

**SENATE . . . . . No. 681**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***James B. Eldridge***

*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 promoting access to debt-free public higher education.

PETITION OF:

| NAME:                     | DISTRICT/ADDRESS:              |                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i>  | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i> |                  |
| <i>Jack Lewis</i>         | <i>7th Middlesex</i>           | <i>1/26/2017</i> |
| <i>Jason M. Lewis</i>     | <i>Fifth Middlesex</i>         | <i>1/26/2017</i> |
| <i>Mike Connolly</i>      | <i>26th Middlesex</i>          | <i>1/27/2017</i> |
| <i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>  | <i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>   | <i>1/30/2017</i> |
| <i>Jose F. Tosado</i>     | <i>9th Hampden</i>             | <i>1/31/2017</i> |
| <i>Kay Khan</i>           | <i>11th Middlesex</i>          | <i>1/31/2017</i> |
| <i>Paul R. Heroux</i>     | <i>2nd Bristol</i>             | <i>1/31/2017</i> |
| <i>Marjorie C. Decker</i> | <i>25th Middlesex</i>          | <i>2/1/2017</i>  |
| <i>Jennifer E. Benson</i> | <i>37th Middlesex</i>          | <i>2/2/2017</i>  |
| <i>Kevin G. Honan</i>     | <i>17th Suffolk</i>            | <i>2/3/2017</i>  |
| <i>Denise Provost</i>     | <i>27th Middlesex</i>          | <i>2/3/2017</i>  |
| <i>Carmine L. Gentile</i> | <i>13th Middlesex</i>          | <i>2/3/2017</i>  |
| <i>James Arciero</i>      | <i>2nd Middlesex</i>           | <i>2/3/2017</i>  |
| <i>Natalie Higgins</i>    | <i>4th Worcester</i>           | <i>2/3/2017</i>  |
| <i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i> | <i>Second Middlesex</i>        | <i>2/15/2017</i> |

**SENATE . . . . . No. 681**

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By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 681) of James B. Eldridge, Jack Lewis, Jason M. Lewis, Mike Connolly and other members of the General Court for legislation to promote access to debt-free public higher education. Higher Education.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court  
(2017-2018)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act promoting access to debt-free public higher education.

*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 is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 44 the following section:-

3 Section 45.

4 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the  
5 commonwealth shall pay the tuition and mandatory curriculum fees or course fees not paid by  
6 state grants, federal grants, or gift aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
7 process for an eligible student. An eligible student must:

8 (1) attend high school in the commonwealth for not less than 3 years;

9 (2) graduate from a high school in the commonwealth or attain the equivalent thereof in  
10 the commonwealth;

11 (3) be a resident of the commonwealth;

12 (4) have an annual family income of \$200,000 or less;

13 (5) apply for federal and state grants and aid via the Free Application for Federal Student  
14 Aid process; provided, however, that a person who is not eligible to apply for federal and state  
15 grants and aid via the Free Application for Federal Student Aid process shall be exempt from the  
16 aid application requirement in this paragraph;

17 (6) be enrolled full-time in a program of higher education at a higher education institution  
18 listed in section 5 of chapter 15A, at a per-semester minimum course load of 15 credits;

19 (7) maintain a grade point average of at least 2.7; and

20 (8) not hold a baccalaureate or higher degree granted by a higher education institution  
21 listed in section 5 of chapter 15A.

22 (b) The commonwealth shall pay the housing and transportation costs for an eligible  
23 student whose annual family income is not more than the median income in the commonwealth  
24 as determined by the United States Census Bureau. The board of higher education shall create a  
25 formula for payment of housing and transportation costs; provided, however, that the formula  
26 shall take into account the living expenses in the area where the student's higher education  
27 institute is located.