HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 3207 FILED ON: 1/21/2011

HOUSE . . . . . No. 2681

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Denise Provost

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 prevent homelessness among recipients of transitional assistance.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Denise Provost	*27th Middlesex*
Linda Dorcena Forry	*12th Suffolk*
Kay Khan	*11th Middlesex*
Peter V. Kocot	*1st Hampshire*

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By Ms. Provost of Somerville, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2681) of Denise Provost and others relative to services for homeless individuals and families receiving assistance under the program of emergency aid to elders, disabled and children. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *169* OF 2009-2010.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act to prevent homelessness among recipients of transitional assistance.

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. This act may be known and cited as the No Place Like Home Initiative.

2 SECTION 2. Chapter 18 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
3 section 2A, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, the following section:-

4 Section 2B. (a) The department of transitional assistance shall offer and provide
5 screenings of applicants and recipients for services and benefits provided by the department,
6 including but not limited to food stamps, transitional aid to families with dependent children, and
7 emergency aid to the elderly, disabled and children, to determine whether the applicants and
8 recipients are in a stable housing situation or are at risk of homelessness within the next 12
9 months. The screenings shall be offered at the time of application for assistance, at the time of a

10 recertification or eligibility review, and before termination of assistance by the department. The
11 screenings shall also be available on a walk-in basis at the offices of the department and the
12 availability shall be publicized in each local department office.

13 (b) With regard to applicants or recipients of services and benefits from the department
14 of transitional assistance whose incomes are at or below 130 per cent of the federal poverty limit
15 and who are at risk of homelessness within the next 12 months, the department, subject to
16 appropriation into an item to be established for these purposes, shall provide to both eligible
17 families and individuals the types of services and benefits designed to prevent homelessness and
18 create housing stability that are authorized by subdivision (D) of section 2 as in effect on January
19 1, 2009 and shall coordinate with and make referrals to other available services, benefits, and
20 housing resources to prevent homelessness and create housing stability. With regard to
21 applicants or recipients of services and benefits from the department of transitional assistance
22 whose incomes are above 130 per cent of the federal poverty limit and who are at risk of
23 homelessness within the next 12 months, the department shall coordinate with and make referrals
24 to other available services, benefits, and housing resources to prevent homelessness and create
25 housing stability.

26 (c) The department shall, at least as frequently as once each calendar quarter, provide to
27 the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children,
28 families and persons with disabilities a written report describing the number of applicants and
29 recipients who have participated in the screenings authorized by subsection(a), the number of
30 individuals and families serviced and the types of services and referrals provided pursuant to
31 section (b), and the department's assessment of the level of need for and effectiveness of the
32 services provided pursuant to this section.

33 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the department
34 of transitional assistance shall each month deposit into escrow accounts for the benefit of
35 homeless individuals and families receiving assistance under the program of emergency aid to
36 elders, disabled and children, pursuant to chapter 117A of the General Laws, or receiving
37 assistance under the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children, pursuant to
38 chapter 118 of the General Laws, an amount equal to the amount by which the department
39 reduces the grants of said individuals and families due to their lack of shelter expenses. Such
40 escrowed funds shall be available to such individuals and families to obtain and retain permanent
41 housing and to remove barriers to obtaining and retaining housing and shall not be countable
42 toward otherwise applicable asset limits.