

HOUSE No. 3737

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, November 4, 2013.

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Senate Bill to foster economic independence (Senate, No. 1806), reports recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text contained in House document numbered 3737.

For the committee,

BRIAN S. DEMPSEY.

HOUSE No. 3737

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

By striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the following:—

1 SECTION 1. To provide for improvements to the department of transitional assistance in
2 the commonwealth in fiscal year 2014, the sums set forth in sections 2 and 2A are hereby
3 appropriated from the General Fund for the several purposes and subject to the conditions
4 specified in this act and subject to laws regulating the disbursement of public funds; provided,
5 however, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, appropriations made
6 herein shall not revert and shall be available for expenditure until June 30, 2014. The sums
7 appropriated in this act shall be in addition to any amounts previously appropriated and made
8 available for these purposes.

9 SECTION 2.

10 OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

11 *Department of Transitional Assistance.*

12 4400-1100 \$3,000,000

13 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

14 *Department of Early Education and Care.*

15 3000-4050 \$5,000,000

16 *Department of Higher Education.*

17 7070-0066 \$1,000,000

18 SECTION 2A.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary.

4000-0010 For the operation of the commission created in section 30 of this act to support the research and publication of a report on (a) the root causes of poverty in the commonwealth, (b) related solutions to reduce poverty, and (c) the cost savings for the commonwealth in reducing poverty.....\$50,000

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Department of Career Services.

7003-0810 For the department of career services to enhance participation in work programs for clients referred by the department of transitional assistance; provided, that not less than \$6,000,000 shall be used to administer, in consultation with the Commonwealth Corporation, the pathways to self-sufficiency program, established pursuant to section 12 of chapter 23H of the General Laws..... \$11,000,000

SECTION 3. Paragraph (A) of section 2 of chapter 18 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting before the words “the provision”, in line 3, the following words:-

the provision and administration throughout the commonwealth of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, with benefits designed for use by participants to purchase eligible foods, including seeds and plants, for home consumption and use;

SECTION 4. Paragraph (B) of section 2 of chapter 18 of the General Laws, as amended by section 1 of chapter 65 of the acts of 2013, is hereby further amended by adding the following 9 clauses:-

(m) provide notice to households and recipients of cash assistance benefits under emergency aid to elders, disabled and children and transitional aid to families with dependent children if the benefits have not been accessed for 1 year or more. The department shall expunge and recoup the balance of cash assistance benefits under emergency aid to elders, disabled and children and transitional aid to families with dependent children if no response is received by the department within 30 days;

(n) provide notice to households and recipients if they have not accessed Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for 270 days or more. The department shall expunge and recoup the balance of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits if no response is received by the department within 30 days;

(o) provide notice to all households of cash assistance benefits under emergency aid to elders, disabled and children and transitional aid to families with dependent children with

53 balances higher than \$1,500 and instruct them to contact the department for a case review within
54 30 days of receiving notice in order to continue receiving benefits. The department shall expunge
55 and recoup the balance of cash assistance benefits under emergency aid to elders, disabled and
56 children and transitional aid to families with dependent children in excess of \$2,500 and for
57 failure to complete a case review for continuation of benefits and shall notify all households
58 immediately upon expunging the benefit;

59 (p) on a biannual basis, on or before January 1 and July 1, file a report detailing the
60 following: (i) the number of households and recipients receiving cash assistance under
61 transitional aid to families with dependent children who are non-exempt from the work
62 requirement as described in 106 CMR 203.400(A)(1)(a) to (c), inclusive; (ii) the number of
63 households and recipients receiving cash assistance under transitional aid to families with
64 dependent children who are exempt from said work requirement; (iii) the number of recipients
65 who are work required and in need of additional education, training or other barrier-removal
66 services; (iv) the number of exemptions and extensions granted to recipients of cash assistance
67 under transitional aid to families with dependent children; (v) the reasons for granting such
68 exemptions and extensions; (vi) the reasons why recipients are applying for additional benefits
69 beyond their initial 24 month period; provided, that this shall include, but not be limited to, an
70 analysis of the recipient's economic independence goals, as required by section 15 of chapter
71 118; and (vii) information regarding caseloads, including how long recipients have been
72 receiving cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children and how
73 much recipients have received. The report shall not contain a recipient's personal identifying
74 information. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the house of representatives and the
75 senate who shall forward the report to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on
76 children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and
77 means;

78 (q) on an annual basis, file a report detailing the number of cases referred to the
79 department's program integrity bureau and the results of each investigation. The reports shall be
80 filed with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate who shall forward the reports
81 to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on children, families and persons with
82 disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means;

83 (r) annually, on or before December 1, file a report detailing the use of economic
84 independence accounts, established under section 16 of chapter 118, that have been opened by
85 recipients of cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children; provided,
86 that this shall include, but not be limited to, the number of accounts opened and the average
87 balances in the accounts. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the house of representatives
88 and the senate who shall forward the report to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee
89 on children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways
90 and means;

91 (s) annually, on or before March 1, file a report detailing the number of recipients
92 receiving cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children who are
93 present in the United States under 1 of the eligible noncitizen statuses as described in 106 CMR
94 203.675 (A). The report shall be filed with the clerks of the house of representatives and the
95 senate who shall forward the report to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on
96 children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and
97 means;

98 (t) subject to appropriation, create an educational program to be implemented in each
99 department of transitional assistance office that shall include, at a minimum, the following:
100 proper card usage, card and PIN security, advantages of having a bank account, basic financial
101 management, available education and training resources and supports, local job opportunities and
102 other topics as the department considers appropriate; and

103 (u) subject to appropriation, in consultation with the department of higher education, the
104 community college system, the public university system, and the University of Massachusetts
105 system, shall maintain in each local office of the department an up-to-date listing and description
106 of all educational certificate programs, higher education programs, financial aid officials at
107 public institutions of higher education, and financial aid programs, including, but not limited to,
108 scholarships, grants, loans, and work study programs; and counsel children whose parents
109 receive transitional aid for families with dependent children age 14 and older on how to access
110 higher education without incurring debt.

111 SECTION 5. Paragraph (D) of said section 2 of chapter 18 of the General Laws is hereby
112 amended by inserting after clause (f), in line 139, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, the
113 following 2 clauses:-

114 (g) the recording and tracking of blank electronic benefit transfer cards that ensures the
115 integrity of the cards and establishes a clear chain of custody and best practices in the shipment
116 and custody of those cards; and

117 (h) the suspension of benefits to any recipient who has failed to notify the department of a
118 change of address and who the department has attempted to contact by certified mail, but whose
119 mail communication has been returned to the department as undeliverable; provided, however,
120 that the department, after receiving notice that the mail communication has been returned as
121 undeliverable or returned with a Massachusetts forwarding address, shall use all available means
122 to determine the address of the recipient and, in the event that it cannot be determined, subject
123 the recipient's case to further review as to continued eligibility.

124 SECTION 6. Subsection (a) of section 5J of chapter 18 of the General Laws, as so
125 appearing, is hereby amended by inserting before the word "jewelry", in line 13, the following:-
126 foreign transmittal agencies licensed under chapter 169;

127 SECTION 7. Section 5L of said chapter 18, as inserted by section 3 of chapter 161 of the
128 acts of 2012, is hereby amended by adding the following subsection:-

129 (f) An individual who traffics food stamp benefits, as described in subsection (b) and on 2
130 prior occasions has been convicted of trafficking food stamp benefits under said subsection (b) or
131 conspiracy to traffic food stamp benefits shall be punished by imprisonment in a state prison for
132 not more than 10 years or by a fine of not more than \$25,000, or both such fine and
133 imprisonment.

134 SECTION 8. The first paragraph of section 22 of said chapter 18, as so appearing, is
135 hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- Self-declarations by applicants or recipients
136 of transitional aid to families with dependent children shall be signed under the penalties of
137 perjury and, if possible, shall not be accepted as the sole verification of categorical and financial
138 eligibility during eligibility evaluations and reviews.

139 SECTION 9. The second paragraph of said section 22 of said chapter 18, as so appearing,
140 is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following
141 sentence:- The department shall determine which verification requirements can be reasonably
142 met by third party affidavits and shall provide notification to recipients and applicants of the
143 circumstances under which third party affidavits may be used; provided, however, that all work
144 participation forms shall be verified by a third party who shall sign the work participation form
145 under the penalties of perjury.

146 SECTION 10. Chapter 18 is hereby further amended by adding the following 3
147 sections:-

148 Section 31. The department of transitional assistance shall require applicants or recipients
149 of cash assistance to provide their social security number within 3 months of being assigned a
150 placeholder social security number; provided, however, that this section shall not apply to
151 recipients who are present in the United States under 1 of the eligible noncitizen statuses as
152 described in 106 CMR 203.675(A) or 106 CMR 320.620(A). Failure to provide a valid social
153 security number within 3 months shall result in the suspension of benefits until a valid social
154 security number is provided and verified by the department. The department of transitional
155 assistance shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this section.

156 Section 32. Subject to appropriation, the department of transitional assistance shall ensure
157 that when recipients of cash assistance call the department during normal business hours they are
158 able to speak with a caseworker.

159 Section 33. The department of transitional assistance, in consultation with the bureau of
160 program integrity, established pursuant to section 16V of chapter 6A, shall develop a fraud
161 detection program. The fraud detection program shall analyze the risk of fraud and refer any
162 cases of suspected fraud to the program integrity division and the bureau of special investigations

163 in the office of the state auditor. In analyzing risk of fraud and identifying cases for investigation,
164 the program shall consider: (i) even dollar transactions; (ii) full benefit withdrawal; (iii) usage
165 patterns; (iv) high EBT card balances; (v) repeated duplicate EBT card requests; (vi) purchases
166 of prohibited items; and (vii) other relevant data sources. In order to assist the program in
167 identifying and investigating likely cases of fraud, the department shall develop and make
168 available reports identifying even dollar transactions by cardholder, instances of full benefit
169 withdrawal, high EBT card balances, duplicate EBT card requests, purchases of prohibited items
170 and other data reports, as necessary.

171 SECTION 11. Chapter 23H of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official
172 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting, after section 11, the following new section:-

173 Section 12. The department shall develop a program designed to promote financial
174 independence for recipients of transitional aid to families with dependent children (TAFDC) by
175 coordinating the placement of recipients with regional employers through employment agencies,
176 including one-stop career centers, with the goal of permanent employment. Applicants to the
177 program shall be referred from the department of transitional assistance, following a thorough
178 intake and employment assessment process. The program shall be known as the pathways to self-
179 sufficiency program and shall identify applicants with relevant job skills and experience, then
180 match those applicants with appropriate employment for the required number of hours, as
181 specified in 106 CMR 203.400(A)(5).

182 The department, in consultation with the Commonwealth Corporation, shall create
183 selection criteria and guidelines for employment agencies seeking to participate in the placement
184 of applicants, including, but not limited to: (1) experience with job-seeking difficulties facing
185 recipients of public assistance; (2) demonstrated ability to identify and overcome barriers to
186 employment; (3) geographic diversity; (4) experience with members of diverse populations and
187 non-English speakers; (5) a willingness to accommodate job-seekers with dependent children or
188 family members; and (6) a proven track record of job placement and retention.

189 For identified applicants who are not connected with appropriate employment within 60
190 days of applying for TAFDC benefits, the department shall provide a written finding as to why
191 the pathways to self-sufficiency program was not successful, which findings shall be part of the
192 applicant's TAFDC case file. An applicant who is otherwise eligible for TAFDC assistance shall
193 not be denied temporary benefits while awaiting employment placement under the program.

194 The department shall annually, file a report, in consultation with the Commonwealth
195 Corporation, detailing the number of households and recipients receiving cash assistance under
196 TAFDC who are participating in the pathways to self-sufficiency program who can reasonably
197 be moved into gainful employment within 12 months of applying for TAFDC benefits, given the
198 resources and funds allocated. This report shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1)
199 the cost of implementing the components of the pathways to self-sufficiency program; (2) the

200 estimated placement cost per participant; (3) job placement and retention rates; (4) the extent to
201 which appropriate activities and supports were available to recipients; (5) the components of the
202 pathways to self-sufficiency program that were implemented in light of available resources and
203 appropriations; and (6) the reasons recipients were unsuccessful in obtaining gainful employment
204 within 12 months. The report shall be filed with the clerks of the house of representatives and the
205 senate who shall forward the report to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on
206 children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and
207 means.

208 The department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this section.

209 SECTION 12. Subsection (b) of section 21 of chapter 62C of the General Laws, as so
210 appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the following clause:-

211 (27) the disclosure of tax return information for individuals or households to an agency of
212 the commonwealth, if the agency certifies that the information is relevant to determine eligibility
213 of those individuals or households for benefits awarded by the agency.

214 SECTION 13. Section 3 of chapter 118 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012
215 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking, in line 35, the words “division of employment
216 and training” and inserting in place thereof the words “department of career services”.

217 SECTION 14. Section 3 of chapter 118 is hereby further amended by inserting at the end
218 thereof the following 2 paragraphs:-

219 The department of transitional assistance shall require all training and employment
220 service programs contracted through the department to track the outcomes of individuals served
221 by the program for at least 1 year after transitioning into employment. The department shall
222 determine the number of individuals that each employment service program is required to track.

223 The department of transitional assistance shall allow applicants or recipients who are
224 employed a monthly \$150 work-related expense deduction from gross wages in determining
225 eligibility and in determining the amount of the cash assistance grant.

226 SECTION 15. Said chapter 118 is hereby further amended by inserting, after section 3,
227 the following 2 sections:-

228 Section 3½. The pathways to self-sufficiency program, administered by the department of
229 career services, and established pursuant to section 12 of chapter 23H, shall be mandatory for all
230 identified applicants over the age of 18 who are not attending a secondary school full time or
231 participating in an education or training activity, as defined in 106 CMR 203.400(A)(2)(i);
232 provided however, that the program shall not be mandatory for an applicant who is exempt from
233 the work requirements under 106 CMR 203.400(A)(1)(a) to (c), inclusive; and provided further,
234 that the program shall not be mandatory for an applicant who is participating in a certified

235 substance abuse treatment program while in a substance abuse shelter or other inpatient program.
236 The department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this section.

237 Section 3¾. Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish an employment
238 counseling program to assist recipients of cash assistance under transitional aid to families with
239 dependent children recently employed. The program shall include, but not be limited to, job
240 coaching, assistance in resolving workplace disputes, life skills development, counseling and
241 tutoring, support services referrals, tax information forms regarding state and federal earned
242 income tax credits, and any other activities that will assist recipients through the first year after
243 transitioning into employment. The department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with
244 this section.

245 SECTION 16. Chapter 118 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
246 following 6 sections:-

247 Section 12. A temporary absence from the commonwealth which exceeds 30 calendar
248 days shall create a rebuttable presumption that Massachusetts residency has been abandoned by a
249 recipient of cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children and the
250 recipient is no longer eligible for assistance. The department of transitional assistance shall
251 promulgate regulations in accordance with this section.

252 Section 13. (a) The department shall require all adult applicants who are not exempt from
253 the work requirement to conduct an initial job search prior to receiving cash assistance unless the
254 applicant has good cause for not participating as determined by the department which may
255 include disability.

256 (b) The department shall inform all applicants required to conduct an initial job search of
257 available local job placement service providers. Applicants shall provide evidence of this search
258 by returning to the department a list of the potential employers contacted recently, the date of
259 contact and the name and telephone number of the person with whom the applicant spoke, to the
260 extent feasible. All initial job search documentation shall be signed by the applicant under the
261 penalties of perjury. The number of potential employers to be contacted by the applicant shall be
262 determined by the department. An applicant shall provide the information before the applicant's
263 case approval. An applicant who fails to provide this information within 30 days of filing the
264 application shall be determined to be ineligible. The department shall promulgate regulations in
265 accordance with this subsection. The requirements of this subsection shall be deemed satisfied
266 upon submission to the department of proof of job search activities issued by a 1-stop career
267 center that is established under sections 160 to 168A, inclusive, of chapter 149.

268 (c) The department shall require adult recipients, who are meeting their work requirement
269 through job search and who did not receive full-time employment under the pathways to self-
270 sufficiency program, to provide, on a weekly basis, evidence of job searches by returning to the
271 department a list of the employers contacted, the date of contact and the name and telephone

272 number of the person with whom the applicant spoke, to the extent feasible. The requirements of
273 this subsection shall be deemed satisfied upon submission to the department of proof of job
274 search activities issued by a 1-stop career center that is established under sections 160 to 168A,
275 inclusive, of chapter 149. The department of transitional assistance shall terminate the cash
276 assistance for a recipient who fails to provide such accurate information; provided, however, the
277 department shall not terminate the cash assistance provided to the recipient's dependent children.
278 The department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this subsection.

279 (d) Notwithstanding 106 CMR 203.400(A)(2)(i) or any general or special law to the
280 contrary, an education or training activity, for the purpose of meeting the work requirement, is
281 defined as an accredited community college or certificate program, not to exceed 24 months, or a
282 vocational education, not to exceed 12 months. If the education or training activity is less than
283 the required hours per week to meet the work requirement, the recipient shall perform other work
284 program activities to total the required hours per week.

285 Section 14. The department shall not calculate a separate 60 month benefit period for an
286 individual who receives aid under transitional aid to families with dependent children if the
287 individual is part of a 2 parent assistance unit. The department shall promulgate regulations in
288 accordance with this section.

289 Section 15. The department shall develop economic independence goals for all recipients
290 of cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children to be completed
291 during the recipient's first 24 month period of receiving benefits. The economic independence
292 goals shall assist a recipient in determining a path through which the recipient will be able to be
293 self-sufficient. Recipients who re-apply for benefits at any time after the first 24 month period
294 shall be required to demonstrate a good faith attempt to meet their goals prior to receiving
295 additional benefits. Recipients who fail to demonstrate a good faith attempt to meet all of their
296 goals shall not receive additional benefits or an extension of benefits; provided, however that
297 such failure shall not prohibit a recipient from receiving benefits on behalf of a dependent child.

298 Section 16. (a) The department shall develop a savings program that allows recipients of
299 cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent children and emergency aid to
300 elders, disabled and children to accumulate assets outside of the asset limit. The savings accounts
301 shall be called economic independence accounts. The economic independence accounts shall be
302 used to help recipients save for the first and last month of rent and the security deposit or later
303 expenditure for costs related to education or training, health care, basic household necessities,
304 debt reduction, or other necessary expenses as identified by the department. The economic
305 independence accounts shall not be included as a countable asset under 106 CMR 204.120.

306 (b) For recipients of cash assistance who elect to participate in the program, the
307 department shall require a designated amount of a recipient's cash assistance to be held in an
308 escrow account for the recipient until the recipient is no longer eligible or in need of benefits;

309 provided, further, that the department shall allow a recipient to deposit additional funds into the
310 account. While a recipient is receiving benefits, funds in the economic independence account
311 shall only be withdrawn for a department approved purpose. If a recipient, who is currently
312 receiving benefits, uses funds from the account for any purpose other than a department
313 approved purpose, then the department shall reduce the recipient's monthly cash assistance until
314 the cumulative reductions are equal to the amount used for a non-allowable purpose. The
315 department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this section; provided that the
316 commissioner shall submit any proposed regulations to the joint committee on children, families
317 and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means 30 days
318 before their adoption by the department.

319 Section 17. The department shall treat as uncountable with regard to any maximum
320 countable resource limits and the lump sum income rule up to \$5,000 dollars that has been
321 expended or is placed in an economic independence account for costs relating to first and last
322 month of rent and the security deposit or later expenditure for costs related to education or
323 training, health care, basic household necessities, debt reduction, or other necessary expenses as
324 identified by the department.

325 Section 18. The department shall require unverified applicants for cash assistance for a
326 dependent under transitional aid to families with dependent children to provide proof of income
327 and assets. For the purposes of this section, unverified applicants shall mean an applicant who
328 has not provided the required information about citizenship or immigration status.

329 SECTION 17. Chapter 121B of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
330 section 32F the following section:-

331 Section 32G. A temporary absence from the commonwealth which exceeds 30 calendar
332 days shall create a rebuttable presumption that Massachusetts residency has been abandoned by a
333 recipient of state or municipally-funded or subsidized housing and that the recipient is no longer
334 eligible for such assistance under this chapter. The department shall promulgate regulations in
335 accordance with this section.

336 SECTION 18. The definition of "Child of record" in subsection (a) of section 110 of
337 chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 is hereby amended by adding the following words:- ; provided,
338 however, that the commissioner shall develop specific criteria for approving exceptions or
339 waivers to the family cap provision for extraordinary circumstances and shall only grant an
340 exception or waiver when the specific criteria is met.

341 SECTION 19. Said subsection (b) of said section 110 of said chapter 5 is hereby
342 amended by adding the following paragraph:- The department shall exclude from a filing unit's
343 countable income any earned income of dependent children of the assistance unit who are
344 working part-time while attending school full time. The department shall promulgate regulations

345 in accordance with this section, including, but not limited to, updating clause (2) of subsection
346 (D) of 106 CMR 204.210.

347 SECTION 20. Subsection (e) of said section 110 of said chapter 5 is hereby amended by
348 striking out clauses (1) and (2) and inserting in place thereof the following 2 clauses:-

349 (1) recipients who are disabled, as defined by the federal Social Security Act, 42
350 U.S.C.A. § 423 (d) or, in the commissioner's discretion, a recipient who has been determined by
351 the commonwealth's disability evaluation service to have a disability that substantially reduces
352 the recipient's ability to support the recipient's children taking into account the individual's age,
353 education and work experience; provided that in families with 2 parents, both parents are
354 disabled; provided further, that to the extent permitted by federal law, the word "disabled" shall
355 not include recipients who are dependent on alcohol or drugs or whose disability is based in
356 whole or in part on previous dependency. A recipient who requests an exemption under this
357 clause shall, as a condition of continued eligibility for transitional aid to families with dependent
358 children, apply for supplemental security income (SSI) and, if requested by the department,
359 appeal a denial of SSI benefits. Recipients who do not comply with the department's request to
360 apply for SSI or appeal a decision shall not be granted a work exemption under this clause.

361 (2) recipients who must care for a disabled child or spouse. A recipient who requests an
362 exemption under this clause shall apply for SSI benefits on behalf of their dependent.

363 SECTION 21. Clause (3) of subsection (e) of said section 110 of said chapter 5 is hereby
364 amended by striking out the words "recipients in their third trimester of pregnancy" and inserting
365 in place thereof the following words:-

366 recipients in their 30th week or later of pregnancy who have not quit a job without good
367 cause within the last 30 days, recipients prior to their 30th week of pregnancy who have
368 submitted documentation signed by a primary care provider as defined in section 1 of chapter
369 111 of the General Laws or an obstetrician, gynecologist, nurse-midwife or family practitioner
370 registered and certified under chapter 112 of the General Laws that the recipient has a medical
371 condition that prevents the recipient from working.

372 SECTION 22. The fourth paragraph of subsection (f) of said section 110 of said chapter 5
373 is hereby amended by inserting after the word "extended", in line 2, the following words:- ;
374 provided, however, that an extension of benefits shall not exceed 3 months.

375 SECTION 23. The first paragraph of subsection (j) of said section 110 of said chapter 5 is
376 hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- The department shall exempt from the work
377 requirements a recipient who is age 66 or older; provided, however, that a recipient who is age
378 60 or over, who is the primary caregiver for a child and who was retired prior to applying for
379 benefits shall be exempt from the work requirements; provided further, that the department shall

380 promulgate regulations in accordance with this sentence, including, but not limited to, updating
381 106 CMR 203.100 (A)(1)(h).

382 SECTION 24. Said subsection (j) of said section 110 of said chapter 5, as amended by
383 section 218 of chapter 149 of the acts of 2004, is hereby amended by inserting after the second
384 paragraph the following paragraph:-

385 An individual receiving cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent
386 children, who is not exempt from the work requirements as determined through regulations
387 promulgated by the department may meet the work requirements by participating in an education
388 or training activity for up to the required hours per week as determined by the department. The
389 education or training activity shall not exceed 12 months; provided, however, that the department
390 of transitional assistance may extend the duration of the education or training activity eligible
391 towards the work requirement if the department determines, using performance standards
392 established by the department, that the individual is making substantial progress towards
393 completion of a certificate or degree program. The department shall promulgate regulations in
394 accordance with this section.

395 SECTION 25. In fiscal year 2014 the department of higher education shall expend no
396 less than \$1,500,000 for the high demand scholarship program for students from the
397 commonwealth who are enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education in the University
398 of Massachusetts, state universities and community colleges designated by the board of higher
399 education to be a training program for an in-demand profession as defined by the executive
400 office of labor and workforce development's study on labor market conditions pursuant to item
401 7070-0066 of section 2 of chapter 38 of the acts of 2013.

402 SECTION 26. Notwithstanding any general or special law, subject to appropriation, the
403 integrated eligibility system, or IES, developed by the executive office of health and human
404 services shall allow multiple state agencies and programs to access and share data by creating
405 data hubs and streamlining information processes. Through the integrated eligibility system, the
406 department of housing and community development, housing authorities and state health and
407 human services agencies and programs including, but not limited to, transitional aid to families
408 with dependent children, temporary assistance for needy families and MassHealth shall share and
409 have access to the data.

410 SECTION 27. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a pregnant
411 teen, aged 16 to 20 years old, who meets all other eligibility requirements shall be eligible to live
412 in a teen parent shelter or participate in a teen living program during her entire pregnancy and
413 shall be eligible to receive cash assistance under transitional aid to families with dependent
414 children if she meets the school attendance requirements set forth in 106 CMR 203.610 and the
415 requirements set forth in 106 CMR 203.630.

416 SECTION 28. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department
417 of transitional assistance shall not approve an application for new benefits for any person
418 required to register under sections 178C to 178P of chapter 6 of the General Laws and who has
419 failed to register until the individual registers as required by said sections 178C to 178P of said
420 chapter 6; provided, however, that prior to the denial of benefits, the department shall provide the
421 applicant with notice of the applicant's failure to register under said sections 178C to 178P of
422 said chapter 6 and a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

423 SECTION 29. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall
424 be a special commission to investigate and study how poverty in the commonwealth can be
425 reduced by 10 per cent in the next 5 years and 20 per cent in the next 10 years by engaging the
426 public, private, and non-profit sectors drawn from all regions of the commonwealth and
427 representing rural, urban and suburban populations.

428 (b) The investigation and study shall include, but not be limited to: (1) appropriate
429 measures of poverty; (2) the root causes of poverty; (3) analysis of income inequality in
430 Massachusetts, in particular examining the number of people and families in the commonwealth
431 living below 200 per cent of the federal poverty level and the socio-economic challenges they
432 face, while also calculating the number of people and families living at multiples above and
433 below the federal poverty level; (4) violence in urban areas, particularly gun violence, and its
434 effect on youth, commercial activity, and job opportunities in the community; (5) the number and
435 types of existing jobs and the economically competitive strengths of the commonwealth; (6)
436 obstacles to job opportunities for the poor; (7) barriers to education from pre-school through
437 college and recommendations to remove barriers and increase education levels; (8) recent
438 examples and categories of successful paths out of poverty for youth, families, and
439 neighborhoods; (9) successful approaches and innovative system change efforts to reduce
440 poverty and violence within the commonwealth and throughout North America; and (10)
441 recommended action by the public, private and non-profit sectors to achieve the poverty
442 reduction goals stated above. The commission shall also produce data, estimates, and conduct
443 analysis on the potential long-term municipal and state government savings that would result
444 from effective poverty reduction efforts throughout the commonwealth as the number of people
445 in need of government safety net spending is reduced. The commission shall establish a
446 methodology for calculating annually relevant and appropriate metrics of poverty in the
447 commonwealth.

448 (c) The commission shall consist of the following members: the Governor, who will serve
449 as chair; the secretary of administration and finance, or a designee; the secretary of housing and
450 economic development, or a designee; the secretary of health and human services, or a designee;
451 2 appointees to be chosen by the speaker of the house of representatives, 2 appointees to be
452 chosen by the president of the senate; 1 appointee to be chosen by the Massachusetts Mayors'
453 Association; 1 appointee to be chosen by the chair from a chamber of commerce in the
454 commonwealth; 1 appointee to be chosen by the Associated Industries of Massachusetts; 1

455 appointee to be chosen by the Retailers Association of Massachusetts; 1 appointee to be chosen
456 by the Massachusetts Non-Profit Network; 1 appointee to be chosen by the chair from a non-
457 profit organization assisting low-income individuals and families; and 1 appointee to be chosen
458 by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. The commission shall be staffed by a social impact consulting
459 firm or a Massachusetts based philanthropic foundation through a procurement managed by the
460 secretary of administration and finance.

461 (d) The commission shall report its findings to the general court, along with draft
462 legislation necessary to carry its recommendations into effect, by filing the report on or before
463 September 1, 2014 with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the house and
464 senate chairs of the joint committee on children, families, and persons with disabilities, the house
465 and senate chairs of the joint committee on labor and workforce development, the house and
466 senate chairs of the joint committee on economic development and emerging technologies and
467 the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means.

468 SECTION 30. Sections 14, 16, and 18 shall take effect 90 days after the effective date of
469 this act.