

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Frank I. Smizik

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:

NAME:

Frank I. Smizik
Mr. Pacheco

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

15th Norfolk

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

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:

1 SECTION 1. There is hereby established a charter school working group to study the costs and
2 benefits of charter schools, including the financing of, and the innovations promoted by, charter
3 schools authorized under the provisions of chapter 71, section 89. The working group shall also
4 study the obstacles which have limited the broader utilization of the Horace Mann model of
5 charter schools. The working group shall report its findings and conclusions to the general court
6 and make recommendations regarding any necessary legislative and regulatory changes which
7 are suggested by those findings and conclusions. The first meeting of the working group shall
8 take place within 30 days after the effective date of this act.

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

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

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22 a) the appropriateness of the financing and reimbursement provisions of chapter 71, section 89(nn) and
23 section 89(pp) as a mechanism for the financing of charter schools; including examining the feasibility of

24 designating commonwealth charter school tuition as a separate line item in the state budget, and
25 including examining alternative proposals for financing charter schools, such as limiting the cost to
26 sending districts;

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

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

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

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

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

46
47 g) the extent to which charter schools enroll special education and limited English proficient students
48 compared with district enrollment, examining allegations of discrimination and inappropriate or
49 inadequate provision of services, as well as the rate of return of special education or LEP students to the
50 district schools.

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