ATTACHMENT L

July 16, 2021

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

Pursuant to Article LVI, as amended by Article XC, Section 3 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am returning to you for amendment Section 67 of House Bill No. 4002, “An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2022 for the Maintenance of the Departments, Boards, Commissions, Institutions and Certain Activities of the Commonwealth, for Interest, Sinking Fund and Serial Bond Requirements and for Certain Permanent Improvements.”

Section 67 requires the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to eliminate any asset test for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) applicants. TAFDC extends a vital lifeline to certain Massachusetts residents, but I disagree with eliminating the current asset test completely. At the same time, it is important that TAFDC recipients have the opportunity to build up assets without losing eligibility for TAFDC. Therefore, I support reforming the TAFDC asset rule to allow recipients who meet the asset test at the time of application to continue to accrue assets in excess of the current limit without risk of losing eligibility for TAFDC. Other program parameters will ensure that the benefit remains time limited. Under existing income limits, as soon as a recipient exceeds the applicable income threshold, the recipient will no longer be eligible. Additionally, the TAFDC benefit ends after two continuous years.

For these reasons, I recommend that Section 67 be amended by striking out the section and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

SECTION 67. Section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 is hereby amended by striking out subsection (b), as appearing in section 62 of chapter 41 of the acts of 2019, and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

(b) A family shall be eligible for assistance if its countable resources do not exceed $5000 and they meet all other eligibility criteria; provided that one vehicle shall not count toward the family’s countable resources; and provided further, that an assistance unit shall be allowed the value and balance of a college savings plan for a child established and maintained pursuant to, or consistent with, section 519 of the Internal Revenue Code; provided further, recipients who increase their countable resources above $5000 while receiving benefits will continue to be eligible for benefits if all other eligibility criteria continue to be met.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker

Governor