

HOUSE No. 2661

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jonathan Hecht

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 creating a legislative research bureau.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>

HOUSE No. 2661

By Mr. Hecht of Watertown, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2661) of Jonathan Hecht and others for legislation to create a legislative research bureau within the General Court. Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act creating a legislative research bureau.

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 inserting after section
2 71 the following section:-

3 Section 72. (a) There is hereby established the Joint Legislative Research Bureau,
4 hereinafter referred to as “the bureau.” It shall be the duty and function of the bureau to provide
5 the general court and its members with research, analysis, and recommendations on legislative
6 and fiscal matters facing the commonwealth. The bureau shall act in a nonpartisan, factual,
7 timely, and professional manner, with the goal of assisting the general court and its members to
8 make informed policy decisions that are in the best interests of the commonwealth.

9 (b) (1) The bureau shall be headed by a director, who shall be appointed by a majority
10 vote of the senate president, the speaker of the house, the senate minority leader, and the house
11 minority leader. The person so appointed shall be selected without regard to political affiliation
12 and solely on the basis of his or her fitness to perform the duties of director. The term of office

13 shall be 8 years. No person shall serve more than 3 terms as director. Any individual appointed
14 as director to fill a vacancy shall be considered to have been appointed to a new term. No person
15 appointed director shall, in the 5 years preceding such appointment, have held federal or state
16 elective office, served as a member of a federal or state political party committee, or been
17 registered as an executive or legislative agent. No person appointed director shall, during their
18 term in office, be a candidate for election to a federal, state or municipal office or to a federal,
19 state or municipal political party committee or register as an executive or legislative agent.

20 (2) The director may be removed from office, for cause, by a majority vote of the senate
21 president, the speaker of the house, the senate minority leader, and the house minority leader.
22 Such cause may include substantial neglect of duty, gross misconduct, indictment, or conviction
23 of a crime. The reasons for removal of the director shall be stated in writing and shall include the
24 basis for such removal. Such writing shall be sent to the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the
25 house of representatives at the time of the removal.

26 (3) The director shall receive a salary equal to that of the state budget director in the
27 executive office for administration and finance. Funding for the salaries of the director and other
28 personnel of the bureau and for the operations of the bureau shall be provided from the general
29 fund, subject to appropriation.

30 (4) The director shall, subject to appropriation, appoint and may remove such employees
31 as he or she deems necessary to carry out the duties and functions of the bureau, and may
32 determine their salaries and duties; provided, however, that the total amount of all such salaries
33 shall not exceed the sum appropriated therefore by the general court. The personnel of the office
34 shall include at least one certified public accountant and one attorney. All personnel of the office

35 shall be appointed without regard to affiliation and solely on the basis of their fitness to perform
36 their duties. For purposes of payment of salaries, employment benefits, rights, privileges, and
37 disciplinary matters, all personnel of the bureau shall be considered employees of the general
38 court.

39 (c) The bureau shall perform duties including, but not limited to, the following:

40 (1) advise and assist any committee of the senate or house of representatives, upon
41 request of the chair, by providing analysis, appraisal, and evaluation of legislative proposals
42 within that committee's jurisdiction or recommendations submitted to the general court by the
43 governor or any agency, department or division within the executive branch;

44 (2) provide such other research and analytical services as any committee deems
45 appropriate, or otherwise assist in furnishing the basis for proper evaluation and determination of
46 legislative proposals and recommendations;

47 (3) advise and assist members of the senate or house of representatives, upon request, in
48 the analysis of legislative proposals, provided however that:

49 (i) the proposed legislation has been favorably reported out of at least one committee of
50 the senate or house of representatives or one joint committee and the request is made by the
51 principal sponsor of the legislation or by no less than 4 members of the senate or 16 members of
52 the house of representatives; or

53 (ii) the request is made by no less than 10 members of the senate or 40 members of the
54 house of representatives;

55 Analyses prepared by the bureau pursuant to this sub-section shall be public and made
56 available online.

57 (4) prepare and provide other information, research, and reference materials and services
58 to committees and members of the senate and house of representatives to assist them in their
59 legislative and representative functions.

60 (d) The bureau shall have the authority and ability to access documents and information
61 maintained in any form by agencies or authorities of the commonwealth relating to their
62 operations, organizational structure, revenues, and expenditures.

63 (e) The bureau shall prepare an annual report detailing its work for each biennial
64 legislative session. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the senate and house of
65 representatives on or before November 1 of each even-numbered year.