

HOUSE No. 1328

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Natalie M. Higgins

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 transform the Commonwealth’s emergency response system and create housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>1/18/2023</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/27/2023</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>
<i>Simon Cataldo</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/15/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 1328

By Representative Higgins of Leominster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1328) of Natalie M. Higgins and others for legislation to develop housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**
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An Act to transform the Commonwealth’s emergency response system and create housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 23B of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section xx. As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context clearly
3 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

4 “Congregate shelter”, any sheltering approach of mass dormitory-style bed space in
5 which individuals are not each sheltered in an individual or shared bedroom demarcated by walls
6 on all sides and a door.

7 “Continuum of care”, has the same meaning as defined in Section 578.3 of Title 24 of the
8 Code of Federal Regulations.

9 “Non-congregate shelter”, a setting where a person experiencing homelessness is
10 sheltered within an individual or shared bedroom with walls on all sides, a door, and preferably a
11 bathroom.

12 “Permanent supportive housing”, a model of housing that combines ongoing subsidized
13 housing matched with flexible health, behavioral health, social and other support services.

14 “Department of Housing and Community Development” or “the department”, as defined
15 in Section 1 of Chapter 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

16 (a) The department of housing and community development working closely with
17 municipalities and the continuums of care shall conduct an objective and predictive study of
18 future shelter and housing demand to determine the type and amount of permanent supportive
19 housing, non-congregate and congregate shelter programmatic models necessary to reduce
20 reliance on shelter and meet housing demand one year following the effective date of this
21 section. This study shall determine housing and shelter capacity in every municipality in the
22 commonwealth using calculations based on the ratio of the number of units to the overall
23 population in order to ensure adequate capacity statewide.

24 (b) The department shall develop a plan to prioritize the building of permanent supportive
25 housing and new non-congregate shelter solutions, that will supplement or replace existing
26 congregate shelter programs, with a five-year implementation goal to meet the unmet needs of
27 affordable housing capacity for each municipality in the commonwealth based on the ratio of the
28 number of units to the overall population, in accordance with the findings of the study, in order
29 to ensure adequate permanent supportive housing capacity statewide. The department shall
30 determine benchmark goals for the implementation of said study recommendations within the
31 five-year implementation goal to meet the permanent supportive housing needs for each
32 municipality in the Commonwealth.

33 (c) The department shall create an inventory of existing congregate shelters, the cost to
34 the commonwealth of these existing congregate shelters and conduct a feasibility study as to the
35 extent these current resources can be converted to non-congregate shelter and/or permanent
36 supportive housing. The department shall submit the plan to the chairs of the joint committee on
37 housing and the continuums of care within one year following the effective date of this section.

38 (d) The department shall develop and provide a specific plan for unique housing
39 responses specifically targeted to unaccompanied adult persons experiencing homelessness,
40 including, but not limited to, long-term vouchers, shallow subsidy pools, rapid re-housing
41 resources and permanent supportive housing. The department shall develop housing resources
42 across a spectrum of need, but shall prioritize those elderly, disabled, medically complex, and
43 LGBTQ+ persons experiencing homelessness. The department shall review and consider
44 alternative construction models including, but not limited to, modular construction, micro-units,
45 repurposed hotels or other alternatives capable of bringing homeless housing initiatives to an
46 affordable scale necessary to end the homelessness of chronic and medically complex persons
47 experiencing homelessness. The department shall submit a plan for the development of such
48 housing to the chairs of the joint committee on housing and the continuums of care no later than
49 one year following the effective date of this section.