

SENATE No. 744

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 to guarantee debt-free public higher education.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/22/2019</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/22/2019</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/22/2019</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/23/2019</i>
<i>Nick Collins</i>	<i>First Suffolk</i>	<i>1/23/2019</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>1/23/2019</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	<i>1/24/2019</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/28/2019</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>1/28/2019</i>
<i>Michael J. Barrett</i>	<i>Third Middlesex</i>	<i>1/29/2019</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Adam G. Hinds</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>

<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>James Arciero</i>	<i>2nd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Bristol</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Cindy F. Friedman</i>	<i>Fourth Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/4/2019</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>5/30/2019</i>

SENATE No. 744

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 744) of James B. Eldridge, Natalie M. Higgins, Jack Patrick Lewis, Carmine Lawrence Gentile and other members of the General Court for legislation to guarantee debt-free public higher education. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to guarantee debt-free public higher education.

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. Section 1 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “opportunities.” in line 14 the
3 following words:-

4 It is hereby further declared to be the policy of the commonwealth to guarantee free
5 public higher education as a right for all residents.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
7 following section:-

8 Section 45. (a) Definitions

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

11 “Board”, the Board of Higher Education.

12 “Eligible Student”, a resident of the commonwealth as determined by the board of higher
13 education's residency status for tuition classification purposes, who has attained a high school
14 diploma or its equivalent in the commonwealth, who is admitted to and enrolled in a
15 Massachusetts public college or university or other public certificate, vocational, or adult
16 education program, and who is enrolled full-time or part-time, and who maintains a cumulative
17 GPA of 2.0 or above.

18 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the
19 board shall create a grant program to pay the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees to an
20 eligible student at any Massachusetts public college or university, or certificate, vocational, or
21 training program at a public institution, up to the equivalent of four years of public college or
22 university.

23 (c) The grant shall supplement and shall not replace state grants, gift aid, institutional aid,
24 or federal aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid process. The board shall
25 promulgate regulations to ensure funds from this program do not affect eligibility for other state
26 grants, gift aid, institutional aid, or federal aid through the Free Application for Federal Student
27 Aid process.

28 (d) All public higher education and public vocational training institutions shall be
29 considered eligible institutions for this program and there shall be no restrictions on a student's
30 choice of academic programs.

31 (e) The board shall provide an annual notice of eligibility for this program to all eligible
32 students and all new graduates from a Massachusetts high school or GED program. The board
33 will maintain a database of all students currently or potentially eligible for this program.