SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1280 FILED ON: 1/16/2015

SENATE . . . . . No. 665

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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing an education loan repayment program for social workers in areas of need.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*
Carmine L. Gentile	*13th Middlesex*
David M. Rogers	*24th Middlesex*
Eileen M. Donoghue	*First Middlesex*
Jason M. Lewis	*Fifth Middlesex*
Sonia Chang-Diaz	*Second Suffolk*
Mary S. Keefe	*15th Worcester*
Sean Garballey	*23rd Middlesex*
Barbara A. L'Italien	*Second Essex and Middlesex*
Kathleen O'Connor Ives	*First Essex*
Patricia D. Jehlen	*Second Middlesex*
Anne M. Gobi	*Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*
Todd M. Smola	*1st Hampden*
Kenneth J. Donnelly	*Fourth Middlesex*
Paul R. Heroux	*2nd Bristol*
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	*26th Middlesex*

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By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 665) of James B. Eldridge, Carmine L. Gentile, David M. Rogers, Eileen M. Donoghue and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish a education loan repayment program for social workers in areas of need. Higher Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *51* OF 2013-2014.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)

An Act establishing an education loan repayment program for social workers in areas of need.

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. To provide for certain unanticipated obligations of the commonwealth, to provide for an alteration of purpose for current appropriations, and to meet certain requirements of law, the sum set forth in this section is hereby appropriated from the General Fund unless specifically designated otherwise in this section, for the several purposes and subject to the conditions specified in this section, and subject to the laws regulating the disbursement of public funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. This sum shall be in addition to any amounts previously appropriated and made available for the purposes of this item.

XXXX-XXXX For the Licensed Certified Social Worker Student Education Loan Repayment

Pilot Program Trust Fund established in section 2 of this act.... $1,200,000

SECTION 2. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be a licensed certified social worker student education loan repayment pilot program, hereinafter referred to as the pilot program, for the purpose of increasing and retaining access to child welfare services and social services in the commonwealth. The pilot program shall provide financial assistance to eligible program participants to assist them in repaying student education loans, as defined in this section; provided, that the pilot program shall be limited to a total of 100 licensed certified social workers. The pilot program shall be administered by the board of higher education. The board, in collaboration with the executive office of health and human services, shall promulgate guidelines governing the pilot program. The guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, the following provisions: (1) eligibility shall be limited to persons with incomes that do not exceed 500% of the federal poverty level; (2) eligibility shall be limited to persons entering the field of social work after July 1, 2011; (3) eligibility shall be limited to social workers who are licensed certified social workers as defined in section 130 of chapter 112 of the General Laws and who are employed in child welfare, or in a geographic or programmatic setting defined as high need under the guidelines governing the pilot program; (4) the commonwealth shall repay a student education loan at a rate not to exceed $250 per month for a period not to exceed 48 months; (5) payments by the commonwealth shall be made directly to the lender on behalf of a pilot program participant, and shall cover only loan payments owed by the participant in the months during which the participant works in the commonwealth as a licensed certified social worker in child welfare, or in a geographic or programmatic setting defined as high need under pilot program guidelines; (6) procedures for selecting 100 pilot program participants among eligible applicants; and (7) measures to deal with

situations in which a pilot program participant ceases to comply with program requirements. For the purposes of this section, the term student education loan shall mean any indebtedness, including interest on such indebtedness, incurred to pay tuition, fees or other direct expenses incurred in connection with the pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant, but shall not include loans made by any person related to the applicant, or loans paid by credit card.

(b) There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Licensed Certified Social Worker Student Education Loan Repayment Pilot Program Trust Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Licensed Certified Social Worker Education Loan Repayment Fund, to which shall be credited any appropriations or other monies authorized by the general court and designated to be credited thereto. The board of higher education shall hold the Licensed Certified Social Worker Education Loan Repayment Fund in an account separate from other funds or accounts. Amounts credited to the Licensed Certified Social Worker Education Loan Repayment Fund shall be used, without further appropriation, by the commissioner of higher education or his designee, to carry out the licensed certified social worker student education loan repayment pilot program established in this section. (c) The licensed certified social worker student education loan repayment pilot program shall expire once the final payment is made under this section by the board of higher education on behalf of all pilot program participants. The board of higher education shall evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program and its benefits and costs to the commonwealth and shall submit a report, together with its recommendations on whether a permanent program should be established and if so how such program should be structured, to the general court by filing the report with the house and

senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education, not less than one year prior to the expiration of the pilot program.