

SENATE No. 751

By Mr. Backman, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 751) of Jack H. Backman, Paul D. Harold, Thomas M. Gallagher, Thomas M. Finneran, Raymond A. Jordan, Jr., Francis D. Doris, George Bachrach, Michael J. McGlynn, Lawrence R. Alexander and A. Joseph DeNucci 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-three.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING 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 is hereby amended by
2 inserting after Section 24 the following new section: —
3 *Section 25.* The department of community affairs, division
4 of social and economic opportunity, shall administer a home
5 heating assistance program which consists of: —
6 (a) a continuously revolving loan fund to provide start-up
7 funding and periodic advance funding for an emergency as-
8 sistance program to lessen the impact of high energy costs on
9 low-income individuals, families and the elderly. The revol-
10 ing loan fund shall be administered so as to conform with the
11 regulations promulgated October 7, 1980 under the federal
12 Home Energy Assistance Act of 1980 (45 CFR 260) or suc-
13 cessor regulations which receive final approval by the appro-
14 priate federal agency, except where the division finds that the
15 regulations do not further the purposes of this act. Funding
16 from said loan fund shall be available no later than October 1
17 of each year and may be used to purchase bulk oil, to provide
18 grants to eligible applicants, and to cover initial administra-
19 tive costs. Inspection of the program shall not be conditional
20 upon approval of a state plan required under any federal
21 program for federal fuel assistance. Any funds expended from
22 this revolving loan fund shall be reimbursed by such federal
23 funds as are available to the commonwealth for home energy

24 assistance. The balance of the loan fund shall not revert to
25 the general fund until June 1.

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

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

51 (d) a winterization and conservation program to aid elderly
52 individuals and families who participated in the previous year's
53 energy crisis assistance program to lessen the impact of high
54 energy costs; provided that said program is administered dur-
55 ing the months of July through November so as to assist such
56 households prior to the advent of cold weather and the incep-
57 tion of the federal home energy assistance program.

58 (e) administrative costs for the operation of the home en-
59 ergy assistance program provided that said program shall be
60 administered in order to meet federal match requirements and/
61 or to supplement available federal administrative funds up to
62 ten percent of the total federal program allocation.