

SENATE No. 829

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>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Brian W. Murray</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>3/9/2021</i>
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>3/12/2021</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>	<i>3/18/2021</i>
<i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>	<i>3/23/2021</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>3/24/2021</i>

<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>4/2/2021</i>
<i>Adam G. Hinds</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden</i>	<i>4/20/2021</i>
<i>Sonia Chang-Diaz</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	<i>8/26/2021</i>
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>Second Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>1/20/2022</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/15/2022</i>

SENATE No. 829

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 829) of James B. Eldridge, Natalie M. Higgins, Maria Duaine Robinson, Brian W. Murray 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-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

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 2018
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 inserting after
7 section 45 the following section:-

8 Section 46. (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.

17 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the
18 board shall create a grant program to pay the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees to an
19 eligible student at any Massachusetts public college or university, or certificate, vocational or
20 training program at a public institution. Students meeting the income eligibility for Federal Pell
21 Grants shall receive additional aid in grants to pay for the additional costs of attendance as
22 calculated by the academic institution of enrollment, including, but not limited to, room and
23 board, books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses.

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

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

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