

SENATE No. 37

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James B. Eldridge

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act Relative to Workers' Pathways to Self Sufficiency

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
James B. Eldridge	Middlesex and Worcester
Linda Dorcena Forry	12th Suffolk
Pam Richardson	6th Middlesex
Patricia D. Jehlen	Second Middlesex
Anthony D. Galluccio	Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex
Kenneth J. Donnelly	Fourth Middlesex
Susan C. Fargo	Third Middlesex
Thomas M. McGee	Third Essex and Middlesex
Susan C. Tucker	Second Essex and Middlesex
Robert A. O'Leary	Cape and Islands
Elizabeth A. Malia	11th Suffolk
Kevin G. Honan	17th Suffolk
William N. Brownsberger	24th Middlesex
Frank I. Smizik	15th Norfolk
Christine E. Canavan	10th Plymouth
Willie Mae Allen	6th Suffolk
Barbara A. L'Italien	18th Essex
Lida E. Harkins	13th Norfolk
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex

Alice K. Wolf	25th Middlesex
William Lantigua	16th Essex
Denise Provost	27th Middlesex
Theodore C. Speliotis	13th Essex
Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.	34th Middlesex
Michael F. Rush	10th Suffolk
Steven J. D'Amico	4th Bristol
Gloria L. Fox	7th Suffolk
Michael J. Moran	18th Suffolk
James J. O'Day	14th Worcester District
Mary E. Grant	6th Essex
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	26th Middlesex
Anthony W. Petruccelli	First Suffolk and Middlesex
Harriette L. Chandler	First Worcester
Jennifer L. Flanagan	Worcester and Middlesex
Jennifer M. Callahan	18th Worcester
Cynthia Stone Creem	First Middlesex and Norfolk
Anne M. Gobi	5th Worcester
Richard J. Ross	9th Norfolk
Karen E. Spilka	Second Middlesex and Norfolk
Susan C. Fargo	Third Middlesex
Paul McMurtry	11th Norfolk
Steven A. Tolman	Second Suffolk and Middlesex

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO WORKERS' PATHWAYS TO SELF SUFFICIENCY

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

SECTION 1. Education Rewards Grant Program

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, not less than 10 days after the effective date of this act, the comptroller shall transfer \$4,500,000 from the General Fund to the Educational Rewards Grant

Program Fund established pursuant to section 2SSS of chapter 29 of the General Laws; provided that up to \$1,500,000 of said funding shall be used for a "Supports for Success" pilot program to assist Educational Rewards recipients complete their degree or certificate programs; provided further, that supports provided through said pilot may include but need not be limited to intensive advising and counseling, college and career success courses, work study jobs in the students' field of study, learning communities, curricula redesign to support blended or accelerated remediation, mentoring or tutoring, and child care and transportation assistance; provided further, that on or before December 1 of each year, the Board of Higher Education in collaboration with the Office of Student Financial Assistance shall submit to the house and

14 senate clerks and the chairs of house and senate committees on ways and means a report
15 describing how funds in said section 2SSS were used in the prior fiscal year, including but not
16 limited to, how many grants were distributed to how many students and in what amounts, the
17 level of educational attainment of grant recipients, persistence from semester to semester,
18 degrees and certificates awarded to recipients, and analysis of the strengths and areas of needed
19 improvement in the primary program and the pilot program and recommendations for such
20 improvements.

21 **SECTION 2. Education & Training for TAFDC Recipients**

22 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and to the maximum extent possible
23 in light of the need to preserve available sources of federal funding, it is the policy of the
24 Commonwealth to encourage low-income parents, including those who receive assistance under
25 the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children, to obtain the vocational
26 educational training they need to obtain and retain good paying jobs with benefits that will
27 enable them to support their families in the longer term. Consistent with this policy, the
28 department of transitional assistance shall:

29 a) in collaboration with the workforce development system and the community college system,
30 maintain in each local office of the department an up-to-date listing and description of all
31 vocational educational programs within the relevant geographic region that can be accessed at
32 little or no cost to the individual, including adult basic education, English for speakers of other
33 languages, skills training, certificate programs, and higher education programs;

34 b) at least 30 days before an individual becomes subject to the work program requirement
35 pursuant to section 110(j) of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 and before completion of any

36 Employment Development Plan pursuant to section 110(h) of said chapter 5, (i) inform that
37 individual orally and in writing that said work program requirement may be met by participation
38 in vocational educational programs, including adult basic education, English for speakers of
39 other languages, skills training, certificate programs, and higher education programs, (ii) inform
40 that individual of all vocational educational programs available in the relevant geographic region
41 that can be accessed at little or no cost to the individual, and (iii) inform that individual of the
42 policies described in subsections (e) and (f) of this section;

43 c) at least 30 days before an individual becomes subject to the work program requirement
44 pursuant to section 110(j) of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 and before completion of any
45 Employment Development Plan pursuant to section 110(h) of said chapter 5, provide that
46 individual with counseling on how to access vocational educational training without incurring
47 debt, including but not limited to information on the availability of funding for such programs
48 through the Employment Services Program, the Workforce Investment Act, PELL grants, the
49 Educational Rewards program, the Department of Education, and appropriate referrals to such
50 vocational educational training;

51 d) use funds appropriated for the department's Employment Services Program to expand the
52 availability of programs that integrate skills training with adult basic education for those without
53 a high school diploma and/or English for speakers of other language instruction for those with
54 limited English proficiency, including but not limited to programs at community colleges;

55 e) allow individuals to satisfy their work program requirements pursuant to said section 110(j),
56 in whole or in part and throughout their periods of time limited benefits and any extension
57 periods, by participating in vocational educational training programs.