

SENATE No. 215

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Harriette L. Chandler

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 promote and enhance civic engagement.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Harriette L. Chandler</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>	
<i>Linda Dean Campbell</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>1/20/2017</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2017</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2017</i>
<i>Peter J. Durant</i>	<i>6th Worcester</i>	<i>1/26/2017</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/27/2017</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>John F. Keenan</i>	<i>Norfolk and Plymouth</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2017</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2017</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Paul R. Heroux</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

<i>Jeffrey N. Roy</i>	<i>10th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>David T. Vieira</i>	<i>3rd Barnstable</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Cynthia S. Creem</i>	<i>First Middlesex and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Jennifer L. Flanagan</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/8/2017</i>

SENATE No. 215

By Ms. Chandler, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 215) of Harriette L. Chandler, Linda Dean Campbell, Marjorie C. Decker, Jason M. Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to involve youth in civic engagement. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 249 OF 2015-2016.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement.

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. Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting at striking out Section 2 and replacing it with the following
3 section:-

4 Section 2. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following
5 meanings:-

6 “student led civics project” is a rigorous project-based approach that involves a student-
7 led inquiry and learning process involving essential knowledge, and use of disciplinary concepts
8 and tools, structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and
9 tasks.

10 “The Department” is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

11 “local educational agency” or “LEA” is a public board of education or other public
12 authority legally constituted within Massachusetts for either administrative control or direction
13 of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city,
14 county, township, school district , or other political subdivision of Massachusetts, or for a
15 combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in Massachusetts as an
16 administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

17 “The Fund” is the Civics Project Fund administered by the Department of Elementary
18 and Secondary Education.

19 (b) In all public elementary and high schools American history and civics, including the
20 constitution of the United States, the declaration of independence and the bill of rights, and in all
21 public high schools the constitution of the commonwealth and local history and government and
22 a program relating to the flag of the United States of America, including, but not limited to,
23 proper etiquette, the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the
24 electoral process and the provisions of 36 U.S.C. 170 to 177, inclusive, shall be taught as
25 required subjects for the purpose of promoting civic service and a greater knowledge thereof, and
26 of fitting the pupils, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship.

27

28 (c) There shall be set upon the books of the Commonwealth a fund known as the Civics
29 Project Fund. The Fund shall be used by the Department to implement this section, including
30 offering central capacity for standards, models, professional development infrastructure, and
31 progress monitoring infrastructure. The remainder of the Fund may be allocated to regional

32 educational collaboratives and districts to support curriculum development, offer professional
33 development, and collaboration with outside entities that can support these efforts. Gifts, grants,
34 and donations for those purposes from public and private sources shall be deposited into the
35 Fund.

36 (d) Every student in the Massachusetts public school system shall complete no less than 2
37 student led civics projects, administered at 2 separate grade levels, as a requirement for
38 graduation. These projects are intended to prepare students for lifelong civic motivation and
39 participation through applied learning of civics content. These projects will provide for a student-
40 centered inquiry process investigating the connection between federal, state, or local policy and
41 an issue that impacts their community, research the issue, take strategic action to influence that
42 issue, and create portfolios to demonstrate their process and outcomes. The project, and
43 instruction on the skills and knowledge necessary to complete it, will be integrated into existing
44 course curricula that also includes comprehensive civics content. Such courses may include
45 Social Studies, History, Science, Math and English, or an independent civics course.

46 (e)The Department shall establish regional civics councils to monitor civics education
47 implementation. Regional civics councils shall consist of representatives from K-12, higher
48 education, nonprofits, and the business community. Regional civics councils shall include at
49 least two voting high-school student members and shall solicit student input from students in
50 their service area. The Department shall establish an annual convention and invite members of
51 the regional civics councils to attend in order to assess the current state of civic education and
52 make recommendations to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department
53 shall promulgate regulations consistent with this section specifying the size, membership, service
54 area, selection process, and responsibilities for regional civics councils.

55 (f) (i) The Department shall promulgate regulations necessary to implement this section,
56 which shall include a reporting mechanism to ensure that LEAs fulfill the requirements of this
57 section.

58 (ii) The Department shall set quality standards, aligned with the existing Social Studies
59 standards, in order to support LEAs in the implementation of this section. LEAs shall collaborate
60 with schools within their jurisdiction to assist with project implementation and integration as
61 well as offer curriculum options and professional development opportunities. The Department,
62 regional civics councils, and LEAs may collaborate with outside entities to assist with the
63 offering of said resources as well as in the evaluation of the implementation of this section and
64 the achievement of objectives outlined in subsection (d).

65 (g) The Department shall establish the Edward M. Kennedy Civics Challenge. The
66 Challenge shall be available to all eighth-grade students in the Massachusetts public school
67 system. Participating students shall be administered a version of the U.S. citizenship test
68 provided by the Department. The Department shall establish an annual statewide civics
69 symposium for the top scoring one hundred students at an appropriate historic location. The
70 Department shall notify the top scoring one hundred students of their invitation to attend said
71 symposium. In the event of a tie score at the cut off for the top one hundred students,
72 participation in the symposium shall be determined among those top scoring students by lottery.

73 (h) The Department shall establish the High School Voter Challenge. Every public high
74 school shall name one or more currently enrolled pupils designated by the school administrator
75 or nominated by peers to serve as voter outreach coordinators. The last two full weeks in April
76 and the last two full weeks in September shall be known as “high school voter challenge weeks,”

77 during which time voter outreach coordinators shall be allowed and encouraged to hold voter
78 registration drives and reach out to other students who are eligible to register or pre-register to
79 vote on any high school campus at locations and times deemed appropriate by the school
80 administrator, or his or her designee, which are reasonably accessible to all students.

81 SECTION 2. The department of elementary and secondary education shall submit a
82 report to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives who shall forward the same to
83 the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education and the chairs of the house and
84 senate committees on ways and means on the implementation of this act on or before July 1,
85 2020.