

**SENATE . . . . . No. 88**

---

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Joan B. Lovely*

*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 establishing a commission on the status of children and youth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>
<i>Chris Walsh</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>
<i>Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>

**SENATE . . . . . No. 88**

---

---

By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 88) of Joan B. Lovely, Chris Walsh and Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. for legislation to establish a commission on the status of children and youth. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

---

---

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 2398 OF 2013-2014.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act establishing a commission on the status of children and youth.

*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 3 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following  
2 section:-

3 Section 71. (a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of children and  
4 youth to consist of 19 persons, 5 of whom shall be appointed by the governor, 4 of whom shall  
5 be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the  
6 president of the senate and 6 of whom shall be appointed by the student advisory council to the  
7 board of education established in section 1E of chapter 15; provided, however, that not more  
8 than 2 such persons shall be from the same regional student advisory council. Members of the  
9 commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation and socio-  
10 economic backgrounds; provided, however, that no member at the time of appointment or re-

11 appointment shall be older than 21 years of age. Members shall be subject to chapter 268A as it  
12 applies to special state employees.

13 (b) Members shall serve terms of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. A  
14 vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority  
15 for the remainder of the unexpired term. Appointments shall be made in consultation with  
16 organizations that focus on children and youth including, but not limited to, the Massachusetts  
17 Boys State program, the Massachusetts Girls State program, the YMCA Youth in Government  
18 program, the Massachusetts Student Government Day program, the Boys and Girls Clubs of  
19 Massachusetts, Teens Leading the Way, the Children's League of Massachusetts, Massachusetts  
20 Citizens for Children, Generation Citizen, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, City Year, the  
21 Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps and the Mass Mentoring Partnership. Terms of  
22 office shall commence annually on October 1 and nominations for vacancies shall be solicited  
23 annually between May 1 and June 16 of each year through an open application process using a  
24 uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the state.

25 (c) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer  
26 and any other officers it deems necessary.

27 (d) The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be  
28 reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

29 (e) The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning children  
30 and youth and shall be guided by the tenets of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of  
31 the Child and the Declaration and Plan of Action for the survival, development and protection of  
32 children and youth adopted by the World Summit on Children in 1990. In furtherance of that

33 responsibility, the commission shall: (i) study, review and report on the status of children and  
34 youth in the commonwealth; (ii) inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and  
35 local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to children and youth; (iii)  
36 serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues  
37 affecting children and youth; (iv) serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to  
38 children and youth; (v) identify and recommend qualified youth for appointive positions at all  
39 levels of government, including boards and commissions, as the commission deems necessary  
40 and appropriate; (vi) assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect children  
41 and youth, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; (vii) advise executive and  
42 legislative bodies on the effect on children and youth of proposed legislation, as the commission  
43 deems necessary and appropriate; (viii) promote and facilitate collaboration among local youth  
44 commissions and youth organizations, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; (ix)  
45 organize programs to celebrate the positive contributions of children and youth including, but not  
46 limited to, the observance of Youth Honor Day established in section 15G of chapter 6 and the  
47 observance of Youth in Government Day established in section 15WW of said chapter 6; (x)  
48 establish a commonwealth award for exemplary community service which shall be presented to a  
49 graduating senior in each high school in cooperation with Massachusetts Secondary School  
50 Administrators' Association; and (xi) encourage programs that enhance the civic knowledge and  
51 engagement of youth in the democratic process with the goal of producing active and engaged  
52 citizens. The commission shall annually, not later than June 2, report the results of its findings  
53 and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the governor and to the clerks of  
54 the senate and the house of representatives.

55 (f) The commission may: (i) use such voluntary and uncompensated services of private  
56 individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; (ii)  
57 recommend policies and make recommendations to agencies and officers of state and local  
58 governments to effectuate the purposes of subsection (e); (iii) select an executive director and  
59 acquire adequate staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation; (iv) establish and maintain  
60 such offices as it deems necessary, subject to appropriation; (v) enact by-laws for its own  
61 governance; (vi) hold regular, public meetings and fact-finding hearings and other public forums  
62 as it may consider necessary; (vii) exercise such other powers as it deems necessary to perform  
63 its duties.

64 (g) The commission shall meet monthly, except for the months of July and August, at the  
65 members' discretion. The governor, speaker of the house of representatives, president of the  
66 senate and designated members of the senate and house of representatives shall be invited to  
67 attend the monthly meetings on a rotating basis as determined by the commission.

68 (h) (1) The commission may request from state agencies such information and  
69 assistance as the commission may require.

70 (2) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants,  
71 bequests and federal funds for the purposes of the commission. Such funds shall be deposited in  
72 a separate account with the state treasurer and shall be expended by the commission in  
73 accordance with law.

74 (i) There shall be an advisory council to the commission which shall serve co-  
75 terminously with the governor and shall consist of the commissioner of elementary and  
76 secondary education or a designee; the commissioner of early education and care or a designee;

77 the commissioner of higher education or a designee; the commissioner of youth services or a  
78 designee; the chief justice of the juvenile court or a designee, the commissioner of juvenile  
79 probation or a designee; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on children, families  
80 and persons with disabilities or their designees; and the house and senate chairs of the joint  
81 committee on education or their designees. The governor shall additionally appoint members  
82 from organizations that focus on children and youth; provided, however, that the governor shall  
83 appoint 1 member from each of the following organizations from nominees submitted by the  
84 Massachusetts Boys State program, the Massachusetts Girls State program, the YMCA Youth in  
85 Government program, the Massachusetts Student Government Day program, the Boys and Girls  
86 Clubs of Massachusetts, Teens Leading the Way, the Children's League of Massachusetts,  
87 Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Generation Citizen, the Massachusetts Service Alliance,  
88 City Year, the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps and the Mass Mentoring Partnership.  
89 There shall be a co-chair appointed from among the executive branch representatives, a co-chair  
90 appointed from among the legislative representatives and a co-chair appointed from among the  
91 judicial branch representatives.

92 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding section 71 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, the initial  
93 members of the commission on the status of children and youth shall be appointed for the  
94 following terms: (i) the governor shall appoint 2 members for a term of 1 year, 2 members for a  
95 term of 2 years and 1 member for a term of 3 years; (ii) the speaker of the house of  
96 representatives shall appoint 2 members for a term of 1 year, 1 member for a term of 2 years and  
97 1 member for a term of 3 years; (iii) the president of the senate shall appoint 2 members for a  
98 term of 1 year, 1 member for a term of 2 years and 1 member for a term of 3 years; and (iv) the

99 student advisory council to the board of education shall appoint 1 member for a term of 1 year, 2  
100 members for a term of 2 years and 3 members for a term of 3 years.