

HOUSE No. 01858

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Linda Dorcena Forry

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 passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to promote financial stability and asset development .

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Linda Dorcena Forry</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Theodore C. Speliotis</i>	<i>13th Essex</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>
<i>Michael J. Moran</i>	<i>18th Suffolk</i>
<i>Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>David B. Sullivan</i>	<i>6th Bristol</i>
<i>Ann-Margaret Ferrante</i>	<i>5th Essex</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Gloria L. Fox</i>	<i>7th Suffolk</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>9th Plymouth</i>
<i>Byron Rushing</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Alice K. Wolf</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>

<i>Tom Sannicandro</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>	<i>Second Middlesex</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Christine E. Canavan</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>
<i>Sonia Chang-Diaz</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>
<i>Carlos Henriquez</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>
<i>Thomas A. Golden, Jr.</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>
<i>Ellen Story</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Russell Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>
<i>Benjamin Swan</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>

HOUSE No. 01858

By Ms. Forry of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1858) of Linda Dorcena Forry and others for legislation to promote asset development in transitional assistance programs. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE
□ SENATE
□ , NO. 38 OF 2009-2010.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act to promote financial stability and asset development .

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. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and to the maximum
2 extent possible in light of the need to preserve available sources of federal funding, it is the
3 policy of the Commonwealth to encourage low-income parents, including those who receive
4 assistance under the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children, to obtain the
5 vocational educational training they need to obtain and retain good paying jobs with benefits that
6 will enable them to support their families in the longer term. Consistent with this policy, the
7 department of transitional assistance shall:
- 8 a) in collaboration with the workforce development system and the community college system,
9 maintain in each local office of the department an up-to-date listing and description of all

10 vocational educational programs within the relevant geographic region that can be accessed at
11 little or no cost to the individual, including adult basic education, English for speakers of other
12 languages, skills training, certificate programs, and higher education programs;

13 b) at least 30 days before an individual becomes subject to the work program requirement
14 pursuant to section 110 (j) of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 and before completion of any
15 Employment Development Plan pursuant to section 110 (h) of said chapter 5, (i) inform the
16 individual orally and in writing that said work program requirement may be met by participation
17 in vocational educational programs, including adult basic education, English for speakers of
18 other languages, skills training, certificate programs, and higher education programs, (ii) inform
19 the individual of all vocational educational programs available in the relevant geographic region
20 that can be accessed at little or no cost to the individual, and (iii) inform that individual of the
21 policies described in subsections (e) and (f) of this section;

22 c) at least 30 days before an individual becomes subject to the work program requirement
23 pursuant to section 110 (j) of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 and before completion of any
24 Employment Development Plan pursuant to section 110 (h) of said chapter 5, provide the
25 individual with counseling on how to access vocational educational training without incurring
26 debt, including but not limited to information on the availability of funding for such programs
27 through the Employment Services Program, the Workforce Investment Act, PELL grants, the
28 Educational Rewards program, the Department of Education, and appropriate referrals to such
29 vocational educational training;

30 d) use funds appropriated for the department's Employment Services Program to expand the
31 availability of programs that integrate skills training with adult basic education for those without

32 a high school diploma and/or English for speakers of other language instruction for those with
33 limited English proficiency, including but not limited to programs at community colleges;
34 e) encourage and allow individuals to satisfy their work program requirements pursuant to said
35 section 110(j), in whole or in part and throughout their periods of time limited benefits and any
36 extension periods, by participating in vocational educational training programs; and
37 f) grant extensions of the time limit to enable individuals to complete such programs if they are
38 making satisfactory progress toward an achievable vocational goal.

39 SECTION 2. Subsection (b) of section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995, as most recently
40 amended by section 308 of chapter 159 of the acts of 2000, is further amended by striking out
41 said subsection and inserting in place thereof the following new subsection:

42 (b) In order to encourage asset development, promote employment, prevent
43 homelessness, and simplify administration, otherwise eligible families shall not be subject to a
44 resource limit.

45 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, in order to encourage
46 asset development, promote employment, prevent homelessness, and simplify administration,
47 persons otherwise eligible for the program of emergency aid to elders, disabled and children
48 under chapter 117A of the General Laws shall not be subject to a resource limit.

49 SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, on or before October
50 1, 2011, the department of transitional assistance shall establish a generally applicable work
51 expense deduction within the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children at a
52 level intended to cover work expenses incurred by working recipients, including but not limited

53 to payroll deductions, transportation, and clothing expenses. Said work expense deduction shall
54 initially be no less than \$250 and shall thereafter be adjusted annually to reflect inflation.

55 SECTION 5. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, payments under state
56 or private work study programs and state grants for education or training shall not be counted as
57 income or a resource in determining eligibility for or benefits levels under the program of
58 emergency aid to elders, disabled and children under chapter 117A of the General Laws and the
59 program of transitional aid to families with dependent children under chapter 118 of the General
60 Laws.

61 SECTION 6. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and in order to
62 encourage asset development, promote employment, and prevent homelessness, with respect to
63 the programs of emergency aid to elders, disabled and children under chapter 117A of the
64 general laws and transitional aid to families with dependent children under chapter 118 of the
65 General Laws, the department of transitional assistance shall treat as noncountable with regard to
66 any maximum countable resource limits and the lump sum income rule up to \$10,000 that has
67 been expended or is placed in an Individual Asset Account for later expenditure for costs related
68 to education or training, transportation to work or to other activities of daily living, obtaining or
69 retaining or maintaining housing, debt reduction, starting a business, health care, basic household
70 necessities, or other responsible expenses as identified by the department.