

SENATE No. 837

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mark C. Montigny

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 to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Mark C. Montigny

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Bristol and Plymouth

SENATE No. 837

By Mr. Montigny, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 837) of Mark C. Montigny for legislation to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to establish the Bridge the Gap Scholarship to universalize access to community colleges.

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 . Section 16 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the eleventh paragraph in that section, the
3 following:-

4 There shall be a Bridge the Gap Scholarship Program to provide universal access for
5 residents of the commonwealth to public higher education through accredited degree programs
6 offered at community college institutions under section 5 of this chapter. Such assistance shall
7 apply only after all other federal and state financial assistance has been exhausted. To be
8 eligible, students must have obtained a high school diploma, or its equivalent, from an institution
9 within the commonwealth within the preceding two years, maintain a cumulative 2.5 grade point
10 average during their course of study, complete their course of study within three years, and agree
11 to reside and work within the commonwealth for at least two years after graduation of such
12 course of study or further degree program within the commonwealth. If a student does not fulfill

13 the above requirements, the scholarship will be converted into a low interest loan to be
14 determined and administered by the department of higher education and Massachusetts
15 Educational Financing Authority, established pursuant to section four of chapter fifteen C, with
16 exemptions for financial hardship.

17 Each community college shall annually consult with their board of trustees, local
18 workforce developments boards, and employers to identify current and future workforce needs
19 within such region. Upon identifying such workforce needs, each college shall certify up to five
20 programs eligible to qualify under the Bridge the Gap Scholarship Program to promote universal
21 access to higher education and workforce readiness. Each college shall annually file with the
22 department of higher education those programs certified to receive the Bridge the Gap
23 Scholarship.

24 SECTION 2. The department of higher education may promulgate regulations to
25 implement this act.