

HOUSE No. 3379

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carlos Gonzalez

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 programs to promote self-sufficiency and decrease dependence on government provided assistance.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Jose F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>

HOUSE No. 3379

By Mr. Gonzalez of Springfield, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3379) of Carlos Gonzalez and Jose F. Tosado for legislation to create a self-employment assistance allowance to promote independence for needy families receiving transitional assistance. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act relative to programs to promote self-sufficiency and decrease dependence on government provided assistance.

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

1 Chapter 18 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 5H the following section:-

3 Section 5I. (a) As used in this section the following terms shall, unless the context clearly
4 appears otherwise, have the following meanings:-

5 “Micro business”, a business entity, which has its principal place of business in the
6 commonwealth, is independently owned and operated as a sole proprietorship, partnership or
7 corporation, with 5 or fewer employees in full-time positions.

8 “Micro business assistance allowance or self-employment assistance allowance”, an
9 allowance, payable in lieu of transitional assistance for needy families, hereinafter TANF,

10 established or administered pursuant to the general appropriations act and the general laws, to an
11 individual participating in TANF activities who meets the requirements of this section.

12 “Self-employment assistance activities”, activities, including any entrepreneurial training
13 that the commonwealth or non-profit organizations may provide in coordination with programs
14 of training offered by the department or its assignee, which may include business counseling,
15 mentorship for participants, access to small business development resources, and technical
16 assistance, approved by the department for the purpose of establishing a business and becoming
17 self-employed.

18 (b) The department shall provide for a program of self-employment assistance allowances
19 to promote self-sufficiency and decrease dependence on government provided assistance. The
20 weekly allowance payable under this section to an individual shall be equal to the weekly benefit
21 amount for TANF otherwise payable under law. The allowance paid under this section shall not
22 exceed the maximum TANF benefit amount with respect to such benefit year. No individual
23 shall receive self-employment assistance allowances for a total of more than 26 weeks.

24 (c) Eligibility for self-employment assistance allowance. The allowance described in
25 subsection (a) shall be payable to an individual at the same interval, on the same terms, and
26 subject to the same conditions as TANF except that:

27 (1) the requirements of TANF relating to availability for work, active search for work,
28 and refusal to accept work are not applicable to such individual;

29 (2) an individual who fails to participate in self-employment assistance activities or who
30 fails to actively engage on a full-time basis in activities, which may include training, relating to

31 the establishment of a business and becoming self-employed shall be disqualified for the time-
32 period such failure occurs; and

33 (3) an individual shall not be eligible to receive a self-employment allowance unless the
34 department of transitional assistance has a reasonable expectation that the individual will
35 successfully complete a self-employment allowance assistance program.

36 (d) The aggregate number of individuals receiving an allowance under this section at any
37 time shall not exceed 1 per cent of the number of individuals receiving TANF from the
38 commonwealth. The department shall, through regulations, prescribe such actions as are
39 necessary to assure the requirements of this subsection are met.

40 (e) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the purposes of
41 this section.