

SENATE No. 2080

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Fourteen

An Act establishing a commission on the status of children and youth.

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, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by adding the following section:—

3 Section: 70. (1) There is established a permanent commission on the status of children
4 and youth consisting of 19 persons as follows: five persons appointed by the governor; four
5 persons appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; four persons appointed by the
6 president of the senate; and six persons appointed by the statewide student advisory council,
7 established pursuant to section 1E of chapter 15 of the general laws, provided, however that no
8 more than two such persons shall be from the same regional student advisory council. Members
9 of the commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation and
10 socio-economic backgrounds from throughout the commonwealth, provided, however that no
11 member, at the time of appointment or re-appointment, shall be older than twenty one years of
12 age. Members shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 268A as they apply to special state
13 employees.

14 (2) (a) Members shall serve terms of three years and until their successors are
15 appointed.

16 (b) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original
17 appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term.

18 (c) Appointments shall be made in consultation with organizations that focus on
19 children and youth including, but not limited to the Massachusetts Boys State and Girls State
20 Programs, the YMCA Youth in Government Program, the Massachusetts Student Government
21 Day Program, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Massachusetts, Teens Leading the Way, the
22 Children’s League of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Generation Citizen,

23 the Massachusetts Service Alliance, City Year, the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps,
24 and the Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership. Nominations shall be solicited between May 1
25 and June 16 of each year for the term commencing October 1 of each year through an open
26 application process using a uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the state.

27 (d) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a
28 treasurer and any other officers it deems necessary.

29 (e) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their
30 services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the
31 performance of their duties.

32 (3) The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning children
33 and youth, and shall be guided by the tenets of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
34 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the Declaration and Plan of Action for the
35 survival, development and protection of children and youth adopted by the World Summit on
36 Children in 1990. In furtherance of that responsibility, the commission shall: (a) study, review
37 and report on the status of children and youth in the commonwealth; (b) inform leaders of
38 business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of
39 issues pertaining to children and youth; (c) serve as a liaison between government and private
40 interest groups concerned with issues affecting children and youth; (d) serve as a clearinghouse
41 for information on issues pertaining to children and youth; (e) identify and recommend qualified
42 youth for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions, as
43 the commission deems necessary and appropriate; (f) assess programs and practices in all state
44 agencies as they affect children and youth, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
45 (g) advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect on children and youth of proposed
46 legislation, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; (h) promote and facilitate
47 collaboration among local youth commissions and among youth organizations in the state, as the
48 commission deems necessary and appropriate, (i) organize programs to celebrate the positive
49 contributions of children and youth including, but not limited to the observance of Youth Honor
50 Day established pursuant to section 15G of chapter 6 of the General Laws and the observance of
51 Youth in Government Day, established pursuant to section 15WW of chapter 6 of the General
52 Laws, (j) establish a Commonwealth Award for Exemplary Community Service to be presented
53 to a graduating senior in each Massachusetts high school in cooperation with Massachusetts
54 Association of Secondary School Principals, and (k) encourage programs whose goal is to
55 enhance the civic knowledge and engagement of youth in the democratic process with the goal of
56 producing active, engaged citizens of the Commonwealth. The commission shall annually, on or
57 before June 2, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its
58 recommendations to the governor and to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives.

59 (4) The powers of the commission shall include but not be limited to the following: (a) to
60 use such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and

61 organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; (b) to recommend policies and
62 make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of
63 government to effectuate the purposes of subsection (3); (c) to select an executive director and to
64 acquire adequate staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation; (d) to establish and
65 maintain such offices as it may deem necessary, subject to appropriation; (e) to enact bylaws for
66 its own governance; and (f) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings
67 and other public forums as it may deem necessary.

68 (5) The commission shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and
69 August at members' discretion. The (i) governor, (ii) speaker of the house of representatives, (iii)
70 president of the senate and (iv) designated members of the Senate and House of Representatives
71 shall be invited to attend the monthly meetings on a rotating basis.

72 (6) (a) The commission may request from all state agencies such information and
73 assistance as the commission may require.

74 (b) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations,
75 grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of this chapter. Such funds shall
76 be deposited in a separate account with the state treasurer, be received by said treasurer on behalf
77 of the commonwealth, and be expended by the commission in accordance with law.

78 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 70 of chapter 3 of the General
79 Laws, the initial members of the commission on the status of children and youth shall be
80 appointed for the following terms:—

81 (a) The governor shall appoint two members for a term of one year, two members for a
82 term of two years, and one member for a term of three years.

83 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint two members for a term of
84 one year, one member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years.

85 (c) The president of the senate shall appoint two members for a term of one year, one
86 member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years.

87 (d) The statewide student advisory council shall appoint one member for a term of one
88 year, two members for a term of two years, and three members for a term of three years.

89 SECTION 3. There shall be an advisory council to the commission, who shall serve co-
90 terminously with the governor, consisting of the commissioner of elementary and secondary
91 education, ex-officio; the commissioner of early childhood education, ex-officio; the
92 commissioner of higher education, ex-officio; the commissioner of youth services, ex-officio; the
93 chief justice of the juvenile court, ex-officio, the commissioner of juvenile probation, ex-officio;
94 the senate chair of the joint legislative committee on children, families, and persons with
95 disabilities, ex-officio; the house chair of the joint legislative committee on children, families,

96 and persons with disabilities, ex-officio; the senate chair of the joint legislative committee on
97 education, ex-officio; and the house chair of the joint legislative committee on education, ex-
98 officio; There shall be a co-chair appointed from among the executive department
99 representatives, a co-chair appointed from among the legislative department representatives, and
100 a co-chair appointed from among the judicial department representatives. Any ex-officio member
101 of the advisory council may designate a representative to participate in the advisory council. In
102 addition to the foregoing, the governor shall appoint one member from each of the following
103 organizations from nominees submitted by said organizations that focus on children and youth
104 including, but not limited to the Massachusetts Boys State and Girls State Programs, the YMCA
105 Youth in Government Program, the Massachusetts Student Government Day Program, the Boys
106 and Girls Clubs of Massachusetts, Teens Leading the Way, the Children's League of
107 Massachusetts, Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Generation Citizen, the Massachusetts
108 Service Alliance, City Year, the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, and the
109 Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership.