

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 538**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Frank A. Moran and Adam Scanlon***

*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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

**An Act to Improve access, opportunity, and capacity in Massachusetts vocational-technical education.**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Frank A. Moran</i>	<i>17th Essex</i>	<i>1/13/2023</i>
<i>Adam Scanlon</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>	<i>1/13/2023</i>
<i>Marcus S. Vaughn</i>	<i>9th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/24/2023</i>
<i>William M. Straus</i>	<i>10th Bristol</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Steven Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2023</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>David F. DeCoste</i>	<i>5th Plymouth</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Susan Williams Gifford</i>	<i>2nd Plymouth</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>Steven S. Howitt</i>	<i>4th Bristol</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>	<i>2/1/2023</i>
<i>Tackey Chan</i>	<i>2nd Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>

<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Alan Silvia</i>	<i>7th Bristol</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Todd M. Smola</i>	<i>1st Hampden</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Estela A. Reyes</i>	<i>4th Essex</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>
<i>Patricia A. Haddad</i>	<i>5th Bristol</i>	<i>2/9/2023</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/10/2023</i>
<i>F. Jay Barrows</i>	<i>1st Bristol</i>	<i>2/10/2023</i>
<i>Kate Donaghue</i>	<i>19th Worcester</i>	<i>2/14/2023</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>
<i>Kip A. Diggs</i>	<i>2nd Barnstable</i>	<i>2/17/2023</i>
<i>Josh S. Cutler</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/21/2023</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>2/22/2023</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>	<i>2/22/2023</i>
<i>Shirley B. Arriaga</i>	<i>8th Hampden</i>	<i>2/23/2023</i>
<i>Daniel Cahill</i>	<i>10th Essex</i>	<i>2/27/2023</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/1/2023</i>
<i>Paul R. Feeney</i>	<i>Bristol and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/2/2023</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 538**

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By Representatives Moran of Lawrence and Scanlon of North Attleborough, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 538) of Frank A. Moran, Adam Scanlon and others for legislation to provide for a program of capital investments for vocational-technical education programs and regional vocational-technical schools. Education.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act to Improve access, opportunity, and capacity in Massachusetts vocational-technical education.

*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. To create a new capital infrastructure and investment tool within the  
2 Massachusetts School Building Authority, established under section 1A of Chapter 70, to  
3 provide for a program of capital investments for vocational-technical education programs and  
4 regional vocational-technical schools, as defined in Chapter 74 of the General Laws, for  
5 investment in equitable access to public education and industry-relevant workforce and  
6 economic development infrastructure; to support greater access to vocational-technical education  
7 programs and regional vocational-technical schools as defined in Chapter 74; to fund  
8 replacement and renovation of school infrastructure to meet workforce demands of regional  
9 employers and increase equitable access for all students applying to Chapter 74 programs and  
10 schools; and to support the purchase of critical training equipment for the purposes of teaching  
11 and learning, the sums set forth in this section, for the purposes and subject to the conditions

12 specified in this act, are hereby made available, subject to the laws regulating the disbursement  
13 of public funds, which sums shall be in addition to any other amounts previously appropriated  
14 for these purposes; provided, that the amounts specified for a particular project may be adjusted  
15 in order to facilitate projects authorized in this act. For costs associated with initiatives, projects  
16 and expenditures to replace or make improvements to the quality, consistency, efficiency and  
17 delivery of any Chapter 74 program or regional school for the benefit of the public high school  
18 students in Chapter 74 programs and regional school districts and their preparation for post-  
19 secondary and career opportunities.

20 .....

21 .....

22 \$3,000,000,000

23 SECTION 2. Section 10 of Chapter 70B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020  
24 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following new subsection:

25 (d) Notwithstanding any state law, state regulation or agency policy to the contrary, the  
26 authority shall be authorized and directed to add twenty (20) percentage points to the project  
27 reimbursement rates for regional vocational-technical high school and county, regional and  
28 independent agricultural high school construction so that reimbursement rates for such projects  
29 are not less than 75% nor more than 90% of the eligible costs. Further, the authority shall add  
30 five (5) percentage points to the reimbursement rate for any project that includes state-approved  
31 vocational-technical education programs as defined in Chapter 74 of the General Laws aligned  
32 with priorities specifically identified in the Regional Labor Market Blueprint for the region in  
33 which the school is located. However, additional percentage points shall not be awarded unless

34 the school currently offers five (5) or more Chapter 74 programs. In no case shall the total  
35 reimbursement for a project exceed 90% of eligible costs.

36 Funds for this Section shall come from revenue generated by the Fair Share Amendment  
37 passed by voters in November of 2022 and which amended Article XLIV of the Massachusetts  
38 Constitution.

39 SECTION 3. Section 21C of Chapter 59 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020  
40 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding after subsection (n) the following new  
41 subsection:- (o) The local appropriating authority may, by accepting this paragraph, provide that  
42 taxes may thereafter be assessed in excess of the amount otherwise allowed by this section,  
43 solely for payment, in whole or in part, of debt service charges incurred for the construction of a  
44 regional-vocational technical high school that the school board responsible for determining the  
45 debt service charges certifies were not in fiscal year two thousand and twenty-one paid by local  
46 taxes.

47 SECTION 4. Chapter 69 of the Massachusetts General Laws is hereby amended by  
48 adding the following section:-

49 Section 37. For the purposes of sections 38 through 42, inclusive, the following terms  
50 shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:-

51 “Office”, shall mean the office of vocational-technical education.

52 “District of residence”, shall mean the school district of the city or town where a student  
53 resides.

54 “School of residence”, shall mean the middle school or junior high school a student  
55 attends within their district of residence.

56 Section 38. (a) There is hereby established within the department of elementary and  
57 secondary education an office of vocational-technical education whose purpose is to develop and  
58 implement policies and promulgate regulations to promote, enhance, and expand vocational-  
59 technical education programs, as defined in Chapter 74 of the General Laws, in the  
60 commonwealth.

61 (b) The office shall:

62 (i) oversee all Chapter 74 approved programs and ensure compliance with M.G.L.  
63 Chapter 74 and related regulations;

64 (ii) establish a statewide marketing campaign to promote the success of vocational-  
65 technical education and careers in Massachusetts and to raise the level of awareness and  
66 understanding of such education among parents, students, businesses, labor unions, and the  
67 general public;

68 (iii) work to increase awareness of vocational-technical education and career  
69 opportunities among students in elementary schools, junior high schools, and middle schools;

70 (iv) ensure that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are provided reasonable access  
71 during the school day at schools of residence to meet with all students and distribute information  
72 about vocational-technical education and careers to said students, including English language  
73 learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and other student populations, to ensure that  
74 such information is provided equitably to all learners;

75 (v) ensure that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are given the opportunity during the  
76 school day to host middle school tours, with transportation costs paid by the school hosting the  
77 tour, for all middle school students in member communities, including English language  
78 learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and other student populations to ensure that  
79 such opportunities are provided equitably to all learners; and further ensure that the school of  
80 residence may not count middle school student tours of vocational schools or programs during  
81 the school day as unexcused absences if the vocational school or program confirms the student's  
82 participation, and may not unreasonably withhold student access to tours of vocational schools  
83 and programs during the school day.

84

85 (vi) require that schools offering Chapter 74 programs are given the opportunity to  
86 provide middle and junior high school students with information about vocational-technical  
87 programs and careers through mail and email.

88 (vii) require all middle schools and junior high schools in member communities to  
89 establish and implement a Chapter 74 Access Policy, in accordance with state requirements  
90 promoting equitable access to Chapter 74 programs, outlining specific ways in which the middle  
91 schools will collaborate with regional vocational-technical high schools and agricultural high  
92 schools to:

93 provide staff members from Chapter 74 schools with direct school day access to all  
94 middle school students, to inform them about opportunities in vocational-technical and  
95 agricultural education and to distribute materials about such opportunities to them;

96 provide all middle school students an opportunity to tour, during regular middle school  
97 hours, the regional vocational-technical high school and/or county agricultural school of which  
98 the middle school's city or town is a member, with the transportation costs of all such tours being  
99 borne by the school hosting the tours;

100 provide contact information for all seventh-grade and eighth-grade middle school  
101 students, including a student's name and mailing address, a student's personal email address, and  
102 the parent's/guardian's email address by October 15 of each school year;

103 (viii) establish, in addition to the minimum requirements outlined in the preceding  
104 subsections, such additional requirements for Chapter 74 Access Policies as the office deems  
105 reasonable and necessary to promote equitable access by all students to information about  
106 vocational-technical and agricultural education;

107 (ix) require all sending school districts which are members of a regional-vocational  
108 school district or whose community is located in the county or district of an agricultural high  
109 school to:

110 submit the Chapter 74 Access Policy annually to the office;

111 annually attest in writing that the Chapter 74 Access Policy is being implemented  
112 equitably and that all students are being provided with information, access, and tours in  
113 accordance with this section and with federal and state civil rights laws, regulations, and policies;

114 post the Chapter 74 Access Policy on its district website and provide written copies to  
115 students and parents, upon request;

116 (x) create a mechanism to enforce timely implementation of Chapter 74 Access Policies;



117 (xi) establish a system to ensure that students who live in communities that are not  
118 members of or affiliated with a regional vocational-technical high school district or agricultural  
119 high school annually are provided with information about their high school options, including  
120 their option to seek an education in a vocational-technical or agricultural high school;

121 (xii) support the attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials in Chapter 74 programs;

122 (xiii) support the use of both longitudinal and pre- and post-student assessment as a  
123 means of obtaining meaningful data for curricular improvement. Data may be utilized for  
124 facilities improvement, equipment investments, mission success, and professional development;

125 (xiv) encourage and work to increase the use of articulation agreements with community  
126 colleges and public universities and other dual credit programs to allow vocational-technical  
127 students to earn credit leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree;

128 (xv) provide technical support to schools seeking to offer Chapter 74 programs that meet  
129 regional labor market demands and do not duplicate existing programs in the region;

130 (xvi) support the continuation of state grant programs that provide funding for equipment  
131 purchases and facility expansion; and

132 (xvii) support the continuation of demonstration programs that provide opportunities in  
133 vocational-technical education for students unable to secure a seat in an approved Chapter 74  
134 program due to lack of enrollment capacity.

135 SECTION 5. Section 3A of Chapter 70B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020  
136 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking the number "17" and inserting "19" in place  
137 thereof, and further by inserting, after "Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts, Inc." the

138 following:- “,Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, Inc., Alliance for  
139 Vocational Technical Education,”

140 SECTION 6. Chapter 70 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting the  
141 following new section: --

142 Section 10A. Expansion Grants for Regional Vocational-Technical Schools

143 (a) In addition to the funding otherwise provided pursuant to this chapter, any regional or  
144 county vocational or agricultural school shall, subject to appropriation, receive a one-year  
145 expansion grant in any fiscal year in which its foundation enrollment increases by more than two  
146 percent over its foundation enrollment for the previous fiscal year.

147 (b) The amount of said expansion grant shall be calculated by multiplying the number of  
148 additional students in its foundation enrollment, over its foundation enrollment for the previous  
149 fiscal year, by its per-student foundation budget amount. The per-student foundation budget  
150 amount shall be calculated by dividing the district’s foundation budget amount for the current  
151 year by its foundation enrollment for the prior fiscal year.

152 (c) The department shall annually solicit information from all regional and county  
153 vocational and agricultural schools as needed to estimate the amounts required to fund expansion  
154 grants in the coming fiscal year for all such schools, and the department shall request  
155 appropriation of the amount required to fully fund such expansion grants.

156 (d) If the amount appropriated for expansion grants in a fiscal year is less than the amount  
157 required to fully fund such grants, then each eligible regional or county vocational or agricultural  
158 school shall receive a share of the appropriated funds proportional to the share that its expansion

159 grant, calculated pursuant to subsection (b), constitutes of the total amount of expansion grants  
160 for all schools, pursuant to said subsection.

161 SECTION 7. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, to meet the  
162 expenditures necessary in carrying out section 1, the state treasurer shall, upon receipt of a  
163 request by the governor, issue and sell bonds of the Commonwealth in an amount to be specified  
164 by the governor from time to time but not exceeding, in the aggregate, \$3,000,000,000. All  
165 bonds issued by the commonwealth, as aforesaid, shall be designated on their face  
166 Commonwealth Vocational-Technical Education Expansion Act of 2023, and shall be issued for  
167 a maximum term of years, not exceeding 30 years, as the governor may recommend to the  
168 general court pursuant to section 3 of Article LXII of the Amendments to the Constitution;  
169 provided, however, that all such bonds shall be payable not later than June 30, 2057. All interest  
170 and payments on account of principal on such obligations shall be payable from the General  
171 Fund. Bonds and interest thereon issued under the authority of this section shall, notwithstanding  
172 any other provision of this act, be general obligations of the Commonwealth.