

**SENATE . . . . . No. 377**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Patrick M. O'Connor***

*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 to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/17/2021</i>
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>	<i>4/1/2021</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/9/2021</i>

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By Mr. O'Connor, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 377) of Patrick M. O'Connor, Jack Patrick Lewis, Bruce E. Tarr, Thomas M. Stanley and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities. Education.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 318 OF 2019-2020.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

—————  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**  
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An Act to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

*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 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition,  
2 is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraph:-

3 All teachers who apply for an initial Massachusetts educator license on or after December  
4 31, 2022 shall receive training and preparation in the use of augmentative and alternative  
5 communication for students who are nonverbal or who have limited speech, as a requirement for  
6 such licensure. Such training and preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and  
7 alternative communication and practical experience in the classroom with children who use  
8 augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited to children with Autism  
9 Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other disabilities that result in

10 limited or no verbal abilities; provided that practical experience for regular education teachers  
11 shall include experience in the classroom with students who use augmentative and alternative  
12 communication, and if classroom settings are unavailable practical experience may include other  
13 types of interactions with and observations of individuals who use augmentative and alternative  
14 communication. Teacher and specialist teacher licensure requirements, subject matter knowledge  
15 requirements, professional standards for teachers, and educator preparation program approval  
16 requirements shall adequately address augmentative and alternative communication  
17 competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have limited verbal  
18 abilities; provided that a teacher shall not be subject to such requirements if they are applying for  
19 a second or subsequent licenses. The board shall require that the individual professional  
20 development plans required under section 38G of Chapter 71 address the learning needs of  
21 students who are nonverbal or have limited speech.