

SENATE No. 995

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Adam Gomez

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 modernize the roles and responsibilities of the victim and witness assistance board.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Adam Gomez

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Hampden

SENATE No. 995

By Mr. Gomez, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 995) of Adam Gomez for legislation to modernize the roles and responsibilities of the victim and witness assistance board. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act to modernize the roles and responsibilities of the victim and witness assistance board.

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 3 of chapter 258B, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by striking the last paragraph beginning with the words “there shall be
3 conspicuously posted” and inserting the following:-

4 There shall be conspicuously posted in all courthouses and police stations a summary of
5 the rights afforded under this section. To satisfy this requirement, the victim and witness
6 assistance board, pursuant to section 4, shall provide information on the rights afforded to
7 victims and witnesses to court officials and police chiefs. Information may be provided in printed
8 or digital formats. The board shall provide information in the top five languages spoken at home,
9 other than English, as provided by the most recent federal census data.

10 SECTION 2. Section 4 of said chapter 258B, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is
11 hereby amended by striking the word “him” in the second paragraph and inserting the following
12 word:- them

13 SECTION 3. Said Section 4 of chapter 258B, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
14 by striking the fourth paragraph and inserting the following paragraphs:-

15 The board shall establish, adopt, and maintain bylaws relative to the operation of internal
16 governance.

17 In addition to the foregoing, the board shall:

18 (a) fund and support services that are available to victims across the commonwealth

19 (b) provide professional development and community education opportunities for
20 Massachusetts victim services providers, victims, and allied professionals, including sharing
21 information relative to the victim and witness rights and services established under this chapter

22 (c) advocate for policy and legislative initiatives related to access and support for
23 victims' rights and services including but not limited to funding

24 (d) assume the management and administration of the Garden of Peace, a public
25 memorial garden located on the plaza of 100 Cambridge street in the city of Boston to honor
26 victims of homicide, to receive gifts or grants of money or property to assist the board in the
27 maintenance and operation of the memorial and to establish an advisory committee which shall
28 consist of interested residents appointed by the victim witness assistance board to provide advice
29 to the board.

30 (e) administer the SAFEPLAN advocacy program

31 SECTION 4. Section 6 of said chapter 258B, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is
32 hereby amended by striking the words "the board".