

161 appropriate physical or technological participation credentials; provided, however that the
162 inability to comply with this subparagraph shall require that the meeting be delayed until a
163 quorum is reached or 30 minutes has passed, whichever occurs sooner.

164 (e) Prior to taking up any business at a remote or hybrid town meeting, and following the
165 determination of a quorum, if applicable, the meeting shall vote on whether to commence the
166 business of the meeting using remote or hybrid access. If the town meeting votes to continue,
167 then the town meeting shall proceed to hold a remote or hybrid meeting to address the articles in
168 the warrant. If the town meeting votes not to conduct the town meeting by remote or hybrid
169 means, then the town meeting shall be adjourned, without further action, to the date, time and
170 place specified in the notice or warrant or to such other time, date and place as may be approved
171 by town meeting.

172 (f) Votes taken by a roll call vote at a remote or hybrid representative town meeting shall
173 be recorded and kept with the minutes of the town meeting.

174 (g) A remote or hybrid town meeting shall be recorded and the recording shall be
175 preserved and made publicly available on the town's website for at least 90 days after the
176 dissolution of said town meeting and until the official minutes of the meeting have been prepared
177 by the town clerk.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2205
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Rausch
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2063): Reported favorably; referred to House Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 30A: State Administrative Procedure

SUMMARY

This legislation authorizes public bodies to meet remotely. These bodies must ensure that access to meetings is granted to all interested parties. This can include providing access through telephone, internet, or satellite-enabled audio or video conferences. All documents used in the meeting must be posted publicly.

SENATE No. 2205

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Rebecca L. Rausch

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 updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Rebecca L. Rausch

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex

SENATE No. 2205

By Ms. Rausch, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2205) of Rebecca L. Rausch for legislation relative to update the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2063 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation.

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 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended in section 20 by striking out paragraph (d).

3 SECTION 2. Said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting
4 after section 20 the following section:-

5 Section 20A. (a) A public body may allow remote participation by any member for any
6 meeting of the public body. For the purposes of this section, the term remote participation means
7 participation by a member of a public body during a meeting of that public body where the
8 member is not physically present at the meeting location.

9 (b) Members remotely participating in a meeting may vote, shall be considered present
10 and in attendance for all purposes, including for purposes of determining a quorum and for the
11 purposes of section 23D of chapter 39.

12 (c) All members of the public body participating either remotely or at a meeting location
13 shall be clearly audible to one another.

14 (d) For any meeting conducted with remote participation, the public body shall make
15 provisions to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body for interested members
16 of the public through adequate, alternative means. Adequate, alternative means of public access
17 shall mean measures that provide transparency and permit timely and effective public access to
18 the virtual meeting. Such means may include, without limitation, providing public access
19 through telephone, Internet or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other
20 technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the meeting while the
21 proceedings are occurring. Documents used for any such meeting should be made available to
22 the public before or at the time of the meeting of the public body. Where allowance for active,
23 real-time participation by members of the public is a specific requirement of a general or special
24 law or regulation, or a charter, local ordinance or by-law, pursuant to which the proceeding is
25 conducted, any alternative means of public access shall provide for such participation. A public
26 body shall offer its selected alternative means of public access to meetings with remote
27 participation without subscription, toll, or similar charge to the public.

28 (e) A public body that elects to conduct its proceedings with remote participation shall
29 ensure that any party entitled or required to appear before it may do so through remote means, as
30 if the party were a member of the public body participating remotely.

31 (f) The executive body of a municipality shall develop and adopt standards and
32 guidelines for remote participation of public bodies that is sufficient for the municipality prior to
33 any meeting with remote participation held pursuant to this section.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2206
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act promoting governmental efficiency
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Rausch
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H3382 (Rep. David Paul Linksy)

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2065): Reported favorably; referred to Senate Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Section 23 of chapter 30A: Enforcement of open meeting law; complaints; hearing; civil action

SUMMARY

This legislation amends the process for filing complaints under the Open Meeting Law. Any individual may file a complaint with a public body provided that it is filed within 2 business days of a violation and includes electronic and postal contact information for the complainant.

The public body must review and respond to the complaint no later than 14 business days after they have received the notice.

If a complainant files more than 12 complaints to the same body within one year or has been deemed excessively burdensome, the public body may petition the Attorney General for relief from having to respond.

SENATE No. 2206

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Rebecca L. Rausch

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 promoting governmental efficiency.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Rebecca L. Rausch

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex

SENATE No. 2206

By Ms. Rausch, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2206) of Rebecca L. Rausch for legislation to promote governmental efficiency. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2065 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act promoting governmental efficiency.

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. Section 23 of chapter 30A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out paragraph (b) and inserting in place thereof
3 the following paragraph:-

4 (b) Complaints.

5 (1) Any individual may file a complaint with a public body alleging violation of the open
6 meeting law, provided that the complaint:

7 (i) reasonably describes the circumstances constituting the alleged violation;

8 (ii) is filed with the public body within 20 business days of the date of the alleged
9 violation;

10 (iii) includes electronic and postal mail contact information for the complainant; and

11 (iv) is signed by the complainant either in ink or in compliance with chapter 110G.

12 (2) Complaints shall be deemed received:

13 (i) if filed by electronic mail, on the business day of submission if submitted by 4:00

14 p.m., and otherwise on the next business day; or

15 (ii) three days after mailing via first class postal mail.

16 (3) A public body must meet to review and respond to a complaint not later than 14

17 business days after receipt thereof confirming receipt of the complaint and identifying any

18 remedial action(s) taken or intended to be taken by the public body in response to the complaint;

19 provided, however, that if a complainant files more than twelve complaints with the same public

20 body within the same calendar year, or a complaint is otherwise unduly burdensome, the public

21 body may file a petition with the attorney general seeking relief from the obligation to respond to

22 the complaint. In determining whether to grant an order requiring the public body to respond to

23 the complaint, the attorney general may consider, without limitation, (i) the previous record of

24 compliance or non-compliance by the public body; (ii) the burden placed on the public body in

25 responding to the complaint; (iii) any evidence of harassment or intimidation on the part of the

26 complainant; (iv) the facts of the alleged violation; and (v) the number of complaints filed

27 against the public body or other public bodies within the municipality. The attorney general may

28 authorize an extension of time to the public body for the purpose of taking remedial action upon

29 the written request of the public body and a showing of good cause to grant the extension.

30 (4) The public body shall, within 14 business days of receipt of a complaint unless
31 granted an extension of time pursuant to subsection (B)(3), send a copy of the complaint to the
32 attorney general and notify the attorney general of any remedial action.

33 (5) Any remedial action stated pursuant to subparagraph (3) of this section shall not be
34 admissible as evidence against the public body in any subsequent administrative or judicial
35 proceeding related to the alleged violation.

36 SECTION 2. Said section 23 of said chapter 30A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
37 striking out, in line 19, the word “complaint” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-
38 petition for review of an open meeting law complaint.

39 SECTION 3. Section 10 of chapter 66 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
40 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 96-98, the words “, and the requests
41 are not intended for the broad dissemination of information to the public about actual or alleged
42 government activity”.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2223
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Tarr and Eldridge
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H3331 (Rep. Ann-Margaret Ferrante)

PRIOR HISTORY

2023-24 (S. 2073): Reported favorably; referred to Senate Ways and Means

CURRENT LAW

Section 2 of chapter 6A: Establishment of executive offices

Section 3 of Chapter 23G: Powers

SUMMARY

This legislation establishes the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security with specific departments of Food Production, Food Labor and Workforce Development, Food Innovation, Investment and Financial Planning, Food Security, and Nutrition. The office shall be empowered to foster sustainable food production, stimulate job creation, promote sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and enhance local food economies.

SENATE No. 2223

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bruce E. Tarr

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 establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>6/11/2025</i>

SENATE No. 2223

By Mr. Tarr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2223) of Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to establish an executive office of food resources and security. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2073 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

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. Section 2 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “affairs”, in line 3, the following
3 words:- “, food resources and security,”.

4 SECTION 2. Section 3 of Chapter 23G of the General Laws is hereby amended by
5 inserting after the word “projects”, in line 92, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, the
6 following words:- and loans to food producers selected by the department of investment and
7 financing for food production pursuant to section 10 of chapter 28B.

8 SECTION 3. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after section 28A the
9 following chapter:-

10 CHAPTER 28B.

11 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF FOOD RESOURCES AND SECURITY

12 Section 1. As used in this chapter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly
13 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

14 “Food Producer”, a person who produces food by farming, as that term is defined in
15 section 1A of chapter 128, in the commonwealth, or by taking and selling fish, including
16 shellfish, lobsters, edible crabs or other living marine resources, from coastal waters of the
17 commonwealth under a commercial fishing license, permit or certificate issued pursuant to
18 chapter 130.

19 “Food production”, the process by which a food producer cultivates, raises, harvests,
20 collects, takes, gathers or otherwise handles plant or animal life, in whole or in part, whether or
21 not embedded in the soil, for the purpose of offering for sale such plant or animal life, or part
22 thereof, as food in the open market.

23 “Office”, the executive office of food resources and security.

24 “Secretary”, the secretary of food resources and security.

25 Section 2. There shall be an executive office of food resources and security, which shall
26 be under the supervision and control of a secretary of food resources and security, appointed by
27 the governor. The secretary may, pursuant to chapter 30A, adopt regulations for the
28 implementation or interpretation of any law enforced or administered by any department, office,
29 agency, or other entity in the executive office of food resources and security. In the executive
30 office shall be the department of food production, the department of food labor and workforce

31 development, the department of food innovation, development and research, the department of
32 investment and financing for food production, the department of food security, identification and
33 labeling, the department of economic development for locally-produced food, the department of
34 nutrition and food health and the department of self-sufficiency for food production. Each
35 department shall be headed by a commissioner. The executive office shall be organized and shall
36 function as a single state agency with the authority and control for administrative purposes
37 including, but not limited to, for the purposes of the accounting and financial system of the
38 commonwealth. The secretary shall, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary,
39 identify and consolidate administrative activities and functions common to the separate
40 departments within the office and may designate such functions “core administrative functions”
41 in order to improve administrative efficiency and preserve fiscal resources; provided, however,
42 that common functions that shall be designated core administrative functions shall include, but
43 shall not be limited to, human resources, financial management, information technology, legal,
44 procurement and asset management.

45 Each commissioner shall be appointed and may be removed by the secretary, with the
46 approval of the governor. Each commissioner shall be a person of skill and experience in the
47 field of his appointment. The commissioner of each department may adopt reasonable
48 regulations to allow those employees within his or her department to testify in civil proceedings
49 so as to further the performance of the department's business. The commissioner of each
50 department shall appoint all necessary employees within the department, except as may be
51 otherwise provided by law. The positions of commissioner shall not be subject to the provisions
52 of chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30. Each commissioner shall perform such functions as
53 may be assigned to him by the secretary and shall devote his full time during business hours to

54 the duties of the position. In case of a vacancy or an emergency, the secretary may appoint a
55 person as acting commissioner for a period not exceeding 6 months, of any of the above
56 departments, provided, the appointee is a person of skill and experience in the field of his or her
57 appointment. The positions of the commissioners shall be classified in accordance with section
58 45 of chapter 30 and the salaries shall be determined in accordance with section 46C of said
59 chapter 30.

60 Section 3. The office and its appropriate departments shall carry out policy relative to
61 food production and in so doing shall:

62 (1) foster and support food producers so they are able to effectively and safely produce,
63 market and sell food in a sustainable manner throughout the commonwealth.

64 (2) promote job creation and economic development in food production and local food
65 distribution;

66 (3) create a workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for
67 next-generation food production workers and researchers;

68 (4) develop and administer programs and incentives to improve nutrition and promote
69 healthy eating habits across all age groups;

70 (5) develop statewide polices to increase demand for local foods through marketing and
71 branding initiatives, and improve market and environmental statistics to support such polices;

72 (6) encourage, support, and undertake research and maintain laboratory and other
73 research facilities to produce information regarding the science of food production,

74 transportation and consumption for the benefit of the commonwealth, its communities, its
75 citizens and other interested parties;

76 (7) enter into contracts and partnerships with private and public institutions for the
77 advancement of the goals and directives set forth in this chapter;

78 (8) develop and administer programs and recommendations to reduce input costs, while
79 strengthening financing and business planning for food producers;

80 (9) develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the
81 commonwealth so that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens
82 without importation of food from other states;

83 (10) foster strong relationships with food producers and consumers to achieve the goals
84 and directives set forth in this chapter while creating opportunities for cultural and economic
85 growth for the citizens of this commonwealth;

86 (11) advise and assist local governments, private and public institutions, organizations
87 and associations, businesses, industries, and individuals by providing and acting as a
88 clearinghouse for food production and labeling and consumption information, data, and other
89 materials;

90 (12) represent and act on behalf of the commonwealth in connection with federal grant
91 programs;

92 (13) keep accounts, records, personal data, enter into contracts, adjust claims, accept
93 gifts, grants, bequests and devises, and subject to appropriation, acquire real or personal property
94 by eminent domain or otherwise;

95 (14) advise and assist state agencies, cities, towns, and other units of local government in
96 the preparation of grant or loan applications with respect to any food production or protection
97 programs;

98 (15) coordinate activities among public institutions of higher education to engage in
99 complementary state educational programs and collaborative research initiatives regarding food
100 production; and

101 (16) promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out their statutory
102 responsibilities.

103 Section 4. The secretary shall have the following powers and duties concerning any
104 power or duty assigned to any department:

105 (1) the power and duty to resolve administrative and jurisdictional conflicts between any
106 such departments or officers;

107 (2) the power and duty to implement, upon request of any such department or officer,
108 programs jointly agreed to by the secretary and such agency or officer; and

109 (3) the power and duty to coordinate and improve program activities involving 2 or more
110 such departments or officers.

111 Section 5. The secretary shall conduct comprehensive planning with respect to the
112 functions of the office and shall coordinate the activities and programs of the departments and
113 divisions within the office. The secretary shall continually review the operations of the office
114 with a view toward improving administrative organization, procedures and practices, promoting
115 economy and efficiency.

116 The secretary shall prepare annually a report of the organization and activities of the
117 office as individually reported by the various departments and divisions within the office, the
118 assignment of functions to various administrative units, officers and employees, and of the
119 established places at which, and the methods whereby, the public may receive information or
120 may make requests, and such other matters as the secretary deem appropriate.

121 The secretary shall annually evaluate the status of the production, distribution, labeling
122 and consumption of food within the commonwealth. This evaluation shall be submitted as a part
123 of the report referred to in the preceding paragraph, and it shall be accompanied by
124 recommendations for appropriate actions to be taken to achieve best practices with respect to the
125 production, distribution, labeling and consumption of food within the commonwealth.

126 In order to carry out the provisions of this chapter the secretary may, and is encouraged
127 to, seek the laboratory, technical, education, and research skills and facilities of state institutions
128 of higher learning.

129 Section 6. Subject to appropriation, the secretary, with the approval of the governor, may
130 appoint such experts and other assistants as he shall deem necessary to perform the functions of
131 his office, provided that the provisions of chapter 31 and section 9A of chapter 30 shall not apply
132 to any person holding any such appointment. Every person so appointed to any position in his
133 office shall have experience and skill in the field of such position. So far as practicable in the
134 judgment of the secretary, appointments to such positions in his office shall be made by
135 promoting employees of the commonwealth serving in positions which are classified under
136 chapter 31, and such appointments shall at all times reflect the professional needs of the
137 department or division affected. If an employee serving in a position which is classified under

138 chapter 31 or in which he has tenure by reason of section 9A of chapter 30 shall be appointed to
139 a position within his office which is not subject to the provisions of chapter 31, he shall upon
140 termination of his service in such unclassified position be restored to the position which he held
141 immediately prior to such appointment; provided, however, that his service in such unclassified
142 position shall be determined by the civil service commission in accordance with the standards
143 applied by said commission in administering chapter 31. Such restoration shall be made without
144 impairment of his civil service status or tenure under section 9A of chapter 30 and without loss
145 of seniority, retirement, or other rights to which uninterrupted service in such prior position
146 would have entitled him. During the period of such appointment, each person so appointed from
147 a position in the classified civil service shall be eligible to take any competitive promotional
148 examination for which he would otherwise have been eligible.

149 Section 7. There shall be a department of food production broadly tasked with promoting
150 the effective, profitable and safe production of food throughout farms and fishing communities
151 located in the commonwealth.

152 Section 8. There shall be a department of food labor and workforce development, which
153 shall: (1) develop programs that provide economic incentive to food producers; (2) create a
154 workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for future food
155 production workers and researchers; and (3) encourage, support, and undertake research into
156 alternative centers of economic growth for food production and distribution within the
157 commonwealth, including projects like the Gloucester Genomics Institute.

158 Section 9. There shall be a department of food innovation, development and research,
159 which shall undertake research and maintain laboratory and other research facilities to provide

160 information to food producers and other interested parties regarding the science behind food
161 production. The department shall undertake research regarding the impact that specific
162 environmental, biological, meteorological and chemical conditions have on food production in
163 the commonwealth in order to, develop new sciences, proposals and techniques for the
164 conservation and enhancement of fields, water and wildlife for food production.

165 Section 10. There shall be a department of investment and financial planning for food
166 production, which shall identify and select food producers who are eligible to receive loans from
167 the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency pursuant to clause (17) of section 3 of chapter
168 23G, based on criteria to be determined by the department; provided, however, in selecting food
169 producers pursuant to this section, the department shall give preference to food producers
170 operating in designated port areas. The department shall research and investigate production and
171 operation methods of food producers, including the possibility and efficacy for producers to
172 utilize shared equipment and infrastructure, and make recommendations to reduce input costs
173 associated with production and transportation. The department shall develop programs and make
174 recommendations to food producers designed to attract entrepreneurs and other new investors
175 with a focus on providing

176 equity-like, risk capital for production growth to be supplied in smaller amounts and at
177 lower returns.

178 Section 11. There shall be a department of food security, identification and labeling,
179 which shall develop and administer programs and policies to improve food management and
180 security and shall research the efficacy and implementation of next-generation food tracking

181 systems, food management policies and labeling procedures to ensure a secure food
182 infrastructure in the commonwealth.

183 Section 12. There shall be a department of economic development for locally-produced
184 food that shall develop and administer public relations campaigns and marketing and branding
185 programs to encourage public institutions and private businesses to purchase locally grown foods
186 in order to strengthen and maintain local food producers positions in the local marketplace.

187 Section 13. There shall be a department of nutrition and food health, which shall develop
188 and administer a public relations campaign and other programs designed to: (i) provide
189 nutritional education to food producers and consumers; and (ii) encourage consumers to adopt
190 healthy eating habits.

191 Section 14. There shall be a department of self-sufficiency for food production, which
192 shall develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the commonwealth so
193 that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens without importation
194 of food from other states.

Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Bill Summary

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	Senate, No. 2225
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act creating an Inspector General oversight of the Emergency Assistance Shelter system
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senators Tarr and Durant
<u>HEARING DATE</u>	Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 01:00 PM - 05:00 PM, B-2

SUMMARY

This legislation requires the Inspector General to convene a special unit to monitor the state's response to people migrating to Massachusetts.

SENATE No. 2225

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bruce E. Tarr

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 creating an Inspector General oversight of the Emergency Assistance Shelter system.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	
<i>Peter J. Durant</i>	<i>Worcester and Hampshire</i>	<i>3/17/2025</i>

SENATE No. 2225

By Mr. Tarr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2225) of Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to create an Inspector General oversight of the Emergency Assistance Shelter system. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act creating an Inspector General oversight of the Emergency Assistance Shelter system.

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. The office of the inspector general, shall, subject to appropriation, convene
2 a special unit for the purpose of providing ongoing and comprehensive oversight of actions taken
3 by the commonwealth in response to the ongoing crisis attributable to the influx of migrants into
4 the state. Such a special unit shall identify, review, and analyze the cost and cost-effectiveness of
5 specialized contracts and procurements for such resources as food, and housing.

6 Said unit shall file reports, together with legislative and regulatory recommendations,
7 with the clerks of the House and Senate, the Senate and House Committees on Ways and Means,
8 and the Secretary of Administration and Finance quarterly, beginning not later than 3 months
9 following the passage of this act, for a period of not less than 3 years, unless otherwise such
10 requirement is otherwise modified, terminated, or extended, provided that such reports shall also
11 be posted electronically so as to enable public inspection.

12 SECTION 2. Section 1 shall expire 3 years after the passage of this act.