

HOUSE No. 4490

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 5, 2020.

The committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 130) of Kate Hogan and others for legislation to establish a special commission (including members of the General Court) to study women and homelessness, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4490) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KAY KHAN.

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

An Act establishing a special commission to study women and homelessness.

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. There shall be a special commission, as established by section 2A of
2 chapter 4 of the General Laws, to conduct an investigation and study regarding homelessness
3 among women in the commonwealth.

4 The special commission shall consist of: two members of the house of representatives,
5 one of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives who shall serve as
6 co-chair, and one of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of
7 representatives; two members of the senate, one of whom shall be appointed by the president of
8 the senate who shall serve as co-chair, and one of whom shall be appointed by the minority
9 leader of the senate; the governor or designee; the secretary of health and human services or
10 designee; the commissioner of public health or designee; and the secretary of housing and
11 economic development or designee. The first meeting of the commission shall take place not
12 later than February 28, 2021.

13 The co-chairs of the special commission shall appoint six representatives, including but
14 not limited to: a representative of Health Care Without Walls; a representative of homeless
15 shelters and agencies; a representative of housing advocacy organizations and agencies; a
16 representative of a service provider with expertise in health care disparities, women’s health, and
17 trauma-informed care; an academic researcher with expertise in women’s homelessness; and an
18 individual who has experienced homelessness.

19 The special commission shall conduct a community needs assessment regarding
20 homelessness among persons who identify as women; and make recommendations regarding
21 homelessness prevention, improving shelters for women and families, increasing permanent
22 housing opportunities, collection and reporting of data regarding women experiencing
23 homelessness and ensuring that homeless women have access to a full range of health care and
24 social services.

25 The special commission shall submit its findings and recommendations to the clerks of
26 the senate and the house of representatives, the chair of the house committee on ways and means,
27 the chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the chairs of the joint committee on
28 housing and the chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance abuse not later than
29 July 31, 2022.