

HOUSE No. 4390

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 15, 2024.

The committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 152) of Paul J. Donato relative to the structure of the commission of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4390) ought to pass.

For the committee,

JAY D. LIVINGSTONE.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act to amend the structure of the Commission of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

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. Section 69 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out subsections (a) and (b) and inserting in place
3 thereof the following 2 subsections:

4 (a) There shall be a permanent commission on the status of grandparents raising
5 grandchildren which shall consist of 21 persons as follows: 3 persons appointed by the secretary
6 of elder affairs, 1 of whom shall be from the secretary's office; 3 persons appointed by the
7 commissioner of children and families, 1 of whom who shall be from the department of children
8 and families, 2 of whom shall be grandparents or kinship caregivers with current or past
9 experience raising minor children; 1 person appointed by the commissioner of the department of
10 transitional assistance, who works at the department of transitional assistance; 2 persons
11 appointed by the governor; 2 persons appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, 1
12 of whom shall be a member of the house; 1 person appointed by the house minority leader; 2
13 persons appointed by the president of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate; 1
14 person appointed by the senate minority leader; 1 person appointed by the attorney general; 1

15 person appointed by the chief justice of the probate and family court who shall have
16 demonstrated commitment to the rearing of grandchildren by grandparents; 1 person to be
17 appointed by the chief justice of the juvenile court who shall have a demonstrated commitment
18 to the rearing of grandchildren by grandparents; and 3 persons who shall be grandparents or
19 kinship caregivers with current or past experience raising minor children, who shall be
20 nominated for appointment by the officers of the commission and appointed by a majority vote
21 of the commissioners present and voting. Members of the commission shall be residents of the
22 commonwealth who have demonstrated a commitment to the rearing of grandchildren by
23 grandparents. Persons responsible for appointing members to the commission shall ensure that,
24 to the fullest extent possible, the composition of the commission reflects a diverse population
25 with respect to race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender
26 expression, disability, economic status, geographic diversity, and other diverse backgrounds.

27 (b) Members shall serve terms of 4 years and until their successors are appointed.
28 Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original appointing
29 authority for the balance of the unexpired term. All appointments may be made in consultation
30 with the commission on the status of grandparents raising grandchildren. Nominations for
31 members shall be solicited by the appointing authorities between August 1 and September 16 of
32 each year through an open application process.

33 (c) The executive office of elder affairs shall provide the commission with suitable
34 accommodations for its meetings. The department of children and families shall further provide
35 administrative support to assist the commission, including, but not limited to, maintaining the
36 records of the commission and convening a meeting not fewer than 10 times annually, with
37 members able to participate in any meeting virtually, via teleconference or in person.

38 SECTION 2. Said section 69 of said chapter 3 is hereby further amended by striking out
39 subsection (e) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:

40 (e) The commission shall be a resource to the commonwealth on issues affecting
41 grandparents raising grandchildren in the commonwealth. In furtherance of that responsibility,
42 the commission shall: (1) foster unity among grandparents raising grandchildren communities
43 and organizations in the commonwealth by promoting cooperation and sharing of information
44 and encouraging collaboration and joint activities; (2) serve as a liaison between government and
45 private interest groups with regard to matters of unique interest and concern to grandparents
46 raising grandchildren in the commonwealth; (3) assess programs, regulations, and practices in all
47 state agencies as they affect grandparents raising grandchildren, as the commission deems
48 necessary and appropriate, to encourage collaboration and sharing of promising practices among
49 groups with regard to matters of unique interest and concern to grandparents raising
50 grandchildren in the commonwealth; (4) advise executive and legislative bodies of the potential
51 effect of proposed legislation on grandparents raising grandchildren, as the commission deems
52 necessary and appropriate; (5) investigate the merits of the establishment of a state agency
53 dedicated to grandparents issues and determine how such agency would be set up; and (6)
54 identify issues that are faced by relatives, other than parents, who are raising children.