

HOUSE No. 4058

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 10, 2016.

The committee on the Higher Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1051) of Peter V. Kocot and John W. Scibak for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the establishment of a Pioneer Valley Polish heritage institute at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, reports recommending that the accompanying resolve (House, No. 4058) ought to pass.

For the committee,

TOM SANNICANDRO.

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

Resolve relative to preserving Polish heritage in the Pioneer Valley.

1 Resolved, That the Pioneer Valley is the home to a higher percentage of people of Polish
2 heritage than any other area of Massachusetts. That public colleges and universities have
3 suffered reductions in funding for studies of the arts and humanities during the past several years.
4 That the documentation, preservation and research of this heritage and the contributions of the
5 Polish people to the socioeconomic vitality of this region and the Commonwealth is an important
6 public policy goal. Therefore, there is hereby established a special commission to investigate
7 and support the preservation of Polish culture and history in the Pioneer Valley. The purpose of
8 the special commission shall be to promote public support and funding of Polish cultural
9 preservation activities in western Massachusetts, and to compliment those activities that
10 acknowledge the contributions people of Polish heritage have made and continue to make to the
11 Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The commission shall evaluate the
12 public and private resources available to preserve and research Polish language, history, culture,
13 genealogy, music and the immigrant experience. The commission will serve as a public
14 clearinghouse for legislative and private efforts to secure additional funding for archival and
15 educational efforts. The special commission shall be comprised of 3 members of the house of

16 representatives, appointed by the speaker, of which at least 2 shall be of Polish heritage; 2
17 members of the senate, appointed by the senate president; 3 members appointed by the governor,
18 in consultation with the legislative delegation representing the Pioneer Valley, all of which shall
19 be officers in Polish heritage or Polish genealogical organizations located in Hampshire,
20 Hampden or Franklin counties, a designee of the Polish Discovery Center, located in the town of
21 Chicopee, and 1 member to be recommended by the chair of the Slavic studies department at the
22 University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

23 The special commission may receive funding through state appropriation for the
24 purposes of this act; provided, that a state university, community college, or campus of the
25 University of Massachusetts located in the Pioneer Valley may allocate meeting room space for
26 the purposes of the special commission; and provided further, that the special commission shall
27 file its report, including a fiscal note, with the clerks of the house and senate, and the chairmen of
28 the house and senate committees on ways and means, no later than July 1, 2017.