

**SENATE . . . . . No. 186**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Eric P. Lesser*

*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 establish Gateway City Opportunity Zones.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Eric P. Lesser</i>	<i>First Hampden and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Thomas M. McGee</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2017</i>
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>
<i>Mark C. Montigny</i>	<i>Second Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>2/3/2017</i>

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By Mr. Lesser, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 186) of Eric P. Lesser, Thomas M. McGee, Jason M. Lewis, Sal N. DiDomenico and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish Gateway City Opportunity Zones. Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court  
(2017-2018)**  
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An Act to establish Gateway City Opportunity Zones.

*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. Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 edition, is  
2 hereby amended by adding after section 19E, the following new section:-

3 Section 19F. (a) There shall be a student loan repayment program known as the gateway  
4 cities opportunity zones program, for the purpose of encouraging recent college or university  
5 graduates to work and live in a gateway municipality, as defined in section 3A of chapter 23A of  
6 the General Laws, by providing financial assistance for the repayment of qualified education  
7 loans, as defined below. The term “qualified education loan” shall mean any indebtedness  
8 including interest on such indebtedness incurred to pay tuition or other direct expenses incurred  
9 in connection with the pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant, but shall  
10 not include loans made by any person related to the applicant. The program shall be administered  
11 by the board of education and shall be subject to appropriation. Nothing in this section  
12 guarantees an individual a right to the benefits provided in this section.

13 (b) Eligibility for the program shall be limited to persons who establish domicile and  
14 obtain employment in an individual gateway municipality. Said persons may apply for and be  
15 accepted to the program in a form and manner prescribed by the board. Once enrolled, a  
16 participant shall be entitled to a maximum of five years participation.

17 (c) The commonwealth shall repay a participant's qualified education loan at a rate not to  
18 exceed two hundred and fifty dollars per month for a period not to exceed sixty months.  
19 Repayment shall be made to the participant annually upon the presentation by the participant of  
20 satisfactory evidence of payments under the loan. A participant shall not receive repayment of  
21 qualified education loans by the commonwealth under this section if: (1) the applicant is  
22 delinquent on any qualified education loan payment; or (2) the applicant does not maintain  
23 domicile or employment within the designated gateway municipality.

24 (d) Expenses for administration of the program may be retained in an interest bearing  
25 trust fund to be established by the board and expended for the costs of administering the program  
26 without further appropriation. Any funds remaining in the trust fund at the termination of the  
27 program shall be returned to the General Fund.

28 (e) On January 1, annually, the board shall report to the senate and house committee on  
29 ways and means, and the joint committee on higher education on the status of the program  
30 including, but not limited to: (1) the total number of applicants and participants in each gateway  
31 municipality and in the commonwealth; (2) the total cost of the program; and (3) efforts to  
32 publicize the program.

33           SECTION 2. The board shall promulgate regulations or guidelines to implement the  
34 program established pursuant to section 19F of chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in  
35 section 1 above.