# **SENATE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . No. 2102**

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

#### PRESENTED BY:

## Rebecca L. Rausch

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 promoting equality and respect in the legislature.

### PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Rebecca L. Rausch	Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex	
Tami L. Gouveia	14th Middlesex	2/26/2021
James B. Eldridge	Middlesex and Worcester	3/1/2021
Patricia D. Jehlen	Second Middlesex	3/1/2021
Michael O. Moore	Second Worcester	3/2/2021
Eric P. Lesser	First Hampden and Hampshire	3/16/2021
Danillo A. Sena	37th Middlesex	3/19/2021

#### SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1539 FILED ON: 2/17/2021

# **SENATE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . No. 2102**

By Ms. Rausch, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2102) of Rebecca L. Rausch, Tami L. Gouveia, James B. Eldridge, Patricia D. Jehlen and other members of the General Court for legislation to promote equality and respect in the legislature. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

## [SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION SEE SENATE, NO. 1898 OF 2019-2020.]

## The Commonwealth of Alassachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court (2021-2022)

An Act promoting equality and respect in the legislature.

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 General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 23M the

2 following chapter:-

3 CHAPTER 23N. COMMISSION ON WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL

## 4 ASSAULT IN THE LEGISLATURE.

- 5 Section 1. As used in this chapter, the following words shall have the following meanings
- 6 unless the context clearly requires otherwise:
- 7 "Claim", a written statement submitted to the commission by a reporting individual

8 alleging workplace harassment.

9 "Commission", the commission on workplace harassment and sexual assault in the10 legislature.

11 "Complaint", a written statement submitted to the commission by a complainant alleging12 workplace harassment.

"Complainant", any state house personnel who files a claim with the commission stating
that the person experienced, observed, or has reasonable reason to know of workplace
harassment by a state house personnel or another person the complainant reasonably believes
could affect the job security or career opportunities of the complainant.

17 "Investigative report", a report compiled by the general counsel, duly appointed pursuant18 to Section 4 of this chapter, at the end of an investigation.

"Identity-based harassment", verbal or physical conduct designed to humiliate, threaten,
intimidate, coerce, demean, or disparage an individual targeted because of the individual's race,
color, religion, national origin, sex, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation,
disability, age, genetic information, ancestry, or other aspect of a person's identity, which
conduct negatively interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating,
hostile, offensive, or otherwise untenable workplace environment.
"Reporting individual", a person who has experienced or witnessed incidents of

26 workplace harassment and has reported those incidents to the commission.

27 "Respondent", an individual accused of workplace harassment by a reporting individual28 or complainant.

29 "Retaliatory action", the discharge, suspension, demotion or other adverse employment 30 action taken against an individual, reporting individual, or complainant that provides information 31 to the commission.

32 "Sexual harassment", unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal 33 or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, 34 requests, or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or 35 as a basis for an employment decision, or (b) such advances, requests, or conduct have the 36 purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating 37 an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

38 "Sexual assault", any nonconsensual sexual act involving physical touching.

39 "State house personnel", any person whose essential job functions are substantially 40 related to the operation of the general court. State house personnel shall include, but shall not be 41 limited to, members of the Senate and House of Representatives, employees of the legislature, 42 legislative interns, and employees of the executive branch whose principal place of business is 43 the state house.

44 "Workplace harassment", an incident involving elements of identity-based harassment,
45 sexual harassment or sexual assault as defined in this chapter.

Section 2. (a) There shall be within the executive office of administration and finance, but
not under its control, a commission on workplace harassment and sexual assault in the
legislature. The commission shall respond to claims and investigate and report on complaints of
workplace harassment as provided in this chapter. The commission shall be an independent

50	public entity not subject to the supervision and control of any other executive office, department,		
51	commission, board, bureau, agency or political subdivision of the commonwealth.		
52	(b) The commission shall consist of 13 members:		
53	(1) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the governor, provided however that the		
54	appointee shall not be a current employee of the executive branch;		
55	(2) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the senate president, provided however that the		
56	appointee shall not be a current member of the Senate or the House of Representatives;		
57	(3) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the senate minority leader, provided however		
58	that the appointee shall not be a current member of the Senate or the House of Representatives;		
59	(4) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives,		
60	provided however that the appointee shall not be a current member of the Senate or the House of		
61	1 Representatives;		
62	(5) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the house minority leader, provided however		
63	that the appointee shall not be a current member of the Senate or the House of Representatives;		
64	(6) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts,		
65	who shall be a licensed attorney with demonstrated experience in the field of workplace		
66	harassment;		
67	(7) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association,		
68	who shall be a licensed attorney with demonstrated experience in the field of workplace		
69	harassment;		

70 (8) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Caucus of Women
71 Legislators;

(9) 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative
Caucus;

(10) 2 of whom shall be appointed by the attorney general, 1 of whom shall be a sexual
assault counsellor, as that term is defined in section 20J of chapter 233, and 1 of whom shall be a
licensed attorney with experience as a mediator or other presider over alternative dispute
resolution; and

(11) 2 of whom shall be appointed by the auditor, 1 of whom shall be a licensed social
worker with demonstrated expertise in sexual harassment outreach and 1 of whom shall be a
human resources professional with demonstrated expertise in the field of workplace harassment
training.

The commission shall annually elect 1 of its members to serve as chair and 1 of its members to serve as vice-chair. Each member shall be appointed for a term of 3 years and shall be eligible for reappointment; provided, however, that a person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve only for the unexpired term. A member shall not hold other employment in the government of the commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions. Each member of the commission shall be a resident of the commonwealth.

(c) Seven members of the commission shall constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote
 of seven members of the commission shall be necessary and sufficient for any action taken by
 the commission. Members shall serve without pay but shall be reimbursed for actual expenses
 necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. Meetings of the commission shall be

92 subject to sections 18 to 25, inclusive, of chapter 30A and records pertaining to the

administration of the commission shall be subject to section 42 of chapter 30 and section 10 of

chapter 66. All moneys of the commission shall be considered to be public funds for purposes of

95 chapter 12A.

96 The commission shall not be required to obtain the approval of any other officer or 97 employee of any executive agency in connection with the collection or analysis of any 98 information. The commission shall not be required, prior to publication, to obtain the approval of 99 any other officer or employee of any executive agency with respect to the substance of reports, 100 investigative or annual, that the general counsel has prepared under this chapter.

(d) The commission shall have all the powers necessary or convenient to carry out andeffectuate its purposes. The powers shall include, but shall not be limited to:

(i) developing a plan of operation for the commission that shall include, but shall not
be limited to, the implementation of procedures for operations of the commission and procedures
for communications with the general counsel;

106 (ii) making, amending and repealing rules and regulations for the management of the107 commission's affairs;

108 (iii) making contracts and executing all instruments that are necessary or convenient109 for the carrying on of the commission's business;

(iv) acquiring, owning, holding, disposing of or encumbering personal property and
leasing real property in the exercise of the commission's powers and the performance of the
commission's duties;

(v) seeking and receiving grant funding from the federal government, departments or
agencies of the commonwealth and private foundations;

(vi) entering into and executing instruments in connection with agreements or transactions with any federal, state or municipal agency or other public institution or with any private individual, partnership, firm, corporation, association or other entity that may be necessary in the commission's judgment, and to fix the compensation of such an individual or entity;

(vii) enter into interdepartmental agreements with other state agencies that thecommission considers necessary to implement this chapter;

122 (viii) adopt and alter an official seal;

123 (ix) sue and be sued in its own name, plead and be impleaded; and

(x) establish lines of credit and establish at least 1 cash and investment account to
 receive appropriations from the commonwealth and for all other business activity granted by this
 chapter.

Section 3. The commission shall: (i) ensure the objective and thorough investigation of all workplace harassment complaints within its jurisdiction; (ii) ensure the transparency of processes and reports related to investigations of workplace harassment within its jurisdiction; (iii) monitor and record claims of workplace harassment reported to the commission by frequency and claim type; (iv) provide workplace harassment resources to individuals upon request; (v) establish models for workplace harassment policy guidelines and training programs for the general court; and (vi) conduct an annual workplace harassment survey for general courtemployees.

135 Section 4. (a) The commission shall appoint a general counsel by a majority vote. The 136 general counsel shall be lawfully admitted to practice as an attorney in the commonwealth and 137 shall supervise the administrative affairs and general management and operations of the 138 commission. The general counsel shall receive a salary commensurate with the duties of the 139 office. The general counsel may appoint other officers and employees of the commission 140 necessary to the functioning of the commission. Sections 9A, 45, 46, and 46C of chapter 30, 141 chapter 31 and chapter 150E shall not apply to the general counsel of the commission. Sections 142 45, 46 and 46C of chapter 30 shall not apply to any employee of the commission. The general 143 counsel may establish personnel regulations for the officers and employees of the commission. 144 The general counsel shall file an annual personnel report with the senate and house committees 145 on ways and means containing the job classifications, duties and salary of each officer and 146 employee of the commission together with personnel regulations applicable to the officers and 147 employees.

148 (b) The general counsel shall, with the approval of the commission:

(i) plan, direct, coordinate and execute administrative functions in conformity withthe policies and directives of the commission;

(ii) establish an intake procedure for the submission of claims by reporting
individuals to the commission pursuant to section 5, including any necessary forms;

(iii) conduct investigations authorized by this chapter, including supervising summons
and the collection of information relevant to authorized investigations; and

(iv) at the conclusion of each investigation and pursuant to the requirements of section
7, submit an investigative report on the findings of the investigation to the appropriate parties.

157 Section 5. (a) The commission shall receive and review claims of workplace harassment158 according to procedures established by the general counsel.

159 (b) A reporting individual shall submit a claim in the form of a written statement to the 160 commission including, but not limited to: (i) the name, position, and the department, if 161 applicable, of the reporting individual; (ii) the name, position and department, if applicable, of 162 the respondent; (iii) a description of the incident, including the date, location and presence of 163 witnesses; (iv) the effect of the incident on the ability of the reporting individual to perform the 164 reporting individual's job, or on other terms or conditions of the reporting individual's 165 employment; and (v) other information the reporting individual believes is relevant to the claim. 166 The general counsel or a member of the commission staff may assist the reporting individual in 167 completing the written statement. The general counsel may request additional information from 168 the reporting individual in the form of a written statement or an in-person interview.

169 (c) The commission shall notify a reporting individual orally and in writing of any 170 organization or government entity that has jurisdiction to address the specific incident of 171 workplace harassment reported by the individual including, but not limited to: (i) the attorney 172 general; (ii) a law enforcement official; (iii) the Massachusetts Commission Against 173 Discrimination; and (iv) the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A notification 174 under this subsection shall include an option for the claim to be sent to an organization or 175 government entity at the discretion and with the consent of the reporting individual. Claims 176 submitted to the commission shall be recorded and retained by the commission.

(d) The procedures and remedies available to a reporting individual under this chapter
shall not preempt or supersede any legal procedures or remedies otherwise available to an
individual under local, state or federal law.

180 Section 6. (a) The general counsel shall execute and supervise investigations under this181 chapter.

(b) If the commission determines that a reporting individual is a complainant as defined
by this chapter, the general counsel shall open an investigation into the complaint reported by the
complainant and notify the complainant and respondent in writing that an investigation has been
opened.

(c) The commission shall issue rules and regulations to establish a process for a
respondent to appeal the determination that a reporting individual is a complainant under this
section. The process shall include notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

189 (d) The general counsel may request the production, on a voluntary basis, of testimony or 190 documents from an individual, government agency or non-governmental entity. The general 191 counsel may require by summons the production of all records, reports, audits, reviews, papers, 192 books, documents, recommendations, correspondence and any other data and material relevant to 193 a matter under investigation pursuant to this chapter. The summons shall be served in the same 194 manner as a summons for the production of documents in civil cases issued on behalf of the 195 commonwealth and the law relative to the summons shall apply to a summons issued pursuant to 196 this chapter. A justice of the superior court department of the trial court of the commonwealth 197 may, upon application by the general counsel, issue an order to compel the production of records, 198 reports, audits, reviews, papers, books, documents, recommendations, correspondence and any

other data and material relevant to any matter under investigation pursuant to this chapter. Afailure to obey such an order may be punished by the court as contempt.

(e) A summons issued pursuant to this section shall not be made public by the general
counsel or any officer or employee of the commission and any information provided pursuant to
this section shall not be made public until such time as it is necessary for the general counsel to
do so through the issuing of an investigative report. Disclosure of production, attendance or
testimony may be made to the members of the staff of the commission as is deemed necessary by
the general counsel.

(f) An investigation may be closed when the general counsel determines a sufficient
amount of information has been collected to find that it is more likely than not that workplace
harassment occurred or to determine that a finding could not be made. An investigation under
this section shall be completed in not more than 6 months; provided, however, that the
commission may, upon a request by the general counsel, approve an extension of not more than 6
months.

Section 7. (a) At the conclusion of an investigation, the general counsel shall compile andsubmit a report on the findings of the investigation.

(b) The report shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) the position and department, if applicable, of the complainant; (ii) the name, position and department, if applicable, of the respondent; (iii) the time and location of the incident being investigated; (iv) a detailed description of the incident; (v) resources provided to the complainant by the commission or other governmental or non-governmental entities; and (vi) a finding that it is more likely than not that harassment occurred or a statement that a finding could not be made. If after an investigation a

majority of the commission determines that it is more likely than not that harassment occurred,
the commission shall include in the report a recommendation for disciplinary action, including
but not limited to: in the case of a legislator, reprimand, censure, temporary or permanent
removal from committee chairmanship or other position of authority, suspension with or without
pay, or expulsion; in the case of an officer or employee of the general court, reprimand,
suspension or removal. Said report shall not prevent the senate or house of representatives from
taking any other action as it shall deem advisable and appropriate.

(c) Prior to a report being released, the general counsel shall notify the complainant and
the respondent that the investigation has been closed and issue a copy of the investigative report
to the complainant and respondent for review. The commission shall issue rules and regulations
to establish a process for a complainant or respondent to appeal the release of an investigative
report before a report is released. The process shall include notice and an opportunity for a
hearing.

(d) The general counsel shall submit a copy of the investigative report to all interested
parties including, but not limited to: (i) the complainant; (ii) the respondent; (iii) each member of
the commission; and (iv) the respondent's employer, provided, however, that if the respondent is
a member of the legislature, the report will be sent to the committee on ethics in the chamber
where the respondent is a member. A copy of the report may be submitted to the attorney general
or the district attorney for the district in which the incident occurred with the complainant's
written consent.

241 Section 8. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the proceedings and records of 242 the commission related to investigations shall be confidential and not subject to section 10 of

chapter 66. The commission shall establish procedures, applicable to members of the
commission, general counsel, and staff that ensure compliance with the confidentiality
requirements of this chapter.

(b) If the subject matter of an investigation becomes public through independent sources,
the general counsel may issue a statement to confirm the pendency of the investigation or to
clarify the procedural aspects of the investigation.

(c) Reports submitted to interested parties by the general counsel shall be confidential and not subject to section 10 of chapter 66, including reports sent to individuals, members of the commission and governmental and non-governmental entities. A party that receives a report from the general counsel shall notify staff, if any, that the report is confidential and take steps to ensure non-disclosure of the report.

(d) Nothing in this chapter shall preclude or limit the right of a complainant, respondentor witness to share personal information under federal, state or local law.

256 Section 9. A person shall not discharge or cause to be discharged or otherwise discipline 257 or in any manner discriminate against or take any other retaliatory action against any employee, 258 client or other person for providing information to the commission, the general counsel or 259 commission staff, including filing a report or complaint with the commission or testifying in a 260 commission proceeding. A person who willfully violates this section shall be punished by a fine 261 of not more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both. A person who 262 takes such a prohibited action against an employee, client or other person may be liable to that 263 employee, client or other person for treble damages, costs and attorney's fees.

264 Section 10. The commission shall annually conduct a workplace harassment survey of all 265 employees and interns of the general court. The survey shall be administered electronically and 266 the identity of the survey takers shall be anonymous. The survey shall include a definitions 267 section that shall include but shall not be limited to the definitions of identity-based harassment, 268 sexual harassment and sexual assault under this chapter. The survey shall include a demographic 269 section that shall include the age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, 270 religious affiliation, level of education and relationship status of the survey taker. The survey 271 shall include a questions section that shall include, but shall not be limited to the following 272 questions: (i) "Have you experienced or witnessed some form of workplace harassment or 273 assault-related behaviors in the past 12 months?"; (ii) "If you have experienced or witnessed 274 some form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, what was the primary basis for 275 the specific behavior or set of experiences?"; (iii) "If you have experienced or witnessed some 276 form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, when and where did the specific 277 behavior or set of experiences occur?"; (iv) "If you have experienced or witnessed some form of 278 workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, how often and for how long did the specific 279 behavior or set of experiences persist?"; (v) "If you have experienced or witnessed some form of 280 workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, who was involved in the specific behavior or 281 set of experiences?"; (vi) "If you have experienced or witnessed some form of workplace 282 harassment or assault-related behaviors, what was the job title of the person or persons involved 283 in the specific behavior or set of experiences?"; (vii) "If you have experienced or witnessed some 284 form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, did your work role require you to 285 continue to interact with the person or persons involved?"; (viii) "If you have experienced or 286 witnessed some form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, did you discuss the

287 specific behavior or set of experiences with anyone at work?"; (ix) "If you have experienced or 288 witnessed some form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, did you make a 289 complaint or report in response to the specific behavior or set of experiences?": (x) "If you have 290 made a complaint or report, what happened as a result of it?"; (xi) "If you have experienced or 291 witnessed some form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors and did not make a 292 complaint or report, what were the reasons for not doing so?"; (xii) "If you have experienced or 293 witnessed some form of workplace harassment or assault-related behaviors, what effect did the 294 specific behavior or set of experiences have on your interpersonal relationships, physical or 295 emotional well-being, job performance or willingness to remain a part of the legislature?"; (xiii) 296 "If you have experienced or witnessed some form of workplace harassment or assault-related 297 behaviors, what resources did you use to make a complaint or report or receive additional information about workplace harassment, if any?"; (xiv) "If you experience or witness workplace 298 299 harassment or assault-related behaviors, will you make a complaint or report?"; and (xv) "If you 300 would not make a complaint or report after experiencing or witnessing workplace harassment or 301 assault behaviors, is it due to a fear of retaliatory action?".

302 Section 11. The commission shall annually compile a report that shall include, but shall 303 not be limited to: (i) the number of incidents of workplace harassment and assault reported to the 304 commission, classified and analyzed by the type of incident, the demographics of reporting 305 individuals and the percentage of reports that led to investigations; (ii) the number of 306 investigations opened by the general counsel, classified by respondent job title; (iii) the number 307 of investigative reports issued by the commission, classified by the type of incident, the 308 demographics of complainants and the demographics of respondents; (iv) the results of the 309 workplace harassment survey conducted pursuant to section 10 as raw data and synthesized to

identify and describe correlations and overarching trends; (vi) recommended changes to the model workplace harassment policies established by the commission, if any; and (vii) any other information that may assist the legislature in preventing and effectively responding to incidents of workplace harassment. The commission shall file the annual report with the senate president, the speaker of the house of representatives, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the chairs of the joint committee on rules not later than September 15.

Section 12. The commission shall promulgate the rules and regulations and perform the
functions that are necessary for the administration, implementation and enforcement of this
chapter.

SECTION 2. Notwithstanding subsection (b) of section 2 of chapter 23N of the General Laws, the initial appointments to the commission on workplace harassment and sexual assault in the legislature made by the governor, senate president and senate minority leader shall serve for a term of 3 years, the initial appointments made by the speaker of the house of representatives and the house minority leader and 1 of the initial appointments made by the attorney general shall serve for a term of 2 years and the initial appointments made by the auditor and 1 of the initial appointments made by the attorney general shall serve for a term of 1 year.

326 SECTION 3. (a) The commission on workplace harassment and sexual assault in the 327 legislature established by chapter 23N shall, in consultation with the Massachusetts Commission 328 Against Discrimination, research and develop model workplace harassment policies for 329 consideration and use by the senate and house of representatives. In developing the model 330 policies, the commission may request and receive information and testimony from experts in 331 relevant fields including, but not limited to, workplace harassment, sexual assault, personnel 332 policies and human resources management. The model workplace harassment policies shall 333 include, at a minimum: (i) a statement of the illegality of workplace harassment; (ii) a definition 334 of identity-based harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault; (iii) descriptions of conduct 335 constituting identity-based harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault, including 336 examples; (iv) resources available to reporting individuals including, but not limited to, contact 337 information for the commission, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the 338 federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and (v) protection against retaliatory 339 action. The commission shall submit the model workplace harassment policies, including 340 specific policy language, to the senate president, the speaker of the house of representatives, the 341 clerks of the senate and house of representatives, and the chairs of the joint committee on rules. 342 The senate and house of representatives may adopt the model policies submitted pursuant to this 343 section in whole or in part.

344 (b) The commission shall research and develop a model workplace harassment training 345 program for consideration and use by the senate and house of representatives. In developing the 346 model training program, the commission may contract with third party vendors and request and 347 receive information and testimony from experts in relevant fields such as identity-based 348 harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, personnel policies and human resources 349 management. The model training program shall include, at a minimum: (i) a definition of 350 "effective interactive training"; (ii) a definition of "legislative employee"; (iii) a definition of 351 "unlawful conduct", which shall include applicable federal and state statutory and case law 352 references and principles; (iv) minimum trainer qualifications; (v) minimum training frequency 353 and duration requirements; (vi) procedures for training completion documentation, including 354 minimum record retention requirements and procedures for individual tracking; and (vii) training

- 355 content requirements, including, but not limited to, types of conduct that constitute workplace
- 356 harassment, remedies available to reporting individuals, strategies to prevent workplace
- 357 harassment, practical examples of workplace harassment and hypothetical situations,
- 358 confidentiality of the reporting process and resources for reporting individuals.