HOUSE DOCKET, NO. FILED ON: 1/12/2009

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

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

**Frank I. Smizik**

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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 CHARTER SCHOOL WORKING GROUP.

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

PETITION OF:

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| --- | --- |
| Name: | District/Address: |
| Frank I. Smizik | 15th Norfolk |
| Mr. Pacheco |  |

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the Year Two Thousand and Nine**

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AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHARTER SCHOOL WORKING GROUP.

*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. There is hereby established a charter school working group to study the costs and benefits of charter schools, including the financing of, and the innovations promoted by, charter schools authorized under the provisions of chapter 71, section 89. The working group shall also study the obstacles which have limited the broader utilization of the Horace Mann model of charter schools. The working group shall report its findings and conclusions to the general court and make recommendations regarding any necessary legislative and regulatory changes which are suggested by those findings and conclusions. The first meeting of the working group shall take place within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

SECTION 2. The working group shall consist of: six legislators including the House and Senate chairs of the Joint Committee on Education, and two members appointed by the President of the Senate and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House, including one member in each chamber from the minority party; the commissioner of education, or his designee; the secretary of administration and finance, or her designee; and one representative each from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Charter School Association, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the AFT-Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Taxpayers Association.

SECTION 3. In carrying out its charge, the working group shall examine, report on, and make recommendations regarding, the following matters:

 a) the appropriateness of the financing and reimbursement provisions of chapter 71, section 89(nn) and section 89(pp) as a mechanism for the financing of charter schools; including examining the feasibility of designating commonwealth charter school tuition as a separate line item in the state budget, and including examining alternative proposals for financing charter schools, such as limiting the cost to sending districts;

b) the extent to which the reimbursement provisions of chapter 71, section 89(pp) are effective at minimizing the adverse financial impact of charter schools on sending school districts while providing sufficient resources for the successful operation of charter schools;

c) the extent to, and means by, which the dissemination of successful innovation programs called for in section 89(s) has occurred;

d) the obstacles to broader utilization of Horace Mann charters as a vehicle to achieve the objectives articulated in section 89(d);

e) the appropriateness of the current application and approval process in ensuring community support and need for a charter in a particular district or region, as well as the extent to which the current process provides adequate notice for affected districts, and including whether to require prior local approval;

f) the extent to which charter schools are or should be held to the same or similar rules and public disclosure requirements as district schools, particularly in the areas of enrollment projections, financial reporting and accounting requirements, and the extent to which the state agencies that oversee charter schools are enforcing current law, as well as their capacity for increasing oversight; and,

g) the extent to which charter schools enroll special education and limited English proficient students compared with district enrollment, examining allegations of discrimination and inappropriate or inadequate provision of services, as well as the rate of return of special education or LEP students to the district schools.

SECTION 4. The working group shall file a report containing its recommendations, including legislation and regulations necessary to carry out its recommendations, with the joint committee on education and the clerks of the house and senate within one year of the effective date of this act, but no later than December 15, 2010.