

HOUSE No. 3418

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing a special commission on gender-responsive programming for system-involved girls.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Cheryl A. Coakley-Rivera	10th Hampden
William N. Brownsberger	24th Middlesex
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex
Christine E. Canavan	10th Plymouth
Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.	34th Middlesex
Elizabeth A. Malia	11th Suffolk
Martha M. Walz	8th Suffolk
Alice K. Wolf	25th Middlesex
Gloria L. Fox	7th Suffolk
Ellen Story	3rd Hampshire
Willie Mae Allen	6th Suffolk
Linda Dorcena Forry	12th Suffolk
Karen E. Spilka	Second Middlesex and Norfolk

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL COMMISSION ON GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING FOR SYSTEM-INVOLVED GIRLS.

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 special commission shall be appointed to investigate and study methods of instituting
2 gender-responsive programming for system-involved girls, hereinafter referred to as “the commission”.
- 3 **Section 2.**
- 4 The commission shall make recommendations to the Governor and General Court to improve the
5 effectiveness of services for system-involved girls by any or all of the following means:
- 6 a. conducting a national review of gender-responsive programming implementation successes and
7 challenges by other state’s juvenile justice systems;
- 8 b. conducting a national review of the published reports, curricula, and best practices for gender-specific
9 programming by government, foundations, and non-profit organizations;
- 10 c. conducting a national review of leading indicators that leads to girls becoming involved in criminal
11 justice systems;
- 12 d. conducting a review of all relevant state training curricula;
- 13 e. conducting a review of all relevant state agencies’ methods of data collection and aggregation by
14 gender and race;
- 15 f. analyzing and evaluating all relevant state contracts with private or community-based vendors for the
16 purpose of confirming that there is a consistent approach to the delivery of girls’ programming;
- 17 g. analyzing and reporting the rates of recidivism for girls within an agency as well as between agencies.
- 18 h. tracking and analyzing educational attainment of system-involved girls;

19 i. holding at least 3 regional community-wide meetings to solicit the input of community members and
20 agencies serving high-risk girls; and,

21 j. establishing a mechanism for incorporating the opinion and values of young
22 system-involved girls.

23 **Section 3.**

24 The commission shall be comprised of the following members appointed by the Governor:

25 a. 8 community members who are geographically representative and who represent current state vendors
26 that provide direct services to high-risk girls;

27 b. 2 members of the Massachusetts Senate appointed by the Senate President, 1 of whom shall serve as
28 co-chair of the commission;

29 c. 2 members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, 1 of
30 whom shall serve as co-chair of the commission; and,

31 d. the Secretaries of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department of Elementary
32 and Secondary Education ; the Commissioner of Probation, the Department of Youth Services, the
33 Department of Children and Families, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Public
34 Health; and the Chief Counsel for the Committee for Public Counsel Services, or their designees.

35 **Section 4. Meetings and Reports.**

36 a. The Commission shall meet monthly.

37 b. The Commission may seek assistance from other organizations or individuals on a pro bono basis.

38 c. The Commission shall file bi-annual reports with the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of
39 Representatives, and the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities not later
40 than June 30th of 2010, and every year thereafter no later than June 30th.

41 d. The Commission shall present to said committees recommendations concerning the adoption of gender
42 responsive practices in programs, both community-based and state-wide, serving high-risk and system-
43 involved girls.