

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

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

**Eldridge, James - Rep. (HOU)**

*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 passage of the accompanying bill:

**An Act Removing Barriers to Financial Stability and Asset Development for Low to Moderate Income Families**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Eldridge, James - Rep. (HOU)	Middlesex and Worcester
Kevin G. Honan	17th Suffolk
Marian Walsh	Suffolk and Norfolk

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

## AN ACT REMOVING BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL STABILITY AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT FOR LOW TO MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES

*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. Subsection (b) of section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995, as most recently  
2 amended by section 308 of chapter 159 of the acts of 2000, is further amended by striking out said  
3 subsection and inserting in place thereof the following new subsection:

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5           (b) In order to encourage asset development, promote employment, and prevent homelessness,  
6 the Commissioner is authorized to establish by regulation a maximum allowable resource limit for  
7 otherwise eligible families and to establish by regulation rules governing the extent to which the value  
8 of vehicles are or are not countable toward said limit. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the maximum  
9 allowable resource limit shall not be less than \$5,000 and the rules governing vehicles shall provide that  
10 at least one motor vehicle used for transportation per licensed driver in a household shall not count as a  
11 resource.

12

13           SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, in determining eligibility for the  
14 program of emergency aid to elders, disabled and children under chapter 117A of the General Laws, at  
15 least one motor vehicle used for transportation per licensed driver in a household shall not count as a  
16 resource.

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18           SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, on or before October 1, 2009,  
19 the department of transitional assistance shall establish a generally applicable work expense deduction

20 within the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children at a level intended to cover  
21 work expenses incurred by working recipients, including but not limited to payroll deductions,  
22 transportation, and clothing expenses. Said work expense deduction shall initially be no less than \$250  
23 and shall thereafter be adjusted annually to reflect inflation.

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25 SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, payments under state or private  
26 work study programs and state grants for education or training shall not be counted as income or a  
27 resource in determining eligibility for or benefits levels under the program of emergency aid to elders,  
28 disabled and children under chapter 117A of the General Laws and the program of transitional aid to  
29 families with dependent children under chapter 118 of the General Laws.

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31 SECTION 5. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and in order to encourage asset  
32 development, promote employment, and prevent homelessness, with respect to the programs of  
33 emergency aid to elders, disabled and children under chapter 117A of the general laws and transitional  
34 aid to families with dependent children under chapter 118 of the General Laws, the department of  
35 transitional assistance shall treat as noncountable with regard to any maximum countable resource  
36 limits and the lump sum income rule up to \$10,000 that has been expended or is placed in an Individual  
37 Asset Account for later expenditure for costs related to education or training, transportation to work or  
38 to other activities of daily living, obtaining or retaining or maintaining housing, debt reduction, starting a  
39 business, health care, basic household necessities, or other responsible expenses as identified by the  
40 department.

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42 SECTION 6. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and in order to simplify  
43 administration and encourage asset development, any asset that federal law does not require be  
44 counted under the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program shall also not be counted in  
45 determining eligibility for benefits under the program of transitional aid to families with dependent  
46 children under chapter 118 of the General Laws and the program of emergency aid to elders, disabled  
47 and children under chapter 117A of the General Laws or any other state administered program to the  
48 extent not inconsistent with federal law. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to  
49 require that any asset that is countable under the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program  
50 must be countable under the state cash assistance programs.

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52 SECTION 7. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, and to the maximum extent  
53 possible in light of the need for the commonwealth to meet work participation rates associated with the  
54 federal transitional assistance to needy families block grant, the department of transitional assistance  
55 shall a) encourage and allow recipients of transitional aid to families with dependent children benefits

56 under chapter 118 of the General Laws to satisfy their work activity requirements, in whole or in part  
57 and throughout their periods of time limited benefits and any extension periods, by participating in  
58 vocational educational training programs and b) grant extensions of the time limit to enable recipients  
59 to complete such programs if they are making satisfactory progress toward an achievable vocational  
60 goal.

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