

By Messrs. Natsios of Holliston and Moore of Hopedale, petition of Richard T. Moore and other members of the House that provision be made for local option on subjects taught in the public schools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Nine.

AN ACT PROVIDING LOCAL OPTION ON SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws as inserted by Chap-
2 ters 408 and 916 of the acts of 1977 is hereby repealed and the fol-
3 lowing section inserted in place thereof: —

4 *Section 1.* Every town shall maintain, for at least the number of
5 days required by the board of education in each school year unless
6 specifically exempted as to any one year by said board, a sufficient
7 number of schools for the instruction of all children who may
8 legally attend a public school therein. No town shall hold double
9 sessions in any public school, if in any other public school of com-
10 parable grade levels in such town there are vacant spaces for more
11 than thirty-five children, the number of such vacant spaces to be
12 computed without exceeding a maximum of thirty-five children
13 to a classroom. The board of education may suspend the appli-
14 cation of the preceding sentence in a particular town for a
15 limited period. Such schools shall be taught by teachers of
16 competent ability and good morals, and shall give instruction
17 and training in reading, writing, arithmetic, the English
18 language and grammar, the history and constitution of the United
19 States, and the duties of citizenship. No pupil shall be required to
20 take or participate in instruction on disease, its symptoms, devel-
21 opment and treatment, whose parent or guardian shall object
22 thereto in writing on the grounds such instruction conflicts with his

23 sincerely held religious beliefs, and no pupil so exempt shall be
24 penalized by reason of such exemption. Such other subjects as the
25 school committee considers expedient may be taught in public
26 schools, provided however the Board of Education shall not
27 require through rule or regulation that any course of instruction be
28 taught in public schools, except as provided in the General Laws.
29 The Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations for the
30 establishment of a twelve-month school year. Any city, town or
31 school district by vote of its school committee may maintain and
32 operate on a continuous twelve-month basis a sufficient number of
33 schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a
34 public school therein in accordance with such rules and regula-
35 tions. Nothing herein contained shall be construed as to authorize
36 said board to require the establishment of a twelve-month school
37 year in any city, town or school district the school committee of
38 which has not voted to establish, maintain and operate such a
39 twelve-month school year.