

HOUSE No. 1956

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Marjorie C. Decker

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 the hospitality comeback.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>	<i>3/9/2021</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>3/12/2021</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>	<i>3/14/2021</i>
<i>Daniel J. Hunt</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/18/2021</i>
<i>David Biele</i>	<i>4th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/23/2021</i>
<i>Jessica Ann Giannino</i>	<i>16th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/25/2021</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>3/30/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>4/1/2021</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/1/2021</i>
<i>Steven C. Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/6/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 1956

By Ms. Decker of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1956) of Marjorie C. Decker and others relative to protecting certain hospitality workers. Labor and Workforce Development.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to the hospitality comeback.

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 149 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
2 following section:-

3 Section 204. (a) As used in this section, unless the context clearly implies otherwise, the
4 following words shall have the following meanings:-

5 “Employer”, a hotel employer.

6 “Hotel employer”, an owner, operator or manager of a residential building designated or
7 used for public lodging or other related service for the public that: (i) contains 50 or more
8 guestrooms or (ii) earned gross receipts in 2019 exceeding \$5,000,000; provided, that a hotel
9 employer shall include the owner, operator, manager or lessee of any restaurant located on hotel
10 premises.

11 “Laid off worker”, an individual employed for hire by an employer in any lawful
12 employment who was employed by the employer for six months or more in the 12 months
13 preceding March 4, 2020 and whose most recent separation from active employment with the
14 employer occurred on or after March 4, 2020 as a result of a lack of business, a reduction in
15 work force or other economic, non-disciplinary reason. For purposes of this section, a laid off
16 worker shall not include a manager, supervisor or a confidential employee as defined in section 1
17 of chapter 150E.

18 “Length of service”, the total time of an individual’s work for hire by an employer in any
19 lawful employment, including periods of time when the worker was on leave or vacation.

20 (b) In any city or town that accepts this section in the manner provided for in section 4 of
21 chapter 4, an employer shall offer any position that is or becomes available to a laid off worker
22 for which said laid off worker is qualified. The offer shall be sent in writing to the: (1) last
23 known mailing address of the laid off worker, (2) electronic mail address of the laid off worker
24 and (3) phone number of the laid off worker by text message. A laid off worker shall be qualified
25 for an available position if the laid off worker: (1) held the same or a substantially similar
26 position at the same employment site at the time of the laid off worker’s most recent separation
27 from active service with the employer; or (2) is or can become qualified for the position through
28 the same training that would be provided to a new worker hired for that position. If more than 1
29 laid off worker is entitled to preference for a position, first priority shall be for a laid off worker
30 with the greatest length of service in the same or a similar position and then for a laid off worker
31 with the greatest length of service at the employment site.

32 (c) A laid off worker offered a position pursuant to this section shall be given no less than
33 5 business days in which to accept or decline the offer. An employer may make simultaneous,
34 conditional offers of employment to laid off workers, with final offer of employment conditioned
35 on application of the priority system set forth in subsection (b).

36 (d) A laid off worker who is aggrieved by a violation of this section may bring a civil
37 action for damages or injunctive relief or both in the superior court for the county in which the
38 alleged unlawful practice occurred not later than 3 years after the alleged unlawful practice
39 occurred.

40 (e) Prior to initiating a civil action pursuant to subsection (d), the laid off worker shall
41 provide written notice to the employer of the alleged violation stating the provisions of this
42 section that were violated and facts to support the alleged violation. The employer shall have 15
43 days from receipt of the written notice to cure any alleged violation.

44 (f) If a court finds for the laid off worker, the court may order: (i) hiring or reinstatement of
45 the laid off worker, with or without back pay; and (ii) an award of actual damages including, but
46 not limited to, lost pay and benefits, or statutory damages in the sum of \$1,000, whichever is
47 greater. The court may additionally award punitive damages, injunctive relief or any other
48 appropriate relief.

49 (g) A court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to a laid off worker who
50 prevails in any such enforcement action or to an employer who prevails and obtains a court
51 determination that the lawsuit was frivolous.

52 (h) No criminal penalties shall attach for violation of this section.

53 (i) No employer may discharge, reduce in compensation or otherwise discriminate against
54 any employee or laid off worker for: (i) opposing any practice prescribed by this section; (ii)
55 participating in proceedings related to this section; (iii) seeking to exercise their rights under this
56 section by any lawful means; or (iv) otherwise asserting rights under this section.

57 (j) The attorney general shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement this section.
58 The attorney general shall post the rules and regulations on the attorney general's website.

59 (k) A city or town that accepts this section in the manner provided in section 4 of chapter
60 4 may revoke its acceptance in the same manner.

61 SECTION 2. Prior to March 1, 2023, each municipality that has accepted section 204 of
62 chapter 149 of the General Laws shall report to the chief executive officer of the municipality
63 regarding: (i) the effectiveness of said section 204 of said chapter 149 in protecting workers'
64 stability of employment; (ii) recommendations for additional employment stability protections;
65 and (iii) whether the protections of said section 204 of said chapter 149 are still necessary based
66 on the municipality's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.