

SENATE No. 700

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mark C. Montigny

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 to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Mark C. Montigny</i>	<i>Second Bristol and Plymouth</i>	
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

SENATE No. 700

By Mr. Montigny, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 700) of Mark C. Montigny, Kevin G. Honan, Eric P. Lesser and Sal N. DiDomenico for legislation to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges.

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. Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 16 the following section:-

3 Section 16A. There shall be a Bridge the Gap Scholarship Program to provide universal
4 access for residents of the Commonwealth to public higher education through accredited degree
5 programs offered at community college institutions under section 5 of this chapter. Such
6 assistance shall apply only after all other federal and state financial assistance has been
7 exhausted. To be eligible, students must have obtained a high school diploma, or its equivalent,
8 from an institution within the Commonwealth within the preceding two years, maintain a
9 cumulative 2.5 grade point average during their course of study, complete their course of study
10 within three years, and agree to reside and work within the Commonwealth for at least two years
11 after graduation of such course of study or further degree program within the Commonwealth. If
12 a student does not fulfill the above requirements, the scholarship will be converted into a low

13 interest loan to be determined and administered by the Department of Higher Education and
14 Massachusetts Education Financing Authority (MEFA) with exemptions for financial hardship.

15 Each community college shall annually consult with their Board of Trustees, local
16 workforce developments boards, and employers to identify current and future workforce needs
17 within such region. Upon identifying such workforce needs, the college shall certify up to five
18 programs eligible to qualify under the Bridge the Gap Scholarship Program to promote universal
19 access to higher education and workforce readiness. The college shall annually file with the
20 Department of Higher Education those programs certified to receive the Bridge the Gap
21 scholarship. The Department of Higher Education may promulgate regulations to implement this
22 section.