

# SENATE NO. 340

## AN ACT PROMOTING A FRAMEWORK FOR CIVIC 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. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 15ZZZZ,  
2 inserted by section 2 of the acts of 2005, the following section:- --

3 Section 15AAAAA. The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart October 19 as  
4 Massachusetts History Day, in recognition of the convening of the first session of the Massachusetts  
5 general court, and recommending that this day shall be observed in an appropriate manner by the  
6 people.

7 SECTION 2. (a) There shall be a special commission on civic engagement and learning consisting  
8 of: 3 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be the senate chairperson of the joint committee on  
9 education, 1 of whom shall be a member of the majority party to be appointed by the president of  
10 the senate and 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party to be appointed by the minority  
11 leader of the senate; 3 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the house  
12 chairperson of the joint committee on education, 1 of whom shall be a member of the majority party

13 to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and 1 of whom shall be a member of  
14 the minority party to be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; the  
15 director of the legislative education office of the general court , or his designee; the chancellor of  
16 the board of higher education, or his designee; the commissioner of the department of education, or  
17 his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, or his  
18 designee; the president of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, or his designee;  
19 the president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, or his designee; the president of the  
20 Massachusetts Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, or his designee; the president of the  
21 Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts  
22 League of Women Voters, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Bar Association, or  
23 his designee; the Massachusetts state coordinator of the Center for Civic Education; a representative  
24 of local government appointed by the Massachusetts Municipal Association; a representative of the  
25 judicial branch appointed by the chief administrative justice of the trial court; and 6 members  
26 appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be the dean of a school of education or chair of a  
27 department of education skilled in the preparation of teachers, 1 of whom shall have expertise in  
28 adult education, 1 of whom shall be a scholar in the field of civic education, 1 of whom shall have  
29 expertise in curriculum development with special emphasis on civic learning, 1 of whom shall have  
30 expertise in the field of civic engagement of youth, and 1 of whom shall have expertise in service  
31 learning.

32 (b) The co-chairpersons of the special commission shall be a member of the senate designated by  
33 the senate president and a member of the house designated by the speaker of the house of  
34 representatives. The organizational session of the commission shall be convened by the co-  
35 chairpersons once the members of the commission have been appointed, but not later than 60 days

36 after the effective date of this act whether or not all of the gubernatorial appointees have been  
37 appointed and qualified.

38 (c) The special commission shall make an investigation and study of the status of civic engagement  
39 and learning in the commonwealth including, but not limited to: (1) an assessment of the status of  
40 civic education in the commonwealth from kindergarten through high school and undergraduate  
41 college education with particular attention to compliance by agencies of public education and public  
42 higher education with section 2 of chapter 71 and section 2A of chapter 73 of the General Laws;  
43 including an assessment of the civic knowledge of graduates of the public high schools of the  
44 commonwealth; (2) an investigation of the opportunities available to the students of the  
45 commonwealth for service learning that develops an understanding of the relationship of those  
46 experiences with democratic government and a review of programs that teach civic engagement  
47 knowledge and skills that are essential to the development of active citizens; (3) an investigation of  
48 the status of public and private programs that promote civic engagement and learning including, but  
49 not limited to Massachusetts History Day, established pursuant to this act and Massachusetts  
50 Student Government Day, established pursuant to section 12M of chapter 6 of the General Laws;  
51 and how those programs could be enhanced or expanded through cooperation among themselves  
52 and with other entities such as schools and colleges, and through additional resources from public  
53 or private sources to be more effective and generally available to a larger number of students or the  
54 population at large; (4) an assessment of best practices in civic education in the United States that  
55 could serve as models for improving civic engagement and learning in the commonwealth; (5) an  
56 assessment of the implementation of the history and social studies curriculum frameworks by the  
57 department of education and the school districts of the commonwealth, including recommendations  
58 for the development and assessment of practical skills for civic engagement that are complementary

59 to the knowledge based aspects of the frameworks; (6) an assessment of the need for a permanent  
60 entity students to promote civic engagement by a responsible citizenry and to encourage the  
61 building of partnerships to enhance the teaching and learning of the principles of representative  
62 democracy in the commonwealth; and (7) any other matters that the special commission considers  
63 relevant to the fulfillment of its mission and purpose.

64 (d) The special commission may conduct public hearings appropriate to gathering information and  
65 to raising the civic awareness of the people of the commonwealth, including the sponsorship of 1 or  
66 more statewide or regional conferences involving educators, students, or the public at large. The  
67 department of education and the board of higher education shall provide staff and other resources as  
68 the commission and those agencies consider appropriate. The special commission shall make its  
69 final report to the joint committee on education, including recommendations for legislation or other  
70 appropriate measures as it considers necessary, not later than November 1, 2008, and may make  
71 interim reports as it considers appropriate.” ; and

72 by inserting before the enacting clause the following Emergency Preamble:-

73 “ Whereas , The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is forthwith  
74 to designate the annual observance of Massachusetts History Day and establish a special  
75 commission on civic engagement and learning, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency  
76 law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.”