

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sal N. DiDomenico

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 a loan repayment program for human services workers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Sal N. DiDomenico

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Middlesex and Suffolk

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

An Act relative to a loan repayment program for human services 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 Chapter 6A of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby
2 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 “human service provider,” a community-based human services organization with a
6 human services program funded by the executive office of health and human services, the
7 executive office of elder affairs, the department of housing and community development or the
8 department of early education and care.

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

11 “qualified education loan,” any indebtedness, including interest on such indebtedness,
12 incurred to pay tuition or other direct expenses incurred in the connection with the pursuit of a

13 certificate, undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant. It shall not include loans made by
14 any person related to the applicant.

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 the program, a participant must be working a minimum of 35 hours
20 per week as a human services worker. Further, individuals must have maintained 12 consecutive
21 months of employment as a human service worker at a minimum of 35 hours per week to be
22 eligible for this program. This program will help defray costs from previously incurred student
23 loans for graduates holding a certificate or undergraduate/graduate degrees.

24 (d) Priority for funding should be given to applicants who have an individual salary less
25 than 50 percent of the median income; who are bilingual; who are living and/or working in a
26 vaccine equity initiative community; or who have worked in the direct care field for three or
27 more years.

28 (e) Applicants will be eligible for up to \$6,000 if they have an associate degree, up to
29 \$20,000 if they have a bachelor's degree and up to \$30,000 if they have a master's degree.

30 (f) Other eligibility criteria may be created to determine how applicants to the program
31 should be prioritized and how much funding each would be able to apply for.