

HOUSE No. 324

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 require school attendance up to age eighteen or until graduation.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Antonio F. D. Cabral

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

13th Bristol

HOUSE No. 324

By Mr. Cabral of New Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 324) of Antonio F. D. Cabral for legislation to require school attendance up to age eighteen or until graduation. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act to require school attendance up to age eighteen or until graduation.

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 1 of chapter 76 of the general laws, as appearing in the 2012 official
2 edition is hereby amended by striking in lines 47 to 48 the following:

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4 “between the minimum and maximum ages established for school attendance by the
5 board of education”

6

7 and inserting in place thereof the following: “ages of six and eighteen, having completed
8 at least the 12th grade or whichever comes first”.

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10 SECTION 2. Said section 1 of chapter 76 is amended in line 100 by inserting after the
11 word “herewith” the following:

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13 “provided that no student over the age of 16 shall face criminal penalties for failure to
14 attend school through the mandatory age for school attendance”

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16 SECTION 3. Section 1B of chapter 69 of the general laws, as appearing in the 2012
17 official edition is hereby amended by inserting after line 114 the following: “provided, however,
18 that all children under the age of 18 shall be required to attend school if they have not graduated
19 from high school.”

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21 SECTION 4. Chapter 76 is amended by inserting after section 21 the following new
22 section:

23

24 Section 22. Commission to study barriers to high school graduation

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26 There shall be a special commission for the purpose of making an investigation and study
27 relative to barriers to high school graduation and to make recommendations regarding identifying
28 students at risk of dropping out and targeted services and programs that will help to ensure all
29 students can graduate from high school, known as the High School Graduation Commission. The

30 commission shall be chaired by the secretary of education or his designee. The commissioner of
31 the department of higher education or his designee and the commissioner of the department of
32 elementary and secondary education or his designee shall be members. The governor shall
33 appoint four members, one of whom shall be nominated by the Massachusetts Teachers
34 Association and one of whom shall be nominated by the American Federation of Teachers of
35 Massachusetts. The speaker of the house and the senate president shall each appoint one
36 member.

37

38 The commission shall report its findings and any legislation necessary to implement said
39 findings to the governor, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the senate and
40 house of representatives committees on ways and means, the senate and house of representatives
41 committees on education by December 31, 2016. The commission report shall include but not be
42 limited to: an analysis of the student populations who are at the highest risk of dropping out,
43 mechanisms to identify students who are at risk of dropping out, barriers to high school
44 graduation and evidence based services that reduce and eliminate barriers to high school
45 graduation. In making its recommendations the commission shall consider among other issues:

46

47 a) grades, attendance patterns, disciplinary issues, family and environmental factors,
48 breaks or gaps in education, teen parenthood, limited English proficiency and disabilities that
49 may indicate a student is at risk of not completing high school;

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51 b) mechanisms and information technology that can be used to identify students at risk
52 of dropping out and track students' progress once identified;

53

54 c) appropriate benchmarks for periodic review of students' progress;

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56 d) wrap around support services designed to effectively target and alleviate or
57 eliminate barriers for students completing high school;

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59 e) methods to reengage students who have left school;

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61 f) dedicated tutoring and academic services for students who have gaps in education
62 as a result of moving, illness, absences, disciplinary issues or immigration;

63

64 g) additional preparation and resources to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive
65 Assessment System (MCAS) or any successor thereto for students who have not passed
66 examinations required for graduation after two attempts;

67

68 h) emotional support services and resources for students at risk of dropping out; and

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70 i) recommendations for mechanisms to emphasize the importance of high school
71 graduation for all students.

72 SECTION 5. Effective Date. Sections 1 to 3 of this Act shall become operative on
73 August 1, 2016.