

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 118**

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**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:
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 118**

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By Ms. Provost of Somerville, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 118) 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.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 143 OF 2013-2014.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court  
(2015-2016)**  
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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.