HOUSE DOCKET, NO. FILED ON: 1/13/2009

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

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

**Viriato Manuel deMacedo**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*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 Relative to Protecting the Religious Freedom of Students.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

PETITION OF:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name: | District/Address: |
| Viriato Manuel deMacedo | 1st Plymouth |

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**In the Year Two Thousand and Nine**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

An Act Relative to Protecting the Religious Freedom of Students.

 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 1C of chapter 71, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting, at the end thereof, the following new section:-

Section 1D. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, beginning with the school year commencing after July 1, 2009, school districts shall adopt and implement a local policy that allows for a limited public forum and voluntary student expression of religious views at school events, graduation ceremonies, and in class assignments, and non-curricular school groups and activities. The policy must require the district to ensure that a student does not engage in obscene or indecent speech and shall provide a disclaimer that students’ views are neither endorsed nor sponsored by the district. Districts shall treat such expression, on an otherwise permissible subject, in the same manner as the expression of a secular view. Districts are prohibited from discriminating against any student on the basis of a student’s expressed religious views.