

HOUSE No. 1792

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Daniel E. Bosley

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 to establish a Self Sufficiency Standard in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Daniel E. Bosley

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

1st Berkshire

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1774 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A SELF SUFFICIENCY STANDARD IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

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. Not later than October 1, 2009, the Commonwealth Corporation, known in this Act
2 as the Corporation, shall develop a self-sufficiency standard for the commonwealth, known in this Act as
3 the standard. As used in this Act, the term "self-sufficiency standard," as defined by Wider Opportunities
4 for Women and The Crittenton Women's Union, shall mean the amount of income needed by a family or
5 household to provide for adequate housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and employment-
6 related expenses, and to pay taxes. The Corporation may enter into a contract through the competitive
7 procurement process for the development of such standard.

8

9 SECTION 2. (1) Such standard shall take into account the family size and age of children, and shall take
10 into account regional variations in the costs of housing and child care, the differential inflation rates that
11 affect the growth of these costs, and the effect of existing tax laws, including state sales tax, payroll taxes,
12 federal and state income tax, child care tax credits and the earned income tax credit. In developing the
13 standard, the Corporation shall rely, to the extent possible, on data reported by the United States Census
14 Bureau, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and on other data reported to state
15 and federal agencies using standardized methodology and shall consult with state departments or agencies
16 that serve low-income populations.

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18 Housing costs will be determined using fair market rents for apartments as reported by the United States
19 Department of Housing and Urban Development. Child care costs will be determined using average costs
20 for licensed child care facilities, including, but not limited to, family day care, as reported to the
21 commonwealth's child care resource and referral agencies for children of different ages in different areas
22 of the state.

23

24 (2) The president of the Corporation shall establish an advisory board to advise the Corporation on all
25 matters relating to the development of a self-sufficiency standard and future revisions to it. The advisory
26 board shall be composed of 26 members, each of whom shall serve a term of 2 years. The following shall
27 be members of the board: the secretary of the executive office of administration and finance or his
28 designee; the secretary of the executive office of health and human services or his designee; the secretary
29 of the executive office of labor and workforce development or his designee; the commissioner of the
30 department of revenue or his designee; the undersecretary of the department of housing and community
31 development or his designee; the secretary of the executive office of education; the commissioner of the
32 department of early education and care or his designee; 4 members of the senate, 3 of whom shall be
33 appointed by the president of the senate and 1 by the senate minority leader; 4 members of the house of
34 representatives, 3 of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and 1 by the
35 house minority leader; 1 faculty member of a Massachusetts university or college with research expertise
36 in the areas of demographics, living costs and labor markets to be selected by the Commonwealth
37 Corporation; and representatives of the following 10 organizations to be nominated by their respective
38 organizations and selected by the Commonwealth Corporation: the Crittenton Women's Union; the
39 Massachusetts AFL-CIO; the Associated Industries of Massachusetts; the Massachusetts Association of
40 Community Colleges; the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation; the Massachusetts Workforce Board
41 Association; the Massachusetts Community Action Program Directors' Association; the Massachusetts
42 Workforce Investment Association; the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association; and the
43 Massachusetts Association of Day Care Agencies. Members of the advisory board shall serve without
44 compensation.

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46 SECTION 3. Not later than March 31, 2010, the Commonwealth Corporation shall report the self-
47 sufficiency standard, including the methodology used to arrive at the standard to the clerks of the house of
48 representatives and senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee
49 on labor and workforce development. The standard shall be distributed to each of the state executive
50 offices and state agencies that counsel individuals who are seeking education, training or employment,
51 including, but not limited to, the executive office of health and human services, the executive office of

52 labor and workforce development, the department of transitional assistance, the department of public
53 health, the department of children and families, the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, the
54 department of housing and community development, the executive office of housing and economic
55 development, the Massachusetts office of business development, the Massachusetts department of early
56 education and care, the executive office of education, all local workforce investment boards and all
57 Massachusetts one-stop career centers. The standard shall be made available to educational institutions,
58 nonprofit organizations, and the general public upon request. The standard shall also be made available on
59 any internet site established and maintained by the Commonwealth Corporation.

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61 (2) Such state agencies and other entities may use the updated standard to assist and guide individuals
62 who are seeking education, training or employment in establishing personal financial goals and estimating
63 the amount of income such individuals may need to support their families.

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65 Section 4. The standard shall be updated and issued every other year by the Commonwealth Corporation
66 and shall be reported on March 31 in the second year of each sitting of the general court, with the next
67 update on March 31, 2012.

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69 Section 5. The standard shall not be used to increase the amount of entitlement benefits provided by the
70 Commonwealth, unless enacted by the Legislature and subject to appropriation, and said standard shall
71 not give rise to enforceable legal rights in any party to services or entitlements or an enforceable
72 entitlement to services or benefits not currently provided.