HOUSE . . . . No. 1248

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

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 a commission to study student loan debt relief programs.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
John C. Velis	4th Hampden	1/15/2019
Sean Garballey	23rd Middlesex	2/1/2019
Richard M. Haggerty	30th Middlesex	1/22/2019
Rady Mom	18th Middlesex	1/23/2019
Thomas M. Petrolati	7th Hampden	1/25/2019
José F. Tosado	9th Hampden	1/31/2019
Bud L. Williams	11th Hampden	1/30/2019

HOUSE . . . . No. 1248

By Mr. Velis of Westfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1248) of John C. Velis and others for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to student load debt. Higher Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *3005* OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing a commission to study student loan debt relief programs.

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. (a) The Massachusetts General Court shall initiate a commission to study

2   and draft policies to ease the burden of student loan debt on citizens on the Commonwealth.

3   (1)   Said Commission shall have three members of the Massachusetts House of

4   Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

5   (2)   Said Commission shall have three members of the Massachusetts Senate,

6   appointed by the President of the Senate;

7   (3)   Said commission shall have two attorneys, admitted to the Massachusetts Bar,

8   who specialize in student loans for higher education;

9   (4)   Said Commission shall have a representative from a consumer advocacy group,

10   operating in Massachusetts, which has a history of advocating for student borrower protections;

11   and

12   (5)   Said Commission shall have a representative from an association or advocacy

13   group, operating in Massachusetts, which has a history of advocating on behalf of lenders and

14   banks.

15   (b)   The commission will specifically study

16   (1)   The economic impact of student loan debt on individuals and families in the

17   Commonwealth;

18   (2)   The lending and refinancing programs currently run by the Massachusetts

19   Educational Financing Authority and other private lenders;

20   (3)   The possibility of a new state-run refinancing program that can offer refinancing

21   loans to borrowers with lower credit scores who cannot currently get their loans refinanced

22   through MEFA or private lenders;

23   (4)   Repayment Assistance Programs for borrowers in high-need professions and

24   locations in the Commonwealth;

25   (5)   Tax relief programs for borrowers of student loans in the Commonwealth; and

26   (6)   Any other programs or policies that would be beneficial for those working to

27   repay student loan debt in the Commonwealth.

28   (c)   Said commission shall file a report that includes policy recommendations to

29   improve existing programs that seek to ease the burden of student loan debt, in addition to policy

30   recommendations to establish new programs for the same purpose. They shall file their report

31   with the clerk of either chamber, as well as the Chairmen of the Joint Committee on Higher

32   Education and the Joint Committee on Financial Services, no later than December 31st, 2020.