SENATE DOCKET, NO. 206 FILED ON: 1/18/2011

# SENATE . . . . . No. 29

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

***Gale D. Candaras***

*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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to creating a loan repayment program for direct care human service workers.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: |
|---|---|
| *Gale D. Candaras* | |
| *Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.* | *12th Hampden* |
| *Theodore C. Speliotis* | *13th Essex* |
| *Cory Atkins* | *14th Middlesex* |
| *James B. Eldridge* | |
| *Michael R. Knapik* | |
| *Brian M. Ashe* | *2nd Hampden* |
| *David Paul Linsky* | *5th Middlesex* |
| *Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.* | *34th Middlesex* |
| *Benjamin Swan* | *11th Hampden* |

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By Ms. Candaras, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 29) of Gale D. Candaras, Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr., Theodore C. Speliotis, Cory Atkins and other members of the General Court for legislation to create a loan repayment program for direct care human service workers. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**

An Act relative to creating a loan repayment 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:*

Section 16 of Chapter 6A shall be amended by inserting the following new section, 16A. There shall be a student loan program for credentialed direct care human service workers for the purpose of encouraging individuals to enter and continue to work in human service programs. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services shall administer the program in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Department of Education.

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

To be eligible for this program a participant must be working a minimum of 35 hours per week as a credentialed direct care human service worker and have an individual income of less than forty-five thousand annually. This program will also help defray costs from

previously incurred student loans for graduates holding certificate, undergraduate or graduate degrees once they have maintained twelve consecutive months of employment at a minimum of 35 hours per week.

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

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