

By Mr. Valianti of Marlborough, petition of Daniel J. Valianti for legislation to provide public assistance for parents for the care of children. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Five.

AN ACT SETTING FORTH BASIC PRINCIPLES TO ASSIST ALL PARENTS TO SECURE THE MEANS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND THEMSELVES.

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. These basic principles to assist all parents to
2 secure the means to provide for their children and themselves
3 shall be the policy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1 SECTION 2. To truly value families and the contributions they
2 make to our nation's future, society must assist all parents to
3 secure the means to meet their responsibilities — both to their
4 children and to themselves. Parents must have access to: an ade-
5 quate income; employment opportunities; health care for them-
6 selves and their children; education and training; child care and
7 other services provided in a way that respects people, does not
8 stigmatize them and involves parents in decisions affecting their
9 families. All families are vulnerable to life's uncertainties and
10 need different services and supports at different times. Any
11 attempt to help poor families today must recognize that many
12 families are in serious jeopardy due to economic conditions
13 beyond their control.

14 Taken together and of equal importance, the following four
15 principles are basic to the well-being of all families.

16 All families need:

17 (a) Access to a floor of adequate income and other supports
18 based solely on need:

19 (i) Income, child care, health care, and/or housing supports are
20 necessary to allow parents to provide for their families when
21 employment is not available or appropriate.

22 (ii) Income support programs should respect parental decisions
23 regarding whether employment is feasible, based on family cir-
24 cumstances. At the same time, programs should actively help par-
25 ents to obtain training, education or employment without loss of a
26 basic floor or protection.

27 (iii) Supports should be available as long as the need continues.

28 (b) Access to affordable training and education to prepare both
29 parents for jobs that will provide adequate wages, benefits and
30 working conditions.

31 (i) Educational and training goals should be determined by the
32 parent, with guidance that does not underestimate potential or dis-
33 courage long range plans.

34 (ii) Publicly-funded training programs are necessary and should
35 lead to jobs that provide adequate wages and are really available
36 in the existing job market.

37 (iii) Training programs must offer jobs at prevailing wages that
38 do not displace existing workers.

39 (iv) Higher education, even at advanced levels, may well be the
40 appropriate route to breadwinner's wages, especially for women.

41 (v) All training and education programs should be voluntary
42 with adequate marketing and advising so that participation is gen-
43 uinely encouraged.

44 (c) Public supports when jobs do not yield enough income and
45 benefits to meet family needs.

46 (i) Income, child care, health care, and/or housing supports may
47 be necessary to allow parents to accept or keep certain jobs.

48 (ii) Supports should last as long as wages and benefits are inad-
49 equate.

50 (iii) Public supplements to low wages should not replace efforts
51 to raise wages to adequate levels.

52 (d) Jobs that provide wages adequate to cover basic living
53 costs, including child care and decent health care benefits, and

54 with working conditions flexible enough for parents to care for
55 their children.

56 (i) All publicly supported jobs must offer prevailing wages and
57 benefits.

58 (ii) Flexibility of worktime and total hours of work required per
59 week are legitimate considerations in determining the adequacy of
60 a job.

61 (iii) In situations of domestic violence, custodial parents should
62 not be required to disclose any information which could jeopardize
63 the safety of themselves or their children.

