

SENATE No. 31

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joanne M. Comerford

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 providing for coordinated data and assistance to address family homelessness.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Joanne M. Comerford</i> | <i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i> | |
| <i>Natalie M. Higgins</i> | <i>4th Worcester</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i> | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Marjorie C. Decker</i> | <i>25th Middlesex</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Kay Khan</i> | <i>11th Middlesex</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>James T. Welch</i> | <i>Hampden</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Anne M. Gobi</i> | <i>Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i> | <i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Daniel J. Hunt</i> | <i>13th Suffolk</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Paul R. Feeney</i> | <i>Bristol and Norfolk</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>José F. Tosado</i> | <i>9th Hampden</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Mary S. Keefe</i> | <i>15th Worcester</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i> | <i>7th Middlesex</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Carlos González</i> | <i>10th Hampden</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Mindy Domb</i> | <i>3rd Hampshire</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Diana DiZoglio</i> | <i>First Essex</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |
| <i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i> | <i>1st Hampshire</i> | <i>2/1/2019</i> |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mike Connolly</i> | <i>26th Middlesex</i> | <i>2/1/2019</i> |
| <i>Michael O. Moore</i> | <i>Second Worcester</i> | <i>2/1/2019</i> |
| <i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i> | <i>11th Suffolk</i> | <i>2/3/2019</i> |
| <i>David M. Rogers</i> | <i>24th Middlesex</i> | <i>2/3/2019</i> |
| <i>Paul W. Mark</i> | <i>2nd Berkshire</i> | <i>2/3/2019</i> |

SENATE No. 31

By Ms. Comerford, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 31) of Joanne M. Comerford, Natalie M. Higgins, James B. Eldridge, Marjorie C. Decker and other members of the General Court for legislation to provide for coordinated data and assistance to address family homelessness. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act providing for coordinated data and assistance to address family 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 an annual comprehensive report on housing instability faced
2 by families in the commonwealth to enable the public to gain an informed understanding of the
3 issue and to efficiently predict and better direct homelessness prevention and housing resources.
4 The report shall be written cooperatively by the executive office of health and human services,
5 the executive office of housing and economic development, the executive office of labor and
6 workforce development and the executive office of education.

7 The report shall include the following information:

8 (1) the number of client households that have been identified as homeless and at risk of
9 homelessness by each agency;

10 (2) the department of housing and community development shall provide the numbers of
11 households receiving emergency assistance also receiving benefits and services from the

12 following programs: (i) the supplemental nutrition assistance program and the transitional aid
13 for families with dependent children program of the department of transitional assistance; (ii)
14 workforce development programs; (iii) programs of the department of children and families; (iv)
15 early intervention services of the department of public health; (v) MassHealth data on income
16 sources for families in shelter and housing instability screening for patients.

17 (3) To better understand the level of housing stability among HomeBASE participants,
18 the department of housing and community development shall provide the number of households
19 that have received assistance from the HomeBASE program under line item 7004-0108,
20 including, the number of households that were evicted, the number that returned to shelter, the
21 number of households with involvement of the department of children and families and the
22 number with incomes below 150 per cent of the Federal Poverty Level. The department shall
23 coordinate with programs under the executive office of health and human services on matching
24 data sets for the purposes of this report.

25 (4) The department of early education and care shall provide the number of contracted
26 slots for homeless children and the current utilization, the number of childcare vouchers issued to
27 homelessness households.

28 (5) All interagency teams or groups that are currently working on issues related to
29 homelessness.

30 The report shall be filed with the clerks of Senate and House, the chairs of the
31 committees on ways and means, the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness and the
32 Learn to Earn Interagency Working group annually on the day assigned for submission of the
33 budget by the governor to the general court under section 7H of chapter 29 of the General Laws.

34 SECTION 2. The executive office of health and human services, executive office of
35 housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and
36 executive office of education shall establish a single joint telephone hotline for residents of the
37 commonwealth to receive information and assistance on benefits, eligibility and application
38 processes for all benefit and assistance programs managed by the offices and the connections and
39 relationships between their programs and other programs of the commonwealth.

40 Each agency of the executive office of health and human services, executive office of
41 housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and
42 executive office of education shall publicly conspicuously post on their main internet site
43 information on the benefit and assistance programs managed by the agency, including a link or
44 information on how to access a benefits calculator and guide for calculating benefits in relation
45 to incomes. The agencies shall distribute information about the programs, calculator and guide to
46 homelessness service providers in a form appropriate for distribution to their clients. Each state
47 agency of these offices shall provide training for staff and vendors on the benefits calculator in
48 order to help families receiving assistance gain information on the programs to access the
49 programs and optimize their benefits, including avoiding cliff effects due to the income
50 eligibility rules.