

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

**David M. Torrasi**

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*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 establishing a youth workforce system in the commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
David M. Torrasi	14th Essex
Thomas M. McGee	Third Essex and Middlesex
John W. Scibak	2nd Hampshire
Thomas M. Stanley	9th Middlesex
Robert M. Koczera	11th Bristol
Marc R. Pacheco	First Plymouth and Bristol

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

## AN ACT ESTABLISHING A YOUTH WORKFORCE SYSTEM IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

*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. PREAMBLE

2 The purpose of this act is to promote and support activities and programs that will increase the education,  
3 skills and employment of youth in the commonwealth and their successful integration into the  
4 commonwealth's economy.

5 SECTION 2. FINDINGS

6 Whereas, employers choose and stay in Massachusetts because of the quality of its workforce; and  
7 whereas, Massachusetts also leads the nation in innovation, technology utilization, and attracting capital,  
8 all reflecting a quality workforce, the workforce is a critical asset of Massachusetts's economic well-  
9 being. Whereas, recent trends in teen unemployment, high school dropouts, employer skill demands,  
10 demographic shifts within the United States, and immigration into Massachusetts, point to a need to  
11 protect our most competitive asset, the education and skills of our emerging workforce.

12 Whereas, the youth workforce development system in Massachusetts consists of a number of programs  
13 across various state agencies, there is a need for better coordination and alignment. Therefore, needs of  
14 young people out of the labor market and out-of-work, those who have either dropped out of school or are  
15 at risk for dropping out must be addressed as well as the development of educational pathways for young  
16 people to obtain a post secondary education which is increasingly needed for successful entry into the  
17 labor market. There is no alternative if Massachusetts is to fulfill the promise to all our youth and enable  
18 them to succeed in our economy.

19 SECTION 3. PURPOSE AND CONSTRUCTION

20 The Youth Solutions Act of 2009 responds to that need with active and intensive investment in youth  
21 employment, education pathways and efforts to reduce violence and dropout rates in an integrated,  
22 coordinated and cost effective manner.

23 This Act will establish an effective, youth workforce and education system in the Commonwealth through  
24 specific strategies, agency and community coordination and collaboration and consistent investments and  
25 activities set forth in the Act.

26 This Act seeks to achieve the maximum level of coordination and co investment in each of the agencies  
27 named herein, private sector employers, and philanthropic organizations in Massachusetts. This Act will  
28 highlight and support proven investment strategies including school-to-career connecting activities,  
29 youth-at-risk programs for a year-round employment program for youth in all workforce regions, and  
30 grants for community safety initiatives.

31 SECTION 4. This act proposes that the following programs in the annual general appropriations act be  
32 maintained at the following levels:  
33 7027-0019..For school-to-career connecting activities: \$7,000,000;  
34 7002-0012..For a youth-at-risk program of a year-round employment program for youth in all workforce  
35 regions: \$8,000,000;  
36 7061-9611..For grants or subsidies for after-school and out-of-school programs; provided, that preference  
37 shall be given to after-school proposals developed collaboratively by public and non-public schools and  
38 private community based programs and programs that provide employment and training opportunities for  
39 high school students: \$5,550,000;  
40 8100-0111..For a grant program to be known as the Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety  
41 Initiative: \$13,000,000;  
42 4590-1506..For a program to be administered by the department of public health to support the  
43 establishment of a comprehensive youth violence prevention program: \$3,500,000;  
44 SECTION 5. Chapter 315 of the acts of 2008 is hereby amended by inserting, after section 4, the  
45 following section:-  
46 Section 5. Implementation of dropout prevention and recovery strategies in each workforce region based  
47 upon agreed upon dropout triggers to activate 1- local task force to include workforce board and school  
48 district; 2- early district dropout identification and intervention; 3- dropout recovery through outreach and  
49 reenrollment. Following the filing of the commission's recommendations on May 15, 2009, there is  
50 hereby established a dropout prevention and recovery grant program to: (i) provide school districts with  
51 funds to implement early indicator systems; (ii) create capacity within regions by engaging local  
52 workforce investment boards for outreach to dropouts and referral to local school districts and alternative  
53 education programs; or (iii) provide funds to local districts or nonprofit programs to develop alternative  
54 routes to a diploma or its equivalent to prevent students from dropping out and to meet the needs of those  
55 returning to education: \$5,000,000.  
56 SECTION 6. Section 89 of chapter 182 of the acts of 2008 is hereby amended by striking subsection (b)  
57 and inserting in place thereof the following:-  
58 \$5,000,000 shall be transferred to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, established in section 2  
59 WWW of chapter 29 for grants to employer, education, workforce partnerships to develop educational  
60 pathway projects for out of school youth.