

MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES *for* CHILDREN



Hand-Delivered

August 6, 2012

His Excellency Deval L. Patrick
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Re: H. 4332/An Act Relative to Students' Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School

Dear Governor Patrick:

We are writing to request that you approve H. 4332, enacted by the Legislature on July 31, 2012. Most of us are members of the Education Law Task Force (ELTF), and all of us have experience with issues of school discipline and school dropout.

Many of us have worked closely with Rep. Alice Wolf for many years on legislation she and others have filed to reduce the number of students who are excluded from school. Our goal has been to improve the fairness of the process, to educate students who nonetheless have to be excluded from school, and to generate exclusion data to allow DESE to assist schools to reduce high numbers of expulsions.

During these years we have met repeatedly with Secretary Reville, Commissioner Chester, Child Advocate Garinger, and with school personnel to craft legislation that would reflect their views.

Data show that a student being suspended or expelled is a strong precursor to him or her dropping out of school, which leads to far-reaching consequences for the student, the community, and taxpayers. The bill aims to curb the overuse of suspension and expulsion—jointly known as school exclusions—as a disciplinary tactic other than as a last resort. The ultimate goal is to keep kids in school, actively engaged in learning, and severing the school to prison pipeline.

We believe that the bill ultimately enacted by the Legislature reflects the views of all the stakeholders as best as possible. If your Administration has questions about H. 4332, they may contact Attorney Thomas Mela of the Massachusetts Advocates for Children, at 617-357-8431 ext. 223.

We urge you to approve this legislation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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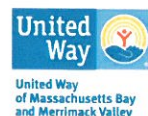
Jerry Mogul

Senior Project Directors

Massachusetts Advocates for Children

25 Kingston Street, 2nd Floor Boston, MA 02111

Tel. 617.357.8431 · Fax 617.357.8438 · www.massadvocates.org



Massachusetts
Legal
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Sincerely,



Jerry Mogul, Executive Director

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Massachusetts Advocates for Children
Jerry Mogul, Executive Director

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Isabel Raskin, Juvenile Justice Center

The Civil Rights Project at UCLA (*for affiliation purposes only*)
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