

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joanne M. Comerford

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 responding to the COVID-19 emergency by instituting a moratorium of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Joanne M. Comerford

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act responding to the COVID-19 emergency by instituting a moratorium of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to establish forthwith a moratorium on the administration of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System and for associated graduation requirements and accountability measures, in response to the COVID-19 emergency, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 37. (a) Notwithstanding subsection (i) of section 1D, for the school years
4 beginning in the fall of 2020 through the school year ending in 2024, the requirement that a
5 student must demonstrate mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge as
6 measured by Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System or any other named statewide
7 standardized assessment shall not be required as a condition for high school graduation.

8 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general law, special law, regulation, or
9 collective bargaining agreement to the contrary, the results from student learning measures that

10 inform the educator plan or self-assessment shall not be used, in whole or in part, in an
11 educator’s formative evaluation, formative assessment, or summative evaluation for the four
12 academic years from the effective date of this act.

13 (c) The department shall not implement or use the mandated state standardized
14 assessment to satisfy the accountability provisions of section 1J or section 1K, for the school
15 years beginning in the fall of 2020 through the school year ending in 2024.

16 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the
17 commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall submit to the United States
18 Department of Education a request that the Commonwealth’s statewide assessment,
19 accountability and reporting requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act be
20 waived for the 2020-2024 school years. The request shall be made pursuant to section 8401 of
21 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and shall include a request to waive the assessment
22 requirements in section 1111(b)(2); the accountability and school identification requirements in
23 sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D); and the report card provisions related to assessments
24 and accountability in section 1111(h).

25 SECTION 3. (a) There shall be a special commission on the school and district
26 evaluation system, assessment instruments, and requirements regarding underperforming schools
27 and school districts. The commission shall review the performance, efficacy and impact of the
28 state’s school and district evaluation system, including indicators, the framework and the process
29 used to evaluate school and district performance, including, but not limited to, district and school
30 goals, availability of programs, assessment instruments used to measure academic progress
31 indicators of social, emotional and physical health of students and staff, opportunities for

32 instruction in civics, arts and creative expression, communication and social skills, racial and
33 social equity, and level of resources provided.

34 Members of the commission shall include the house and senate chairs of the joint
35 committee on education or their designees, who shall serve as co-chairs; the secretary of
36 education; the commissioner of elementary and secondary education; the commissioner of early
37 education and care; the speaker of the house of representatives or a designee; the president of the
38 senate or a designee; the minority leader of the house of representatives or a designee; the
39 minority leader of the senate or a designee; and 1 member to be appointed by each of the
40 following organizations: the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc.; the
41 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Inc.; the Massachusetts Teachers
42 Association; the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts; the Massachusetts Association
43 of Vocational Administrators, Inc.; the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, Inc.; The
44 Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association, New England Area Conference (NEAC) of the
45 NAACP; La Comunidad; Chelsea Collaborative; Muslim Justice League; the Massachusetts
46 State Student Advisory Council to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; and a
47 person with academic expertise in the intersection of public health and education to be appointed
48 by the co-chairs. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall furnish
49 reasonable staff and other support for the work of the commission, including administration of
50 the grant program established in subsection (b). Prior to issuing its recommendations, the
51 commission shall conduct not fewer than 4 public hearings across regions of the commonwealth,
52 and shall review reports, and recommendations from the school district task forces created in
53 subsection (c). The special commission shall make recommendations, including proposed
54 amendments to sections 1I, 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws. The special

55 commission shall file its recommendations, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry
56 those recommendations into effect, with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives on
57 or before December 31, 2022.

58 (b) The commission shall create a grant program within 90 days of the enactment of this
59 act to support the establishment of district task forces to develop and pilot school and district
60 evaluation models. The purpose of the grant program is to enable educators, students, parents
61 and local districts to establish a vision and goals for their public schools; to determine how best
62 to evaluate whether or not their vision and goals are being met; and to identify what resources
63 are needed to realize those goals. The further purpose of the grant program is to provide the
64 commission established with locally informed, practical information and feedback to inform its
65 work, findings and recommendations. The commission shall approve all grant decisions related
66 to the program, which shall be administered by the department of elementary and secondary
67 education. Grants to school districts, not to exceed \$15,000, shall be funded from the 21st
68 Century Education Trust Fund.

69 (c) A school district task force on assessment shall be formed at the local level in no more
70 than 25 public-school districts. The participating school districts shall include districts from each
71 region of the state and include regional school districts, economically disadvantaged school
72 districts as defined in section 3A of chapter 23A of the General Laws and school districts with a
73 significant population of English language learners as defined in subsection (d) of section 2 of
74 chapter 71A of the General Laws.

75 Each task force shall be co-chaired by the chair of the school committee, or the chair's
76 designee, and the president of the authorized collective bargaining agent representing licensed

77 educators, or the president's designee. In addition to the co-chairs, the task force composition
78 shall consist of no more than nine members of the community, parents, school staff including
79 administrators and educators, and students as appropriate. The task forces may convene within
80 30 days of notification by the department that a grant has been awarded to the district.

81 Each task force shall annually report on its progress to the department of elementary and
82 secondary education, which shall furnish the reports to the commission.

83 (d) The department of elementary and secondary education shall submit a preliminary
84 report on the status of the grant program, progress of applicants and assess the need for increased
85 funding after the initial application cycle to the commission to inform its work and
86 recommendations.