

SENATE No. 121

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jason M. Lewis

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 relative to economic mobility for families with low-income.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	
<i>Diana DiZoglio</i>	<i>First Essex</i>	<i>3/1/2021</i>

SENATE No. 121

By Mr. Lewis, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 121) of Jason M. Lewis and Diana DiZoglio for legislation relative to economic mobility for families with low-income. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 58 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to economic mobility for families with low-income.

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. The executive office of administration and finance in conjunction with the
2 executive office of health and human services, the executive office of housing and economic
3 development, the executive office of labor and workforce development and the executive office
4 of education shall conduct and report an impact study on the impacts of minimum wage increase
5 as directed in the Chapter 121 of the Acts of 2018 on households with low incomes who would
6 lose the eligibility of benefits due to the wage increase with decline in net resources and face
7 cliff effects. The impact study shall also recommend directives to determine ways to adjust
8 assistance in response to changes in income, including but not limited to automatic adjustments
9 tied to minimum wage increases and options for increasing utilization of the earned income tax
10 credit so as to prevent families from facing cliff effects. The report shall be submitted to the

11 clerks of the house and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the
12 interagency council on housing and homelessness no later than January 1, 2022.

13 SECTION 2. The executive office of health and human services, executive office of
14 housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and
15 executive office of education shall examine economic mobility programs, recommend criteria for
16 evaluation and create a mechanism for evaluating economic mobility programs for program
17 outcomes including changes in earned income, education and state and federally funded services
18 and the feedback of participants and those not enrolled in programs, for the purpose of producing
19 a report. The report shall recommend directives for each executive office to expand outreach to
20 eligible non-participants to boost enrollment. The report shall outline the outcomes for economic
21 mobility and financial stability programs for families and individuals with extremely low
22 incomes, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The
23 report shall be submitted to the clerks of the house and the senate, the house and senate
24 committees on ways and means and the interagency council on housing and homelessness no
25 later than January 1, 2022.

26 SECTION 3. (a) The executive office of health and human services, executive office of
27 housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and
28 executive office of education shall file an annual report for the purposes of gaining a deeper
29 understanding of housing instability faced by families in order to efficiently predict and better
30 direct homelessness prevention and housing resources. The report shall include the following
31 metrics:

32 (i) The number of client households that have been identified as homeless and at risk of
33 homelessness; The numbers of households receiving Emergency Assistance Shelter also
34 receiving benefits and services from the following: Department of Transitional Assistance
35 (DTA) – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, DTA – Transitional Aid for Families with
36 Dependent Children; Workforce Development Programs; Department of Children and Families,
37 Department of Public Health - Early Intervention Services, MassHealth; income sources for
38 families in shelter; MassHealth data on housing instability screening for patients;

39 (ii) The stability of households that have received assistance from the HomeBASE
40 program, including, the numbers of households that were evicted, the numbers that returned to
41 shelter, number of households with DCF involvement, numbers with incomes below 150% of the
42 Federal Poverty Level. The Department shall coordinate with programs under the Executive
43 Office of Health and Human Services on matching data sets for the purposes of this report;

44 (iii) The number of contracted slots for homeless children and the current utilization, the
45 number of childcare vouchers issued to homelessness households (to be submitted by Early
46 Education and Care); and

47 (iv) The cross agency working groups and committees relative to homelessness, that are
48 currently active at the state agencies, will submit their reports and finding on housing stability
49 and economic mobility.

50 (b) The report shall be submitted to the clerks of the house and the senate, the house and
51 senate committees on ways and means and the interagency council on housing and homelessness
52 no later than January 1 of each year

53 SECTION 4. (a) the executive office of health and human services, executive office of
54 housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and
55 the executive office of education shall establish a telephone hotline for citizens to have the
56 ability to get advice on program benefits and intersectionality with other programs.

57 (b) There shall be a benefits calculator for use by the public through a website with
58 instructions for the public.

59 (c) Information about the assistance program including the phone number shall be posted
60 on each office's website. Each executive office shall provide training for: calculating benefits
61 using a benefits calculator in order to optimize benefits to avoid cliff effects.