

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

**Creem, Cynthia (SEN)**

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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 to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Creem, Cynthia (SEN)	First Middlesex and Norfolk
Garrett J. Bradley	3rd Plymouth

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. S00278 OF 2007-2008.]

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

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### AN ACT TO IMPROVE AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

*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.** Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is  
2   hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraphs:-  
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4   The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate revisions to the Regulations  
5   for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7.00) to ensure that all  
6   special education and regular education teachers who apply for Massachusetts Educator  
7   certification or re-certification on or after June 1, 2011 shall receive training and preparation in  
8   the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students who are nonverbal or who  
9   have limited speech as a requirement for such certification or recertification. Such training and  
10  preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and for  
11  teachers applying for initial certification shall also include practical experience in the classroom

12 with children that utilize augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited  
13 to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other  
14 disabilities that result in limited or no verbal abilities. The coursework and practical experience  
15 must be included for each level of Massachusetts educator certification and for all types of  
16 teacher licenses referenced in 603 CMR 7.00, provided that practical experience for regular  
17 education teachers who apply for certification at the secondary level shall include experience in  
18 the classroom with individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication, and if  
19 classroom settings are unavailable practical experience may include other settings with  
20 individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication. Teacher and specialist  
21 teacher licensure requirements, subject matter knowledge requirements for teachers, professional  
22 standards for teachers, requirements for field-based experiences and educator preparation  
23 program approval requirements shall specifically address augmentative and alternative  
24 communication competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have  
25 limited verbal abilities.

26  
27 The term “alternative and augmentative communication” shall be defined as methods of  
28 communication other than oral speech that enhance or replace conventional forms of expressive  
29 and receptive communication to facilitate interaction by and with persons with disabilities who  
30 are nonverbal or have limited speech, including, but not limited to: specialized gestures and  
31 signs; communication aids such as charts, symbol systems and language boards; mouth sticks;  
32 facilitated communication; and electronic communication devices such as switches, head  
33 pointers, eye tracking, dynamic displays, auditory scanning and speech synthesizers.