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By Mr. McGinn of Westfield, petition of Robert J. McGinn that the Department of Mental Health be authorized to allocate certain funds to sustain the cost of the special diet used to alleviate mental retardation in newborn children suffering from a genetic effect which causes phenylketonuria. Public Welfare.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Two.

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH TO ALLOCATE THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS YEARLY TO SUSTAIN THE COSTS OF THE SPECIAL DIET USED TO ALLEVIATE MENTAL RETARDATION IN THOSE NEWBORN CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM A GENETIC EFFECT WHICH CAUSES PHENYLKETONURIA.

*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 children suffering from phenylketonuria lack  
2 an enzyme which would normally digest phenylalanine, one of  
3 the amino acids present in most body-building foods. An ex-  
4 cessive amount of phenylpyruvic acid in the body eventually  
5 damages the brain. Left unattended, its victims will become  
6 severely retarded by the time they are seven years old.

1 SECTION 2. Special diet should start by the time the child  
2 is a month old to prevent any brain damage from taking place.  
3 The United States Children's Bureau has authorized states to  
4 use funds for the phenylketonuria diet. PKU was the first  
5 breakthrough in mental retardation resulting from "inborn  
6 errors of metabolism". Victims are among the most severely  
7 retarded patients in institutions. Although they comprise only  
8 one percent with the cost of lifetime care for thirty institutional-  
9 ized retardates averaging one million dollars, the cost of care for  
10 these PKU retardates during their lifetime is staggering — some  
11 sixty-six million dollars. (These figures are based on the low  
12 average of fifteen hundred dollars per year for care.)

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