



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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SUMMARY

An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Sunset Review Commission and Establishing a Procedure to Identify and Eliminate Waste, Duplication and Inefficiency in State Government Agencies & Authorities

Following successful models implemented in the States of Florida and Texas, this legislation would create a Massachusetts Sunset Review Commission, entrusted with identifying and eliminating waste and duplication in state government agencies and authorities by “sunsetting” these entities. The Commission shall have legislative and public members, and will employ an Executive Director, with an appropriate staff for carrying out its duties.

The Sunset Commission shall assign sunset dates for agencies it reviews: essentially, a deadline for termination. Upon its recommendations—which will be submitted in a report to the Legislature—the Commission will notify the head of the agency/authority, and follow up by submitting legislation to the Legislature to implement the abolition schedule. Before abolishment of an entity, the Commission will be required to review all annual reports filed by the agency, consult the Legislature’s Committee on Post Audit & Oversight, as well as the State Auditor, Inspector General and the State Comptroller.

The criteria for recommended abolitions by the Commission shall fall within consideration of the efficiency and effectiveness of a particular agency; the success of an agency’s mission or goals; the general need of the agency; the extent to which an agency’s jurisdiction may overlap another, thereby indicating the need for consolidation of an agency; the promptness and effectiveness of an agency’s response to any complaints it receives; the agency’s consideration of state and federal laws, and their compliance with lawful operation; and the extent to which an agency complies with ethics, conflict of interests, and requests for public access.

An Act Establishing the Commission on Government Accountability Economy and Efficiency

This legislation creates a commission that is entrusted with investigating methods to improve the accountability, economy and efficiency of the government of the Commonwealth. The commission shall make formal recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature—that are not limited to—adopting methods to reduce expenditures to the lowest amount possible for efficient performances of state services and programs; eliminate duplication and overlapping services; consolidate services and activities of a similar nature; abolish services unnecessary to state business; eliminate unnecessary departments and agencies and transfer power to another agency; redefine rules and responsibilities for state or local officers; reorganize recruitment and retention practices for public employees; analyze and evaluate all state and local contracts with private vendors to confirm practical practices; and review state requirements for contracting goods and services for the most qualified vendor.

An Act to Eliminate Waste and Improve Public Oversight of State Agencies

Currently, state agencies and authorities that are required to submit an annual report do so in a hard copy, paper format, that can waste tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars. While many of these reports are essential markers of an agencies' performance and research, hard copies of these documents are rarely seen by the public and are stored away. This legislation addresses this source of waste by requiring any state agency or authorities' annual report to be filed online. This will not only save money spent in printing, but will enhance access to the reports for the general public.

An Act to Provide for Efficient Use of Leased or Rented Property and Prevent Waste in Use of Leased or Rented Facilities

In a recent report from the WBZ-I Team, the state's lease on an unused parking lot for state employees was highlighted: approximately \$30,000,000 has been wasted on the leased lot, which is seldom used. This legislation requires a thorough assessment of any state-leased properties and provides for a clause that would allow the Commonwealth to terminate its lease with a property owner, in the event its function serves no purpose and is taking away from taxpayers' money.

An Act to Promote Value and Efficiency in the Delivery of State Services

This legislation creates a board within the Executive Office for Administration & Finance that administers a process for receiving suggestions from state employees and retirees for improving state programs and services. The board is comprised of the Commissioner of A&F, or his/her designee; the Comptroller or his/her designee; the Budget Director or his/her designee; a member appointed by the President of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation; a member appointed by the Director of the Beacon Hill Institute; a member appointed by the Director of the Pioneer Institute; a member appointed by the Director of the McCormick Institute of the University of Massachusetts at Boston; and a member appointed by the Executive Director of MassExcellence.

The Board shall receive, solicit and review suggestions made by officers and employees of the Commonwealth regarding the improvement and efficiency of state services or programs, and the Board shall select the proposals that they deem as having the greatest impact on improving government efficiency. The proposals will be submitted online, and the general public will be able to review and select which proposal they find the best. The winner shall be eligible for a prize to be determined by the Board. To provide for the prize, a "public service value and efficiency fund" shall be established, which may consist of funds that are appropriated, or donated by individuals, foundations and businesses. This legislation will promote and encourage public participation in enhancing government efficiency.