

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4679

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 24, 2020.

The committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 122) of Tami L. Gouveia, Liz Miranda and others relative to establishing a working group on adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4679) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KAY KHAN.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4679**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**

An Act to establish universal screening for adverse childhood experiences.

*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. (1) Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 237 the following section:- Section 238. In conjunction with the commissioner of mental  
3 health, the commissioner shall convene a task force to develop a plan to achieve universal  
4 screening of children for Adverse Childhood Experiences. The task force shall be chaired by the  
5 commissioner and include designees from the the Department of Children and Families,  
6 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Mental Health, the  
7 Childhood Trauma Taskforce established pursuant to section 14 of chapter 18c, as well as other  
8 designees with knowledge in childhood trauma or trauma screening deemed relevant by the  
9 commissioner.

10           (2) The task force shall: (a) recommend an evidence-based trauma screening tool that  
11 takes into account demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and economic  
12 status; (b) identify the most applicable setting for screenings to occur to achieve universal  
13 screening and support child well-being, such as schools or pediatrician’s offices; (c) establish  
14 clear guidelines to protect a child’s privacy; (d) identify the appropriate ages and frequency of

15 screening for trauma; (e) establish a training program to ensure proficiency in trauma screening  
16 and follow-up with children and families in a culturally competent and respectful manner; (f)  
17 identify communities and regions that lack appropriate services for child trauma intervention; (g)  
18 provide legislative and budgetary recommendations to meet these gaps; and (h) establish a child-  
19 trauma service referral system to connect individuals and families identified with behavioral,  
20 social, or trauma-specific service needs to trained professionals.

21 (3) The task force shall meet no fewer than 10 times a year. Members of the house of  
22 representatives, the senate, and the public shall be invited to attend meetings.

23 (4) The task force may request from all state agencies such information and assistance as  
24 the task force may require.

25 SECTION 2. Section 237 of Chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018  
26 Official Edition, is hereby amended in line 33 by inserting after the words “public health trends”  
27 the following: – “The report shall include updates on achieving universal screening for Adverse  
28 Childhood Experiences, available data on the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences  
29 within the Commonwealth and demographic breakdowns, and any existing gaps in intervention  
30 resources.

31 SECTION 3: (1) Within 2 years from the effective date of this act, the commissioner  
32 shall make available a preliminary report and plan to achieve universal screening, as well as a  
33 report outlining the task force's findings and recommendations. The report shall be made  
34 available for public comment for 60 days. During this period, the taskforce shall hold at least 3  
35 public hearings on the plan in diverse geographic areas across the state.

36           (2) 30 days after the end of the public comment period, the commissioner shall submit a  
37 final report and plan to the House and Senate Clerks, the Chairs of the Joint Committee on  
38 Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, the Chairs of the Joint Committee on  
39 Education, and, the Chairs of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse and  
40 Recovery.

41           (3) The taskforce shall hold its first meeting within 90 days from the effective date of this  
42 act.