

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1160**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Thomas M. Stanley*

*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 relative to moving to economic opportunity housing.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1160**

By Mr. Stanley of Waltham, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1160) of Thomas M. Stanley and Kay Khan for legislation to establish a program of rental assistance for certain extremely low-income, working families through mobile and project-based vouchers. Housing.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 385 OF 2011-2012.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen**

An Act relative to moving to economic opportunity housing.

*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  
2 Department of Housing and Community Development shall establish a program of rental  
3 assistance for five hundred extremely low-income, working families, consisting of one or more  
4 persons, through mobile and project-based vouchers; provided, that assistance shall be paid  
5 under a program to be known as the Massachusetts moving to economic opportunity housing  
6 program to be administered by the regional nonprofit housing agencies; provided further, that at  
7 initial occupancy a household’s gross annual income shall not exceed 30 per cent of the area  
8 median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban  
9 Development, adjusted for household size; provided further, that an adult member of the  
10 household must have a work history and be currently employed or seeking employment;  
11 provided further, that eligibility may continue for up to six months if the adult member of the  
12 household becomes involuntarily unemployed and meets work search or training participation  
13 requirements established by the department; provided further, that the initial voucher value shall  
14 be the difference between the approved monthly rent less the amount paid by the household;  
15 provided further, that a household shall pay thirty per cent of its gross income toward rent;  
16 provided further that a household shall receive assistance through this program until the tenant is  
17 paying the full amount of the rent without a subsidy for six months or the household’s gross  
18 annual income reaches 80 per cent of the area median income, adjusted for household size, or in

19 the case of a project-based voucher attached to a unit subject to different restrictions, the  
20 restrictions imposed by such program; provided further, that project-based vouchers may be used  
21 to leverage capital funds provided by private foundations and shall be used to increase the  
22 affordability of units in any development; provided further, that the initial amount of a  
23 household's voucher shall be reduced if the household's income increases; provided further, that  
24 if the amount of the voucher is reduced, an amount equal to the reduction shall be placed in an  
25 escrow account to be held for the benefit of the household; provided further, that at the  
26 expiration of five years from the date of the first rental assistance payment or if the household  
27 voluntarily leaves the program prior to the expiration of five years from the date of the first  
28 rental assistance payment and the household's program goals have been met, the funds placed in  
29 escrow shall be paid to the household; provided further, funds placed in escrow can be used by  
30 the household prior to completing the program in efforts to attain their program goals; provided  
31 further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the release of the  
32 escrowed funds to a household, including interest earned thereon, shall not create any tax  
33 liability for the household, and the funds may be counted as the household's contribution toward  
34 any match required from an existing individual development account, so-called, or similar  
35 program; provided further, that if the household is terminated from the program for cause, the  
36 escrowed funds shall revert to the department; provided further, that a household participating in  
37 this program shall remain eligible for state and federal assistance programs for which they  
38 otherwise qualify; provided further, that each household shall have a stabilization worker, and  
39 the department shall use funds provided for this program for stabilization workers who will link  
40 households to supports including job training, education, and childcare opportunities available to  
41 members of participating households or to facilitate a household's participation in existing  
42 programs to the extent such programs are available and may enter into agreements with other  
43 public and private agencies for the provision of such services; provided further, that a mobile  
44 voucher whose use is or has been discontinued shall be re-assigned or converted to a project-  
45 based voucher within 90 days; and provided further, that the department shall pay agencies for  
46 the costs of administering the program.