

SENATE No. 208

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Eric P. Lesser

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 Western Massachusetts remote worker relocation incentive program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/29/2019</i>
<i>Adam G. Hinds</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>1/29/2019</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Aaron Vega</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Daniel R. Carey</i>	<i>2nd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>

SENATE No. 208

By Mr. Lesser, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 208) of Eric P. Lesser, Joseph A. Boncore, Adam G. Hinds, Julian Cyr and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish the Western Massachusetts remote worker relocation incentive program. Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing the Western Massachusetts remote worker relocation incentive program.

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 23A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
2 following section:-

3 Section 68. (a) There shall be a grant program within the department known as the
4 Western Massachusetts Remote Worker Incentive Program, hereafter referred to as the program,
5 for the purpose of encouraging new remote workers who work for in-state and out-of-state
6 employers to live in Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin or Berkshire County, by providing financial
7 assistance for qualifying remote worker expenses. The program shall be administered by the
8 department. Nothing in this section guarantees an individual a right to the benefits provided in
9 this section.

10 As used in this section, the following words shall have the following meanings unless the
11 context clearly requires otherwise:

12 “New remote worker” means an individual who (i) is an employee of a business with its
13 domicile or primary place of business outside of Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin or Berkshire
14 County; (ii) becomes a full-time resident of the commonwealth in Hampshire, Hampden,
15 Franklin or Berkshire County; and (iii) performs the majority of her or his employment duties
16 remotely from a home office or a co-working space located in Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin or
17 Berkshire County.

18 “Qualifying remote worker expenses” means actual costs a new remote worker incurs for
19 one or more of the following that are necessary to perform her or his employment duties,
20 including but not limited to (i) relocation to Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin or Berkshire
21 County; (ii) computer software and hardware; (iii) broadband access or upgrade; and (iv)
22 membership in a co-working or similar space.

23 (b) A new remote worker may be eligible for a grant under the program for qualifying
24 remote worker expenses in the amount of not more than \$5,000 per year, not to exceed a total of
25 \$10,000 per individual new remote worker over the life of the program.

26 (c) The department of economic development shall award grants under the program on a
27 first-come, first-served basis, as follows: (i) not more than \$250,000 in calendar year 2020; (ii)
28 not more than \$500,000 in calendar year 2021; (iii) not more than \$250,000 in calendar year
29 2022.

30 (d) The department shall design and implement the program, which shall include a
31 certification process to certify new remote workers and certify qualifying expenses for a grant
32 under this section. Applications for the program shall be reviewed and grants shall be awarded
33 on an annual basis.

34 (e) The department shall, at a minimum, (i) adopt procedures for implementing the
35 program; (ii) promote awareness of the program, including through coordination with relevant
36 trade groups and by integration into the department's economic development marketing
37 campaigns; and (iii) adopt measurable goals, performance measures, and an audit strategy to
38 assess the utilization and performance of the program. The department shall promulgate
39 regulations on or before January 1, 2020.

40 (f) On or before October 1, 2020, the department shall submit a report to the house and
41 senate ways and means committees, the joint committee on economic development and emerging
42 technologies and the joint committee on labor and workforce development concerning the
43 implementation of this section, including but not limited to (i) a description of the procedures
44 adopted pursuant to subdivision (e)(i) of this section; (ii) the promotion and marketing of the
45 program pursuant to subdivision (e)(ii) of this section; (iii) any additional recommendations for
46 qualifying remote worker expenses or qualifying workers that should be eligible under the
47 program, and (iv) any recommendations for changes to the maximum allowable amount of the
48 grant.

49 SECTION 2. Section 68 of Chapter 23A, inserted by Section 1, is hereby repealed.

50 SECTION 3. Section 2 shall take effect on January 1, 2022.