HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 2639 FILED ON: 1/18/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 1077

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

William Smitty Pignatelli

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 establishing an education loan repayment program for social workers in areas of need.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
William Smitty Pignatelli	*4th Berkshire*
Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.	*34th Middlesex*
Linda Dorcena Forry	*12th Suffolk*
Colleen M. Garry	*36th Middlesex*
Jay R. Kaufman	*15th Middlesex*
Kay Khan	*11th Middlesex*
Antonio F. D. Cabral	*13th Bristol*
Sean Garballey	*23rd Middlesex*
William N. Brownsberger	*Second Suffolk and Middlesex*
Jason M. Lewis	*31st Middlesex*
Sonia Chang-Diaz	*Second Suffolk*
Stephen L. DiNatale	*3rd Worcester*
Ruth B. Balser	*12th Middlesex*
Nick Collins	*4th Suffolk*
Cory Atkins	*14th Middlesex*
Peter V. Kocot	*1st Hampshire*
Aaron Vega	*5th Hampden*
James R. Miceli	*19th Middlesex*

Jeffrey N. Roy	*10th Norfolk*
Tom Sannicandro	*7th Middlesex*
Marjorie C. Decker	*25th Middlesex*
David M. Rogers	*24th Middlesex*
Carolyn C. Dykema	*8th Middlesex*
Paul R. Heroux	*2nd Bristol*
Thomas P. Conroy	*13th Middlesex*
Paul McMurtry	*11th Norfolk*
James Arciero	*2nd Middlesex*
Ellen Story	*3rd Hampshire*
Thomas J. Calter	*12th Plymouth*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 1077

By Mr. Pignatelli of Lenox, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1077) of William Smitty Pignatelli and others for legislation to establish a student loan repayment pilot program to be administered by the Board of Higher Education for licensed social workers. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act establishing an education loan repayment program for social workers in areas of need.

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. To provide for certain unanticipated obligations of the commonwealth, to provide for an alteration of purpose for current appropriations, and to meet certain requirements of law, the sum set forth in this section is hereby appropriated from the General Fund unless specifically designated otherwise in this section, for the several purposes and subject to the conditions specified in this section, and subject to the laws regulating the disbursement of public funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. This sum shall be in addition to any amounts previously appropriated and made available for the purposes of this item.

XXXX XXXX For the Licensed Certified Social Worker Student Education Loan Repayment Pilot Program Trust Fund established in section 2 of this act . $1,200,000

SECTION 2. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be a licensed certified social worker student education loan repayment pilot program, hereinafter referred to as the pilot program, for the purpose of increasing and retaining access to child welfare services and social services in the commonwealth. The pilot program shall provide financial assistance to eligible program participants to assist them in repaying student education loans, as defined in this section; provided, that the pilot program shall be limited to a total of 100 licensed certified social workers. The pilot program shall be administered by the board of higher education. The board, in collaboration with the executive office of health and human services, shall promulgate guidelines governing the pilot program. The guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, the following provisions: (1) eligibility shall be limited to persons with incomes that do not exceed 500% of the federal poverty level; (2) eligibility shall be limited to

23 persons entering the field of social work after July 1, 2011; (3) eligibility shall be limited to
24 social workers who are licensed certified social workers as defined in section 130 of chapter 112
25 of the General Laws and who are employed in child welfare, or in a geographic or programmatic
26 setting defined as high need under the guidelines governing the pilot program; (4) the
27 commonwealth shall repay a student education loan at a rate not to exceed $250 per month for a
28 period not to exceed 48 months; (5) payments by the commonwealth shall be made directly to
29 the lender on behalf of a pilot program participant, and shall cover only loan payments owed by
30 the participant in the months during which the participant works in the commonwealth as a
31 licensed certified social worker in child welfare, or in a geographic or programmatic setting
32 defined as high need under pilot program guidelines; (6) procedures for selecting 100 pilot
33 program participants among eligible applicants; and (7) measures to deal with situations in which
34 a pilot program participant ceases to comply with program requirements. For the purposes of this
35 section, the term student education loan shall mean any indebtedness, including interest on such
36 indebtedness, incurred to pay tuition, fees or other direct expenses incurred in connection with
37 the pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant, but shall not include loans
38 made by any person related to the applicant, or loans paid by credit card.
39 (b) There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund
40 to be known as the Licensed Certified Social Worker Student Education Loan Repayment Pilot
41 Program Trust Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Licensed Certified Social Worker Education
42 Loan Repayment Fund, to which shall be credited any appropriations or other monies authorized
43 by the general court and designated to be credited thereto. The board of higher education shall
44 hold the Licensed Certified Social Worker Education Loan Repayment Fund in an account
45 separate from other funds or accounts. Amounts credited to the Licensed Certified Social Worker
46 Education Loan Repayment Fund shall be used, without further appropriation, by the
47 commissioner of higher education or his designee, to carry out the licensed certified social
48 worker student education loan repayment pilot program established in this section. (c) The
49 licensed certified social worker student education loan repayment pilot program shall expire once
50 the final payment is made under this section by the board of higher education on behalf of all
51 pilot program participants. The board of higher education shall evaluate the effectiveness of the
52 pilot program and its benefits and costs to the commonwealth and shall submit a report, together
53 with its recommendations on whether a permanent program should be established and if so how
54 such program should be structured, to the general court by filing the report with the house and
55 senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education, not less than
56 one year prior to the expiration of the pilot program.
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