

HOUSE No. 2033

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Tram T. Nguyen and Kenneth I. Gordon

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 Increase Unemployment Insurance Benefits for Low Wage Workers.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | DATE ADDED: |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Tram T. Nguyen</i> | <i>18th Essex</i> | <i>2/18/2021</i> |
| <i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i> | <i>21st Middlesex</i> | <i>2/18/2021</i> |
| <i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i> | <i>1st Hampshire</i> | <i>2/18/2021</i> |
| <i>Steven C. Owens</i> | <i>29th Middlesex</i> | <i>2/24/2021</i> |
| <i>Michael S. Day</i> | <i>31st Middlesex</i> | <i>2/25/2021</i> |
| <i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i> | <i>13th Bristol</i> | <i>2/25/2021</i> |
| <i>Kate Lipper-Garabedian</i> | <i>32nd Middlesex</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i> | <i>17th Worcester</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Carlos González</i> | <i>10th Hampden</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Adrian C. Madaro</i> | <i>1st Suffolk</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>James K. Hawkins</i> | <i>2nd Bristol</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Brian W. Murray</i> | <i>10th Worcester</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i> | <i>3rd Berkshire</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i> | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Christine P. Barber</i> | <i>34th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/6/2021</i> |
| <i>Mike Connolly</i> | <i>26th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/8/2021</i> |
| <i>Marcos A. Devers</i> | <i>16th Essex</i> | <i>3/15/2021</i> |
| <i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i> | <i>13th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/18/2021</i> |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Danillo A. Sena</i> | <i>37th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/19/2021</i> |
| <i>Christopher Hendricks</i> | <i>11th Bristol</i> | <i>3/26/2021</i> |
| <i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i> | <i>27th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/26/2021</i> |
| <i>David Paul Linsky</i> | <i>5th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/29/2021</i> |
| <i>Michael O. Moore</i> | <i>Second Worcester</i> | <i>3/29/2021</i> |
| <i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i> | <i>6th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/30/2021</i> |
| <i>Walter F. Timilty</i> | <i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i> | <i>3/30/2021</i> |
| <i>Russell E. Holmes</i> | <i>6th Suffolk</i> | <i>4/1/2021</i> |
| <i>Tommy Vitolo</i> | <i>15th Norfolk</i> | <i>4/1/2021</i> |
| <i>Tackey Chan</i> | <i>2nd Norfolk</i> | <i>4/5/2021</i> |
| <i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i> | <i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i> | <i>4/12/2021</i> |
| <i>Paul R. Feeney</i> | <i>Bristol and Norfolk</i> | <i>5/12/2021</i> |

HOUSE No. 2033

By Representatives Nguyen of Andover and Gordon of Bedford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2033) of Tram T. Nguyen, Kenneth I. Gordon and others for legislation to increase unemployment insurance benefits for low wage workers. Labor and Workforce Development.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act to Increase Unemployment Insurance Benefits for Low Wage Workers.

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. Subsection (w) of section 1 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as
2 appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out, in lines 343 and 344,
3 the words “reported for the highest quarter” and inserting in place thereof the following words:-

4 wages reported for the highest quarter; and provided further, that if such deeming renders
5 the individual ineligible for unemployment benefits, the amount shall be 1/26 of the total wages
6 reported in the 2 quarters.

7 SECTION 2. Subsection (a) of section 24 of chapter 151A of the general laws, as so
8 appearing, is hereby amended by striking in line 4, the words “thirty times the weekly benefit
9 rate,” and inserting the words:-

10 15 times the average weekly wage, provided that when there is a reduction in the benefit
11 rate from 30 times to 26 times the benefit rate under subsection (a) of section 30, an individual
12 shall have been paid wages in the base period amounting to at least 13 times the average weekly

13 wage; provided that if the individual is thereby rendered ineligible for unemployment benefits,
14 the individual shall have been paid wages in two quarters of the base period;

15 SECTION 3. Section 29 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
16 amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

17 (a) An individual in total unemployment and otherwise eligible for benefits shall be paid
18 for each week of unemployment an amount equal to fifty percent of the individual's average
19 weekly wage in their base period, rounded to the next lower full dollar amount; but not more,
20 exclusive of dependency benefits, than fifty-seven and one-half per cent of the average weekly
21 wage of all employees covered by this chapter; nor less than twenty percent of the average
22 weekly wage of all employees covered by this chapter or seventy-five percent of the individual's
23 average weekly wage, whichever is less, exclusive of dependency benefits. On or before the first
24 day of October of each year, the total wages reported on contribution reports for the twelve
25 months ending March the thirty-first of such year shall be divided by the average monthly
26 number of insured employees (determined by dividing the total insured employees reported on
27 contribution reports for the twelve months ending March the thirty-first by twelve). The average
28 annual wage thus obtained shall be divided by fifty-two and the average weekly wage thus
29 determined, rounded to the nearest cent. Fifty-seven and one-half per cent of this amount,
30 rounded to the next lower full dollar amount shown shall establish the maximum weekly benefit
31 rate paid any individual whose benefit year commences on or after the first Sunday of October
32 of each year and prior to the first Sunday of October the following year. Twenty per cent of the
33 average weekly wage of all employees covered by this chapter, rounded to the next lower full
34 dollar amount shown shall establish the minimum weekly benefit rate paid any individual whose
35 benefit year commences on or after the first Sunday of October each year and prior to the first

36 Sunday of October the following year, provided that the weekly benefit amount which an
37 individual may receive during the individual's benefit year exclusive of dependency benefits is
38 not greater than seventy-five per cent of the individual's average weekly wage.

39 SECTION 4. Section 30 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby
40 amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection:-

41 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), the total benefits which an unemployed
42 individual may receive during his benefit year shall be an amount equal to sixty percent of his
43 wages in the base period, or an amount equal to 30 times the individual's weekly benefit rate in
44 the base period, whichever is less, plus dependency benefits payable under section 29; provided,
45 however, that if in any month the average local unemployment for the last 12 months, as
46 determined by the United States Department of Labor is equal to or below 5.1 per cent in each of
47 the 10 metropolitan statistical areas of the commonwealth, the total benefits which an
48 unemployed individual who then files a claim may receive during his benefit year shall be an
49 amount equal to 60 per cent of his wages in the base period or an amount equal to 26 times the
50 individual's weekly benefit rate, whichever is less, plus dependency benefits payable under said
51 section 29; provided further that no such reduction in benefit rate from 30 times to 26 times the
52 weekly benefit rate due to the operation of this section shall occur to an individual's total benefit
53 amount if, in any month during the individual's benefit year, the requirements of this section
54 have not been met. If such amount includes a fractional part of a dollar, it shall be rounded to the
55 next lower full dollar amount.