

HOUSE No. 1155

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.

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 expand housing opportunities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/18/2013</i>

HOUSE No. 1155

By Mr. Sciortino of Medford, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1155) of Carl M. Sciortino, Jr., for legislation to expand housing opportunities for persons displaced by public action or natural disaster and persons who are homeless or facing imminent homelessness. Housing.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2130 OF 2011-2012.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act to expand housing opportunities.

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, tenant
2 selection plans for units with development or project-based subsidies which limit tenants' rental
3 contributions to a percentage of household income shall include a tenant selection preference for
4 homeless and imminently homeless families as defined below. The preference shall apply only
5 to the extent consistent with any applicable federal requirements, in any rental housing financed
6 or refinanced by public instrumentalities of the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to,
7 those entities described in G.L. c. 23B, § 2(b), G.L. c. 23G, and Section 7 of chapter 708 of the
8 Acts of 1966 as most recently amended,. As between applicants equally in need and eligible for
9 occupancy of the unit, the preference shall apply to persons displaced by public action or natural
10 disaster and persons who are homeless or facing imminent homelessness for reasons beyond the
11 applicants' ability reasonably to control or prevent. For purposes of the preceding sentence,
12 persons who are homeless or facing imminent homelessness for reasons beyond the applicant's
13 ability reasonably to control or prevent shall include, but need not be limited to, those who both
14 (a) are living in emergency shelter, on the street, in cars, in housing that is unsafe due to
15 domestic violence or medical conditions, in other places not suitable for human habitation, in
16 transitional housing, or in private market units made affordable only due to temporary rental
17 subsidies or are within 90 days of having no identified, safe and affordable housing options and

18 (b) either (i) have been displaced or are facing displacement by court-ordered eviction without
19 fault, which shall include eviction for nonpayment of rent where the tenant's rent and shelter cost
20 burden exceeded or exceeds fifty percent of adjusted income at the time of the eviction and
21 where the nonpayment arose from changes in circumstances which were beyond the tenant's
22 ability to prevent or control, such as departure of a household member, job loss or reduction of
23 income, or illness or high medical costs; (ii) are victims of domestic violence who have been
24 displaced or are at imminent risk of harm or displacement as a result of such violence, or (iii) are
25 persons with medical emergencies or conditions who cannot be or could not be accommodated in
26 their existing or former housing or for whom lack of suitable housing is a significant impediment
27 to treatment or recovery.

28 SECTION 2. Subsection (r) of section 3 of chapter 23B of the General Laws is hereby
29 amended by adding the following additional words: - provided further, however, that a
30 household that otherwise qualifies for any preference or priority for state subsidized housing or
31 rental assistance based on homeless or at-risk status shall retain that preference or priority
32 notwithstanding receipt of rental assistance that is intended to be temporary, including, but not
33 limited to, any temporary or bridge subsidies provided with state, federal or local funds and the
34 department shall incorporate this policy into its regulations governing tenant selection criteria.