

HOUSE No. 149

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Liz Miranda

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 resolve:

Resolve A Resolve to better prepare the Commonwealth for climate change refugees.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/17/2019</i>
<i>Mayor Martin J. Walsh</i>		<i>1/18/2019</i>
<i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>	<i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Daniel R. Cullinane</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Daniel J. Ryan</i>	<i>2nd Suffolk</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>	<i>1/29/2019</i>

HOUSE No. 149

By Ms. Miranda of Boston, a petition (accompanied by resolve, House, No. 149) of Liz Miranda and others relative to establishing a special commission supported by the Department of Health and Human Services to better prepare the Commonwealth for climate change refugees. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

Resolve A Resolve to better prepare the Commonwealth for climate change refugees.

1 **Resolved**, SECTION 1. The commission for climate refugees is hereby established to
2 evaluate the
3 commonwealth’s coordination with municipalities, school districts, and between
4 departments and agencies of the commonwealth, upon the influx of displaced persons from
5 Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria and to advise the general court on how to better prepare
6 for the influx and welfare of climate change refugees. “Climate change refugees” shall be
7 defined as individuals who have to leave their domicile due to either sudden on-set disasters or
8 slow on-set degradation of their natural environments related to at least one of the following
9 impacts of climate change: flooding, extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and droughts.

10 SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of up to eleven members, including a chair.
11 The secretary of the department of health and human services or their designee, the
12 undersecretary of the department of housing and community development or their designee, the
13 director of the Massachusetts emergency management agency or their designee, and the

14 commissioner of the department of children and families shall each serve as members on the
15 commission ex officio.

16 Each of the remaining seven members shall be appointed by the governor and shall
17 include three members all of whom are superintendents of school districts in municipalities that
18 enrolled climate refugees from Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. The remaining four
19 members shall have expertise in one or more of the following areas: public and affordable
20 housing, federal immigration law and regulation, and emergency management. Each member,
21 including the chair, shall serve without compensation and in an advisory capacity until the report
22 referenced in section six is delivered, whereupon the commission shall disband.

23 SECTION 3. The commission shall, at a minimum, investigate the following topics: (i)
24 the commonwealth's coordination and efforts following Hurricane Maria to provide, or assist
25 climate refugees in obtaining, adequate housing, healthcare, education, and workforce
26 development training; (ii) which department or agency of the commonwealth should be
27 designated with oversight authority over the coordination and provision of housing, healthcare,
28 education, and workforce development to climate change refugees; (iii) sources of funding for
29 housing, healthcare, education, and workforce development of climate change refugees; (iv)
30 enrollment of climate change refugees in primary and secondary school; (v) identify existing
31 legal and regulatory barriers to establishing a lead department or agency and developing a policy
32 for the commonwealth's intake of climate change refugees, taking into consideration existing
33 federal immigration laws and regulations, affordable and public housing laws and regulations,
34 and existing laws and regulations governing public education, healthcare, and welfare benefits,
35 including proposed changes to existing laws and regulations.

36 SECTION 4. The commission may create committees and working groups to inform the
37 commission's investigation of the topics referenced in section three. The commission, its
38 committees and its working groups may procure services, including consulting services, and
39 otherwise involve experts, stakeholders, and members of the public.

40 SECTION 5. The commission shall be supported by staff from the department of health
41 and human services.

42 SECTION 6. The commission shall provide its report and recommendations to the joint
43 committee on public health of the general court on the first anniversary of the date on which the
44 ninth member has been appointed to the commission.

45 SECTION 7. This resolve shall take effect upon its passage.