

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

STATE HOUSE • BOSTON 02133

(617) 727-3600

ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI  
GOVERNOR

September 5, 1997

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

We are filing for your consideration the attached legislation entitled "An Act to Improve Truancy Enforcement."

A common factor that has been identified as a predictor of delinquency as well as future criminal behavior is truancy. However, present anti-truancy programs suffer from a serious lack of personnel. Many school districts do not have even one truant officer to supervise school attendance, and most districts simply do not have enough. For instance, in Boston there is reportedly only one truant officer assigned to monitor 18,000 high school students and only nine truant officers assigned to the entire school system.

This legislation would expand the statutory powers of police to do truancy work. The current law is ambiguous as to whether or not police officers may apprehend truants and return them to school. This bill would clarify that police officers, while performing their regular duties, may apprehend truants without a warrant and return them to school.

This important legislation will significantly improve anti-truancy efforts across the Commonwealth. Any decrease in truancy will inevitably lead to a decrease in juvenile delinquency and in future criminal activity.

We urge your prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Argeo Paul Cellucci in cursive.  
Argeo Paul Cellucci  
Governor

Handwritten signature in cursive, possibly "A. Cellucci".

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Seven.

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### AN ACT TO IMPROVE TRUANCY ENFORCEMENT.

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

1 Chapter 76 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting  
2 after section 20 the following new section:—

3 Section 20A. A police officer, during the course of duty, may  
4 apprehend and take to school without a warrant any truant or  
5 absentee found wandering in the streets or public places of the  
6 city or town in which the police officer is employed or to which  
7 the police officer is assigned.