

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2048**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Jeffrey Sánchez and Byron Rushing*

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 eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in the commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Jeffrey Sánchez</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>Byron Rushing</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>
<i>Linda Dorcena Forry</i>	<i>First Suffolk</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Peter V. Kocot</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>
<i>Sonia Chang-Diaz</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>
<i>Ellen Story</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Colleen M. Garry</i>	<i>36th Middlesex</i>
<i>Benjamin Swan</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Tom Sannicandro</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Barbara L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>

<i>Daniel J. Ryan</i>	<i>2nd Suffolk</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>Gloria L. Fox</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>Timothy R. Madden</i>	<i>Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket</i>
<i>Evandro C. Carvalho</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Denise C. Garlick</i>	<i>13th Norfolk</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jay R. Kaufman</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>
<i>William Smitty Pignatelli</i>	<i>4th Berkshire</i>
<i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2048**

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By Messrs. Sánchez of Boston and Rushing of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2048) of Jeffrey Sánchez and others for legislation to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. Public Health.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3888 OF 2013-2014.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in the commonwealth.

*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 16 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as  
2 appearing in section 13 of chapter 165 of the acts of 2014, is hereby amended by striking out the  
3 words “and, (7) the health facilities appeals board ” and inserting in place thereof the following  
4 words:- (7) the health facilities appeal board; and (8) the office of health equity.

5           SECTION 2. Section 16O of said chapter 6A, as appearing in section 16 of chapter 38 of  
6 the acts of 2013, is hereby amended by inserting after the word, “recommendations,” in line 3,  
7 the following words:- to the director of the office of health equity.

8           SECTION 3. Said section 16O of said chapter 6A, as so appearing, is hereby further  
9 amended by inserting after the words “the commissioner of public health or a designee, who

10 shall serve ex officio”, the following words:- ; the director of the office of health equity, or the  
11 director’s designee.

12 SECTION 4. Said chapter 6A is hereby amended by inserting after section 16V, as  
13 inserted by section 17 of chapter 38 of the acts of 2013, the following section: –

14 Section 16W. (a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context  
15 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings: –

16 “Disparities”, differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality and burden of diseases  
17 and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific racial and ethnic groups.

18 “Office”, the office of health equity.

19 (b) There shall be an office of health equity within the executive office of health and  
20 human services. The office shall be in the charge of a director, who shall report directly to the  
21 secretary of health and human services. The health disparities council, established in section  
22 16O, shall serve as an advisory board to the office of health equity.

23 (c) The office, subject to appropriation, shall coordinate all activities of the  
24 commonwealth to eliminate racial and ethnic health and health care disparities. The office shall  
25 set goals for the reduction of disparities and prepare an annual plan for the commonwealth to  
26 eliminate disparities.

27 (d) The office, subject to appropriation, shall collaborate with other state agencies of the  
28 commonwealth on disparities reduction initiatives to address the social factors that influence  
29 health inequality. The state agencies shall include, but shall not be limited to, the executive office  
30 of health and human services, the executive office of housing and economic development, the

31 executive office of public safety and security, the executive office of energy and environmental  
32 affairs, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the executive office of labor and  
33 workforce development and the executive office of education. The office shall facilitate  
34 communication and partnership between these agencies to develop greater understanding of the  
35 intersections between agency activities and health outcomes. The office shall facilitate  
36 development of interagency initiatives to address the social and economic determinants of health  
37 and key health disparities issues including, but not limited to, healthcare access and quality;  
38 housing availability and quality; transportation availability, location and cost; community  
39 policing and safe spaces; air, water, land usage and quality; employment and workforce  
40 development; and education access and quality.

41 (e) The office, subject to appropriation, shall evaluate the effectiveness of programs and  
42 interventions to eliminate health disparities, identifying best practices and model programs for  
43 the state.

44 (f) The secretary of health and human services shall annually, on the day assigned for  
45 submission of the budget by the governor to the general court pursuant to section 7H of chapter  
46 29, designate major initiatives of the commonwealth affecting the health and health care of  
47 residents of the commonwealth. The initiatives may include any activity of the commonwealth  
48 including, but not limited to, activities of the executive office of health and human services, the  
49 executive office of housing and economic development, the executive office of public safety and  
50 security, the executive office of energy and environmental affairs, the Massachusetts Department  
51 of Transportation, the executive office of labor and workforce development and the executive  
52 office of education.

53 For each major initiative, the office shall prepare a disparities impact statement  
54 evaluating the likely positive or negative impact of each initiative on eliminating or reducing  
55 racial and ethnic health disparities. The statements shall, to the extent possible, include  
56 quantifiable impacts and evaluation benchmarks. The statements shall be posted on the official  
57 internet site of the executive office of health and human services and submitted to the clerks of  
58 the house of representatives and senate, members of the health disparities council, and the house  
59 and senate committees on ways and means.

60 (g) The office, subject to appropriation, shall prepare an annual health disparities report  
61 card. The report card shall evaluate the progress of the commonwealth toward eliminating racial  
62 and ethnic health disparities, using, where possible, quantifiable measures and comparative  
63 benchmarks. The report card shall report on progress on a regional basis, based on regions  
64 designated by the office. The office shall hold public hearings in several regions of the  
65 commonwealth to get public information on the topics of the report card. The report card shall be  
66 delivered to the governor, speaker of the house of representatives and president of the senate and  
67 the members of the health disparities council, established under section 16O of chapter 6A,  
68 before July 1 of each year and shall be posted on the official internet site of the office or  
69 executive office of health and human services.

70 SECTION 5. Section 5 of chapter 6D, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby  
71 amended by adding the following sentence:- The commission shall establish goals that are  
72 intended to reduce health care disparities in racial, ethnic and disabled communities and in doing  
73 so shall seek to incorporate the recommendations of the health disparities council and the office  
74 of health equity.