

HOUSE No. 4697

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Nika C. Elugardo and Ruth B. Balsler

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 providing for cash assistance to certain persons over 65 years of age who stopped working as a result of COVID-19 or stay-at-home advisory (The CARE Act).

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>
<i>Alan Silvia</i>	<i>7th Bristol</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>

<i>David Allen Robertson</i>	<i>19th Middlesex</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>

HOUSE No. 4697

By Representatives Elugardo of Boston and Balsler of Newton, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Nika C. Elugardo, Ruth B. Balsler and others for legislation to provide cash assistance to certain persons 65 years of age or older who stopped working due to COVID-19. Elder Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act providing for cash assistance to certain persons over 65 years of age who stopped working as a result of COVID-19 or stay-at-home advisory (The CARE Act).

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to establish forthwith cash assistance to persons over 65 years of age who stopped working as a result of pre-existing conditions that put them at higher risk of death were they to contract COVID-19, or who stopped working because of the stay-at-home advisory issued by Governor Baker on March 23, 2020, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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 in addition
2 to any other public funds, a person 65 years of age or older, shall be eligible for benefits pursuant
3 to this act; provided that, such person stopped working due to coronavirus (COVID-19) before,
4 on or after March 23, 2020 when the department of public health stay-at-home advisory was
5 issued along with the governor’s order closing nonessential business and;

6 (i) is not eligible for unemployment benefits pursuant to chapter 151A of the General
7 Laws, including but not limited to hourly workers, part-time workers, self-employed persons or
8 other persons receiving a federal Form 1099; and

9 (ii) is unable to work as a result of an underlying condition as set forth in a Centers for
10 Disease Control Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-
11 19

12 Transmission Guidance, including but not limited to:

13 (1) blood disorders, for example sickle cell disease or on blood thinners;

14 (2) chronic kidney disease as defined by a health care provider or has been told to avoid
15 or reduce the dose of medications because of kidney disease, or is under treatment for kidney
16 disease, including receiving dialysis;

17 (3) chronic liver disease as defined by a health care provider, including for example,
18 cirrhosis, or chronic hepatitis or such person has been told to avoid or reduce the dose of
19 medications because of liver disease or is under treatment for liver disease;

20 (4) a compromised immune system, including for example HIV or AIDS, seeing a health
21 care provider for cancer and treatment such as chemotherapy or radiation, having received an
22 organ or bone marrow transplant, or taking high doses of corticosteroids or other
23 immunosuppressant medications;

24 (5) diagnosed with a endocrine disorder, for example diabetes mellitus;

25 (6) diagnosed with a metabolic disorder, such as inherited metabolic disorders and
26 mitochondrial disorders;

27 (7) heart disease, such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary
28 artery disease;

29 (8) lung disease including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, such as
30 chronic bronchitis or emphysema or other chronic conditions associated with impaired lung
31 function or that require home oxygen; or

32 (9) neurological and neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions, including disorders of
33 the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy or other
34 seizure disorders, stroke, intellectual disability, moderate to severe developmental delay,
35 muscular dystrophy or spinal cord injury.

36 SECTION 2. A person eligible for benefits pursuant to section 1 shall, not later than
37 April 30, 2020, receive in a monthly allotment \$1,500 per month. Such benefits may be
38 increased upon application to the secretary of administration and finance, to the hotline provided
39 for in section 3, if such benefits are insufficient to pay for rent or other necessities or special
40 unavoidable expenses such as car payments or credit card minimum payments.

41 SECTION 3. The secretary of administration and finance shall administer the benefits
42 provided for in this act. The secretary shall provide for a telephone hotline on or before April 15,
43 2020 and receive applications via such hotline for such benefits.

44 SECTION 4. (a) There shall be established and set upon the books of the commonwealth
45 a separate fund to be known as the COVID-19 Assistance Relief for Elders Fund, hereinafter
46 known as the CARE Fund to be administered by the secretary of administration and finance for
47 the purpose of providing cash benefits pursuant to this act.

48 (b) There shall be credited to the CARE Fund all amounts that are, by law, transferred or
49 authorized to be transferred thereto or directed to be deposited therein, and all amounts received
50 as gifts, grants, or contributions for the purposes of the CARE Fund. Amounts credited to the

51 CARE Fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the Fund at
52 the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund; provided, however, that the secretary
53 may provide within the CARE Fund a reserve amount to support the commonwealth's
54 monitoring, treatment, containment, public awareness and prevention efforts against the 2019
55 novel coronavirus by the department of public health, regional and local boards of health and
56 other public instrumentalities.

57 SECTION 5. On the effective date of this act, the comptroller shall transfer \$15,000,000
58 from the General Fund to the CARE Fund established in section 4 for the purposes of carrying
59 out this act.

60 SECTION 6. This act shall be repealed 180 days after the department of public health
61 rescinds its stay at home advisory or any other subsequent stay at home advisory or order by the
62 executive.