

SENATE NO. 743

AN ACT RELATIVE TO CREATING A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR DIRECT CARE HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS

*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. Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16O
2 the following section:-

3 Section 16P. There shall be a student loan program for credentialed direct care human service
4 workers for the purpose of encouraging individuals to enter and continue to work in human
5 service programs. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services shall administer the
6 program in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Department of Education.

7 The term "qualified education loan" shall mean any indebtedness including interest on such
8 indebtedness incurred to pay tuition or other direct expenses incurred in connection with the
9 pursuit of a certificate, undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant, but shall not include
10 loans made by any person related to the applicant.

11 To be eligible for this program a participant must be working a minimum of 35 hours per week
12 as a credentialed direct care human service worker and have an individual income of less than
13 forty-five thousand annually. This program will also help defray costs from previously incurred
14 student loans for graduates holding certificate, undergraduate or graduate degrees once they
15 have maintained twelve consecutive months of employment at a minimum of 35 hours per
16 week.

17 Eligible participants in this program can be reimbursed up to \$1800 per year based on the
18 amount of loan payments made in the previous calendar year, and pending state funding for the
19 program. The commonwealth shall repay the eligible participant's student loan at a rate not to
20 exceed \$150 dollars per month for a period not to exceed 48 months. Payments by the
21 commonwealth shall cover loan payments by the eligible participant in the months during which
22 the direct care human service worker provides services in the commonwealth.

23 A "credentialed direct care human service worker" is defined as a credentialed worker who
24 provides services by supporting individuals and families efforts to function in daily living
25 situations. Human service worker is a generic term for people who hold professional and
26 paraprofessional jobs in settings such as group homes and halfway houses; institutional or
27 residential settings; correctional, mental retardation, and community mental health centers;
28 family, child, and youth service agencies, and programs concerned with alcoholism, drug abuse,
29 family violence, and aging; in addition such worker shall have passed the course requirements
30 and been issued a credential by the Massachusetts Council of Human Services Providers.