

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3405**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

*James J. O'Day*

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*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 construction and rehabilitation of senior centers.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*James J. O'Day*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*14th Worcester*

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3405**

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By Mr. O'Day of West Boylston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3405) of James J. O'Day for legislation to establish a senior center assistance board to assist in the construction or rehabilitation of facilities housing senior centers. Elder Affairs.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court  
(2015-2016)**  
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An Act relative to the construction and rehabilitation of senior centers.

*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 General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 22E the  
2 following chapter:-

3 CHAPTER 22F.

4 THE SENIOR CENTER ASSISTANCE BOARD

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

7 “Board”, the senior center assistance board.

8 “Capital construction project”, a project for the construction, enlargement or renovation  
9 of a senior center.

10 “Construction standards”, the standards promulgated by the board, which shall be used to  
11 determine the minimum and maximum sizes, including square footage, compliance with health  
12 and safety codes, compliance with all applicable provisions of federal, state and local law  
13 relative to the accessibility of facilities to handicapped persons, and the scope of design of a  
14 senior center.

15 “Senior center”, any facility or building constructed, enlarged or renovated with the intent  
16 of housing a senior center.

17 Section 2. (a) There is hereby established in the executive office of housing and  
18 economic development, a senior center assistance board, which shall consist of 5 members to be  
19 appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts  
20 Municipal Association and 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association  
21 of Councils on Aging, Inc. The governor shall first appoint 1 member for a period of 1 year, 1  
22 member for a period of 2 years, 1 member for a period of 3 years, 1 member for a period of 4  
23 years and 1 member for a period of 5 years; provided, however, that appointments made upon the  
24 expiration of a term of any member shall thereafter be for a period of 5 years. All members shall  
25 be residents of the commonwealth and 1 member shall be designated by the governor, from time  
26 to time, as chairman. The secretary of the executive office of housing and economic  
27 development, or a designee, shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of said board.

28 (b) The board shall be provided with suitable office space in the executive office of  
29 housing and economic development. A majority vote of the board shall constitute action by the  
30 board. Any action decided upon by the board shall be in writing and signed by a majority of said

31 board. Each member of the board shall be reimbursed for any expenses actually incurred by him  
32 or her in the performance of his or her duties.

33 Section 3. All administrative and clerical duties deemed necessary to carry out the  
34 provisions of this chapter shall be carried out by employees within the executive office of  
35 housing and economic development, subject to the supervision and control of the board.

36 Section 4. (a) The board shall establish and administer a grant program, to be known as  
37 the Senior Center Assistance Program through which the board shall award and prioritize grants  
38 to cities and towns for capital construction projects, and to encourage and foster the  
39 establishment and building of senior centers in cities and towns which the board deems  
40 appropriate.

41 (b) All such grants made pursuant to this chapter shall be paid from funds in the Senior  
42 Center Assistance Fund. No grant shall be approved for any amount greater than 75 per cent of  
43 the total construction costs for a senior center. In no case shall a grant include payment for the  
44 principal, interest or any other amount obligated to be paid by a city or town in furtherance of a  
45 capital construction project. The specific percentage that a city or town is eligible for, if  
46 approved, shall be determined in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the board  
47 pursuant to this act; provided, however, that all grant payments shall be made by the senior  
48 center assistance board to a city or town in 3 equal payments over a 3 year period.

49 Section 5. Between January 1 and May 1 of each year, a city or town may apply to the  
50 board for a grant for a capital construction project, including costs incurred for the preparation of  
51 preliminary studies, plans, drawings and estimates related thereto. All applications shall comply  
52 with the construction standards promulgated by the board pursuant to this chapter. All

53 application shall be accompanied by required documentation in the form prescribed by the board,  
54 including copies of the plans, drawings, estimates and other construction documents, together  
55 with such additional information as the board may require.

56           Section 6. (a) The board shall establish criteria for making a decision to approve or reject  
57 the grant application for a capital construction project, and to determine the amount of such a  
58 grant; provided, however, that each application shall be placed in one of the following 3  
59 categories as determined by the population of the city or town in which the capital construction  
60 project will take place: (1) cities or towns with a population of not more than 25,000; (2) cities  
61 and towns with a population of more than 25,000 but not more than 75,000; and (3) cities and  
62 towns with a population greater than 75,000. In making a decision to approve or reject an  
63 application, the board shall consider each category separately and shall in no case cause  
64 applicants from 1 category to compete for funding against applicants from any other category  
65 except the category in which the application was placed. The population of a city or town shall  
66 be determined pursuant to the most recent census figures.

67           (b) The board may vote to approve or reject such application after it is satisfied that: (1)  
68 the plans so submitted are satisfactory with respect to site, type and adequacy of the proposed  
69 construction or renovation; (2) that such a capital construction project is in the best interest of the  
70 respective city or town; (3) the city or town has demonstrated the ability and commitment to  
71 adequately maintain a new facility according to standards set forth by the senior center assistance  
72 board; and (4) the expenses so incurred are reasonable.

73           (c) After a vote which results in the approval of an application, the board shall then list all  
74 approved applications in order of priority and according to the 3 categories pursuant to

75 subsection (a). Subject to availability of funding, the board shall certify to the comptroller for  
76 payment to such city or town, not exceeding such expenses, as it may deem proper. A city or  
77 town which has an approved capital construction project that has been prioritized by the board  
78 shall be notified of their ranking and said project shall not be removed from, or have its position  
79 altered on, the priority list until a grant has been awarded to such city or town except when  
80 conditions beyond the control of any city or town result in the destruction of an existing senior  
81 center, necessitating immediate action from the board.

82           Section 7. The board may enter into contracts for technical service within the scope of its  
83 duties, to provide legal, architectural or other technical advice and assistance to all applicants in  
84 the planning, building or renovating of senior centers.

85           (b) The board shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions  
86 of this chapter relative to capital construction project applications to be known as “construction  
87 standards”; provided, however, that the board shall establish a formula for the equitable  
88 distribution of revenues from the Senior Center Assistance Fund for each of the 3 categories of  
89 applications pursuant to subsection (a) of section 6.

90           Section 8. The board may recommend to the general court such legislation as it may  
91 deem desirable or necessary to further the purposes of this chapter. The board shall submit  
92 biannual reports to the house and senate committees on ways and means and to the joint  
93 committee on elder affairs. Said reports shall include, but not be limited to, a listing of  
94 applications received and approved by the board to receive a grant under both grant programs,  
95 together with the amount of each such grant, and a listing of cities and towns whose applications  
96 have not been approved, together with the reason for failure to approve such applications.

97           Section 9. (a) Any city or town which engages in a capital construction project using  
98 funds from a grant pursuant to this chapter shall not be eligible to apply for or receive a grant  
99 pursuant to this chapter for the construction or rehabilitation of the building which was the  
100 subject of said capital construction project for a period of 20 years; provided, however, that the  
101 board may waive the provisions of this section when conditions beyond the control of a city or  
102 towns severely damage or destroy the building which was previously the subject of a capital  
103 construction project.

104           (b) A city or town which engages in a capital construction project using funds from a  
105 grant pursuant to this chapter shall not hire an individual or company to work on said project in  
106 any manner without proof that said individual or company shall pay to its employees the current  
107 prevailing wage in the commonwealth. Such proof shall be furnished to the board in the form of  
108 an affidavit signed by the owner of the business contracted to perform work, or the agent of such  
109 owner.

110           SECTION 2. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
111 section 2QQQQ, inserted by section 14 of chapter 359 of the acts of 2014, the following section:-

112           There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a Senior Center  
113 Assistance Fund which shall be administered by the senior center assistance board.

114 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the following monies shall be  
115 credited to the fund: (i) any appropriations, grants, gifts or other monies authorized by the  
116 general court or other parties and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; and (ii) any  
117 income derived from the investment of amounts credited to the fund. All amounts credited to the  
118 fund shall be used without further appropriation for the purpose of administering the Senior

119 Center Assistance Program and any other program established pursuant to chapter 22F. No  
120 expenditure from the fund shall cause the fund to be in deficiency at the close of a fiscal year.  
121 Monies deposited in the fund that are unexpended at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert to  
122 the General Fund and shall be available for expenditure in the subsequent year. The fund shall be  
123 exempt from the indirect and fringe benefits that would otherwise be assessed pursuant to this  
124 chapter.

125           SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any city or town  
126 which has certified blueprints for senior center prior to the effective date of this act, and who  
127 shall act in furtherance of said blueprints within 1 year of the effective date of this act by  
128 commencing the capital construction project, as defined in section 1 of chapter 22F of the  
129 General Laws shall not be subject to the construction standards promulgated by the board  
130 pursuant to section 5 of said chapter 22F.

131           SECTION 4. The senior center assistance board shall begin making awards and ranking  
132 applications in order of priority pursuant to chapter 22F of the General Laws no later than  
133 January 1 of the year following the effective date of this act. Each year thereafter said grants  
134 shall be awarded on or before September 1.

135           SECTION 5. The senior center assistance board shall promulgate the rules and  
136 regulations required under subsection (b) of section 7 of chapter 22F of the General Laws no  
137 later than September 15 of the year following the effective date of this act.