

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 461**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Alice Hanlon Peisch*

*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 relative to the school choice program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Alice Hanlon Peisch*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*14th Norfolk*

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 461**

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By Ms. Peisch of Wellesley, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 461) of Alice Hanlon Peisch relative to the school choice program for children accepted to attend a public schools in a communities other than the ones in which they reside . Education.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to the school choice program.

*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 12B of chapter 76 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the subsection (a) and inserting in place  
3 thereof the following subsection:-

4 (a) As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

5 "Department", the department of elementary and secondary education.

6 "Receiving district", any city, town or regional school district within the commonwealth  
7 in which a child does not reside, but in which that child attends public school under the  
8 provisions of this section.

9 "Sending district", any city, town or regional school district within the commonwealth in  
10 which a child resides, but in which that child does not attend public school under the provisions  
11 of this section.

12 "State school choice limit", in fiscal year nineteen hundred and ninety-four, one percent  
13 of the total number of students attending public schools in the commonwealth; in fiscal year  
14 nineteen hundred and ninety-five, one and one-half percent of the total number of students  
15 attending public schools in the commonwealth; in fiscal year nineteen hundred and ninety-six,  
16 one and three-quarters percent of the total number of students attending public schools in the  
17 commonwealth; in fiscal year nineteen hundred and ninety-seven and thereafter, two percent of  
18 the total number of students attending public schools in the commonwealth; provided, however,  
19 that students enrolled under the program for the elimination of racial imbalance as provided in  
20 section twelve A shall not be counted toward these limits.

21 SECTION 2. Said section 12B of said chapter 76, as so appearing, is hereby further  
22 amended by striking out subsections (c) through (e), inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the  
23 following subsections:-

24 (c) Each city, town or regional school district shall enroll non-resident students at the  
25 school of such non-resident student's choice; provided, however, that this obligation to enroll  
26 non-resident students shall not apply to a district for a school year in which its school committee,  
27 prior to June first, after a public hearing, adopts a resolution withdrawing from said obligation,  
28 for the school year beginning the following September. Any such resolution of a school  
29 committee shall state the reasons therefor, and such resolution with said reasons shall be filed  
30 with the department of education; provided, however, that said department shall have no power  
31 to review any such decision by a school committee. If the city, town or regional school district  
32 operates an intra-district choice plan, non-resident students may apply for schools on the same  
33 basis as resident students, but the intra-district choice plan may give preference to resident  
34 students in assigning students to schools.

35 (d) If the total number of students admitted to receiving districts pursuant to this section  
36 is greater than the state school choice limit, the board shall notify all districts that no more  
37 students may be accepted pursuant to this section.

38 (e) The number of non-resident students enrolled in a receiving district pursuant to this  
39 section may not exceed ten percent of the total student enrollment in such district; provided,  
40 however, that students enrolled in a commonwealth virtual school pursuant to section 94 of  
41 chapter 71 shall not be counted towards these limits.

42 SECTION 3. Subsection (f) of said section 12B of said chapter 76, as so appearing, is  
43 hereby amended by striking out the last sentence.

44 SECTION 4. Said section 12B of said chapter 76, as so appearing, is hereby further  
45 amended by striking out subsections (g) through (o), inclusive, and inserting in place thereof the  
46 following subsections:-

47 (g) The state treasurer is further directed to disburse to the receiving district, from the  
48 School Choice Tuition Trust Fund established by section twelve C, an amount equal to each  
49 student's school choice tuition as defined in subsection (f); provided, however, that each public  
50 school district which admits children under the provisions of this section shall certify to the  
51 department the number of such children attending its public schools, and the city or town of  
52 residence of each such child; and, provided further, that such certification shall be made on  
53 October first of each year and April first of each year. The department shall calculate the amount  
54 of tuition for each child and periodically certify the annual amount to the department of revenue  
55 for payment and assessment through the local aid distribution process. The department may also,

56 on a post-audit basis, verify the admission and attendance of the number of children certified by  
57 each school district.

58 (h) School committees may establish terms for accepting non-resident students; provided,  
59 however, that if the number of non-resident students applying for acceptance to said district  
60 exceeds the number of available seats, said school committee shall select students for admission  
61 on a random basis; provided, further, that said school committee shall conduct said random  
62 selection twice: one time prior to July first and one time prior to November first; provided,  
63 further, that no school committee shall discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of  
64 race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, ancestry,  
65 athletic performance, physical handicap, special need or academic performance or proficiency in  
66 the English language. The Massachusetts commission against discrimination, established by  
67 section 56 of chapter 6, shall have jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of this section. A school  
68 committee may not publicly release the names of students leaving or entering a district under the  
69 provisions of this section. Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this paragraph, any  
70 sibling of a student already enrolled in the receiving district shall receive priority for admission  
71 to said district.

72 (i) Any child accepted to attend a public school in a community other than the one in  
73 which he resides pursuant to this section shall be permitted to remain in that school district and  
74 have all the rights of a resident of that district until he or she graduates from the district. If the  
75 student attends the public schools of another town and it is anticipated that the student shall need  
76 the services of a private day or residential school, an individual education plan team meeting  
77 shall be convened by the school district in which the child is attending school. The school district  
78 in which the student attends school shall notify the school district where the student resides of

79 the team meeting at least five school days prior to the meeting. Personnel from the district in  
80 which the child resides shall be allowed to participate in the team meeting concerning future  
81 placement of the child.