

HOUSE No. 4634

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Liz Miranda

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 providing emergency access to equity and justice for all in response to COVID-19.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Claire D. Cronin</i>	<i>11th Plymouth</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>
<i>Gerard J. Cassidy</i>	<i>9th Plymouth</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Aaron Vega</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>

<i>Alan Silvia</i>	<i>7th Bristol</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Carole A. Fiola</i>	<i>6th Bristol</i>

HOUSE No. 4634

By Ms. Miranda of Boston, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Liz Miranda and others relative to financial assistance, health care access and small business grants in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Revenue.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act providing emergency access to equity and justice for all in response to COVID-19.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for emergency cash assistance in response to COVID-19, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health.

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. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department
2 of revenue, within 15 days of the effective date of this act, shall release an online “equity and
3 justice for all” (EJA) portal where every person who has resided in Massachusetts since at least
4 January 1st, 2020 shall be eligible to register for COVID-19 EJA assistance. The portal shall
5 include a form where each registrant shall swear and attest to their:

- 6 (1) residency in Massachusetts prior to January 1st, 2020;
- 7 (2) their date of birth, age and physical address;
- 8 (3) their personal income in the calendar year 2019;

9 (4) whether they have dependents who are (i) under the age of 16, (ii) who are otherwise
10 dependent and not submitting a claim for EJA assistance;

11 (5) whether or not they have faced financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19
12 pandemic or any associated response to the pandemic;

13 (6) whether they request financial assistance through this program;

14 (7) whether they have access to affordable medical care.

15 This form shall be made available by the department in the following languages: English,
16 Spanish, Portuguese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean
17 Creole, and other languages as recommended by the office of the Governor. The department of
18 revenue shall create a dial-in registry for people who alternatively call and register in lieu of an
19 online portal.

20 SECTION 2. The department of revenue shall deliver to all registrants age 16 and above
21 an “EJA payment” in the form of a check by first class mail in the amount of \$1,000 to all
22 registrants within 5 business days of each registrants’ complete registration. Registrants shall
23 receive an additional \$750 per dependent identified in Section 1, (5).

24 SECTION 3. For each 30 days following the initial EJA payment, the department of
25 revenue shall continue to send a check equal to the income qualifications set forth below. Income
26 qualifications shall correspond to the sworn and attested income provided by the registrant. EJA
27 assistance shall be as follows:

28 (1) registrants who attest and swear to facing hardship under Section 1, (5), who request
29 financial assistance under Section 1, (6), and have a personal income of less than or equal to

30 300% of the 2020 federal poverty levels, shall receive \$1,500 monthly personally and \$750 for
31 each dependent under Section 1, (4).

32 (2) registrants who attest and swear to facing hardship under Section 1, (5), who request
33 financial assistance under Section 1, (6), and have a personal income of between 300% and
34 500%, inclusive, of the 2020 federal poverty levels, shall receive \$1,000 monthly personally and
35 \$500 for each dependent under Section 1, (4).

36 (3) registrants who attest and swear to facing hardship under Section 1, (5), who request
37 financial assistance under Section 1, (6), and have a personal income above 500% of the 2020
38 federal poverty levels, shall receive \$500 monthly personally and \$250 for each dependent under
39 Section 1, (4).

40 SECTION 4: EJA assistance shall continue and shall not be ended until all state and
41 federal emergency status has been lifted.

42 SECTION 5: EJA assistance shall be considered wholly separate from income for all
43 purposes of qualification for any benefits administered by the Department of Unemployment
44 Assistance, The Department of Transitional Assistance, The Department of Children and
45 Families, and any other departments that use income qualifications to determine eligibility.

46 SECTION 6: Registrants who attest and swear to not have access under Section 1, (7) to
47 affordable medical care shall be immediately eligible for MassHealth.

48 SECTION 7: The Massachusetts Office of Business Development shall create within 30
49 days of this act the “Small Business Recovery Grant Fund.” The fund shall provide emergency
50 funds not to exceed \$50,000 to any Massachusetts-based businesses impacted by COVID-19 and

- 51 no more than 26 full- and part-time employees. Grants shall be immediately available to eligible
- 52 businesses after 30 days.