

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1779**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida*

*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 permanent commission to study the service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida</i>	<i>7th Plymouth</i>	<i>1/18/2023</i>
<i>Michael J. Soter</i>	<i>8th Worcester</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Joseph D. McKenna</i>	<i>18th Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>
<i>David F. DeCoste</i>	<i>5th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1779**

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By Representative Sullivan-Almeida of Abington, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1779) of Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida and others for legislation to establish a permanent commission (including members of the General Court) to study the service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3841 OF 2021-2022.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

—————  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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An Act establishing a permanent commission to study the service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service providers.

*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 adding the following section:-

2 Section 76. (a) There shall be a permanent commission on sexual assault and domestic  
3 violence service providers, which shall consist of 19 members as follows: 1 of whom shall be the  
4 secretary of health and human services or their designee, who shall serve as chair; 1 of whom  
5 shall be the director of the department of public health division of sexual and domestic violence  
6 prevention and services; 2 of whom shall be members of the house of representatives, to be  
7 appointed by the speaker of the house; 1 of whom shall be a member of the house of  
8 representatives, to be appointed by the minority leader; 2 of whom shall be members of the  
9 senate, to be appointed by the president of the senate; 1 of whom shall be a member of the

10 senate, to be appointed by the minority leader; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the  
11 governor's council to address sexual assault and domestic violence; 1 of whom shall be the  
12 attorney general or their designee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the  
13 Massachusetts office for victim assistance; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of Jane Doe  
14 Inc.: the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence; 1 of whom  
15 shall be the executive director of the Victim Rights Law Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the  
16 executive director of the New Bedford Women's Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the executive  
17 director of the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of  
18 Pathways for Change, Inc.; 1 of whom shall be an advocate specialized in working with  
19 survivors with disabilities, to be appointed by the governor; 1 of whom shall be an advocate  
20 specialized in working with children who experienced trauma, to be appointed by the governor; 3  
21 of whom shall be survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence, to be appointed by the  
22 governor. Members of the commission shall be citizens of the commonwealth who have  
23 demonstrated commitment to supporting survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

24 Biennially, every legislative session, the general court shall review the membership of the  
25 commission to ensure its makeup is tailored to its purpose and improved when necessary.

26 (b) Appointed members shall serve terms of 2 years and until their successors are  
27 appointed, or the member is reappointed by their appointing or nominating authority. Vacancies  
28 in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority for the  
29 balance of the unexpired term.

30 (c) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but  
31 shall be reimbursed by the general court for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the  
32 performance of their duties.

33 (d) The commission shall be a resource to the commonwealth on issues affecting  
34 survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. It shall be a primary responsibility of the  
35 commission to study the practices and service standards currently in place for sexual assault and  
36 domestic violence service providers, including any organization, board or program that provides  
37 specialized programs, support, residential programs or intervention services for victims of sexual  
38 assault or domestic violence. The commission shall meet to put forth recommendations for  
39 uniform minimum service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence programs  
40 throughout the commonwealth. The commission shall perform an ongoing review of its  
41 recommendations and their results to ensure its recommendations are narrowly tailored and  
42 improved when necessary.

43 (e) The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1)  
44 to use such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and  
45 organizations as may from time to time be offered and required, including provision of meeting  
46 places and refreshments; (2) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings  
47 and other public events as the commission deems necessary; (3) to establish and maintain such  
48 offices as the commission deems necessary, subject to appropriation; (4) to acquire and direct a  
49 staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation; (5) to enact by-laws for its own governance  
50 but not inconsistent with any general or special law; and (6) to recommend policies and make  
51 recommendations to agencies and officers of the commonwealth and local subdivisions of  
52 government to effectuate the purposes of this commission.

53 (f) (1) The commission may request information and assistance from state agencies as the  
54 commission requires.

55 (2) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants  
56 or bequests or any federal funds, for any of the purposes of this section. These funds shall be  
57 deposited in a separate account with the state treasurer, be received by the treasurer on behalf of  
58 the commonwealth, and be expended by the commission in accordance with law.

59 (g) (1) The commission shall report their recommendations relative to uniform minimum  
60 service standards for sexual assault and domestic violence service programs to the executive  
61 office of health and human services no later than 180 days following the passage of this act.

62 (2) Biennially, not later than June 30, the commission shall reassess and report on the  
63 uniform service standards for sexual assault on domestic violence service programs and any  
64 policy recommendations to the governor, secretary of health and human services and the clerks  
65 of the house of representatives and the senate.