

HOUSE No. 4233

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, November 26, 2019.

The committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 163) of Jeffrey N. Roy, Smitty Pignatelli and others for legislation to establish a loan repayment program for certain human service workers, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4233) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KAY KHAN.

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

An Act relative to a loan repayment program for human service workers.

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 6A of the general laws, as so appearing in the 2016 official edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 16Z the following new section:-

3 Section 16AA. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context
4 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

5 “qualified education loan,” any indebtedness, including interest on such indebtedness,
6 incurred to pay tuition or other direct expenses incurred in the connection with the pursuit of a
7 certificate, undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant. It shall not include loans made by
8 any person related to the applicant.

9 “human service provider,” a community-based human services organization with a
10 human services program funded by the executive office of health and human services, the
11 executive office of elder affairs, the department of housing and community development or the
12 department of early education and care.

13 “human services worker,” an employee of a human service provider who provides
14 treatment, support, or services to clients or their families.

15 (b) There shall be a student loan repayment program for human service workers to
16 encourage individuals to enter the field and maintain employment at human service programs.
17 The Executive Office of Health and Human Services shall administer the program in accordance
18 with guidelines promulgated by the Department of Higher Education.

19 (c) To be eligible for this program, a participant must be working a minimum of 35 hours
20 per week as a human service worker and have an individual income of no more than \$50,000 per
21 year. Further, individuals must have maintained 12 consecutive months of employment as a
22 human service worker at a minimum of 35 hours per week to be eligible for this program. This
23 program will help defray costs from previously incurred student loans for graduates holding
24 certificate, undergraduate or graduate degrees.

25 Eligible participants in this program can be reimbursed up to \$1,800 per year based on
26 the amount of loan payments made by the participant. The Commonwealth shall repay the
27 eligible participant’s student loan at a rate not to exceed \$150 per month for a period not to
28 exceed 48 months. Payments by the Commonwealth shall cover loan payments by the eligible
29 participant only during the months in which the human service workers provides services in the
30 Commonwealth, and the payments shall be made directly to the lender.