

# SENATE NO. 86

## **AN ACT** ESTABLISHING THE GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN COMMISSION

*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. The general court finds: that grandparents constitute the fastest growing group  
2 taking care of children in the commonwealth as well as in the United States; that many grandparents  
3 have overcome great hardships, brought up their own children, saved for retirement, and now must  
4 bring up their grandchildren; that many grandparents are making outstanding contributions to the  
5 educational, nurturing, and upbringing of the youth of the commonwealth; that grandparents continue  
6 to face many challenges in their efforts to raise their grandchildren, including difficulty in accessing  
7 social services, support groups, and funding; and that the commonwealth places a high priority on  
8 addressing the unique concerns of the grandparents raising grandchildren in promoting the wellbeing  
9 and upbringing of the youth of our commonwealth;

10          SECTION 2. Chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, is hereby  
11 amended by adding the following section:—

12          “Section: 67. There shall be a commission on the status of grandparents raising grandchildren  
13 consisting of: 5 persons appointed by the secretary of the executive office of elder affairs or their

14 designees, 2 of which shall be from the secretary's office; 3 persons appointed by the governor; 3  
15 persons appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 3 persons appointed by the president  
16 of the senate; and 3 persons appointed by the attorney general. Members of the commission shall be  
17 citizens of the commonwealth who have demonstrated a commitment to the rearing of grandchildren  
18 by grandparents.

19 Members shall serve terms of 1 year. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled  
20 by the original appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term. All appointments shall be  
21 made in consultation with grandparents raising grandchildren organizations in the commonwealth.  
22 Nominations for members shall be solicited by the appointing authorities between November 15, 2007  
23 and January 31, 2008 through an open application process using a uniform application that is widely  
24 distributed throughout the state.

25 The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer and any other  
26 officers it deems necessary. The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their  
27 services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of  
28 their duties.

29 The commission will be a resource to the Commonwealth on issues affecting grandparents raising  
30 grandchildren in the Commonwealth. In furtherance of that responsibility, the Commission shall:

31 (a) foster unity among grandparents raising grandchildren communities and organizations in the  
32 Commonwealth by promoting cooperation and sharing of information and encouraging collaboration  
33 and joint activities;

34 (b) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups with regard to matters of unique  
35 interest and concern to grandparents raising grandchildren in the Commonwealth;

- 36 (c) assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect grandparents raising  
37 grandchildren, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- 38 (d) advise executive and legislative bodies of the potential effect of proposed legislation on  
39 grandparents raising grandchildren, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- 40 (e) investigate the merits of a state agency dedicated to grandparents issues and determine how the  
41 agency would be set up;
- 42 (f) determine issues that are faced by relatives other than parents raising children

43 The commission shall on or before December 31st, report the results of its findings and activities of  
44 the preceding year and its recommendations to the governor and to the clerks of the senate and house  
45 of representatives.

46 The powers of the commission shall include, but not be limited, to use such voluntary and  
47 uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time  
48 be offered and needed, including provision of meeting places and refreshments; to hold regular, public  
49 meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary; to direct  
50 a staff ("Commission Staff") to perform its duties; to establish and maintain such offices as it may  
51 deem necessary, subject to appropriation; to enact bylaws for its own governance but is not  
52 inconsistent with any General or Special Law; and to recommend policies and make recommendations  
53 to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of  
54 this commission.

55 The commission may request from all state agencies such information and assistance as the  
56 commission may require.

57 The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or  
58 any federal funds for any of the purposes of this chapter. Such funds shall be deposited in a separate

59 account with the state treasurer, be received by said treasurer on behalf of the commonwealth, and be  
60 expended by the commission in accordance with law.

61 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 67 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, the initial  
62 members of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission shall be appointed for the following  
63 terms:—

64 (a) A designee from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs shall appoint, on or before February 28,  
65 2008, five members for a term of one year, 2 of which are to be staff of the Executive Office of Elder  
66 Affairs.

67 (b ) The governor shall appoint, on or before February 28, 2008, three members for a term of one  
68 year.

69 (c) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint, on or before February 28, 2008, three  
70 members for a term of one year.

71 (d) The president of the senate shall appoint, on or before February 28, 2008, three members for a term  
72 of one year.

73 (e) The attorney general shall appoint, on or before February 28, 2008, three members for a term of  
74 one year.