The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul R. Feeney

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 establish a commission to report on the Moral Budget.

PETITION OF:

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DISTRICT/ADDRESS</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul R. Feeney</td>
<td>Bristol and Norfolk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joanne M. Comerford</td>
<td>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</td>
<td>3/3/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erika Uyterhoeven</td>
<td>27th Middlesex</td>
<td>3/15/2021</td>
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An Act to establish a commission to report on the Moral Budget.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Moral Budget Resolution

Whereas we live in the richest country in the history of the world and have abundant resources to ensure dignity and health of people and the country, the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences have revealed the need to dramatically change our priorities and reallocate funding to preserve the future of the people of this Commonwealth and the country as a whole;

According to 2010 US Census categories some 10% - close to 700,000 people - are living below the poverty level in Massachusetts. Many more are struggling with high housing costs, student debt, and inability to afford adequate healthcare. The number of persons experiencing homelessness last year was at least 20,000.

Before the pandemic about 30% of the Massachusetts budget derived from Federal Government funds. With the CARES Act and additional federal stimuli, even more of the state budget is coupled to the federal budget.
Therefore, be it resolved that the Members of the Massachusetts Legislature call upon the MA members of the U.S. Congressional Delegation and the President to support the Moral Budget for America (developed by the Poor People’s Campaign and the Institute for Policy Studies) to revive, repair and renew our national and state economies.

Education: The Moral Budget invests $24.4 billion per year in K-12 schools and teachers to boost academic performance among poor and struggling children. This would bring $480 million to Massachusetts for public education, sufficient to hire more than 6,000 well trained teachers. This would significantly contribute to the $2 billion needed to fully fund the State Fund Our Future Education initiative.

The Moral Budget also invests about $70 billion per year for the federal and state shares of providing four years of free public college. This would bring about $1.4 billion into Massachusetts, and lift up the prospects of completing their education for the 260,000 students in the public colleges and universities.

Housing: The Moral budget provides $44 billion per year in investments in a housing trust fund to build, maintain, and preserve affordable rental homes. The sums coming to Massachusetts cold be used to end Homelessness in the Commonwealth.

Healthcare: Whereas the largest expenditure in the Massachusetts budget is for healthcare, and 379,000 people are still uninsured, the Moral Budget contributes funding for States to transition to lower cost single payer health care;

Family Services: As an immediate measure, The Moral Budget restores $8.9 billion for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to previous funding levels, to provide a modicum of relief to poor families who deserve a fully functional safety net. TANF has not been
adjusted for inflation since the Clinton administration. The restored budget would bring

$180,000,000 to poor families in Mass.

Veterans Services: Whereas some 20% of veterans in Massachusetts are living on less
than $35,000 a year and one in five are living in poverty, the Moral Budget eliminates veteran’s
homelessness, expands access to mental health care and expands job training for veterans;

Transportation: The Moral Budget increases in federal transportation spending would
bring about $1.2 billion/year for Massachusetts. This would enable re-establishing train service
for “South Coast Rail” to New Bedford and Fall River; begin design for the North Station -
South Station Connector, which would unify the nearly entire east coast rail while also fixing
many confusing commutes; extending the Blue Line to Lynn; and expanding Regional Bus
Service for Central and Western MA.

Right to Vote and Mass Incarceration: Whereas almost 3,000 black adults in
Massachusetts cannot vote due to felony voting restrictions, the Moral Budget increases funding
for voter protection and legal assistance programs and funds public financing of campaigns.

Clean Water: By Investing $37.2 billion a year in water infrastructure, the Moral Budget
would create up to 945,000 jobs while providing safe drinking water to thousands of
communities that don’t have it. Some 18,000 of these jobs would be provided to Massachusetts
residents, enabling upgrades in water systems of cities and towns throughout the
Commonwealth.

Climate Protection: Given that in Massachusetts 10,450 tons of NOx are emitted yearly, a
leading cause of respiratory problems, the Moral Budget invests $200 billion in transitioning to
clean renewable energy, crumbling roads, bridges, and a Green New Deal to build a fully
modernized electric grid and create about 50,000 high-quality jobs in Massachusetts.

Fair Wages: A $15 federal minimum wage enacted immediately would raise pay for 49
million workers nationally by a combined $328 billion per year. This would benefit about a
million Massachusetts workers, raising their purchasing power by $600 million.

Peace and Security: Hundreds of Massachusetts residents have been wounded or lost their
lives fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond since 2001. Pursuing these military adventures
have diverted funds from sectors that will make us more resilient and safer such as healthcare,
education, the transition to renewable energy, and increased protection of vital natural resources
in The Moral Budget saves as much as $350 billion per year in the federal budget by cutting
current Pentagon spending for fighting endless wars, maintaining a worldwide network of 800
military bases, stoking dangerous arms races, and subsidizing for-profit corporate contractors,
leaving a military budget that would still be larger than that of China, Russia, and Iran combined.
These savings would finance many of the investments listed above.

SECTION 2

(a) There shall be a Moral Budget commission established pursuant to section 2A of
chapter 4 of the General Laws, referred to in this section as the Commission. The Commission
shall evaluate and report on the impact that passage of the People’s Budget would have on
Massachusetts, including currently underfunded sectors such as environment, education,
healthcare, transportation, and the arts.

(b) The Commission shall consist of 15 members: 2 of whom shall be members of the
House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of representatives; 1 of whom
shall be a member of the House of Representatives appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; 2 of whom shall be members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; 2 of whom shall be appointed by the governor of which one shall be a member of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance; 1 of whom shall be a member of Massachusetts Peace Action; 1 of whom shall be a member of the Mass Taxpayers Association; 1 of whom shall be a member of Mass Budget and Policy Center; 1 of whom shall be a board member of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts; 1 of whom shall be a member of the SEIU Executive Council; 1 of whom shall be a board member of the Alliance of Business Leadership; 1

appointed by the Treasurer of the Commonwealth

(c) The Commission shall submit its final report to the governor, the House and Senate chairs of the Joint Committee on Revenue not later than six months after enactment which shall include: (i) an evaluation of the potential impacts of the resolution upon the standard of living of Massachusetts residents.