

By Mr. Petersen of Marblehead, petition of Douglas W. Petersen and Patricia D. Jehlen for legislation to require the Auditor of the Commonwealth to select a panel to examine and evaluate the comprehensive assessment system tests in judging academic achievement. Education, Arts and Humanities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and One.

AN ACT REQUIRING INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE MCAS TESTS IN DETERMINING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 The Auditor of the Commonwealth shall select a panel of three
2 experts from out-of-state from a list of nationally qualified experts
3 in educational and employment testing, provided by the National
4 Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, to per-
5 form a study of the validity and reliability of the Massachusetts
6 Comprehensive Assessment System tests in judging academic
7 achievement.

8 The commissioner of education shall enter into a contract on
9 behalf of the department of education, with the selected panel of
10 experts to conduct such a study. The contract shall require that the
11 study be completed no later than December 1, 2001. The auditor
12 and the commissioner of education shall assist the panel of
13 experts in obtaining all information, documents or other evidence
14 necessary to conduct the study. To the extent the commissioner
15 and the department are unable to obtain any such information,
16 documents or other evidence from any organization, corporation,
17 individual or other entity under contract or agreement with the
18 commonwealth in connection with the development, administra-
19 tion, scoring or validation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive
20 Assessment System tests, the house or senate committees on post
21 audit and oversight shall utilize their power to summon witnesses,

- 22 administer oaths, take testimony and compel the production of
23 evidence in order to facilitate obtaining the necessary information.