

HOUSE No. 81

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Danillo A. Sena

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 establishing free broadband internet access in public housing.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/17/2023</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2023</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/7/2023</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	<i>5/16/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 81

By Representative Sena of Acton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 81) of Danilo A. Sena and others for an investigation by the Department of Public Health of broadband internet access and its relation to the public health objectives. Advanced Information Technology, the Internet and Cybersecurity.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 137 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

An Act establishing free broadband internet access in public housing.

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. Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
2 following section:-

3 Section 239. The United Nations has declared health a fundamental human right
4 indispensable for the exercise of other human rights and that the right to health is closely related
5 to and dependent upon the realization of other human rights, as contained in the International Bill
6 of Rights, including the rights to food, housing, work, education, human dignity, life, non-
7 discrimination, equality, the prohibition against torture, privacy, access to information, and the
8 freedoms of association, assembly and movement. Broadband internet access is now an essential
9 component of the realization of many of these human rights and is itself a human right.

10 The department shall make a study into broadband internet access in the commonwealth
11 and its relation to the public health objectives of the commonwealth. Said study shall be
12 conducted for the purposes of understanding how broadband internet access is a determinant of
13 health, improving the public health services of the commonwealth, and expanding broadband
14 internet throughout the Commonwealth to reflect its status as a human right, with a focus on
15 communities that have suffered disproportionate health impacts as a result of lack of access to
16 broadband internet.

17 SECTION 2. Section 32 of chapter 121B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018
18 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “cost”, in line 6, the following
19 words:- ,with broadband internet available in all units offered at no charge to residents
20 considered a requirement of a decent, safe and sanitary dwelling

21 SECTION 3. The first paragraph of said section 32, as so appearing, is hereby amended
22 by inserting after the third sentence the following sentence:- For the purposes of this paragraph,
23 broadband internet shall not be considered a utility.

24 SECTION 4. Said first paragraph of said section 32, as so appearing, is hereby further
25 amended by adding the following sentence:- Funds to subsidize housing authorities or other
26 public housing bodies for implementation and maintenance of the requirement of no charge
27 broadband internet for all units shall be appropriated by the general court. The undersecretary
28 shall administer these funds.