

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carlos González

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 the COVID-19 Essential Worker Burial Assistance Fund.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | DATE ADDED: |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Carlos González</i> | <i>10th Hampden</i> | <i>4/27/2020</i> |
| <i>José F. Tosado</i> | <i>9th Hampden</i> | <i>4/27/2020</i> |
| <i>Marcos A. Devers</i> | <i>16th Essex</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Nika C. Elugardo</i> | <i>15th Suffolk</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i> | <i>12th Plymouth</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Brendan P. Crighton</i> | <i>Third Essex</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>John Barrett, III</i> | <i>1st Berkshire</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Mindy Domb</i> | <i>3rd Hampshire</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Edward F. Coppinger</i> | <i>10th Suffolk</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Sheila C. Harrington</i> | <i>1st Middlesex</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Denise Provost</i> | <i>27th Middlesex</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Bud L. Williams</i> | <i>11th Hampden</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Diana DiZoglio</i> | <i>First Essex</i> | <i>4/28/2020</i> |
| <i>Adrian C. Madaro</i> | <i>1st Suffolk</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |
| <i>Michelle M. DuBois</i> | <i>10th Plymouth</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |
| <i>Gerard J. Cassidy</i> | <i>9th Plymouth</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |
| <i>John C. Velis</i> | <i>4th Hampden</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |
| <i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i> | <i>13th Bristol</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Kevin G. Honan</i> | <i>17th Suffolk</i> | <i>4/29/2020</i> |
| <i>Frank A. Moran</i> | <i>17th Essex</i> | <i>5/1/2020</i> |
| <i>Daniel Cahill</i> | <i>10th Essex</i> | <i>5/4/2020</i> |
| <i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i> | <i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i> | <i>5/4/2020</i> |
| <i>David M. Rogers</i> | <i>24th Middlesex</i> | <i>5/5/2020</i> |

HOUSE No.

By Mr. González of Springfield, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Carlos González and others for legislation to establish a COVID-19 essential worker burial assistance fund. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act establishing the COVID-19 Essential Worker Burial Assistance Fund.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for assistance for certain burial costs during the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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. For the purposes of this act, the following words shall, unless the context
2 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

3 “Fund”, the COVID-19 Essential Worker Burial Assistance Fund established in section 2.

4 “Gateway municipalities”, as defined by section 3A of chapter 23A of the General Laws.

5 “Low-income families”, households whose income does not exceed 200 per cent of the
6 federal poverty level.

7

8 “Low-wage essential workforce member”, an individual who is employed in a COVID-
9 19 essential workforce earning an hourly wage of not more than \$15 per hour for their
10 employment in said essential workforces.

11 SECTION 2. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth
12 a separate fund to be known as the COVID-19 Essential Worker Burial Assistance Fund to be
13 administered by the executive office of health and human services.

14

15 (b) The purpose of the fund shall be to provide financial assistance in the form of grants
16 to low-income families, low-wage essential workforce members and residents of gateway
17 municipalities to defray postmortem expenses related to deaths due to COVID-19. Each grant
18 provided to an individual shall be in an amount that is not less than \$1,500; provided, that the
19 funds shall be used to mitigate or offset funeral, burial, cremation or other postmortem expenses
20 resulting from death due to COVID-19.

21 (c) There shall be credited to the fund all amounts that are, by law, transferred or
22 authorized to be transferred thereto or directed to be deposited therein, and all amounts received
23 as gifts, grants, or contributions for the purposes of the fund. Amounts credited to the fund shall
24 not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal
25 year shall not revert to the General Fund.

26 (d) The executive office of health and human services shall promulgate regulations
27 necessary to carry out the purposes of this act, including, but not limited to, regulations
28 pertaining to grant application and disbursement procedures.

29 SECTION 3. On the effective date of this act, the comptroller shall transfer \$5,000,000
30 from the General Fund to the COVID-19 Essential Worker Burial Assistance Fund for the
31 purposes of carrying out this act.