

SENATE No. 35

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Cynthia Stone Creem (BY REQUEST)

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to survey the needs of children, adults and seniors who are visually impaired.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sally Rizzo | 52 Playstead Rd. Newton, MA 02458 |
| Jerry DiFranza | 5 Walden St. Winthrop, MA 02152 |

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT AN ACT TO SURVEY THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN, ADULTS AND SENIORS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED .

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. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the
2 department of public health shall conduct a study for the purpose of collecting data that will
3 determine what services will benefit the visually impaired and increasing number of elders who
4 are experiencing vision loss associated with aging and not receiving services that would allow
5 them to maintain their quality of life. The study shall survey the needs of children, adults and
6 seniors who are visually impaired and residents of Commonwealth.

7 (b) For the purposes of this study an individual shall be considered visually impaired if he or she
8 meets one or more of the following criteria;

9 (1) he or she has an impairment of visual function which cannot be improved, by the use of
10 corrective lenses, to a level that would normally be acceptable for reading without a special level
11 or kind of light;

12 (2) he or she is unable, through physical disability, to hold or manipulate a book; or

13 (3) he or she is unable, through physical disability, to focus or move his or her eyes to the extent
14 that would normally be acceptable for reading

15 (4) he or she has any other impairment of visual function but is not legally blind.

16 (c) The department shall consult with the following seven individuals regarding the scope of
17 the study: the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or his designee, the Commissioner of
18 Commission for the Blind or his designee, the Secretary of the Office of Elder Affairs or his
19 designee, the Commissioner of the Department of Education or his designee, the Chief Executive
20 Officer of MAB community services or his designee, the president of the Silver Haired
21 Legislature or his designee, and the president of the Massachusetts Association of Parents of
22 Visually Impaired Children or his designee.

23 (d) The department shall conduct and complete this study by June 30, 2010. By June 30, 2010,
24 the department shall submit its report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
25 Representatives, the Senate and House chairs of the Joint Committee on Children and
26 Families, and the Senate and House chairs of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.