

SENATE No. 223

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Cynthia Stone Creem

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.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Cynthia Stone Creem	First Middlesex and Norfolk
Garrett J. Bradley	3rd Plymouth
James E. Timilty	Bristol and Norfolk
James B. Eldridge	Middlesex and Worcester
Marian Walsh	Suffolk and Norfolk
Susan C. Fargo	Third Middlesex
Bradley H. Jones, Jr.	20th Middlesex
Matthew C. Patrick	3rd Barnstable
Stephen L. DiNatale	3rd Worcester
Ellen Story	3rd Hampshire
Frank I. Smizik	15th Norfolk
Gloria L. Fox	7th Suffolk
Tom Sannicandro	7th Middlesex
Charles A. Murphy	21st Middlesex
David M. Torrisi	14th Essex
Barbara A. L'Italien	18th Essex
Benjamin Swan	11th Hampden
Michael F. Rush	10th Suffolk

Mark V. Falzone	9th Essex
John W. Scibak	2nd Hampshire
Jennifer M. Callahan	18th Worcester
James Dwyer	30th Middlesex
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex
Alice Hanlon Peisch	14th Norfolk
Geraldo Alicea	6th Worcester
Stephen R. Canessa	12th Bristol

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

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

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,
2 is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraphs:-
3 The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate revisions to the Regulations
4 for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7.00) to ensure that all
5 special education and regular education teachers who apply for Massachusetts Educator
6 certification or re-certification on or after June 1, 2011 shall receive training and preparation in
7 the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students who are nonverbal or who
8 have limited speech as a requirement for such certification or recertification. Such training and
9 preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and for
10 teachers applying for initial certification shall also include practical experience in the classroom
11 with children that utilize augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited
12 to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other

13 disabilities that result in limited or no verbal abilities. The coursework and practical experience
14 must be included for each level of Massachusetts educator certification and for all types of
15 teacher licenses referenced in 603 CMR 7.00, provided that practical experience for regular
16 education teachers who apply for certification at the secondary level shall include experience in
17 the classroom with individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication, and if
18 classroom settings are unavailable practical experience may include other settings with
19 individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication. Teacher and specialist
20 teacher licensure requirements, subject matter knowledge requirements for teachers, professional
21 standards for teachers, requirements for field-based experiences and educator preparation
22 program approval requirements shall specifically address augmentative and alternative
23 communication competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have
24 limited verbal abilities.

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