

SENATE No. 278

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Eric P. Lesser

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 civics and new media literacy education in schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Jeffrey N. Roy</i>	<i>10th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

SENATE No. 278

By Mr. Lesser, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 278) of Eric P. Lesser, Jason M. Lewis, Sal N. DiDomenico, Brian M. Ashe and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to civics and new media literacy education in schools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to civics and new media literacy education in schools.

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 second paragraph of section 1 of chapter 71 of the General Laws is
2 hereby amended by adding, at the end, thereof, the following sentence: -

3 The department of elementary and secondary education shall encourage school districts
4 to implement instruction in news media literacy skills at all grade levels, and in any of the core
5 subjects or other subjects, to equip students with the knowledge and skills for accessing,
6 analyzing, evaluating, and creating all types of news media, including print, online, television,
7 and social media.

8 SECTION 2. Section 2 of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
9 edition, is hereby amended by adding at the end thereof, the following paragraph :-

10 The department shall implement a required project in civics participation, also known as
11 action civics, for all students at least once in elementary school and at least once in high school.
12 The department shall also implement an assessment designed to measure the civics learning

13 objectives recommended by the Civic Learning and Engagement Task Force and adopted by the
14 department at least once in elementary school and at least once in high school. Said assessment
15 shall enable students to demonstrate understanding and relevance in civics and related topics,
16 which may include: public policy; the structure of federal, state and local governments; the
17 United States and Commonwealth constitutions; and the act of civic participation. The
18 department may seek the assistance of outside organizations and experts in the field of civics
19 education to assist with the implementation of said project and assessment of civics learning.

20 SECTION 3. The commissioner shall develop criteria and guidelines for a certificate in
21 Advanced Civics Skills to be awarded by school districts to recognize high school graduates who
22 have met academic benchmarks determined by the department in the subject of civics. The
23 department shall promulgate regulations creating a certification in Action Civics, for educators
24 that demonstrate competency in teaching civics to, and the civics skills of, students.

25 SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any special or general law to the contrary, the department
26 of elementary and secondary education shall establish a pilot program for school districts to
27 utilize and test a curriculum on news media literacy created by the department. Said program
28 shall be voluntary and shall be used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching news media literacy
29 in schools, with the ultimate goal of requiring news media literacy be taught in all schools across
30 the commonwealth.