

By Mr. Serra of Boston, petition of Emanuel G. Serra for legislation to establish a permanent home heating assistance program. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-Six.

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

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 23B of the General Laws, as most recently amend-
2 ed by chapter 574 of the acts of 1983, is hereby further amend-
3 ed by inserting after section 27 the following new section: —

4 *Section 28.* The department of community affairs, division of
5 social and economic opportunity, shall administer a home
6 heating assistance program which consists of: —

7 (a) a continuously revolving loan fund to provide start-up
8 funding and periodic advance funding for an emergency
9 assistance program to lessen the impact of high energy costs
10 on low-income individuals, families and the elderly. The
11 revolving loan fund shall be administered so as to conform
12 with the regulations promulgated October 7, 1980 under the
13 federal Home Energy Assistance Act of 1980 (45 CFR 260) or
14 successor regulations which receive final approval by the ap-
15 propriate federal agency, except where the division finds that
16 the regulations do not further the purposes of this act. Fund-
17 ing from said loan fund shall be available no later than Oc-
18 tober 1 of each year and may be used to purchase bulk oil, to
19 provide grants to eligible applicants, and to cover initial ad-
20 ministrative costs. Inspection of the program shall not be con-
21 ditional upon approval of a state plan required under any
22 federal program for federal fuel assistance. Any funds expend-
23 ed from this revolving loan fund shall be reimbursed by such
24 federal funds as are available to the commonwealth for home
25 energy assistance. The balance of the loan fund shall not
26 revert to the general fund until June 1.

27 (b) a program of state energy assistance in the form of
28 grants, vendor payments or bulk oil delivery for needy elder-
29 ly and families whose income is above the U.S. bureau of labor
30 statistics' lower living standard but not over two hundred per-
31 cent of the poverty level as established by the United States
32 community services administration for one and two person
33 families, provided that such program shall, except for the in-
34 come eligibility requirement, be administered so as to conform
35 with the regulations promulgated October 7, 1980, under the
36 federal Home Energy Assistance Act of 1980, under the federal
37 Home Energy Assistance Act of 1980 or any similar program
38 which supersedes that act unless the division finds that the
39 regulations do not further the purposes of this act, provided
40 further that administrative costs of up to ten percent be in-
41 curred in any allocation for said program.

42 (c) a home energy assistance program for needy elderly
43 and families whose income is not above the U.S. bureau of
44 labor statistics' lower living standard, provided that federal
45 funds available at the time of application are insufficient to
46 make the maximum payment allowed under the state plan
47 submitted under existing federal regulations, provided that ad-
48 ministrative costs of up to ten percent be included in any
49 allocation for said program. Expenditures of these funds shall
50 not be conditioned on promulgation of final regulations under
51 any federal heating assistance program, nor approval of any
52 state plan for expending federal funds.

53 (d) a winterization and conservation program to aid elder-
54 ly individuals and families who participated in the previous
55 year's energy crisis assistance program to lessen the impact
56 of high energy costs; provided that said program is ad-
57 ministered during the months of July through November so
58 as to assist such households prior to the advent of cold weather
59 and the inception of the federal home energy assistance
60 program.

61 (e) administrative costs for the operation of the home
62 energy assistance program provided that said program shall
63 be administered in order to meet federal match requirements
64 and/or to supplement available federal administrative funds
65 up to ten percent of the total federal program allocation.